



The First 100 Days of MTSS Guide:

An MTSS Guide for Education Leadership



BRANCHING
MINDS

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1. Preparing for a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

A continuous and robust MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) framework is an evidence-based solution to support the whole student, create a positive school culture, increase the effectiveness of core instruction, and proactively deliver targeted, evidence-based interventions. But this framework does not just come into existence overnight.

A system of MTSS requires adequate planning, resources, and a continuous data collection cycle to ensure this system is being used effectively to maximize its impact on student achievement. For a district or school looking to implement MTSS or re-evaluate its current process, the first months can be daunting.

This guide provides a framework for education leaders to follow during the first 100 of MTSS. This guide provides steps and resources to help leaders gauge their practice and understand where their MTSS practice may be lacking.

It is important to note that this guide is a framework. Specific details will depend upon a school or district's current stage of MTSS implementation and their access to specific resources. This guide reflects the implementation of MTSS through a system-level change method. MTSS is not a bottom-up solution, where it begins in one classroom and then grows to encompass other grades and students. Instead, effective implementation of MTSS starts at the leadership level and includes the buy-in of all stakeholders.

This guide will cover each step along the way to help leaders ensure that their MTSS framework is built upon a solid foundation. Resources have been included in each segment to provide more information to share with MTSS and school teams.

2. Preparing To Start: Setting Your MTSS Framework

MTSS begins before the first students walk through the halls. In order to have an effective system of MTSS, leadership should ensure that they have taken the proper steps to set a solid foundation to build upon their framework. These steps should be taken prior to the start of a school year, to ensure that all stakeholders are on the same page about their roles and responsibilities. If leaders wait until the start of school to begin planning for how they will implement or improve MTSS, they risk delaying the problem-solving process or frustrating staff with a lack of understanding. Instead of waiting, start planning for MTSS before Day 1 by including the following steps during the summer preparation period.

a. Build Your MTSS Teams

The MTSS team is the problem-solving team, and it will drive the system of MTSS. By proactively creating this team before the onset of a school year, leadership can ensure that there is a team of individuals who are available to answer questions, guide processes, and evaluate the health of their MTSS system. These teams should exist at each school, with a district-level team to help with the implementation and ongoing analysis of the district-wide MTSS practice. Check out the table below for guidance on who should be on a school-based MTSS team.

MTSS Team Members	Roles and Responsibilities
Administrative Representative	Leadership, Facilitates monitoring and MTSS processes, Ensures school schedule and resource allocation are aligned to MTSS practice, Ensures next steps are documented
MTSS Team Coordinator	School-based representatives that coordinate and set agenda for MTSS team meetings, Expert on MTSS and data analysis, Identifies trends in MTSS data, Ensures next steps are documented
Grade-Level/Content Area Representative(s)	Liaison between Departments and MTSS team, Attends PLC/MTSS meetings,
Ensures next steps are documented	
Specialists (Rotating members)	Inclusion of specialist members: ELL teachers, speech/language pathologist, interventionists, and behavior specialists, Ensures next steps are documented
Classroom Teacher(s)	Provide voice of classroom teachers, Expertise and knowledge on specific students,

Additional resources for building your team:



[Blog: Developing a Successful MTSS/RTI Team](#)



[Webinar: How to Create an MTSS Team to Guide Your MTSS Practice](#)



b. Allocate Your Resources to Support MTSS

Key MTSS resources are needed to ensure that educators have access to what they need, when they need it. The following resources should be accounted for prior to the start of the school year in which MTSS will be implemented or revised.



Valid and reliable assessments to screen and progress monitor



Robust data-driven resources for support, enrichment, and intervention are in place



Professional learning to develop or refine MTSS foundational knowledge for all stakeholders



Infrastructure updates to accommodate sessions to provide support and intervention for students as well as for stakeholders to attend MTSS-related meetings



Evidence-based intervention strategies and resources



Professional learning and evidence-based resources for [differentiated core instruction](#)



Resource that enables clear and efficient data collection, and analysis (such as an [MTSS Management Software](#))

c. Create a Clear Vision and Understanding of MTSS

Change methods, or change models, are evidence-based approaches to instituting change at an organizational level. When used with fidelity, they provide a clear guide that allows organizations to walk through a change process while remaining equitable and cognizant of the needs of their stakeholders and staff. While many of these methods exist, one of the most predominant and well-researched is Kotter’s “8-Step Process for Leading Change.” When placed into an education framework, Kotter’s method lays out a clear outline and plan for the district’s implementation of MTSS.

One of the key first steps in Kotter’s Theory is to **create a strategic vision that is universally understood by all stakeholders.** This [same process](#) applies to districts as they implement or revise their system of MTSS. All stakeholders across the district need to have a clear understanding from Day 1 of the goal of MTSS, their responsibility in achieving this goal, and how this goal will impact their school and students.

By communicating an MTSS vision, leaders connect all stakeholders and create accountability and transparency. Beyond just communicating this vision at the beginning of the calendar plan, leaders should create a plan to provide frequent and clarifying messaging to all stakeholders on an ongoing basis. These “check-ins” are reminders of the “why” of MTSS. Remember, this vision should be rooted in reality and address current challenges. For example, if a high percentage of students have historically needed intervention, this vision should account for how MTSS will revise core instruction to proactively support students before intervention is needed.

To further build upon this vision, education leaders will also need to create a framework that establishes a common understanding of MTSS with all staff. MTSS professional development sessions can greatly help in this endeavor, but the district’s schools also create or revise an MTSS Handbook that is accessible by all staff as a resource.

The MTSS Handbook should include resources on:

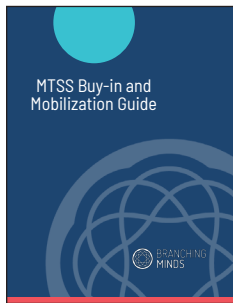
- ▶ Key MTSS Terminology
- ▶ Vision for MTSS
- ▶ MTSS team guidelines/ roles
- ▶ MTSS protocols
- ▶ MTSS goals
- ▶ MTSS meetings
- ▶ SMART goals for MTSS priorities
- ▶ Dates for all MTSS-related meetings

d. Resources for Setting Your MTSS Framework

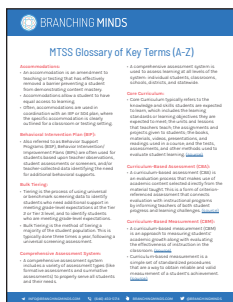
The following resources can be helpful with creating an MTSS framework:



MTSS Guide: This guide covers the ins and outs of MTSS, including important components to consider and the responsibilities of each stakeholder. This guide covers the guiding principles of MTSS, the problem-solving cycle, the MTSS tiers, intervention planning, and how to create effective MTSS meeting structures.



MTSS Buy-in and Mobilization Guide: The mobilization guide dives into each step education leaders need to take when implementing MTSS and building buy-in with their staff. This is a great tool to ensure the transition does not overwhelm staff and the change to MTSS goes smoothly.



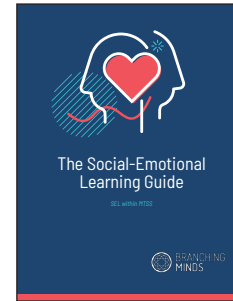
MTSS Glossary of Key Terms: Communication is key when starting a new initiative, and it is important to establish a common MTSS language with all staff. This MTSS glossary covers MTSS key terms, so all staff have an understanding of different components. This glossary is a great resource to use alongside the MTSS guide and your district MTSS handbook.



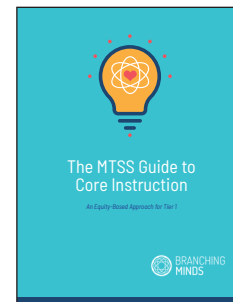
MTSS Meetings Guide: Meetings are a key component in facilitating the MTSS process. Meetings establish a culture of collaboration, data review, and drive the problem-solving process. This guide provides a framework for effective meeting structures in an MTSS structure. It includes frameworks for Grade/Content Meetings, School-Level Meetings, and Individual Support Meeting.



Introducing MTSS to Your Team: Part of the guide includes steps for introducing MTSS to your staff and building a common language around MTSS. This slide deck is available to introduce MTSS to your team and begin establishing the common understanding.



The Social-Emotional Learning Guide: MTSS supports the whole child, including providing support in social-emotional learning and behavior. This SEL guide introduces educators to what SEL is and how to embed SEL into an MTSS framework.



MTSS Core Instruction Guide: Core instruction is the root of a student's education experience. As the first Tier level, core instruction is provided to 100% of students. MTSS requires core instruction to be robust and targeted for the needs of all students. This guide dives into the hows of core instruction, providing strategies for educators on how to improve their core instruction practice.

3. The First 100 Days of MTSS Calendar

This calendar breaks down the first days of MTSS into three, 30-day “chunks.” While some elements will be ongoing throughout the year, this calendar provides guidance on what to highlight as an education leader at each stage. Remember, this is guidance for district and school leadership. Classroom teachers and other stakeholders will have other responsibilities during this time period.

Day 1 to Day 30 | Identifying Challenges

IMPORTANT MTSS STEPS

Using this data, create a plan to support staff members who may have difficulty with any aspect of MTSS

Use universal screening assessment data to assign students to appropriate tier levels and allocate resources to support each tier

Monitor the creation of intervention plans and completion of intervention time, and check-in with MTSS teams to ensure progress monitoring data is being collected and the problem-solving process has begun

Create a schedule for frequent check-ins with staff to measure how MTSS meetings and protocols are going (a quick survey or questionnaire)

Schedule the first round of screening of all students using a universal screening assessment

Check for the fidelity of MTSS, including intervention usage, task completion, the fidelity of core instruction practice, and MTSS meetings

Resources for This Time Period:

 [MTSS Intervention Process Flowchart](#)

 [Best Practices of MTSS Tiering](#)

 [Communication Planning](#)

 [Communications Planning Worksheet](#)

 [MTSS Quizzes](#)

Day 30 to Day 60 | Gathering Data and Measuring Progress

IMPORTANT MTSS STEPS

Send a communication as a reminder of the “why” of MTSS (vision)

Hold a district-wide meeting to discuss MTSS data and system-level health


Hold school-wide meetings to discuss data from MTSS surveys, progress towards MTSS goals, and trends seen in universal screening assessment and progress monitoring data

Continue to check in with staff to monitor MTSS understanding and responsibility

Create proactive plans to address any concerns seen in MTSS data (including data on social-emotional learning, behavior, academics, and attendance)

Resources for This Time Period:

 [Successful Intervention Planning](#)

 [How To Respond to an Upside Down MTSS Tiered Triangle](#)

 [MTSS Guide to Core Instruction](#)

 [MTSS Meetings Guide](#)

 [Creating a Data-Driven School Culture](#)



Day 60 to Day 90 | Determining Impact and Planning Ahead

IMPORTANT MTSS STEPS

Consider scheduling middle of the year professional development to retrain staff on MTSS processes and refresh on MTSS

Hold a district-wide meeting to reflect on middle of year data (universal screening assessment data, intervention plan data from progress monitoring, school-wide data on behavior, SEL, and attendance)




Plan for the second half of the year, building upon established MTSS practices and increasing MTSS fidelity

Continue to check in with staff to monitor MTSS understanding and responsibility

Facilitate the second round of universal screening assessment to measure student progress and identify students who need additional support

Hold school-wide meetings to reflect of middle of year data to identify areas of concern and monitor MTSS fidelity

Resources for This Time Period:

-  [MTSS Fidelity Reference Guide](#)
-  [Best Practices on Interpreting Assessment Data](#)
-  [Evaluating the Quality and Effectiveness of your MTSS Practice](#)

4. 100 Days and Beyond

MTSS does not stop at the end of this calendar. As a starting guide, this calendar aims to provide a framework of guidance for education leaders looking to revise or implement a system of MTSS at their school or within their district.

So, what happens after the first 100 days end?

MTSS is built upon a continuous problem-solving process. As you may have seen in this calendar, many of the events are repeated in each section. That is because these processes are repeated throughout the year. Education leaders will need to continuously check in with their staff to measure MTSS understanding and check for fidelity (check out the added resources for guidance on MTSS fidelity checks). Data collection and analysis will continue as students receive proactive intervention plans, and MTSS teams will continue to evaluate the health of core instruction and their MTSS practices. The data gathered in the first 100 days of MTSS can help leadership understand their strengths and challenges, and set the stage for a stronger MTSS practice moving forward.

About the Branching Minds solution:

Branching Minds is an MTSS/RTI system-level education platform that brings together innovative, easy to use technology with the latest insights from the learning sciences to help drive student and school success, while making teachers and administrators work easier and more effective. Branching Minds connects data, systems, interventions, and stakeholders so that educators, administrators, and families can work better together to support students' holistic needs.

Make MTSS Easy, Efficient, and Effective With the Branching Minds Web Platform

Transform your district's MTSS solution with personalized intervention plans, powerful collaboration tools, and easy-to-understand reporting. We are more than just a platform, we are a system-level partner.

[Schedule a demo](#)

Branching Minds Helps Educators

Understand school health and wellness across the district

Target approach to strengthen Behavior/SEL intervention practice

Avoid overidentification or underreferral of student subgroups