Designing an MTSS-B Evaluation Plan

Why evaluate your MTSS-B effort?

Evaluating your school district's MTSS-B initiative serves many purposes:

1. **Monitoring reach.** Reach has to do with implementation breadth, depth, and scope. If reach is insufficient, implementation will be ineffective – your schools and students will receive an inadequate "dose."

2. **Monitoring fidelity.** Fidelity has to do with implementation integrity or quality – the degree to which a practice is implemented in a way that is faithful to the guiding model. MTSS-B is only associated with reduced student problem behaviors when implemented with fidelity.[1]

3. **Monitoring what you get as a result (outcomes).** Outcomes are the results of your implementation reach and fidelity; they demonstrate program effectiveness. One outcome of high-quality MTSS-B implementation is fewer student problem behaviors (i.e., more prosocial behaviors), which also increases student instructional and learning time.

4. **Evaluating the relationship between implementation and outcomes.** Assessing implementation reach and fidelity helps make sense of outcomes. For instance, if project outcomes are poor – and reach is robust but fidelity is poor – we'd suspect the latter was a prime contributor to the disappointing results.

5. **Improving practice.** MTSS-B evaluation tools guide and structure implementation. MTSS-B evaluation results create feedback loops that facilitate ongoing quality improvement. Getting a realistic picture of what's going well and what's not, and how to fix it, requires corrective feedback that only systematic and unbiased data can provide.

6. **Convincing others to support your effort.** Evaluation data provide accountability to stakeholders, drive marketing, inform policymakers, and aid in sustainability efforts.

Calibrate your expectations

Take the time to understand the MTSS-B framework, your implementation context, and your vision, goals, priorities, assumptions, and key questions *before* selecting evaluation measures. Stakeholders are often overly optimistic about the timing, sequence, and scale of MTSS-B implementation and outcomes. Making these assumptions explicit can help shape more realistic expectations and measurement strategies.

Measure reach

Reach has to do with the who, what, where, and when of your implementation efforts.

Tier 1 reach

To monitor the reach of Tier 1 implementation – and thus the level of exposure to MTSS-B at the student population level – track when, where, by whom, and to which populations (e.g., whole school, grades, classrooms) your Tier 1 programs and supports (e.g., SEL curriculum, schoolwide behavior expectations) are delivered. This information can be tracked in a spreadsheet or data platform at the school level by your Tier 1 team lead(s).

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[1] *Simonsen, B., Eber, L., Black, A. C., Sugai, G., Lewandowski, H., Sims, B., & Myers, D. (2012). Illinois statewide positive behavioral interventions and supports: Evolution and impact on student outcomes across years. Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 14(1), 5-16.*

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Advanced Tier reach

To monitor the reach of Advanced Tier (2/3) services, track the number and percentage of your students that receive Advanced Tier screenings, referrals, and services. Screening data can include the number and type of screenings conducted, as well as individual student-level screening scores. Referral data can capture tier and type of services referred to, presenting concerns, and types of evidence/data supporting the referral. Service tracking can include ongoing recording of the number of Tier 2 and Tier 3 sessions delivered to each student to estimate "dose."

We recommend developing a shared data platform to track this information. The platform should be accessible by select school staff and behavioral health providers on a need-to-know basis. Use of Google Forms/Sheets within your school system for this purpose must be FERPA- and HIPPA-compliant; districts using Google's G Suite for Education can arrange for proper encryption of data by working with Google to establish an appropriate Business Associates Agreement (BAA).

Measure fidelity

We encourage you to assess fidelity to 1) the overarching MTSS-B framework and 2) the individual practices and interventions implemented across MTSS-B tiers.

Fidelity of the MTSS-B framework

Assess implementation fidelity of NH's MTSS-B overarching framework at all three tiers on an annual basis. MTSS-B fidelity can be self-assessed using the **NH MTSS-B Fidelity Inventory (NH MFI).** The NH-MFI consists of District, Schoolwide/Tier 1, Tier 2/3, and Behavioral Health modules, completed by the appropriate district and school teams. The NH-MFI should be completed once a year, during the district/school's typical planning time (e.g., just prior to the start of or after the close of the school year, etc.). An external or internal MTSS-B coach should facilitate administration.

Fidelity of school-level practices

It is also important to assess the fidelity of the individual practices and interventions implemented at the school level within the larger MTSS-B framework. Only when implemented with fidelity can evidence-based and promising practices approach the outcomes achieved in the research environments in which they are developed and tested.[2] For more specific guidance, see **Intervention Fidelity Guidance** in the MTSS-B Toolkit.

Most evidence-based and promising practices have established fidelity measures, although some are too cumbersome for routine use in typical school environments (e.g., technical tools involving direct observation by highly trained raters). In such cases, the MTSS-B Toolkit offers two options: 1) the **Intervention Fidelity Template**, which guides you through the process of creating an intervention-specific fidelity tool and 2) the **Intervention Quality Tool,** which provides a method for tracking implementation quality across your MTSS-B intervention portfolio, by using the presence of key implementation science indicators as a proxy for fidelity.

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[2] Fixsen, D.L., Naoom, S.F., Blase, K.A., & Wallace, F. (2007). Implementation: The missing link between research and practice. APSAC Advisor Excerpt, 19(1-2), 4-11.

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Measure outcomes

The MTSS-B outcome measures below are listing in descending "proximity" to MTSS-B implementation. Measures with greater proximity are more directly related to MTSS-B and thus more likely to serve as a meaningful "leading" outcome indicator. We highly recommend you measure office discipline referrals (ODRs). Feel free to supplement ODRs with one or two additional outcome measures that are particularly relevant to your district.

Office discipline referral (ODR) rates

ODRs are a leading indicator of student problem behaviors, related distress, and school climate – all of which are targeted by MTSS-B. Building-level ODR rates are a key schoolwide MTSS-B outcome measure. When used as school-level measure, they should be expressed as a rate, typically the number of ODRs per 100 students, adjusted for the number of school days within the period (month, school year) of interest. ODR rates can also be used to track the outcomes – or "response to intervention" – of individual students receiving Advanced Tier services.

You can also estimate the amount of instructional time gained or lost due to changes in ODR rates: 15 minutes of administrator time and 20 minutes of student instructional time lost, per ODR.[3] Instructional time gained tends to be especially influential among district administration and external stakeholders such as school boards. The **Time Gained/Lost Calculator** in the MTSS-B Toolkit calculates instructional and administrator time gained/lost from year to year using your ODR data, and helps you adjust your ODR rates to changing school enrollment over time.

We recommend adoption of the **School-Wide Information System (SWIS),** a confidential, web-based information system published by PBISApps[4] to track student behavior data including ODRs and suspensions. If SWIS adoption is prohibitive or infeasible, we offer a simplified **Office Discipline Referral Tracker** in the MTSS-B Toolkit.

Social-emotional competencies

Social emotional competencies – the foundational skills that students need to succeed academically and in life – are a proximal and meaningful MTSS-B outcome indicator at the schoolwide and individual student levels. At the schoolwide level, your social-emotional competency measure should align with your social-emotional learning (SEL) goals and curriculum. In general, we recommend measuring social emotional skills rather than awareness or attitudes. We encourage you to use CASEL's **Measuring SEL** tool (https://measuringsel.casel.org/) to guide you through the process of selecting the right SEL competency tool for you.

The measure you use to monitor schoolwide social-emotional competencies could also be used to monitor response to intervention for individual students receiving Advanced Tier supports. Another measurement option at the student level are teacher-rated Daily Progress Reports directly tied to schoolwide behavioral expectations (See **Sample Daily Progress Report**). A third option is repeated (weekly or monthly) administration of a universal screening tool such as the Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener (SAEBRS) for the purposes of individual student outcome measurement. See **Universal Screening Overview** and **Universal Screeners Review** in the MTSS-B toolkit for more information.

Academic engagement and success

Attendance and truancy, along with grades and standardized test scores, are academic-focused MTSS-B measures. While they can be used at the schoolwide or district level, they are most relevant as an MTSS-B outcome measure for students receiving Advanced Tier services and when academic outcome indicators have historically been problematic.

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[3] *Barrett, S. & Scott, T. (2006). Evaluating time saved as an index of cost effectiveness in PBIS schools. Retrieved from https://www.pbis.org/common/cms/files/Newsletter/Volume3%20Issue4.pdf*

[4] *https://www.pbisapps.org*

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School climate

A school climate survey provides a bird's-eye view of culture shifts at the school level. The **School Climate Survey Suite** is available for free through PBIS Assessment (https://www.pbisapps.org/Applications/Pages/PBIS-Assessment.aspx) and can be administered anonymously via online survey links. The School Climate Survey Suite consists of family, school personnel, and both elementary and middle/high school student versions. NH's MTSS-B evaluation team has enhanced the School Climate Survey Suite to include items that measure aspects of school climate specific to trauma-responsive school practices and home-school partnerships (family engagement). These additional items are available in the **Measuring School Climate** guidance in the MTSS-B Toolkit.

The table below summarizes these suggested MTSS-B outcome measures.

Domain	Measure	Tools/guidance	Measurement level(s)	
			School	**Student**
Student problem behaviors	Office discipline referral rates	**School-Wide Information System (SWIS)** (pbisapps.org) **Office Discipline Referral Tracker** in the MTSS-B Toolkit **Time Gained/Lost Calculator** in the MTSS-B Toolkit	Y	Y
Social-emotional competence	Depends on universal SEL goals and curriculum	**Measuring SEL** (https://measuringsel.casel.org)	Y	Y
Academic engagement & success	Attendance rates, absenteeism, truancy, standardized test scores, grades	**Universal Screening Overview** in the MTSS-B Toolkit	Y	N
School climate	School climate survey	**School Climate Survey Suite on PBIS Assessment** (https://www.pbisapps.org/Applications/Pages/PBIS-Assessment.aspx) **Measuring School Climate** in the MTSS-B Toolkit	N	Y