# Nebraska's Multi-tiered System of Support (NeMTSS)

Coherence At Every Level

**Nebraska Department of Education | University of Nebraska - Lincoln**

*Updated 2023*

# INTENDED AUDIENCE

The NeMTSS Framework is intended for educational leaders, including but not limited to administrators, teachers, support staff, and families to build a common understanding of a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS), which can lead to a shared leadership approach of implementation that guides continuous improvement.

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# NEBRASKA'S MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

# INTRODUCTION

Nebraska's Multi-Tiered System of Support (NeMTSS) is a framework designed through the lens of continuous improvement to guide school districts, schools, and all educators to ensure each and every student has access to learning experiences that enhance their educational outcomes. Continuous improvement is not the job of one or two people, working in isolation, but rather unfolds progressively and implementation is driven by district, school, and student-level teams that are dependent upon a common purpose and collaboration. NeMTSS implementation relies upon action planning that connects district and school initiatives with outcomes not only for students identified for special education services, but for each student attending.

**This introduction includes:**
1. The Goals of NeMTSS
2. The History and Evolution of NeMTSS
3. The Scope of NeMTSS
4. How NeMTSS Aligns with Other State Processes
5. The NeMTSS Framework 2023 Version
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**Specific Goals of NeMTSS**

Nebraska Multi-tiered System of Support (NeMTSS) is a continuous improvement framework that focuses efforts and support for the Whole Child approach to address the needs of students, including academic, social, emotional, behavioral, physical, and environmental.

NeMTSS is purposely coherent with AQuESTT, Nebraska's Accountability for Quality Education System Today and Tomorrow. This coherence aims to improve educational efforts that support improved outcomes for both students and adults.

Implementation of NeMTSS connects to AQuESTT Domains and Tenets in which accountability to students and staff relies on the organizational and professional commitment that is centered around Educator Effectiveness, Student Achievement and Growth, and Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Success. NeMTSS provides a framework for the ongoing process of learning, self-reflection, adaptation, and growth through action planning.

## The History of NeMTSS

NeMTSS grew out of a combination of federal policy and state-driven efforts to improve the achievement of students with attention to students with disabilities.

**2004** — Response to Intervention (RTI) was first mentioned in IDEA. The concept of using a RTI/Multi-Tiered System of Support approach originated as an alternative to the "discrepancy formula" for identifying students with specific learning disabilities.

**2014** — The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) moved to a new accountability framework for special education known as results driven accountability (RDA.)

**2015** — The NDE, Office of Special Education, with stakeholder input, identified MTSS/RtI as a sound, logical, coherent strategy that is aligned with the continuous improvement efforts of the state.

Each State was required to develop a SSIP and use data to identify gaps in student performance, analyze state systems, and then implement targeted, evidence-based reforms to address the gaps.

ESSA replaced NCLB, which allows states to focus on support for schools to help them better serve their students. For schools in Nebraska, AQuESTT was developed to provide educational equity for their students.

**2016** — Nebraska created a new MTSS framework that integrated PBiS and the RtI model into the NeMTSS framework.

**2019** — The Office of SPED established the focus of the SSIP to: Increase the use of EBPs; Develop and implement a comprehensive MTSS framework; Align resources and programs within the state.

**2021** — We began creating the NeMTSS Framework 2023 Version with a focus on coherence and clarity.

### To summarize the key takeaways from this history/graphic:

- Though NeMTSS has roots in special education processes, concerted efforts in the NeMTSS Framework 2023 Version aim to involve all educators in supporting all students. **NeMTSS is about far more than just special education.** NeMTSS will not lead to improved outcomes for any group of students, including students with disabilities and high abilities, unless every educator sees themselves as integral to the system and accountable for its success.
- Beyond IDEA requirements, **ESSA** speaks to the need for a multi-tiered system of support for literacy services. Implementing NeMTSS is critical to serving each student.
- NeMTSS is a critically important and *required* part of the work we need to do to advance outcomes for students with disabilities in Nebraska. The overwhelming majority of students with disabilities who are served under IDEA do not have cognitive impairments that inhibit their ability to learn grade-level content. When students with disabilities are held to high expectations, have access to the Tier 1 Core supports and high-quality materials alongside their same-age peers, and receive high-quality instruction and support they can achieve academic standards.
- NeMTSS in whole is a part of how we can serve the mission (or need) outlined in AQuESTT of supporting students with disabilities to improve results for all students.
- As a framework designed through the lens of continuous improvement, shared leadership will **continue to drive improvement of the NeMTSS framework itself** supported by data and feedback.
- Special education funding is directed to public schools (therefore we use the term "school district" not "school system" throughout this document). Non-public schools are welcome to attend professional learning, but NDE does not provide direct implementation support to non-public schools.

## The Scope of NeMTSS

NeMTSS recognizes there is no predetermined start or end point in continuous improvement. The framework allows a school district to select a challenge or area of focus, possibly from AQuESTT classifications and designations, to then develop goals and corresponding actions to achieve those goals.

It is the expectation that engaging in the process of implementing a NeMTSS Framework for continuous improvement will help school districts support the needs of the whole child. Committing to the whole child is to intentionally address the academic, social, emotional, behavioral, physical, and environmental needs of students throughout the curriculum, materials, instruction, assessment, staff development, school culture, school climate, and family and community partnerships. Engaging in this work varies due to the unique histories, interests, and needs of the community, district, staff, and students.

The examples included in this framework are intended to illustrate how NeMTSS can support needs across a range of dimensions of student support.

This framework can be used to guide support and data-based decision-making for all content areas and all ability levels. The examples in this guidance document will illustrate academic support for mathematics and literacy.

The NeMTSS framework can be used to support early learning needs as long as it does not delay special education evaluation.

## How NeMTSS Aligns with Rule and Other State Processes

NeMTSS assists teams in a way that supports student success. The NeMTSS Framework 2023 Version is intended specifically to help strengthen the clarity and connection to academics, whole child supports, and accreditation and continuous improvement. In doing so, there is a strategic focus on the well-being of each student to promote a safe, engaged, supported, and challenged learning environment. The NeMTSS Framework is designed with reducing the amount of required documentation for various federal and state funding sources in mind. Specifically, NeMTSS strives to strengthen the clarity and connection to inputs and outputs relative to data points, such as school processes, demographics, perceptions, and student learning. This is accomplished through shared leadership, with a specific focus on teaming and integrating initiatives and plans to promote coherence and consistency.

AQuESTT outlines a vision for a quality education system and identifies several tenets that support districts and schools to achieve that vision. NeMTSS provides a process for how teams drive improvement to the AQuESTT tenets.

Similarly, while the Nebraska Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) gives teams a baseline of where their district shows strengths or where they need to grow, NeMTSS action planning is how teams address those areas.

The NeMTSS framework outlines specific skills and actions to organize, support, deliver and drive **continuous improvement**. The NeMTSS framework meets required continuous improvement regulations set forth in Section 009 of Nebraska's Administrative Code, Rule 10, Accreditation of Schools, and regulation 005.03 requiring accredited schools to have a student assistance process. NeMTSS is oriented to help school districts meet local goals for student learning as outlined by state standards and assessments. NeMTSS provides districts, schools, and educators with a structured approach to reaching goals they are already accountable for achieving. The alignment to accreditation and coherence can be seen in:

- A common plan ([the continuous improvement plan](#) (CIP) is used to support both processes)
- Use of the same problem-solving model
- Shared language anchored by the shared glossary
- Orientation of accreditation teams to the particulars of this framework.

NeMTSS provides increased clarity and stronger connections with other school support structures from the Nebraska Department of Education, including the [Nebraska Instructional Materials Collaborative](#). The Nebraska Instructional Materials Collaborative is a tool that informs and supports the decisions made locally related to [curriculum](#) and [instructional materials](#). The connections can be seen in:

- *Cross-references to the value of [high-quality instructional materials](#) in the [layered continuum of support](#)*
- *Examples of how teams can consider [Tier 2 Targeted supports](#) in alignment with their Tier 1 Core materials*
- *Coherence with the AQuESTT Tenet, "Educational Opportunities and Access", each student has access to effective, comprehensive, and continuous learning opportunities that prepare them for ongoing school success, postsecondary education, and career goals.*

NeMTSS is aligned to the [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model](#) (WSCC)and the ASCD Whole Child approach. This can be seen in:

- *Common goals for the aim of NeMTSS*
- *Explicit acknowledgment that the NeMTSS framework applies to non-academic as well as academic support needs and that the problem-solving framework can apply to non-academic needs*
- *Examples aligned to the WSCC model throughout.*

NeMTSS supports the [Nebraska Reading Improvement Act](#). This can be seen in:

- *Use of data to identify students in need of Tier 2 Targeted interventions and to determine support plans*
- *Use of evidence-based support that consists of targeted, supplemental instruction or intervention implemented with [fidelity](#)*
- *[Progress monitoring](#) used to assess students' rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction or intervention*
- *Coherence with the AQuESTT Tenet, "Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Success", schools and districts implement best practices in student, family, and community engagement to enhance experiences and opportunities that are culturally inclusive and relevant for each student. Student success and engagement rely on positive partnerships and relationships to fundamentally improve the outcomes for each student, school, district, and community.*

NeMTSS is central to the support and guidance from the **Office of Special Education**. This can be seen in:

- *Foundational connections between all guidance in the NeMTSS framework and the [State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)](#)—the SSIP is Nebraska's plan to meet the Results Driven Accountability (RDA) requirements of the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)*
- *Integration of [Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP)](#) planning information with the [Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)](#)—data collected in the TIP is reported in the SSIP*
- *Specific call-outs about the connection to eligibility for special education services throughout the framework*
- *Supports and systemic integration of [High Ability Learner (HAL)](#) programming and identification within NeMTSS*
- *Coherence with the AQuESTT Tenet, "Transitions", quality educational opportunities focus on effective supports and high quality collaborations for each student transitioning within, into, and between grade levels.*

**The NeMTSS Framework 2023 Version**

The NeMTSS Framework 2023 Version strengthens the purpose and content of NeMTSS; this includes essential elements of the system and how they work together. Additionally, specific attention was given to creating a shared glossary of terms that provides coherence across The Nebraska Department of Education offices and school users. Shared glossary terms are hyperlinked throughout the document.

| This framework is intended to: | This framework is NOT intended to: |
| --- | --- |
| • Anchor the principles and key approaches that are core to an effective NeMTSS system<br>• Serve as the touchstone document for all staff supporting schools and districts with NeMTSS | • Outline all of the essential implementation guidance<br>• Replace engagement in professional learning and ongoing technical assistance dialogue to support implementation |

**The Essential Elements of NeMTSS and How They Work Together**

There are four essential elements core to NeMTSS. They are:
- Infrastructure and Shared Leadership
- Layered Continuum of Supports
- Data-Based Decision-Making
- Communication and Collaboration

Sound **Infrastructure and Shared Leadership** are the foundation and driver of the systematic processes of organizing support and driving continuous improvement. The **Layered Continuum of Support** is the center of evidence-based support offerings designed to ensure that all students have access to effective instruction and that all students have the support they need to achieve success. **Data-Based Decision-Making** includes the design of a [balanced assessment system](#) to provide data to inform reflection and decision-making. **Communication and Collaboration** require dedicated focus and must be explicitly infused throughout every essential element in order to support the effectiveness of NeMTSS. Each of these essential elements is related to the processes needed to meet the Nebraska Department of Education's Continuous Improvement accreditation criteria in Rule 10.

The order of the essential elements is intentional. The framework begins with an exploration of shared leadership because supporting effective teams builds the infrastructure for implementation and is the foundation on which all other work depends. Shared leadership involves developing a mission and vision for the school system, as reflected in Rule 10. It progresses to the layered continuum of support to help illustrate the processes needed to support all learners. The framework then flows to data-based decision-making, the heart of NeMTSS, to guide teams on how to use data to influence decisions for individual students and groups of students and to drive continuous improvement. This is yet another critical component in meeting Rule 10 expectations of data analysis and the selection of at least one goal related to academic achievement. The final element, communication and collaboration, is addressed after the others to provide an explanation of how these processes live in every element.

## What is Infrastructure and Shared Leadership in NeMTSS and Why is it Important?

Sound infrastructure and effective shared leadership are the foundation from which all the other essential elements build. Without a strong infrastructure and effective shared leadership, it is not possible to design a strong, layered continuum of support, engage in sound data-based decision-making, or support communication and collaboration.

When leadership ensures proper infrastructure and support, teams are equipped with the tools, resources, knowledge, and organizational structures needed to sustainably support NeMTSS implementation. As stated in the Leadership Domain of AQuESTT, strong leaders establish a vision for achieving educational equity—offering students meaningful access to the educational resources they need at the right moment, at the right level, and with the right intensity to not only reach high expectations for learning, but also to discover and explore their passions and make meaningful connections within the context of their postsecondary interests, careers, and civic lives. Strong leadership helps stakeholders understand the relationship between accreditation, accountability, and continuous improvement, which ultimately leads to improved student outcomes. Through shared leadership, there needs to be a possession of the knowledge, skills, and mindsets to systemize equity.

Laying the foundation of strong infrastructure and shared leadership in NeMTSS requires attention to five components:

1. Core Beliefs and Norms
2. Team Structures and Routines
3. Clarity of Roles and Data-Based Decision-Making Process
4. Professional Learning
5. System Alignment

## 1. Core Beliefs and Norms

NeMTSS is built on the core belief that every student is capable of learning and deserves opportunities and access to challenging and supported learning experiences. NeMTSS is also built on the premise that student needs are interdependent. Supporting the whole child needs of students are all necessary to enable student success and opportunity.

Fundamental to the design of NeMTSS is the belief that the well-being of the whole child requires attention to students' academic, social, emotional, behavioral, physical, and environmental needs. These needs are intertwined and codependent. Effective instruction and support attends to the multiple dimensions of students' needs and an effective implementation of NeMTSS involves an integrated, whole-child approach in every essential element.

To support the effective implementation of NeMTSS, teams benefit from explicitly clarifying the core beliefs on which the district's NeMTSS is built, setting norms for interaction, and instituting structures to continuously reflect on the extent to which they are operating with those norms and core beliefs.

Normalizing conversations that call teams back to those norms in moments of challenge and regrounding decisions in the core beliefs set the tone and example for continuous improvement. As part of this work, teams need to specifically look for and take action to build patterns that support the performance of historically marginalized students.

## 2. Team Structures and Routines

The strength of NeMTSS comes from effectively engaging a variety of voices and perspectives to identify and support student needs. To do that, teams need to establish and protect time to meet throughout the school year. Engaging in self-assessments can pinpoint areas of growth and capitalize on areas of strength within current meeting structures.

NeMTSS can be designed and managed through four basic teams:
1. District team
2. School teams
3. Collaborative teams
4. Student support teams

| Student Support Teams | Collaborative Teams | Building Leadership Teams | District Leadership Team |
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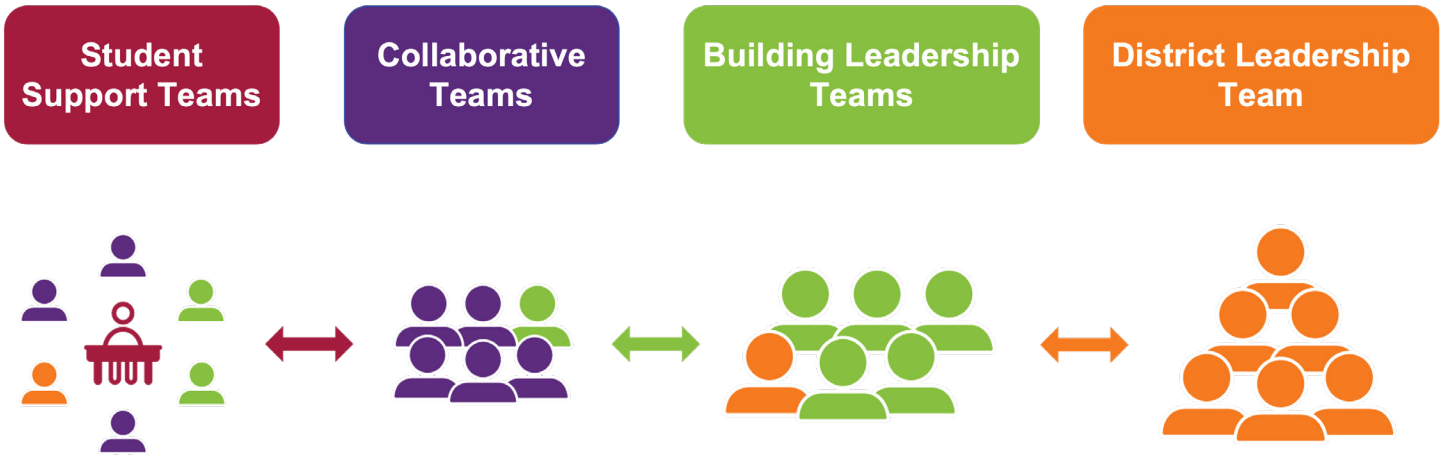


**Important note:** The composition of each team should fit the needs of the community and district to ensure data-based decision-making respects the unique local culture, resources, and circumstances. In particular, districts of different sizes may find that they need more or fewer teams than outlined in this section, and districts can vary their approach as long as they support all the key functions. Even if they keep the same number of teams, districts may choose to refer to their teams by different names.

The purpose, membership, functions, data, and possible routines for each team are outlined in Appendix A.

### *Schedule*

Teams need structured, dedicated, and protected time to meet. This should be scheduled in advance as part of the school calendar.

While teams will develop their own cadence, and while more frequent meetings may be needed when building the system, teams typically need to meet on a regular basis to support data-based decision-making as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Annually | • District and school team— set goals and plans for the year |
| Quarterly | • District team— system monitoring and improvement |
| Monthly | • School team— school monitoring and improvement |
| Weekly/Biweekly | • Collaborative teams— determine student movement within the tiers of intervention<br>• Student support teams— provide recommendations and collect students' response based on student needs |

### 3. Clarity of Roles and Decision-Making

Infrastructure and shared leadership are best established with upfront clarity about roles and responsibilities and clarity about [data-based decision-making processes](#) as well as the articulation of norms for operating that the teams can use to anchor shared work.

Clarity about **roles and responsibilities** involves establishing upfront the expectations for work and participation in teams as well as clarity about accountability for action. The question that guides this articulation tends to be "who is responsible for what work?"

Similarly important, teams benefit from establishing upfront clarity about the **decision-making process**. There are a number of different approaches that teams can take for decision-making (e.g., consensus, majority rules, informed recommendation, hierarchical). There are also a number of different approaches for deciding which teams make specific decisions (e.g., a district-wide plan which all schools use in common, district-wide parameters with school variation, school-driven plans). There are no NeMTSS requirements for the way decisions are driven within a local district or school. There is a strong recommendation that school districts clarify the data-based decision-making approaches upfront and reflect on how those processes are working over time to allow all stakeholders to engage in decision-making with a clear understanding of how decisions will be made.

### 4. Professional Learning

Successful continuous improvement involves a professional learning plan that includes adult learning activities to meet identified goals. Implementation of NeMTSS includes two types of professional learning as part of the PL plan:

A. Professional learning about NeMTSS
B. Professional learning to support the implementation of the NeMTSS system

**Note:** We use the term professional learning in this framework to reflect the ongoing learning that all staff will engage in across their career and to honor the many ways that learning can happen.

#### *Professional Learning About NeMTSS*

A strong NeMTSS system involves all educators, therefore, all educators need some foundational understanding of NeMTSS. While the depth and specificity of capacity building will vary with involvement and responsibility, all involved need to have a basic understanding of the major aspects of the system outlined in this framework, inclusive of:

- The "why," "how," and "what" of the NeMTSS Framework
- Core beliefs and norms guiding the district
- Layered continuum of support and centrality of effective Tier 1 Core supports
- Elements of the balanced assessment system
- Effective scheduling practices
- Data-based decision-making process
- Continuous improvement cycle

Utilizing a regional model alongside ESUs, district or school teams can attend NeMTSS Framework Workshops to support professional learning.

*Professional Learning to Support the Implementation of the NeMTSS System*

To promote effective implementation, ensure that processes are in place so that teachers and school leaders can develop and implement initial and ongoing professional learning to support their key responsibilities. This professional learning will vary based on the district plan but, at minimum, should include upfront and ongoing support to:

- Engage teams in data-based decision-making
- Understand evidence-based practices for their content areas and discipline of focus
- Implement the districts' Tier 1 Core supports consisting of whole child supports
- Administer and interpret results of universal screening
- Implement effective, evidence-based Tier 2 Targeted support programs
- Design effective, evidence-based Tier 3 Intensified supports for academic and whole child support needs

The AQuESTT tenet "Educator Effectiveness" along with self-assessment indicators further strengthens continuous improvement and works to ensure that required practices are met. The tenet states, "Each student is engaged by effective educators throughout their learning experiences, such that schools and districts develop effective teachers and school leaders who establish a culture of success." It is the responsibility of every district to ensure educators and school leaders are supported in the implementation of NeMTSS and are provided development opportunities that build their experiences to lead to that culture of success.

## 5. System Alignment

Nebraska schools are accountable to state and federal requirements to promote a positive culture and climate that enhances student outcomes. These accountability measures take into account student achievement outcomes, graduation rates, and daily attendance percentages to consider various aspects and needs of the whole child through data-based decision-making. The NeMTSS Framework is specifically designed to integrate processes and procedures in order to reduce redundancy. Because of this design choice, when engaging in continuous improvement through a NeMTSS Framework it is most effective when it is fully reflective of and reflected in reporting requirements, AQuESTT designation and classification needs, goals, district policies, resources, and personnel responsibilities.

Similar to state-level coherence building, NeMTSS is best implemented when it is not viewed as a separate entity, but rather as an approach that synthesizes how all student and staff supports at the district level are interrelated and dependent on each other for continuous growth.

The NeMTSS process can and should be reflected in:
- Educator goal-setting processes
- System-wide data processes
- Strategic planning
- Professional learning planning
- Other plans (e.g., Title I, TIP, CSI, HAL)

### What is A Layered Continuum of Support And Why Is It Important?

Trend data in Nebraska demonstrates a disparity in the performance of students that are not identified as needing Special Education services and those that are. Within a NeMTSS Framework, it is the belief that each student in Nebraska is capable of success when given the right support. NeMTSS provides a purposeful approach to offer layers of support with increasing intensity to meet students' whole child social, emotional, behavioral, physical, environmental, and academic needs.

Within a layered continuum, tiered supports are provided to meet the unique needs of each student. The supports are dependent on data, specifying which supports each student should have access to when certain criteria are met. There is a fluidity among the tiers, allowing flexibility in the supports that each student receives with the acknowledgment that these supports are not permanent, but rather a response to learning experiences and progress. Adults are responsible for monitoring student progress and matching the support to each student's specific needs.

The layered continuum is organized around three tiers. This tiered support is designed to meet the needs of the whole child to allow for student growth.

The tiers include:
- Tier 1 Core supports for all students
- Tier 2 Targeted supports for some students
- Tier 3 Intensified supports for a few students

We organize the supports that adults provide into tiers with increasing intensity based on students' needs.

Because our tiered approach is the framework for how we, as adults, provide support for students, we should not refer to a student as a Tier 2 student or Tier 3 student, but instead, as a student who is receiving Tier 3 Intensified supports in a specific area.
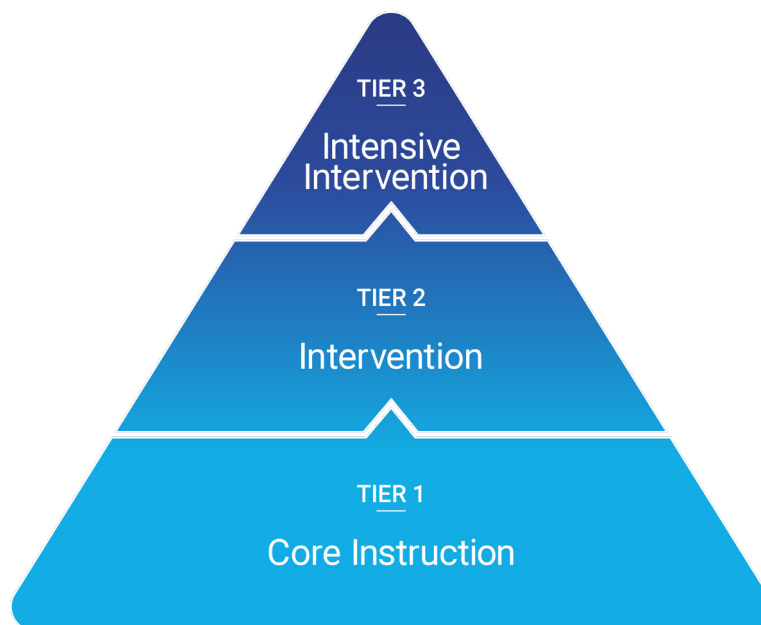
Education is human and interactive work. Effective social, emotional, behavioral, and academic instruction and support will always involve the interaction of teachers, students, and content. In addition, it requires complex judgment to enhance learning. There will never be a script that guarantees outcomes. However, there are approaches to social, emotional, behavioral, and academic instruction that have repeatedly resulted in positive student outcomes.

An effective layered continuum of support will leverage [evidence-based practices](#) at each tier.

Evidence-based practice can be read as a verb (i.e., to practice in a way that attends to evidence). In this framework, however, evidence-based practices will be referred to as a noun: practices that are supported by evidence to support the social, emotional, behavioral, physical, environmental, and academic well-being of students.

Put simply, they are practices that are supported by high-quality evidence. In this context, a "practice" refers to the application of a method or idea. "Evidence-based" refers to multiple demonstrations of effectiveness from high-quality research designs as applied to specific groups of students. Evidence-based practices need to be clear enough to be obviously measurable.

Practices are not programs (effective programs will make use of evidence-based practices). Practices are supported by the locally determined curriculum and by high-quality instructional materials and assessments—which should also reflect the evidence base.

For example, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness in reading has been repeatedly shown to improve reading outcomes across a wide range of student groups. High-quality instructional materials for early reading are designed around the importance of explicit instruction in phonemic awareness; however, the practice of the enacted instruction reflecting explicit instruction in phonemic awareness is the goal. Greeting the student at the door is a practice that has been repeatedly shown to improve student sense of belonging, behavior, and engagement in learning activities. Providing student access to physical, mental, and oral health care has repeatedly been found to improve attendance, behavior, and academic achievement. These would be examples of evidence-based practices.

A practice is the application of a method. Practices may be supported by strategies to allow for individualization for a student or groups of students. For example, greeting students at the door is an evidence-based practice. Greeting students with a high-five, a verbal greeting, or a handshake would be strategies educators could use to greet students—adapting the strategy based on personal preferences or what will work for each student. (To be clear, practices and strategies are different. **Practices** are the umbrella with **strategies** as methods of implementing that practice.)

**Note:** Companion documents will be included in implementation support materials to lift up evidence-based practices and tools that can be used to monitor progress of implementation of those evidence-based practices for an overall category and for topics such as, ELA, math, HAL and SEBL with consideration of evidence-based practices the district/school team can use to support educators.

## Tier 1 Core: Supports for All Students

A NeMTSS Framework focuses on adults to create a positive, inclusive, and safe climate that fosters engaging social, emotional, behavioral, and academic teaching and learning. For adults to provide whole child support, Tier 1 Core practices need to enhance family engagement, staff wellness, and community involvement. This allows students to feel that they are part of a culturally responsive and supportive environment, which enhances a school climate conducive to student well-being. This will build on their experiences and bring their voices and identities to the classroom, which informs Tier 1 Core practices. This type of climate has been linked to positive student development and well-being, learning, academic achievement, effective risk prevention and health promotion, high graduation rates, low dropout rates, and teacher retention. To support learning and wellness, every student needs to be engaged in effective and affirming grade-level social, emotional, behavioral, and academic curriculum, materials, and instruction every day.

Effective instruction attends to whole child supports including social, emotional, behavioral, physical, environmental, and academic needs, as well as the creation of a positive climate and a safe environment, which is enhanced by the use of perceptual data generated by stakeholders, including students, staff, and caregivers.

Teams need to focus on improved Tier 1 Core supports before moving to targeted and intensified intervention strategies. Effective Tier 1 Core supports will be designed with Universal Design for Learning and differentiated instruction in mind and will require attention to scaffolds to support student success in the grade-level instruction as set forth by the content area standards and English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards. Additionally, differentiated instruction in Tier 1 Core includes extension and enrichment of grade-level content for HAL students.

To provide effective Tier 1 Core support, educators must have access to and be supported in implementing an effective locally determined curriculum utilizing high-quality, standards-aligned instructional materials and a system that prioritizes the support and development of educators. NeMTSS relies upon the implementation of evidence-based and high-quality instructional materials that meet the expectations of Nebraska's Content Area Standards. All students, including students with disabilities, high ability learners and English learners, should have access to high-quality instructional materials and instruction. For deep learning to occur, educators need to simultaneously develop students' cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral skills, which can serve as the building blocks for academic learning.

District and school teams are responsible for engaging in data-based decision-making to monitor and adjust Tier 1 Core supports to ensure positive student outcomes.

As a rule of thumb, if fewer than 75–80% of all students are achieving success from Tier 1 Core supports alone, then Tier 1 Core needs attention. (These are approximate percentages.)

Historically, there have been groups of students excluded from educational opportunities, separated from their peers to receive instruction in a different setting, or integrated to receive instruction in the same room but with a different approach. **Inclusion—receiving accommodated, differentiated, and/or scaffolded instruction allowing equitable access to grade-level standards with the same level of expectation—is the model of Tier 1 Core support that is strongly recommended for all students.**
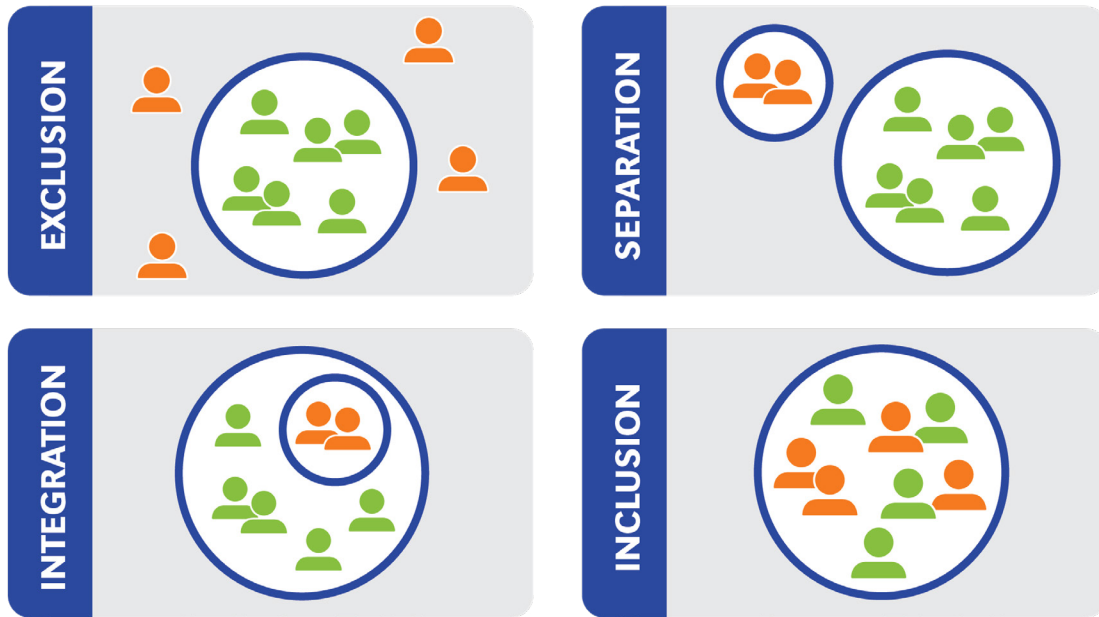


## Tier 2 Targeted: Supports for Some Students

Tier 2 Targeted supports are those that some students receive when Tier 1 Core supports alone are not meeting their social, emotional, behavioral, physical, environmental, or academic needs. Tier 2 Targeted supports are provided **in addition to** Tier 1 Core supports and are usually needed for approximately 10–25% of students. Students should not be excluded from Tier 1 Core supports to receive Tier 2 Targeted supports. However, high ability learners should be excused from mastered content as they engage with Tier 2 Targeted supports for acceleration.

Tier 2 Targeted supports are more intensive than Tier 1 Core supports and can be provided in a variety of settings (e.g., small group, general education, separate setting) by a variety of educators (e.g., general education, specialists). This level of evidence-based support consists of targeted, supplemental instruction or intervention implemented with fidelity. Where Tier 2 Targeted supports that are aligned with the Tier 1 Core supports are available, using those is preferable in order to support coherence and reduce switching costs for the students between social, emotional, behavioral, and academic instructional methods. It is important to clarify that using a core program to meet the social, emotional, behavioral, physical, environmental, and/or academic needs of students in a targeted way with greater intensity and focus can be a useful and effective approach for Tier 2 Targeted support. For example, if a Tier 1 Core program also offers a Tier 2 Targeted intervention, the benefits for students of working with an instructional program that is aligned to their Tier 1 Core program should be considered in the decision-making before layering on additional programs.

School, collaborative, and student support teams utilize a data-based decision-making process to monitor and adjust social, emotional, behavioral, and academic targeted tiered support. Before a student receives Tier 2 Targeted support, the school and collaborative teams should

review for the fidelity of the Tier 1 Core supports. Likewise, before Tier 3 Intensified supports are designed, fidelity of intervention implementation should be assessed and corrected if necessary.

As a general rule, if fewer than 90% of students are achieving success from Tier 1 Core and Tier 2 Targeted supports, the strength of support in those tiers needs attention. (These are approximate percentages.)

## Tier 3 Intensified: Supports for Few Students

Tier 3 Intensified supports are for a small percentage of students who still may demonstrate unfinished learning with Tier 1 Core and Tier 2 Targeted supports or exceptional learning requiring additional acceleration. These students may need more intensive support. Tier 3 Intensified supports are layered onto existing Tier 1 Core and Tier 2 Targeted supports and may be appropriate for 1–10% of students. (These are approximate percentages.) Tier 3 intensified supports differ from special education.

Students may receive additional intensified evidence-based individualized instruction in the specific area of need determined through the data-based decision-making process. Realizing that there have been multiple impacts on student achievement, such as the COVID Pandemic, NeMTSS recognizes that student learning has been disrupted and there needs to be systematized efforts to maximize adult efforts, leading to increased practices that support the whole child.

Intensified supports are based upon individual student needs and aligned with Tier 1 Core instructional materials, instruction, and supplemental supports that are implemented with fidelity. Tier 3 Intensified supports should address skill gaps or promote acceleration and enable successful mastery while ensuring the prevention of new content area gaps and supporting student engagement. This is **not** to delay referral if a student is suspected of having a disability.

## Additional Layered Continuum of Support Considerations

### *The Process of Progress Monitoring*

An intervention is only effective when it leads to advancement for students on the need that the intervention is designed to address.

Progress monitoring refers to watching to see if a student responds to the provided support. The core question driving progress monitoring is **"Is the intervention working at improving the key need?"**

At the student level, progress monitoring is used to assess students' rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction or intervention. In addition, progress monitoring is used across all levels of the system to provide feedback for improvement for educators. **Progress monitoring occurs across all three tiers of support and typically occurs more frequently to monitor the effectiveness of Tier 2 Targeted and Tier 3 Intensified supports.**

Progress monitoring is the responsibility of teams and of any educator that applies the intervention. Student support teams utilize a data-based decision-making process (as further described in Data-Based Decision-Making) to specify area(s) of need, as well as select, monitor and adjust appropriate Tier 2 Targeted and Tier 3 Intensified support.

Students' needs should drive schedule design. Effective schedules will ensure:
- Every student has access to Tier 1 Core supports in the least restrictive environment that allows each student to access the curriculum.
- There is protected time for collaborative teams and student support teams to engage in data-based decision-making.
- There is scheduled and protected time for district and school teams to drive continuous improvement.

## *Fidelity*

Before a collaborative or student support team determines that additional support is needed for a student, the team needs to be sure that the instruction the student received was delivered in a way that matches the approach that originally demonstrated effectiveness.

Even in an affirming and asset-based culture, the decision to provide students with additional tiers of support is not a neutral decision. Students can internalize signals about what the need for additional support means about their own capacity to learn which can have lasting effects on how they approach learning and see themselves.

Before making a decision around providing additional support, every team needs to ensure that the decision is a reflection of a student's need for additional support as opposed to a need for effective Tier 1 Core support.

To distinguish these needs, the team must have confidence that the delivered instruction matches the instructional approach that originally generated demonstrations of effectiveness. This spirit means that evidence-based practices in a given tier need to be implemented with **fidelity** before additional and targeted interventions are added. In terms of continuous improvement, this could also mean that a goal might focus on the fidelity of an identified target change.

"Fidelity" is the degree to which a program, curriculum, intervention, or strategy is implemented as designed through research. This includes basic checks on features and dosage (i.e., the amount of time provided—10 minutes, three times per week) and the quality of the delivery (e.g., each step of a protocol was followed).

Strict monitoring of fidelity—particularly when it results in monitoring compliance to a script—often leads teachers to feel disempowered from giving students the support they know they need and mistrusted in their instructional judgment.

This can be addressed in two ways:

1. Monitoring the fidelity of the practice, not the execution of details of a program can anchor fidelity monitoring to the most important work (i.e. we want to see systematic foundational skills instruction that follows our agreed-upon sequence of learning, but we will not be looking at what page of the curriculum teachers are on in a given day).
2. Teams deciding up front, together in partnership with those delivering the work, exactly what fidelity to the evidence-based practice requires. Monitoring fidelity to these core elements will then be a reflection of the agreement the team has made up together.

To set up all school staff to understand what is meant by evidence-based practice and to be ready to support it, teams need to consider and plan professional learning experiences for:

• Teachers to understand what evidence-based practices look like in action
• Teachers to support planning and delivering instruction in line with those practices
• Administrators to understand what they are looking for in observations
• Administrators to be ready to support teacher planning and implementation
• Teams to understand the expectations and processes for fidelity checks

## What Is Data-Based Decision-Making and Why Is It Important?

Meeting the needs of every student requires a constant process of understanding students' learning journey, the root causes of challenges, and how to provide appropriate support that addresses those root causes. Data-based decision-making involves communication and collaboration from the community and caregivers, as well as the district, school, collaborative, and student support teams using a variety of data points to identify student needs and support planning. The use of a self or needs assessment (e.g., NeMTSS Self-Assessment or the Comprehensive Needs Assessment, CNA 2.0) can increase the district and school team's confidence in selecting target actions that depend on data-based decision-making.

Supporting effective data-based decision-making in NeMTSS requires attention to three components:

1. Balanced assessment system to generate the **data**
2. Data-based decision-making to reinforce **student support**
3. Data-based decision-making to support **continuous improvement of the system**

## Balanced Assessment System

Balanced assessment is defined in the CNA 2.0 as "a comprehensive approach to forming a complete and accurate picture of student learning".

The district team is responsible for designing a balanced assessment system to support instructional decision-making and meet requirements for state and federal compliance.

A balanced assessment system seeks to ensure valid and relevant data for decision-making. Teams are encouraged to limit the time students spend on testing, with awareness of the cognitive load and emotional stress that frequent testing puts on students and the opportunity cost for instructional time and movement for students and staff. The goal should be to collect the least amount of student data necessary to support effective decisions that support student success.

A balanced assessment system supports several categories of student and adult data to inform data-based decision-making:

1. Student learning and well-being data
2. Demographic data
3. Perceptual data (student and adult)
4. Process data—fidelity, needs assessment, and gap analysis

Specific data sources for each category are defined in Appendix B.

## Data-based Decision-Making

Teams engage in a problem-solving model to drive continuous improvement and make data-based decisions about student support.

Students are not the subject of problem-solving—the supports that are provided or not provided to students are the focus of problem-solving.

Teams use the information generated from the balanced assessment system to support data-based decisions through the problem-solving process.

While teams may vary their language and approach, this framework guides teams around a five-step process:

1. **Identify:** What is occurring?
2. **Analyze:** Why is it occurring?
3. **Plan:** What can be done to solve it?
4. **Implement:** Who, what, when, where, how?
5. **Reflect:** What did and did not work?
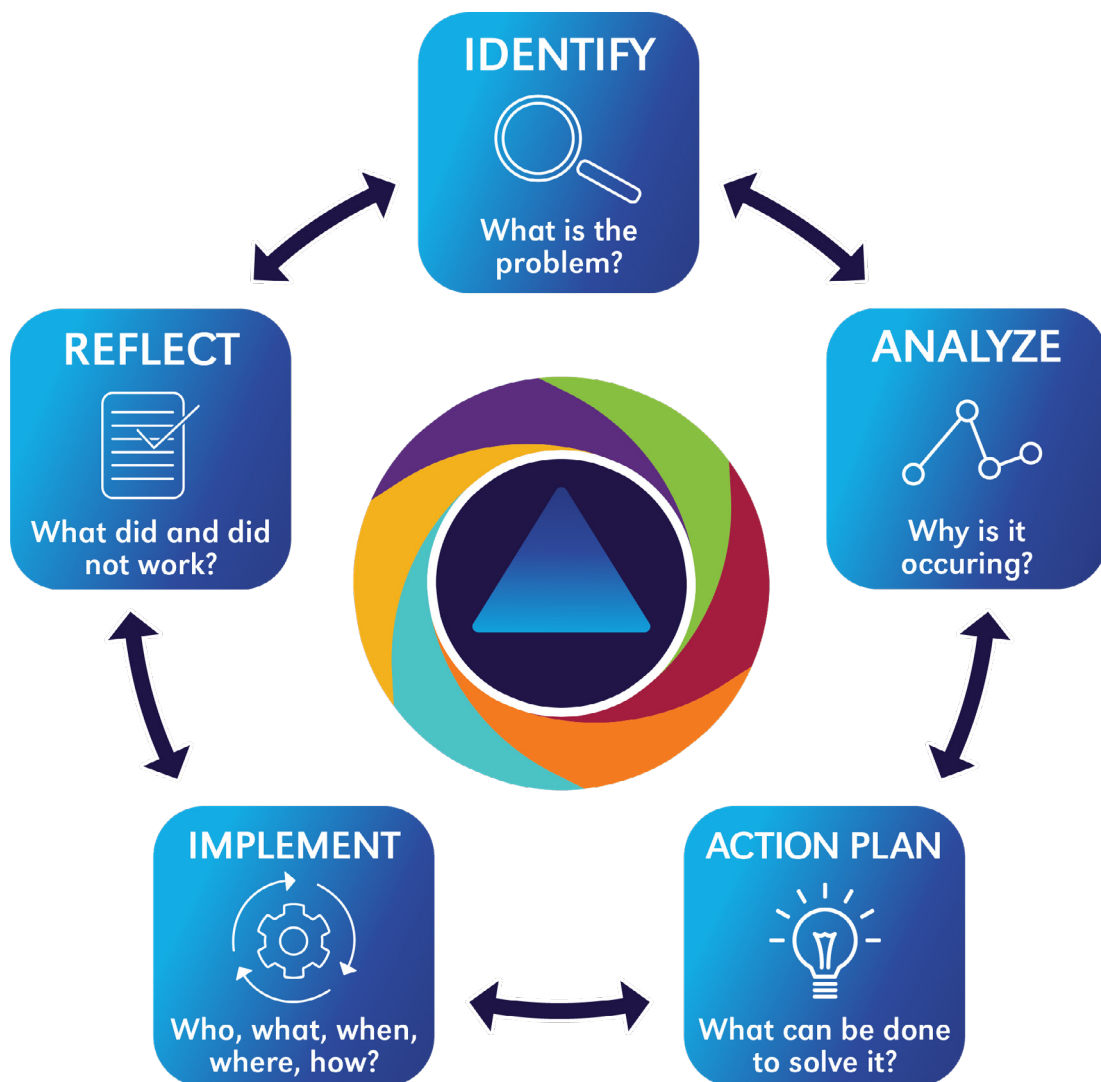


Each of the four teams (i.e., district, school, collaborative, and student support) engages in this problem-solving process with a slightly different focus and therefore looks at slightly different data.

District and school teams engage in the problem-solving model to drive continuous improvement of the supports for the system.

### District

Focus for the district team: ***How can we improve the system to support better outcomes for all students with attention to students in historically marginalized groups?***

### District Team Considerations

- Perceptual data is critical to understand what is getting in the way of attaining a desired outcome. Focus groups, conversations, surveys, and feedback from staff, students, family members and caregivers, and the community, particularly those most impacted by the outcome, need to be of clear priority in the "analyze" phase.
- Teams need to have the ability to take action. For each team, the superintendent needs to establish the structure and amount for resource allocation that is in line with the budget and board policies.

A District Team problem-solving model is detailed in [Appendix C](#).

### School

Focus for school team: ***How can we improve our school implementation to support better outcomes for all students with attention to students in historically marginalized groups? What data is going to be collected and used for AQuESST accountability measures?***

### School Team Considerations

- The team determines what proficiency levels are needed on each assessment. *For grades K–3 in Nebraska, minimum proficiency scores are determined by the Nebraska Department of Education in the area of reading per the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act.*
- As part of a communication plan, determine which information needs to be shared, as well as how, when, and who will share it with all stakeholders.

A School Team problem-solving model is detailed in [Appendix C](#).

*Using the Problem-Solving Model for Student Support*

Collaborative teams and student support teams engage in the problem-solving model to identify, analyze, plan, implement, and reflect on student supports.

### Collaborative

Focus for the collaborative team: ***How can we improve our instruction to support better outcomes for all students? Which students need Tier 2 Targeted support and what should be the focus of that support?***

### Collaborative Teams Tier 2 Targeted [Decision Criteria](#) and Considerations

- ***Decision criteria:*** Which student(s) will require supplemental, targeted intervention/support?
  - » Determine what proficiency levels are needed for each screening assessment. *For grades K–3 in Nebraska, proficiency scores are determined by the Nebraska Department of Education in the area of reading per the Nebraska Reading*

*Improvement Act.*

  ◊ If a student is not meeting or is above the proficiency level, provide targeted support.

- *Determine additional assessments:* Diagnostic assessments will help determine what the student can do in relation to the expectations and what the student still needs to work on.
- *Determine approach:* How will schools respond for students in need of additional support?
  » Student groups (typically three to six)
  » Personnel (need to be trained)
  » Intervention (evidence-based)
  » Frequency (typically three times per week)
  » Duration (typically 15–30 minutes)
  » Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching
- As part of a communication plan, determine which information needs to be shared, as well as how, when, and who will share it with all stakeholders.

A Collaborative Team problem-solving model is detailed in Appendix C.

### Student

Focus for Student Support Team: ***How can we improve our instruction to support students who are in need of Tier 3 Intensified support and what should that support focus on? Are Tier 3 Intensified supports designed to increase student outcomes on achievement measures, attendance, and the pathway to graduation?***

A Student Team problem-solving model is detailed in Appendix C.

## What is Communication and Collaboration in NeMTSS and Why Is It Important?

Collaboration and communication are essential to the functioning of any system of support as multifaceted as NeMTSS. Districts are part of a community, and support from that community is essential. Districts will be more effective and accomplish more when there are community collaborations connected to supporting the social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of each student.

In NeMTSS, communication and collaboration require attention to four components:

1. Student voice and engagement
2. Family and caregiver involvement in teams
3. Community partnerships
4. Communication

Effective communication and collaboration are reflected in the AQuESTT Tenet "Positive Partnerships, Relationships, and Success". This practice hinges upon the belief that student, family, and community engagement enhances learning experiences and are culturally inclusive and relevant for each student. Student success and engagement rely on positive partnerships and relationships to fundamentally improve the outcomes for each student, school, district, and community.

## Student Voice and Engagement

NeMTSS will only succeed in supporting students when students are engaged as the primary stakeholder in their own learning and their perspective is actively sought and respected in all decisions.

Centering student voice can be proactively built into the design of an effective NeMTSS system at every level.

| Team | What Attention to Student Voice Looks Like in Action |
|---|---|
| District Team | • Serving as active participants and collaborators on the district team. Student advisor committees, surveys, and focus groups can also provide critical information to inform system-wide reflection about the strengths and areas for improvement in the NeMTSS system. Student responses can be viewed holistically and disaggregated by student groups. Additionally, focus groups and interviews can be hosted in dedicated groups to better understand the specific experience of students from historically marginalized backgrounds. |
| School Team | • Similar to the district team, student surveys and focus groups are critical data points in reflection on the overall strengths and areas in need of improvement for the school plan.<br>• School teams can utilize informal classroom observations to measure student engagement and use the data to target instructional strategies that boost student engagement. |
| Collaborative Team | • Alongside student work, end-of-unit reflection questions can support collaborative teams to better understand students' experiences in instruction and support reflection and adjustments.<br>• Ongoing conversations with individual students or groups of students about their learning needs are an important source of data to inform instructional planning. Planning these questions and conversations in collaborative teams is an important part of effective instructional reflection ("What questions do we have for students about their learning to support better decision-making?"). |
| Student Support Team | • At all ages, students can and should be consulted in the process of identifying their needs and evaluating the success of supports. |

## Family and Caregiver Involvement in Teams

Family members and caregivers have unique and powerful expertise regarding the children in their care. A school district cannot support student needs effectively without engaging families and caregivers as fundamental partners in the design and implementation of NeMTSS.

To support collaboration and effective decision-making, family and caregivers must be intentionally involved across teams. If a family or caregiver speaks a language other than English, the district must provide interpreters to ensure meaningful participation.

| Team | What Family and Caregiver Engagement Looks Like |
|---|---|
| District Team & School Team | • Family members and caregivers can and should be involved in determining what constitutes high-quality instruction, ensuring materials and practices are culturally responsive, and providing input on how schools can monitor the effectiveness of interventions to ensure they support all of the critical dimensions of whole child support. |
| Student Support Team | • Family members and caregivers should be consulted during the individualized problem-solving process. |

## Community Partnership

School districts are not isolated actors; they support students in the context of communities rich with significant assets and communities that have a shared interest in the success of every student.

Effective implementation of NeMTSS will include partnerships outside of the school district at every level.

| Team | Partnership Principles |
|---|---|
| District & School Teams | • Involving community members or perspectives from community agencies that can connect system-level solutions can set the foundation for effective partnership.<br>• District and school teams can conduct community asset maps to consider both institutional (e.g., faith-based organizations, businesses, health care providers, cultural or language and community-based organizations) and informal sources of community support (e.g., community elders, alumni, community networks). Once these sources of support are identified, teams can consider how to engage in partnerships across the tiers of support.<br>• Even when not involved in the composition of the team, setting up structures to bring the district plan to critical community partners upfront and at key moments of reflection and refinement can allow for the generation of partnership ideas that can strengthen the core plan. |
| Collaborative Team | • Collaborative teams can be prompted to actively think about possible community partnerships as a resource in all tiers of support. |
| Student Support Team | • Community partnerships can be proactively built into the support offerings that student support teams are prompted to consider. Student support teams can also make space to consider partnership options beyond those offerings as they are working to support student needs. If students are receiving outside support (e.g., outside counselor, coach, mentor), consider inviting those individuals to be a part of the student's support team. |

## Communication

NeMTSS plays a central role in school districts, impacting all other systems and all educators and stakeholders. As such, effective communication between staff and districts about all aspects of the system and transparent communication about what is working, what is not working, and the adjustments underway will be critical to the success of the system.

Effective communication will be:

- Clear and concise, avoiding jargon wherever possible
- Regular
- Anchored in the purpose of NeMTSS: student success
- Two-way—with ample opportunities for stakeholder input to gather feedback
- Interpreted/translated as needed

There are a number of common junctures for communication:

- Upfront launch of NeMTSS system
- Communication with students, family members, and caregivers at critical moments in the process
- School- and district-wide annual reflection on what worked, what didn't, and the adjustments that are underway

Each team benefits from establishing upfront the key audiences, goals, structures, and the people responsible for regular communication.

Teams also benefit from articulating together the key messages for communication, role-playing conversations to provide each other feedback, and practicing communications to support those key messages and push for clarity.

# PUTTING NEMTSS INTO PRACTICE

As a continuous improvement process, NeMTSS is a complex framework and the implementation needs to be inclusive of consensus, resources, and implementation science.

## Consensus and Resources

Through shared leadership, there must be a consensus of common language and understanding, as well as commitment to shared vision. District leadership teams need to engage in determining the need for change, leading the change, embracing the change, and establishing the systems for change through consensus. Along with this, educators need tools, resources, and structures to do the work. This would include, but is not limited to, practices, policies, regulations, decision-making, and core beliefs.

## Implementation Science

Utilizing the structures of shared leadership, it is critical to ensure systems are established and operationalized. Implementation of NeMTSS requires a continuous improvement mindset and an understanding that implementation is a journey. There are stages of implementation that guide teams through a purposeful approach to managing system change, building capacity, and creating a sustainable framework. This is a non-linear process of deciding to use an effective MTSS Framework and having it fully in place to realize improved student outcomes. When full implementation is achieved, staff are implementing with fidelity and student outcomes are positively progressing.

Generally, this journey takes two to five years and involves the following key stages:

| Focus | Stage | Action |
|---|---|---|
| Let's Figure This Out | Exploration | • Learn about the why, how, and what of NeMTSS; share awareness with stakeholders; assess readiness; identify barriers<br>• Identify diverse teams; identify current data; review current work (plans, initiatives, etc.)<br>• Review current assessments, curriculum and materials, instruction, and interventions for whole child learning. |
| Let's Do This Right | Installation | • Prepare infrastructure for implementation<br>• Identify necessary resources<br>• Determine a common location for data collection<br>• Take stock of the balanced assessment plan<br>• Take stock and ensure evidence of curriculum and materials<br>• Take stock of and ensure evidence of instruction<br>• Adopt a problem-solving model for data-based decision-making<br>• Use data to create priority areas<br>• Create a professional learning plan for staff; communicate with stakeholders |
| | Initial Implementation | • Start or better systematize NeMTSS implementation<br>• Support the infrastructure through teams<br>• Use data to drive Tier 1 Core curriculum, materials, and instruction<br>• Identify and remedy gaps in resources as needed<br>• Refine structures as needed<br>• Ensure ongoing professional learning for staff is occurring<br>• Communicate with stakeholders consistently<br>• Involve Tier 2 Targeted and Tier 3 Intensified support. |
| Let's Try For Better | Initial Implementation: *Elaboration* | • Enhance systematization<br>• Support the infrastructure through teams<br>• Use data to drive Tier 1 Core support<br>• Provide ongoing professional learning for staff<br>• Develop caregiver partnerships and communicate consistently with stakeholders according to those partnerships<br>• Establish decision criteria and utilize data-based decision-making regularly to aid in systematizing Tier 2 Targeted and Tier 3 Intensified support |
| | Full Implementation | Full implementation occurs when:<br>• Staff are implementing the strategies outlined with fidelity and are seeing positive student outcomes<br>• Teams are continuously reflecting on data; capacity of stakeholders is built<br>• Work is sustainable and leading to continuous improvement |

## Support

There are several ways in which the NeMTSS Team can provide support. The NeMTSS Team is able to assist with the exploration, implementation, and scale-up of a district's MTSS Framework. This work is completed through a regional support model to the greatest extent possible. This model includes a Regional Support Lead, an Early Childhood Implementation Facilitator, a Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Learning Specialist, and a Positive Behavioral Intervention Support Coach. The professional learning that the NeMTSS Team can support includes, but is not limited to:

- **NeMTSS Framework Workshops:** For those who need to focus on the essential elements needed for continuous improvement, which could be full days or chunked into components that fit the needs of the district or ESU.
- **Continuous Improvement Action Planning:** For those who have pieces of the system but would like to refine, refocus, and engage in data-based problem-solving and decision-making for continuous improvement.
- **Implementation Support:** For those who need individualized support to guide their continuous improvement process.
- **Early Childhood MTSS and Pyramid:** Support to ensure that all children experience supportive learning environments that promote positive social and emotional growth and development. The approach offers tools to help educators identify and support infants and young children if persistent, challenging behaviors occur.
- **Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Supports:** Support to enhance educators' capacity to practice, teach and model social-emotional competencies among adults and students while supporting adults in their understanding of a multi-tiered approach for behavior to improve school climate, culture, and learning outcomes.
- **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports:** Support to assist with students' experience of social, emotional, and behavioral success when schools use data to build inclusive and equitable layered continuum of support. This type of support can also include developing prevention activities and implementing high-quality interventions to meet student needs.

Please visit the NeMTSS Website to locate a Regional Support Lead that can answer your questions.

# CONCLUSION

The 2023 NeMTSS framework is grounded in the following beliefs:

- NeMTSS is for all students.
- Successful implementation of this NeMTSS framework will result in improved student outcomes.
- Implementation must be collaborative, including district, school, and student-level teams.
- A layered continuum of tiered supports with evidence based practices at tier is essential to meeting student needs.
- Data-based decision-making and the problem solving model drive continuous improvement for students.
- Communication and collaboration with families and caregivers and community partners is integral to supporting the social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of each student.

Data-based decision-making driving continuous improvement is at the heart of NeMTSS. This 2023 NeMTSS framework reflects continuous improvement of the state framework, informed by quantitative and qualitative data. Much like the student support teams, collaborative teams, school teams and district teams, our state collaboration will continue as we strive to - together - ensure the full range of needs are met for each and every student in our state.

# APPENDIX/RESOURCES

# APPENDIX A

## District Team

| Key Considerations | Details |
|---|---|
| **Purpose** | A district team is charged with leading continuous improvement while using data to design and adjust the district's system to ensure the success of every student while elevating student, caregiver, and staff voices. If the school district has completed a strategic plan and school safety plan, the work of the district team can and should connect directly to strategic goals. |
| **Membership** | District and school administrators, teachers, school psychologists, students, family members, caregivers, counselors, social workers, mental health practitioners, and community members. The district team should include educators with a focus on instructional excellence in core content areas; social, emotional, and behavioral well-being; physical well-being; student safety; a positive and inclusive culture and climate; special education; high ability learners, English learners, as well as other areas that support post-high school options. |
| **Functions** | <ul><li>Identify key stakeholders, including community members and caregivers, and ensure participation.</li><li>Outline the core beliefs and norms for team interactions and model engaging with those and reflecting on how to improve the example.</li><li>Drive the overall district plan or outline of the plan that schools build from in alignment with a strategic plan.</li><li>Ensure capacity is developed and the infrastructure needed to build and sustain implementation is in place.</li><li>Continually monitor district-wide progress and evaluate the needs of families and staff to enhance systems and structures of support so any implementation barriers can be removed.</li><li>Drive continuous improvement of the district NeMTSS system.</li><li>Collect, analyze, and make decisions based on student, caregiver, and staff perceptual data.</li><li>Ensure resource allocation (i.e., monies, staff, scheduling) is considered and decided based on data.</li><li>Communicate the goals and plan for NeMTSS to all key stakeholders (internal and external) and communicate the areas of focus for continuous improvement.</li><li>Provide internal and external communication to share progress updates and decisions with stakeholders.</li></ul> |
| **Routines** | Hold regularly scheduled meetings typically 1–3 times per quarter, more often when building/designing. |

# School Team

| Key Considerations | Details |
|---|---|
| **Purpose** | The school team's purpose is to ensure a strong school plan for NeMTSS and to facilitate schoolwide implementation of that plan to ensure the success of every student. |
| **Membership** | School administrators, teachers, and specialty staff (e.g., school counselors, social workers, mental health practitioners, reading specialists, EL specialists, speech-language pathologists, educational service unit (ESU) staff, HAL specialists, school psychologists). This will vary by school and district.<br><br>*It is beneficial to have common members with the district team.* |
| **Functions** | • Design the school plan to ensure that each student is provided with equitable opportunities to access evidence-based whole child Tier 1 Core supports.<br>• Implement the school plan consistent with the district plan or framework to ensure that all students in need of additional support receive Tier 2 Targeted interventions.<br>• Determine the educator support needed to ensure the preparation and continuous improvement of effectiveness.<br>• Ensure fidelity of implementation of evidence-based practices across the layered continuum of support.<br>• Monitor school-level data and continuously improve school-level implementation.<br>• Ensure resource allocation (i.e., monies, staff, scheduling) is considered and decided based on data.<br>• Communicate the school NeMTSS plan with key stakeholders (including internal and external stakeholders)and outline areas of continuous improvement and key actions to support those areas.<br>• Share progress, updates, and decisions with internal and external stakeholders. |
| **Routines** | Hold regularly scheduled meetings no less than once per month |

# Collaborative Team

| Key Considerations | Details |
|---|---|
| **Purpose** | The purpose of collaborative teams is to ensure that all students in a given grade, classroom, or multiple grade-band levels have access to strong Tier 1 Core supports and the needed Tier 2 Targeted supports to aid their success. |
| **Membership** | • Collaborative teams will look very different based on a variety of factors at the school and district. They typically include teachers, specialty staff (e.g., social workers, school counselors and mental health practitioners, reading specialists, EL specialists, HAL specialists, school psychologists), and paraprofessionals.<br>• Depending largely on the district size, collaborative teams may be split to have a set of teams that focuses on Tier 1 Core and a separate set that focuses on Tier 2 Targeted, or collaborative teams may need to bridge both purposes.<br>• Administrators are encouraged to attend collaborative team meetings in order to support the work of the collaborative teams where possible.<br><br>*The collaborative team benefits from having common members from the school team.* |
| **Functions** | • Analyze Tier 1 Core supports from the classroom, grade, and grade-band data to adjust teaching and learning.<br>• Use data to support planning for Tier 1 Core supports (clarity of focus, professional learning to support evidence-based practices in Tier 1 Core, anticipation of student support needs, and preparation for the scaffolds to support those needs).<br>• Use data to identify students in need of Tier 2 Targeted interventions and determine support plans.<br>• Use data to monitor the success of Tier 2 Targeted supports.<br>• Ensure resource allocation (i.e., monies, staff, scheduling) is considered and decided based on data. |
| **Routines** | Hold regularly scheduled meetings no less than bi-weekly (weekly is optimal) |

# Student Support Teams

| Key Considerations | Details |
|---|---|
| **Purpose** | The student support teams focus on individualized support, regular reviews of progress monitoring data, and making intervention changes to meet the dynamic needs of the student. |
| **Membership** | Those educators directly involved with the student, family members and caregivers, and members of the school support team (e.g., speech-language pathologist, school counselor, special education teacher, school psychologists, HAL specialist especially if the student is considered twice-exceptional) |
| **Functions** | • Drive Tier 3 Intensified social, emotional, behavioral, and academic supports for individual students, including wraparound services (with room for the student support team to also ensure effective Tier 1 Core and Tier 2 Targeted supports).<br>• Monitor student progress.<br>• Engage family members and caregivers in developing the support plan.<br>• Work to ensure that other student or family-identified supports are provided.<br>• Communicate regularly with family members and caregivers to coordinate support and understand family member and caregiver perspective on progress.<br>• Ensure resource allocation (i.e., monies, staff, scheduling) is considered and decided based on data. |
| **Routines** | Hold regularly scheduled meetings no less than once per week **or** as determined by the team based on the individual student's interventions to ensure progress-monitoring and fidelity data are being consistently reviewed and interventions are being adjusted. |

## Notes on the Student Support Teams

- Once a student support team has established effective routines and structures, it can be considered a student assistance team (SAT) or comparable problem-solving team to meet the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Nebraska's Rule 51 and Rule 10 for school-age students. This is **not** to delay referral if a student is suspected of having a disability.
- Students who meet the requirements of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act will be provided Tier 2 Targeted support or Tier 3 Intensified support, dependent on their specific needs. It is the responsibility of collaborative teams and/or student support teams to ensure those needs are met.

**Return to** NeMTSS FRAMEWORK

# APPENDIX B

## 1. Student Learning and Well-Being Data

| Type | Definition | Purpose | Examples* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Formative**<br>For all students | Formative assessment is a deliberate, continuous process used by both students and teachers during learning and teaching. | To elicit and use evidence of student learning to ultimately improve instruction and student understanding.<br><br>To help educators clarify learning goals and success criteria, elicit and analyze evidence, promote student engagement in self-assessment, provide actionable feedback, and use this evidence and feedback to move learning by adjusting strategies or next instructional steps.<br><br>To help students understand and manage their own learning journey. | • Classroom assessments<br>• Quick quizzes<br>• Discussion<br>• Observations<br>• Comprehension checks<br>• Entrance/Exit tickets<br>• Journal<br>• Rubrics<br>• Checklist<br>• Rating scales<br>• Chapter exams<br>• Essays |
| **Interim**<br>For all students | Interim assessments measure students' proficiency against standards at different intervals throughout the year.<br>They are aligned to when students encounter the content they are expected to master by the end of a course/grade. | To help educators understand student learning needs to support instructional decision-making and reflection and assist in predicting end-of-year proficiency.<br><br>To improve school Tier 1 Core supports (curriculum, materials, and instruction) in order to improve learning for all student groups. | • Academic curriculum embedded<br>• NSCAS growth (ELA and Math 3-8)<br>• MAP Suite<br>• aimswebPlus<br>• FASTBridge |
| **Summative**<br>For all students | Summative assessments provide data regarding student achievement at the end of the year, end of a course, end of a unit, or end of a term. | To evaluate learning at the end of a specific period of instruction.<br><br>To improve the district, school, and classroom Tier 1 Core supports (curriculum, materials, and instruction).<br><br>To improve learning for all student groups. | • NSCAS Growth (3–8 ELA and math, 5 and 8 science)<br>• ACT (Grade 11)<br>• ELPA21 (English learners K–12)<br>• Chapter tests<br>• Unit tests |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Universal Screening**<br>For all students | Social, emotional, behavioral and academic assessments that typically occur three times per year.<br><br>This can be considered an interim assessment. | To assess all students in order to identify who may be in need of Tier 2 Targeted or Tier 3 Intensified support to meet the whole child goals.<br><br>To comply with the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act (specific assessments identified by the NDE, must be norm-referenced).<br><br>To improve school and classroom Tier 1 Core supports (curriculum, materials, and instruction).<br><br>To improve learning for all student groups. | • SRSS<br>• BIMAS-2<br>• SDQ (can be adapted to be used as a diagnostic)<br>• SAEBRS<br>• DECA<br>• GOLD<br>• Star Suite Reading<br>• NSCAS growth<br>• aimswebPlus<br>• MAP Suite<br>• iReady<br>• Acadience (DIBELS)<br>• CogAT<br>• SAGES<br>• NNAT<br>• FastBridge Suite |
| **Diagnostic**<br>For students only as needed | Diagnostic assessments are designed to identify, more specifically than screening assessments can, student strengths and areas for growth in a specific skill area.<br><br>They can be either informal or standardized based on the need, with informal being recommended first whenever possible and standardized when students have a history of not responding to targeted or intensified support. | To pinpoint specific learning needs that hone in on skills.<br><br>To assist educators in designing small-group or individualized instruction for students who need additional support. | • Observation<br>• Anecdotal notes<br>• Functional behavior assessment<br>• ABC checklist<br>• SDQ<br>• SEARS<br>• Error analysis<br>• Phonics survey<br>• Running records<br>• Informal reading Inventory<br>• Error analysis of math<br>• Analysis of student work |
| **Progress Monitoring**<br>Provided to students receiving Tiers 2 and 3 support | An ongoing assessment of a student's social, emotional, behavioral, and/or academic performance and rate of growth on targeted or intensified instruction/intervention. | Provide to students to ensure the response to instruction is helping students grow in a targeted area.<br><br>*Progress monitoring as a process to demonstrate tiered support fluidity is detailed under Layered Continuum of Support.* | • Behavior Ratings from a plan<br>• DBR-SIS<br>• BASC-3 Flex Monitor<br>• Running Records<br>• Mastery Measurement: In Curriculum<br>• General Outcome: Tier 1 Core-aligned<br>• Acadience (DIBELS)<br>• i-Ready<br>• FastBridge Suite<br>• aimswebPlus |
| **Grades**<br>For all students | Grades are metrics given to students based on classroom performance and documented within educational records. | When used in coordination with assessment and other student well-being data, this will assist teams in determining the root cause of why a student is struggling with a specific grade or several grades. | • Overall grade reports<br>• Classroom grade reports |

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|---|---|---|---|
| **Attendance**<br>For all students | Attendance is the measure of the extent to which students are attending classes and accessing curriculum, materials, and instruction in the format and location designated by the district/school. This accounts for the implementation of individual plans for students. | To assist in determining the root cause of absenteeism and provide support to increase attendance in tandem with other data sources.<br><br>District/School: To determine patterns of absenteeism (time of the day, day of the week, etc.) and categories for absences. | • Attendance reports |
| **Health**<br>For all students | Health accounts for the whole child well-being of students<br><br>Some Tier 3 Intensified supports, such as individual therapy sessions, are not shared with teams due to the need to protect confidentiality. However, the number of students receiving these supports can be shared to assess schoolwide needs. | To understand how to provide wraparound services to students in need.<br><br>To assist in determining what type of schoolwide or classroom-wide whole child well-being support to integrate and/or explicitly provide. | • Visits to the nurse<br>• Mental health reports (consent from caregiver needed)<br>• Counseling office visits<br>• Free and Reduced<br>• Homelessness<br>• Nutrition<br>• Food Insecurity |
| **Office Referrals, In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension**<br>For all students | Office referrals are the removal of students from the classroom environment that results in loss of instruction. | To determine where unmet needs are by using other data and giving students a voice to examine why these occur.<br><br>To inform practices throughout the day by looking for patterns and other data to assist in improving the culture and climate in an effort to reduce the number of referrals. | • Office referrals: semester, quarter, month, week, day, hours<br>• ISS: semester, quarter, month, week, day<br>• OSS: semester, quarter, month, week, day |

*Examples listed are a sample of approved data sources. More may be added after further vetting.*

## Progress Monitoring Assessments

The key need will drive the kind of assessment that makes sense for progress monitoring.

Some student needs are highly specific and the intervention may have an embedded assessment that measures that particular skill. Some student needs are more general in which case assessments of general performance may make sense as monitoring tools. Teams can use either a skill-specific or a standards-based assessment for progress monitoring as long as it is connected to the identified need. Progress monitoring assessments can be interim assessments (for example Tier 1 Core-aligned assessments) or follow-up administrations of the universal screener.

Progress monitoring should not be based on teacher-developed assessments to ensure validity and reliability.

The ultimate goal is that student success with grade-level, standards-aligned assessments and assessments that stay anchored to the expectations for students avoid the pitfall of a student making progress on a progress monitoring measure but not advancing in the summative measure of performance.

The frequency of progress monitoring depends on the student support need. For students receiving Tier 2 Targeted support, progress monitoring typically occurs one or two times per month. With increased intensity, progress monitoring occurs more frequently. For students receiving Tier 3 Intensified support, progress monitoring typically occurs daily or weekly, which is dependent on the type of progress monitoring, the fidelity of the intervention, and the needs of the student.

Additionally, the goal should always be to limit the loss of instructional time. So, all progress monitoring should be done in service of monitoring interventions and student growth while limiting the time away from core instruction.

# 2. Demographic Data

| Demographic Categories |
| --- |
| (K–12) Student Enrollment |
| Special education |
| High-ability learners |
| Free and reduced |
| English learners |
| White |
| Black or African American |
| Hispanic or Latino |
| Asian |
| Two or more races |
| Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander |
| American Indian/Alaska Native |
| Attendance rate |
| Highly mobile |
| Graduation rate |

# 3. Perceptual Data

| Type | Definition | Purpose | Examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Student Climate and Culture** <br> For all students | A survey that allows students to share their opinions, views, beliefs, convictions, sentiments about relationships, learning conditions, and the school's overall environment. | To inform and allow adjustments in practices, policies, and procedures. | • Surveys <br> • NDE Perceptual Surveys <br> • Focus groups <br> • Follow-up questions as needed |
| **Student Engagement** <br> For all students | A survey that allows students to share their opinions, views, beliefs, convictions, and sentiments about how engaged they feel they are within the school and classroom. | To inform and allow adjustments that improve the school culture and climate to increase achievement and decrease boredom, alienation, and drop-out rates. | • Surveys <br> • Focus groups <br> • Follow-up questions as needed <br> • Student engagement in activities |
| **Adult School Culture and Climate** | A survey that allows adults to share their opinions, views, beliefs, convictions, sentiments about relationships, learning conditions, and the school's overall environment. | To inform and allow adjustments in practices, policies, and procedures. | • Surveys <br> • NDE Perceptual Surveys <br> • Focus groups <br> • Follow-up questions as needed |

# 4. Process Data

| What | Definition | Purpose | Examples |
|------|-----------|---------|----------|
| **Data Monitoring: Tier 1 Core** | Utilizing critical data sources, such as curriculum-based assessments and universal screeners to:<br>1. specify Tier 1 Core criteria, and<br>2. determine if Tier 1 Core support is effective in meeting the needs of learners. | If more than 20-25% of students are below the established criterion, there needs to be a problem-solving process to assist in improving Tier 1 Core support.<br><br>Identify whether some students would benefit from enrichment or extension activities within Tier 1 Core instruction. | • Universal social, emotional, behavioral, and academic screeners<br>• Interim assessments<br>• Formative assessments<br>• Social, emotional, and behavioral data<br>• Attendance |
| **Fidelity** | A review of the implementation of programs, instruction, and evidence-based practices in order to understand if the instruction/practice is being implemented consistent with the design that generated the evidence of impact originally. | To determine if the curriculum and materials are being taught the way in which they were intended for Tier 1 Core, Tier 2 Targeted, and Tier 3 Intensified supports.<br><br>To determine if the instruction is effectively meeting the needs of students within Tier 1 Core, Tier 2 Targeted, and Tier 3 Intensified supports. | • Observational data<br>• Checklists<br>• Look-fors: student engagement, positive feedback, student opportunity to respond<br>• Self, colleague, coach, administrator assessed |
| **Needs Assessment** | A needs assessment is a holistic review of what is working and what is not to improve areas of focus for improvement and future action. | To assess current practices, determine areas of strength, identify priority areas, and monitor progress toward goals for continuous improvement. | • Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2.0 (CNA 2.0)<br>• NeMTSS Self-Assessment<br>• Survey<br>• Rubric<br>• Evidence compilation |
| **Gap Analysis** | Gap analysis is a process for using data to identify root causes and gaps or inequities to best meet the needs of each student. | To determine missing skills or missing access to instruction or adjustments needed to support reaching goals. | • Survey<br>• Rubric<br>• Evidence compilation: identifying criteria, what is currently in place, what needs to be in place, and action steps<br>• Narrative |

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# APPENDIX C

## District Team Decision-Making

| Step | Purpose | Guiding Questions and Key Steps |
|---|---|---|
| **Identify**<br>*What is occurring?* | To determine the measurable difference between the desired outcome and the actual student performance **for system implementation** to improve student outcomes. | • What is our goal?<br>• To which groups of students do we want to hold ourselves accountable for improvement and what do we want to see?<br>• What is the actual student performance overall and for those groups?<br>• What is the difference between the two?<br>• If there is more than one area of discrepancy, which is the highest priority to address? |
| **Analyze**<br>*Why is it occurring?* | To gather relevant information in the domains of **system implementation** (needs assessment and/or strategic planning [CNA, NeMTSS Self-Assessment, Success Gap Toolkit, Strategic Plan, etc.]) to determine contributing factors to the context, conduct root cause analysis to understand what is driving the gap. | • What data do we need to better understand what is driving this discrepancy?<br>• What does the data tell us about what is the root cause for not attaining the desired outcome? |
| **Plan**<br>*What can be done to solve it?* | To create a plan that addresses the prioritized gap. | • What are we going to do to address that root cause?<br>• What professional learning do we need to provide to support the team in that plan? |
| **Implement**<br>*Who, what, when, where, how?* | To focus on following through with the plan to improve areas of need by identifying resources, staff involved, a timeline, and professional learning opportunities needed for staff. | • Are we doing what we said we would do? |
| **Reflect**<br>*What did and did not work?* | To determine the effectiveness of the action plan and adjust as needed. | • What impact did the action we took have on the context we were targeting?<br>• How do we know?<br>• How do we share what we have learned?<br>• (Loop back to identify and begin the cycle again.) |

# School Team Decision-Making

| Step | Purpose | Guiding Questions and Key Steps |
|---|---|---|
| **Identify** <br> *What is occurring?* | To determine the measurable difference between the desired outcome and the actual performance for academic, behavioral, social, and emotional learning outcomes for **all students**. <br><br> • What is the desired outcome? <br> • What is the actual performance? <br> • What is the difference between the two? | • What are we seeing in whole child outcomes? <br> • Review **schoolwide** whole child data. <br> • Review **schoolwide** attendance, office referral, OSS, and ISS data. <br> • Review other schoolwide risk-factor data. |
| **Analyze** <br> *Why is it occurring?* | To inform improvements to instruction, curriculum, and the environment, using whole child assessment, observational, and perceptual data to best support the learner. | • Identify systemic concerns, barriers, patterns, and trends. <br> • Identify content area and grade-level whole child concerns. <br> • Determine root causes. |
| **Plan** <br> *What can be done to solve it?* | To form a plan to meet schoolwide Tier 1 Core support needs. | • Set goals and expected outcomes. <br> • Determine professional learning support needs across educator groups to support effective implementation. |
| **Implement** <br> *Who, what, when, where, how?* | To implement a Tier 1 Core support plan that is focused on what to teach, how best to teach it, and how to monitor progress in the area(s) of whole child learning. | • Implement the plan with fidelity. <br> • Identify students with active plans (RtI tiered plan, 504, IEP, HAL, EL) to ensure those plans are considered. <br> • Document processes and procedures. |
| **Reflect** <br> *What did and did not work?* | To determine the effectiveness of the implemented plan. | • Progress monitor plan at appropriate intervals. <br> • Analyze data to determine effectiveness. <br> • Determine next steps as needed. <br> • (Loop back to identify and begin the cycle again.) |

# Collaborative Team Decision-Making

| Step | Purpose | Guiding Questions and Key Steps |
|---|---|---|
| **Identify**<br>*What is occurring?* | To determine the measurable difference between the desired outcome and the actual student performance for academic, behavioral, social, and emotional learning outcomes to identify improvements needed in Tier 1 Core supports and students in need of Tier 2 Targeted supports. | • What is the goal?<br>• What is the actual student performance?<br>• What is the difference between the two?<br>• For students who did not meet or are above the proficiency levels on whole child data:<br>• Review attendance, office referral, OSS, and ISS data for those students<br>  » Review other risk-factor data.<br>  » Review other benchmark data, formative assessments, prior educational history, and health information.<br>  » Check for other support plans to ensure consistency (504, IEP, HAL, EL, etc). |
| **Analyze**<br>*Why is it occurring?* | To inform improvements to instruction, curriculum, and the environment, to best support the learner using whole child assessment, observational, and perceptual data. Form a plan to meet the needs of some students, which should have a positive impact or no impact on other students. | For Tier 1 Core supports:<br>• What trends in outcomes help illuminate where instruction could have been stronger?<br>• How can we adjust instruction to support those learning needs in planned instruction?<br>• What professional learning do we need to support this change?<br><br>For Tier 2 Targeted supports:<br>• Compare the screening results with other data sources to confirm or disconfirm the need for additional support.<br>• Determine diagnostic assessments needed to hone in on the skills that need targeted support.<br>• Involve family members and caregivers in understanding needs. |
| **Plan**<br>*What can be done to solve it?* | To determine a plan to strengthen core supports. | • Create a plan to support small groups of students with similar needs, ensuring that the intervention matches needs.<br>• How, when, where, and by whom will the interventions be delivered to small groups (usually 4–8 students)?<br>• How will we know if this is working?<br>• Communicate the support plan with personnel and teachers. |

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| **Implement**<br>*Who, what, when, where, how?* | To implement the plan. | For Tier 1 Core support:<br>• Did we make the changes we said we would to support upcoming instruction?<br><br>For Tier 2 Targeted support:<br>• Did we implement the plan we said we would as intended?<br>• Document processes and procedures. |
| **Reflect**<br>*What did and did not work?* | To determine the effectiveness of the implemented plan. | For Tier 1 Core support:<br>• Did the adjustments to instruction lead to better outcomes?<br>• How do we communicate what we learned?<br>• (Loop back to identify.)<br><br>For Tier 2 Targeted Support:<br>• Progress monitor the support plan at appropriate intervals.<br>• Analyze data to determine the plan's effectiveness and adjust accordingly.<br>• Determine the next steps as needed. |

# Student Team Decision-Making

| Step | Purpose | Guiding Questions and Key Steps |
|---|---|---|
| **Identify**<br>*What is occurring?* | To determine the measurable difference between the desired outcome and the actual student performance for academic, behavioral, social, and emotional learning outcomes for **a specific student**. | For students who did not respond to the combination of strong Tier 1 Core instruction and the Tier 2 Targeted supports provided:<br>• What specific support is needed?<br>• What has worked? What has not worked?<br>• Review other data including risk-factor data (attendance, office referral, OSS, ISS), benchmark data, formative assessments, prior educational history, and health information |
| **Analyze**<br>*Why is it occurring?* | Using whole child assessment,, environmental, physical, observational, and perceptual data to determine specific areas of need and determine what factors are contributing to:<br>• the student not meeting proficiency levels and not responding to previous interventions<br>*or*<br>• a high ability learner far exceeding proficiency levels yet not responding to previous interventions | • Compare the screening results with other data sources to confirm or disconfirm the need for additional support.<br>• Determine diagnostic assessments needed to hone in on the skills that need targeted support.<br>• Determine why and under what circumstances the student is not meeting proficiency (where, when, with whom, and during what activities). (Student, family, and caregiver perspectives can be particularly important here.)<br>• What conditions are needed for the student's learning to be enabled?<br>• What intervention strategies and support are needed to support the student? |
| **Plan**<br>*What can be done to solve it?* | Create a roadmap that is accessible to all staff and monitored by the School Team | • Create a plan to support the individual student.<br>• Determine how, when, where, and by whom the interventions will be delivered to small groups (usually one to three students).<br>• Determine roles and responsibilities with respect to intervention implementation (e.g., who will be responsible for running the intervention and preparing materials).<br>• What professional learning, if any, is necessary to provide this intervention effectively?<br>• How will we know if this is working?<br>• Communicate the support plan with personnel and teachers. |

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| **Implement**<br>*Who, what, when, where, how?* | To implement a support plan for intervention that is focused on what to teach, how best to teach it, and how to monitor progress. | • Did we do what we said we would do as we said we would do it?<br>• Document processes and procedures |
| **Reflect**<br>*What did and did not work?* | To determine the effectiveness of the implemented plan. | • Progress monitor the support plan at predetermined intervals.<br>• Is the student demonstrating an adequate rate of improvement based on progress monitoring?<br>• Does the intervention need to be intensified in terms of frequency, length of instruction, or duration?<br>• Determine the next steps as needed. |

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