



# NeMTSS FRAMEWORK



## NeMTSS Decision Making

When determining which students receive additional support (intervention or enhancement), deciding what those supports should be, and evaluating the effectiveness of those supports, teams need to ensure the decision-making process is *equitable*. Relying on teacher referral often leads to concerns about subjectivity due to inconsistent criteria utilized in making decisions (Egyed & Shor, 2006; Klingner & Harry, 2006; Logan, Hansen, Nieminen, & Wright, 2001); classroom context affecting decisions (e.g., teachers were less accurate at identifying students who did or did not need support when the classrooms were overall high-achieving or predominately low-achieving; VanDerHeyden, 2001); or bias affecting decisions (e.g., teachers treated identical information differently and made different recommendations when the only difference in student information presented was ethnicity (Elhoweris, Mutua, Alsheikh, & Holloway, 2005); referrals for gifted education more accurate for White and Asian students than African American and Hispanic students; inequalities in nomination, not assessment (McBee, 2006; Plata & Masten, 1998; Pfeiffer et al., 2007; Forsbach & Pierce, 1999)).

Pre-established, written decision guidelines provide a framework for teams to interpret and utilize data. Decision guidelines that incorporate the use of technically adequate assessments and defined criteria based on performance *and* implementation data help ensure teams apply consistent criteria for equitable decision making. By ensuring decision guidelines include data regarding implementation of interventions, teams shift the focus from a deficit perspective (e.g., this student isn't making progress) to a productive focus on what needs to change for the student to be successful (e.g., what we are doing currently is working or not working for the student; what do the adults need to do differently to ensure student success). Decision guidelines can:

- Improve accuracy of identifying students to receive additional support
- Increase accuracy of instructional planning and decision making
- Promote focus on what adults are doing to provide effective instruction and support to ensure students are successful
- Increase communication and collaboration when utilized consistently by educators and shared with families

Teams should develop decision rules to provide guidance for educators in their district/building to interpret and utilize data in making decisions related to (1) determining which students will receive intervention, (2) how to set goals and monitor student progress, (3) determining if the intervention is working (student response), (4) how to intensify interventions when needed, (5) use of the decision making and problem solving process for individual student problem solving, and (6) when to proceed with evaluation for special education

Decision rules should be written, include what data are appropriate for decision making, criteria for decision making, and guidance for planning following decisions (e.g., links to intervention matrix, intensification strategies, etc.)

#### Decision guidelines for identifying students for intervention (screening process)

- The screening process to determine which students will receive intervention should be considered a “low stakes” decision
- “A skills-based universal screener is the most appropriate, defensible tool for identifying students that have skills deficits and informing the need for a skills-based intervention.” (from TN document)
- If teams are using multiple sources of data, when all data converge to show that yes, a student needs support or no a student does not need support – the team makes the decision based on the combination of data
- If teams are using multiple sources of data, when there are divergent data – data from a measure(s) that is/are technical adequate for the purposes of screening should “carry more weight” than anecdotal data or data from measures that are not technically adequate for the purpose of screening

#### Decision guidelines for examining intervention effectiveness (for individual students)

MTSS teams should develop decision guidelines for examining intervention effectiveness that include (a) a list of student and implementation data needed for decision making, (b) a process and criteria for using a combination of implementation and student data to determine goal attainment and rate of improvement, (c) guidance for determining when to continue intervention as is, discontinue intervention, fade intervention, or intensify intervention, (d) guidance for continued progress monitoring after exiting intervention and criteria for potential “re-entry” into intervention, and (e) guidance for how to intensify interventions. Teams utilizing the decision guidelines should receive professional learning on use the guidelines and planning for intensification of intervention.

Following is an example of decision guidelines:

#### **Data needed for decision making**

Examination of implementation data is critical for decision making regarding effectiveness of intervention supports for individual students. A progress monitoring graph for an individual student is not meaningful outside of the context of the instruction and intervention that was provided. To make decisions regarding individual student progress, teams should consider including the following data:

- Student data:
  - Progress monitoring data (e.g., a CBM graph with at least 12-14 data points for “low stakes” decisions and at least 18-24 data points for “higher stakes” decisions (VanName et al., 2017))
  - Peer comparison data (data from other students in the same intervention group)
  - Mastery test data (SSMM) -- data from intervention-embedded (in-program) assessments
  - Student attendance (at school and in the intervention) -- for decision-making regarding academic interventions, students should have received intervention for a minimum of 16 weeks prior to decision making)
  - Possibly observation data -- e.g., student engagement and accuracy in the intervention

- Implementation data:
  - Fidelity to the intervention plan -- what intervention was to be provided, by whom, how often, when, etc. and fidelity to that intervention plan. These data help determine if the intervention was implemented as designed -- did the student receive the intervention with the frequency and duration outlined?
  - Fidelity/observation check data -- did the interventionist adhere to the intervention delivery guidelines; did the student receive high-quality instruction
  - Intervention lesson progress data -- Has enough of the intervention been provided in the timeframe given to be able to expect the student to meet the level/growth of progress?

### Determining goal attainment, rate of improvement, and next steps for intervention implementation

To examine the effectiveness of the intervention for an individual student, teams can follow a series of steps to analyze goal attainment and rate of progress/improvement

#### Step 1: Determine if the student has met the goal (level of progress)

Procedure: Find the median of the last three points on the progress monitoring graph	
If the median score is <b>equal to or greater than</b> the benchmark ( <b>on the appropriate grade level skill</b> ) (adequate level/goal met)	Student has met the goal, <b>discontinue the intervention</b> (plan for core support & continue PM) or <b>fade the intervention</b> (and continue PM)
If the median score is <b>less than</b> the benchmark (on the appropriate grade level skill) (inadequate level/goal not met)	Student has not met the goal, <b>continue to Step 2</b>

#### Step 2: Determine if the student is making adequate rate of progress

Procedure: Use the 4/5 point decision rule by <b>comparing the five most recent, consecutive data points to aimline</b>	
5 most recent, consecutive data points <b>lie above the aimline</b> or are <b>tightly clustered above and below the aimline</b> (adequate rate to meet goal by goal date)	<b>Continue the intervention as planned</b> (continue to monitor progress); schedule a time to review data
5 most recent, consecutive data points <b>lie below the aimline</b> (inadequate rate; not likely to meet goal by goal date)	<b>Continue to Step 3</b> (Need to examine additional data) and <b>intensify intervention</b>  **If all points are <b>significantly</b> below the aimline, may want to examine or calculate numerical growth rate and compare to the ambitious growth rate to determine the level of intensity needed to “catch up” and if you need to add off-grade level PM ( <b>Step 2b</b> )
Points <b>fluctuate greatly above and below the aimline</b> (Unable to determine adequacy of progress)	<b>Need to analyze the trend</b> ( <b>Step 2a</b> )

**Step 2a: Trend line analysis**

Procedure: <b>Compare the trendline to the aimline (at least 12-14 data points)</b>	
Trendline is <b>steeper than the aimline</b> (Adequate progress)	Continue intervention as is  Determine when the student is likely to meet the goal and plan to review the data at that time
Trendline is <b>parallel to</b> or <b>flatter than</b> the aimline (inadequate rate)	<b>Continue to Step 3</b> (Need to examine additional data) and intensify intervention

**Step 2b: Examine growth rate** (if rate of improvement is not provided through your data system)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If your data system provides an expected growth rate or rate of improvement, compare the student’s rate of improvement to the expected rate</li> <li>• If your data system does not provide an expected rate of improvement, calculate growth rate:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Determine number of weeks of intervention</li> <li>○ Find median score of the last 3 intervention data points and median score of the first 3 intervention data points</li> <li>○ Subtract the median of the first 3 from the median of the last 3 and divide by the number of weeks (This gives you a per week growth rate)</li> <li>○ Compare the calculated growth rate to the ambitious growth rates (at the right)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>“Ambitious” Standards For Weekly Growth Rates</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Grade</th> <th>Reading (correct words/min.)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>3.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>2.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>1.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>1.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>0.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>0.65</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Fuchs &amp; Fuchs</p>	Grade	Reading (correct words/min.)	1	3.0	2	2.0	3	1.5	4	1.1	5	0.8	6	0.65
Grade	Reading (correct words/min.)														
1	3.0														
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6	0.65														
If calculated growth is <b>lower than the expected rate of improvement or ambitious growth rate</b>	Significant intensification of the intervention is needed and consider off-grade level PM. <b>Continue to Step 3 and intensify</b>														
If calculated growth is <b>at or above the expected rate of improvement or ambitious growth rate</b>	Determine how long it may take to catch up. <b>Continue to Step 3</b>														

**Step 3: Examine instructional data and additional student data**

We cannot assume that a student not meeting a goal or not making the expected rate of improvement can be attributed to an intervention not being effective unless we are certain the intervention was implemented as designed.

<p>Are the following criteria being met for the student's intervention group?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lesson progress data (e.g., 5 lessons in 6 days; within 3 lessons of expected lesson progress goal) -- is student progress where would you expect it to be given where student is in the intervention scope &amp; sequence?</li> <li>● Fidelity (average 80% or higher overall; 100% on elements critical to intervention success)</li> <li>● Engagement during intervention sessions (average 80% or higher)</li> <li>● Intervention duration (received intervention for an appropriate average duration (at least 30 minutes a day))</li> <li>● Attendance (student received the number of sessions/weeks of intervention outlined)</li> <li>● Percent of mastery tests the students is passing on first attempt (80% or higher)</li> <li>● The majority of students in the group are meeting goals or making adequate progress (if others in the group are not making progress -- it may suggest an overall instructional issue)</li> </ul>	
<p>If <b>all criteria are met</b></p>	<p>Examine attendance and intensify intervention (monitor fidelity to intensified intervention plan) Schedule a meeting in to review data following intensification</p>
<p>If all criteria are met AND 2 rounds of intervention (1 initial round and 1 with intensification (~18-24 weeks)) AND the student is significantly below the benchmark *for students not initial identified to receive intensive intervention right away</p>	<p>Initiate Individual Student Problem Solving (ISPS) (meet within 2 weeks) and continue intervention as is until a new plan is developed through ISPS</p>
<p>If <b>any criteria are not met</b></p>	<p>Plan support for interventionist and intensify intervention (monitor fidelity to intensified intervention) (See <i>Considerations for planning to improve implementation</i>) Schedule a meeting in to review data following intensification</p>

**Considerations for planning to improve implementation**

*(planning to support interventionist and/or address potential concerns with intervention delivery/dosage)*

Issue	Examples/options to consider
<p>If you need to further examine fidelity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gathering more observation data</li> <li>● Checking lesson progress</li> <li>● Checking fidelity on effective instructional practices</li> <li>● Examine actual time in intervention</li> <li>● Check engagement, accuracy, correct level of difficulty, error correction, wait time provided, etc.</li> </ul>

If interventionist needs additional support		<p>Examples of potential support for interventionist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Observation with feedback</li> <li>● Additional training including practice sessions for delivery</li> <li>● Coaching with planning and preparation of planning</li> <li>● Use of targeted fidelity checks for specific instructional practices</li> <li>● Lesson demonstration</li> <li>● Videotaping of interventionists delivering program and then reviewing video for self evaluation and/or feedback on specific instructional practices</li> <li>● Side by side coaching</li> </ul>
Attendance is an issue	Motivation to come to school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assigning an adult to the student to check in with them when they get to school each morning</li> <li>● Providing an incentive that student is motivated to earn for certain number of consecutive days of attendance (for example extra recess, computer game time, etc.)</li> <li>● Finding a positive peer mentor to assign to student with attendance problems</li> </ul>
	Schedule	If tardy to intervention schedule may need to change
	Adult issue - not getting child to school	Schedule time to problem solve with parents
Engagement is an issue	Motivation	<p>Add incentive to improve specific behavior for the group</p> <p>Add incentive for improved engagement (for student)</p>
	Not enough opportunities to respond	<p>Add varieties of ways to respond for example boys, girls, etc.</p> <p>Add use of partner responses</p> <p>Provide additional individual turns for the student</p>
	Need for increased positive reinforcement	<p>Using affirmation after correct responses</p> <p>Increasing positive to negative ratio (specific praise)</p>

### **Progress Monitoring after exiting intervention**

When an intervention is discontinued, continue to monitor progress at least every other week for a at least 2 months and review this progress monitoring data to ensure the student remains at or above benchmark level. If a student drops below benchmark on 2 consecutive progress monitoring points, consider re-entry in intervention

### Decision guidelines for intensifying interventions

To plan for intensification, it is important for teams to examine the “why” of the concern to appropriately match the intensification strategy to the reason the problem is occurring.

### **Examining the Why of Academic Concern**

This table outlines some potential data sources to analysis in your examination of academic concerns to assist with determining the WHY of the problem

*Examples of data sources for Problem Analysis*

Domain	Areas for analysis	Assessment Source (Review Interview Observe Test)
Examine <b>instructional</b> variables	Lesson pacing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review lesson progress in intervention &amp; classroom</li> <li>Observation data on pacing within lessons</li> <li>Interview with teacher/interventionist re: lesson pacing</li> </ul>
	Instructional data: Number of opp. to respond, Average engagement, % error correction (for this student)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructional observations</li> <li>Interview with teacher/interventionist re: student's engagement during instruction</li> </ul>
	Instructional time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review schedule for allocated time</li> <li>Review of intervention documentation to determine avg. intervention duration and intervention frequency</li> <li>Student attendance in intervention</li> </ul>
	Instructional methods (match stage of learning – acquisition, fluency, generalization, adaptation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review student accuracy and fluency data as well as mastery data (how long to reach mastery)</li> </ul>
	Explicitness of instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation data – ratings on instructional delivery (e.g., limits birdwalks, models, we-do's)</li> </ul>
Examine <b>curricular</b> variables	Intervention placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of student mastery test data (compared to peers)</li> <li>Observation of student accuracy of responding</li> </ul>
	Intervention materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation data examining fidelity to use of materials</li> <li>Interview w/interventionist re: use of additional materials</li> </ul>
Examine <b>environmental</b> variables	Behavior guidelines and expectations Behavior management techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review any behavior plans (systems-wide; student specific)</li> <li>Interview teacher/interventionist re: behavior guidelines</li> <li>Interview student re: knowledge of guidelines</li> </ul>
	Group size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intervention documentation</li> </ul>
	Teacher/student interactions Peer interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation of ratio of positives to negatives</li> <li>Interview teacher/interventionist re: classroom climate</li> <li>Interview student re: classroom culture/climate</li> <li>Systematic behavior observations</li> <li>A-B-C analysis to determine function of the behavior</li> </ul>

	Physical set up	· Observation
Examine <b>learner</b> variables	Student specific skill needs	· Diagnostic data (e.g., Error analysis of Mastery test and progress monitoring data; diagnostics (e.g., CORE phonics, PAST, etc.) · Additional assessment data · Analysis of student accuracy, fluency, generalization of skills (where on the instructional hierarchy is the student with specific skills)
	Student motivation	· Can't do/won't do analysis · Teacher/interventionist interview · Student interview
	Language information	
	Student behavior & interaction with environment	· Systematic observation of student behavior

### Some considerations for intensifying intervention

This table outlines some potential strategies for intensifying intervention when there are curricular, instructional, dosage, or learner variables

Area for intensification	Examples/options to consider
Increase explicitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide more opportunities to do it with the student (We do it) before having the student respond alone</li> <li>● Increase opportunities to respond</li> <li>● More precise error correction; keep track of specific errors and practice the sounds/words, etc. at the beginning of the next session</li> <li>● Add flashcard procedure for sight words, sounds, concepts</li> </ul>
Increase Dosage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase the amount of time in the intervention (duration)</li> <li>● Increase number of sessions per week or per day</li> <li>● Provide extended instruction (e.g., after/before school)</li> <li>● Eliminate/decrease independent work time and replace with additional teacher directed instruction</li> </ul>
Improve match of instructional level (attention to mastery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Get more precise with amount of new information being taught (90/10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identify skill gaps in phonics, word analysis, phonemic awareness</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Adjust placement level based on in-program assessment data (appropriate level of difficulty)</li> <li>● Break tasks down into smaller steps</li> <li>● Adjust think/wait time before requesting response</li> </ul>
Intervention environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Decrease group size to allow for more individual responses</li> <li>● Consider change of environment (e.g., if in a space with multiple groups)</li> </ul>

	occurring at once)
Self monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Include students in monitoring of progress toward goals</li><li>● Self-talk – attributing success to hard work, learning</li></ul>