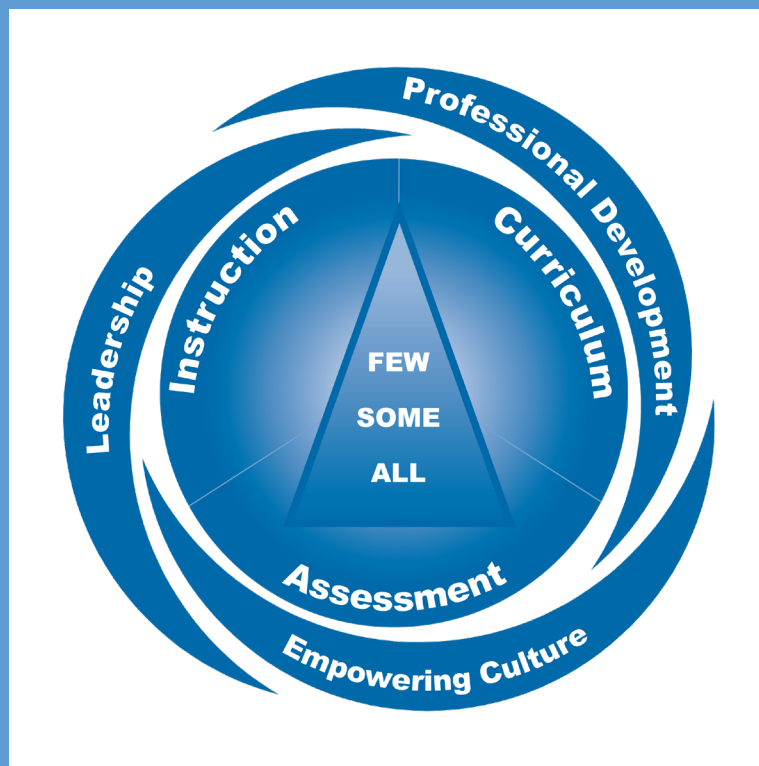


# KANSAS MULTI-TIER SYSTEMS OF SUPPORTS (MTSS) & ALIGNMENT



## SYSTEMS ALIGNMENT GUIDE

PRE-K THROUGH 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE



## Introduction to Document

The *Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports and Alignment: Phase 1 Guide* has been created to assist schools in creating the structures necessary to begin the implementation of a Multi-Tier System of Supports and Alignment (MTSS). This document provides an explanation of each component and its importance to the MTSS process. The guide also provides steps to support districts in successfully completing the tasks and decision making to create a sustainable system. Content area specific documents for reading, mathematics, behavior, and social-emotional learning are companion documents to this guide. All Kansas MTSS and Alignment documents are aligned with the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports and Alignment: Innovation Configuration Matrix (ICM), which describes the critical components of an MTSS and what each looks like when fully implemented. *The Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports and Alignment: Research Base* provides a basic overview of the research support for an MTSS.

## Acknowledgements

A significant commitment of time and energy from numerous Kansas educators and their districts, organizations, and partners made this document possible. Their efforts to learn and help others understand what it takes to make an MTSS a reality within schools is reflected in this document. This grassroots effort on the part of Kansas educators indicates a commitment to meeting the needs of every student and sharing wisdom from the field and the research. As the list of individuals and districts who have contributed to this effort over the past 15 years has become too long to detail, a collective expression of gratitude is offered here to everyone who has contributed to the concepts, ideas, and knowledge that are reflected in all Kansas MTSS and Alignment documents.

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## **Introduction**

In Kansas, every student should always be learning. Furthermore, every student should be challenged to achieve high standards, both academically and behaviorally. The systemic framework for ensuring that all students have this experience is referred to as the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS). Simply put, the Kansas MTSS is a set of evidence-based practices implemented across a system to meet the needs of all learners. Horner et al. (2005) stressed the importance of supporting children both academically and behaviorally in order to enable them to reach their full learning potential. The Kansas MTSS builds a system of prevention, early intervention, and support to ensure that all students are learning from the instruction. It establishes a system that intentionally focuses on leadership, professional development, and an empowering culture.

Kansas MTSS incorporates a continuum of assessment, curriculum, and instruction. This systemic approach supports both struggling and advanced learners through the selection and implementation of increasingly intense evidence-based interventions in response to both academic and behavioral needs. The system establishes a self-correcting feedback loop that includes ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of instruction to ensure that each Kansas student achieves high standards.

The goal of the Kansas MTSS is to provide an integrated systemic approach that meets the needs of all students. To achieve this, resources must be used in an effective and efficient way. Most importantly, the Kansas MTSS does not necessarily require additional resources or practices; rather, it involves evaluating current practices to identify those that yield evidence of effectiveness, addressing areas that are missing, and replacing ineffective or inefficient approaches with those that are supported by research and/or evidence. The Kansas MTSS is a guiding framework for school improvement and accreditation activities to address the academic and behavioral achievement of all students.

## **Why is a Multi-Tier System of Supports Needed?**

Even with the best of intentions, educational systems are not always as cohesive as desired. In many instances, the process of accessing support has frustrated educators and parents of students who are advanced learners as well as those who are struggling. A significant aspect of changing to a multi-tier system involves a shift in thinking about how a system responds to students' needs.

The Kansas MTSS is designed as a framework based on prevention, early intervention, and support for all students. It is not tied to specific content or curricula. Although the Kansas MTSS does not stipulate the curriculum, programs, instructional practices, or assessments used within a system, those chosen by schools should be supported by research.

## **Definition of the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports**

The Kansas MTSS is a coherent continuum of evidence-based, system-wide practices to support a rapid response to academic and behavioral needs. Frequent data-based monitoring for instructional decision-making empowers each Kansas student to achieve high standards.

## **Focus of the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports**

The focus of the Kansas MTSS is to achieve system-level change across the classroom, school, district, and state.

## **Core Beliefs of the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports Team**

- Every child learns and achieves to high standards.
- Learning includes academic and social competencies.
- Every member of the learning community continues to grow, learn, and reflect.
- Every leader at all levels is responsible for every child.
- Change is intentional, coherent, and dynamic.

The core beliefs are achieved by making these commitments:

- Every child will be provided a rigorous and research-based curriculum.
- Every child will be provided effective and relentless teaching.
- Interventions will be provided at the earliest identification of need.
- Policy will be based on evidence-based practice.
- Every educator will continuously gain knowledge and develop expertise to build capacity and sustain effective practice.
- Resources will be intentionally designed and redesigned to match student needs.
- Every leader will be responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating evidence-based practices.
- Academic, social-emotional, and behavioral data will be used to inform instructional decisions.
- Educators, families, and community members will be part of the fundamental practices of effective problem-solving and instructional decision-making.
- An empowering culture will be enhanced and developed to create a collective responsibility for student success.

A stakeholder group comprised of early implementers created these beliefs, and the list was adopted by KSDE. Buildings and districts develop and adopt their own belief statements as they move toward a multi-tier system.

### **Essential Items in the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports**

The creation of a sustainable MTSS requires significant leadership and an intense focus on the alignment of all resources and practices. To achieve this, schools agree to consider the following:

- All districts should have a district leadership team in place due to KESA requirements. It is not necessary to create a new district level team for the purpose of implementing an MTSS.
- Active participation of the building-leadership administrator is necessary to provide leadership, support, and authority to the team.
- Membership of the leadership team includes individuals with decision-making authority over curriculum, instruction, professional development, and assessments. This enables teams to discuss and take action as opposed to requiring external approval to move forward.
- The MTSS needs to be designed to support the learning of *all* students, not only students who are struggling to learn.

### **School Improvement within the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports Model**

The Kansas MTSS is not an initiative that schools choose instead of or as an alternative to Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA), or any accreditation or improvement plan required by KSDE. The Kansas MTSS is an overarching framework that guides schools through a process of needs assessment and decision-making that assists in not only selecting effective practices, but also creating a sustainable aligned system. Schools use the Kansas MTSS as the framework for the school improvement process to address the academic and behavioral achievement of all students.

Most school accreditation and improvement models have specific requirements with built-in timelines for planning, developing, and conducting needs assessments as part of the process. As an overarching framework, Kansas MTSS does not have specific requirements for timelines or needs assessment, but rather allows schools to establish an MTSS according to the requirements of accreditation and school improvement. The Kansas MTSS materials and the process for structuring and implementing it require an ongoing needs assessment process to address both the factors that influence educational practices as well as the results being achieved. For more information about KESA, please visit the [this site](#).

**Facts/Myths Regarding Implementation of the Kansas MTSS**

<b>Myth</b>	<b>Current Reality</b>	<b>Fact</b>
<p align="center">MTSS is just about the interventions.</p>		<p>MTSS emphasizes that a strong Tier 1 (core) is the foundational curriculum and instruction for all students and is the opportunity to have the greatest impact on student achievement.</p>
<p align="center">MTSS is for general education students and special education functions in parallel to that.</p>		<p>MTSS is a systems change. It is intended to meet the needs of all learners, including students with disabilities. All students should receive Tier 1 supports.</p>
<p align="center">MTSS is “just one more thing” we have to do.</p>		<p>MTSS is not a program, but an overarching framework for academic and behavioral instruction. It is a logical way of doing business to meet the needs of all students with the limited resources that districts have.</p>
<p align="center">MTSS gets rid of the special education referral process.</p>		<p>At any time, the collaborative team suspects that a student has an exceptionality and/or a need for special education services, the team must refer the student for an initial evaluation.</p>
<p align="center">Students in Tier 3 are in special education.</p>		<p>Some students in Tier 3 might be in special education, and others might not. Students are provided support based on their need, not their label.</p>
<p align="center">MTSS is for struggling students only.</p>		<p>Kansas MTSS is a systemic approach that supports both struggling and advanced learners through the selection and implementation of increasingly intense evidence-based interventions in response to both academic and behavioral needs.</p>



<p style="text-align: center;">“I am the MTSS teacher.”</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Implementing an MTSS is a systems change. This means that MTSS is more than just a class or time period in the day where interventions take place. Also, one person feeling responsible for the building’s MTSS negatively impacts collective responsibility.</p>
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What should be communicated to our staff:

As your DLT begins the work of systems alignment with a Kansas MTSS and Alignment trainer, it is important to point out that the following sections of this guide are components of the Phase 1 process. These components will be customized to meet the needs of your system and are not listed in any particular order (Located in the appendix: Kansas MTSS and Alignment Existing/Desired State Information).

## **Establish a District Leadership Team (DLT) and Identify Decision Making Method**

1. Select and document a leadership team comprised of appropriate representation
2. Develop team norms
3. Identify the team's decision-making method
4. Schedule monthly meetings at the beginning of the year
5. Communicate the development and purpose of the district leadership team with stakeholders

Leadership throughout the system is essential in the process of creating the Kansas MTSS. Schools improve when leaders work cooperatively with fellow educators to create an environment that gives priority to improving instructional quality (Schmoker, 2006). Planning for and implementing the Kansas MTSS is best accomplished through careful consideration of the building culture and requires leaders to develop and navigate a course for improvement of present and past practices and events. Formal leaders must take an active role in supporting the change. This means the formal leadership and stakeholders fully participate in problem-solving and decision-making, a complex process that will not happen without clear, concise planning. Your district might already have leadership teams developed through the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA) process. These teams can also serve as the Kansas MTSS Leadership Teams.

The leadership teams must be large enough to meet responsibilities while remaining small enough to operate efficiently. The goal is to align all state, federal, and local programs/resources appropriately and effectively into a single system with multiple ways of supporting each student.

District Leadership Teams should include representation from leaders that adequately represent the district's vision and are empowered to make decisions in developing alignment and consistency across the district as well as improving the system.

The purpose of a District Leadership team is to:

- Establish alignment and consistency of all education-related aspects, including the Kansas MTSS Framework, across the district
  - Prioritize goals, initiatives, and actions for the district
  - Ensure that all aspects of the Kansas MTSS are implemented with fidelity across the district
  - Ensure the process for continual districtwide improvement and sustainability

The responsibilities of District Leadership Teams are to:

- Develop meeting agendas that address improvement toward the implementation and sustainability of the Kansas MTSS
  - Articulate the rationale for the Kansas MTSS and vision for the district across stakeholders
  - Represent the needs of buildings and other district stakeholders
  - Establish bi-directional communication and collaboration with stakeholders
  - Engage community partners and families
  - Communicate a clear and consistent message with all stakeholders
  - Allocate and/or reallocate resources for system-wide alignment
  - Identify and provide for systemic professional development needs
  - Analyze data and make data-based decisions across buildings in the district
  - Eliminate barriers and distractors

Representation to consider might include but are not limited to:

- Superintendent and/or Asst. Superintendent(s)

- District Executive Directors
- Building Principals
- Special Education Director
- Preschool Director
- School Psychologist
- Business and Finance Director
- Facilities and Operations Director
- Communications Director
- Human Resources Director
- Technology Director

The process of **making decisions** allows stakeholders to work together to develop mutually acceptable solutions. There is no right or wrong way to make a decision; the important thing is that the process is transparent and builds common understanding and agreement. Ideally, the solution reached will meet the relevant interests of all stakeholders. Although not all individual issues will be resolved, agreement is reached when all agree to support the final proposal. As a group, the leadership teams must have a clear understanding and explain how decisions are made. This means clarifying what agreement means to the group and adopting the operating procedures for determining agreement.

Unanimity, or 100% consensus, is not realistic most of the time. Therefore, the group should determine at what point agreement has been reached and it is acceptable to move forward. Unless this is clearly defined, individuals can perceive final decisions as incomplete or act as holdouts, believing their interests will be better served by resisting the proposed agreement.

Early in the process, teams should spend time determining when agreement has been achieved, the procedure for agreement, and the course of action if agreement cannot be achieved. If individuals do not agree, exclusion from the final solution can occur. The team has a duty to make every effort to meet the interests of the holdouts. (This is to the team's advantage as well as the individual's. Holdouts can become *spoilers*—people who try to “spoil” or block implementation of any agreement.) The Decision-Making Models table is adapted from the work of Robbins and Finley (2000) and identifies seven methods of making decisions. Many teams determine that a variety of methods is necessary to function effectively, depending on the circumstances. This approach to decision-making works well if it is clear (1) when each method will be used and (2) who has the authority to make a final decision in the event of an authority-rule model.

## Decision-Making Methods

<b>1. Consensus</b>	<p>Consensus occurs when all team members get a chance to voice their opinions and all agree and support the outcome. <b>If any team member disagrees, then the discussions continue until all can agree and support the outcome.</b></p> <p>When using this method, the team should identify how it will be determined that consensus has been achieved by using approaches such as fist to five or thumbs up, thumbs down, or thumbs sideways.</p>
<b>2. Majority Rule</b>	<p>This method is democracy in action; the team votes, and the majority wins. Some groups use a modified majority rule model in which a minimum threshold of agreement must be met (e.g., 80%) before it is considered a majority that demonstrates agreement.</p>
<b>3. Minority Rule</b>	<p>This method is used when a subgroup investigates information and makes recommendations to the entire group. When using this method, it is important to determine how final decisions about recommendations from subgroups will be made. This approach can be used to bring information to the entire Leadership Team.</p>
<b>4. Averaging</b>	<p>This is the ultimate method of compromise. Team members discuss, haggle, and negotiate an intentional middle position.</p>
<b>5. Expert</b>	<p>Either an expert on the team or an external one brought in for a specific decision provides a recommendation for the team to follow.</p>
<b>6. Authority Rule without Discussion</b>	<p>This method typically leaves no room for discussion. The predetermined decision maker hands down the decisions to be followed by the team. If using this method, it is important to identify who has the authority for all decisions within each area (e.g., assessment, curriculum).</p>
<b>7. Authority Rule with Discussion</b>	<p>This is also called participative decision-making. Using this method, those in the decision-making role make their authority clear to all, and then all team members engage in a lively discussion on the issues. Everyone's opinion counts. When the discussion starts to repeat with no new insight offered, the discussion ends. The decision-maker makes the decision, informs every one of the outcome, and explains how his or her input affected the decision. If using this method, it is important to identify who has the authority for all decisions or within each area (e.g., assessment, curriculum).</p>

Decision-Making Method	Pros	Cons
Consensus		
Majority Rule		
Minority Rule		
Averaging		
Expert		
Authority Rule without Discussion		
Authority Rule with Discussion		

Primary decision-making strategy decided upon by DLT \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary decision-making strategy \_\_\_\_\_

Some districts might need to complete a document called a Decision-Making Matrix. This document is designed to explain who makes the decision, who provides input, and who is informed of the decision across a variety of areas. While larger districts might have to document more of these areas due to additional staff members and responsibilities, most districts can benefit from clearly documenting their processes for decisions regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment during their work in building an MTSS structure. An example of this document for the curriculum, instruction, and assessment areas can be found below.

<b>Function</b>	<b>Decision Maker</b>	<b>Input</b>	<b>Notify</b>
<b>Curriculum</b>			
Core Curriculum			
Intervention Curriculum			
<b>Assessments</b>			
Screeners			
Diagnostic			
Summative			
Formative			
<b>Instruction</b>			
Universal Instructional Practices			
Professional Development			

**District Leadership Team Membership**

USD Number & Name:	
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Team Member Name	Represents/Voice of/Expertise	Specific Responsibilities

Leadership Team Norms:

Decision- Making Method:

Frequency of Leadership Team Meetings:

## Norms

- 1. Understand the importance of developing norms to guide the collaboration of the district leadership team.**
- 2. Determine what needs to be addressed within your norms.**
- 3. Create, publicize, and enforce the agreed upon norms as the team collaborates.**

Team norms are a valuable tool in guiding the collaboration of the leadership team. Norms have been shown to promote a spirit of inquiry, increase productive listening and responding, create high-functioning, committed groups, and develop successful collaborative relationships (Garmston & Wellman, 2014).

As part of the process of developing norms, teams must consider the way in which they currently function. When creating the team norms, consider the following questions: Do they have honest discussions? How can they ensure everyone is heard? Do team members release personal agendas in order to benefit the needs of the group?

The goal of the team norms should be to promote skilled, collaborative dialogue as a part of effective team meetings. Kansas MTSS and Alignment refers to three norms for consideration of all teams.

1. Candor – being open and honest in expression
2. Vulnerability – the quality or state of being exposed
3. Non Judgmentalism – avoiding being overly critical of other people

These norms may be enough to guide the team's work. Individual leadership teams should determine what additional norms may be needed in order to allow for their team to be as effective as possible.



## Assess Current State of the District and Determine the District’s Priorities and Focus Areas

1. Collect and organize district-level data.
2. Plan for a data discussion with the KS MTSS team.
3. Use a Focused Conversation or another method of analyzing the data.
4. Identify the district’s area of need, using the results of the data day, the district’s strategic plan, and the district’s KESA goals.
5. Determine if any feedback is needed before making the final decision on focus areas for implementation of the KS MTSS.
6. Communicate the decision to all stakeholders for feedback.

The process of determining a district’s priorities and focus areas for KS MTSS implementation can happen in a variety of ways. Often, districts have existing strategic plans, and all districts in Kansas have identified goals through their accreditation process. These already existing goals should be used as a starting point for identifying focus areas for the work of the Kansas MTSS. It is worth considering that, in data-driven districts, data should be used to help teams prioritize areas of improvement. District leaders and administrators should work side by side to first analyze the current state of their district and understand the areas of greatest need and those areas in which students are achieving and not achieving.

Using data from reviews is a good way to begin the discussion around the greatest needs of the district and how the findings connect to the existing strategic plans and KESA goals. District Leadership should collect and gather data from grades PreK-12 in the areas of reading, math, behavior, and social-emotional learning as well as systems data such as results from the Kansas Educational Resource and Initiative Inventory (KERII). Review the chart below for possible data sources.

Type of Data Used	Explanation of What It Measures	How to Obtain
Academic Screener	Percent of students at benchmark and at-risk in academics and/or behavior.	District-, building-, and/or grade-level reports from the district’s screening system
State Assessment 5-Year Trend Data	The district’s 5-year trend in performance on state assessments and their 5-year trend in terms of growth for all students and for subgroups.	KSDE’s Performance Level Reports
ACT	District ACT average. Used to compare the district with comparable districts.	KSDE’s Data Central
Demographics	Comparing a district’s percent of students who are identified as Special Education and a district’s free and reduced status with comparable districts.	KSDE’s Data Central
Post-Secondary Progress	District’s Post-Secondary Effective Rate	KSDE’s Data Central
Communities that Care	Climate Type report for the last three years to determine specific climate categories that might need attention.	Available to school districts annually in the AMOSS system
Chronic Absenteeism/Attendance	The percent of students district wide that were absent 10% or more of the time as compared to the	KSDE’s Data Central, district’s

	state AND the percent of students that have attended 90% of the time or more per grade level in the most current school year.	school information system
Graduation Rate	A district's yearly graduation rate	KSDE's Data Central
Office Discipline Referrals	The percent of the students with zero referrals per building and top three most referred behavior concerns or top three overall behavior concerns in a classroom.	District's school information system

One way to begin to analyze this data is through a structured process called a "Focused Conversation." A Focused Conversation leads the team through a conversation together, first starting with more observational questions, into reflection questions, then into interpretive questions and finally into decisional questions. This structure encourages full participation and leads to more enriching, meaningful discussions around the data. It also keeps team members from jumping to conclusions about the reason behind the data.

Use the example of focused conversation questions as you process the data you have collected and make notes of the findings of your team.

**Objective Questions:**

1. What are the first things you notice about the data?
2. Describe what you are seeing in this data.
3. What data catches your eye/attention?
4. What strengths do you see?
5. What are the facts?
6. Are there particular grade levels that stand out?
7. What questions of clarity do you have?

**Reflective Questions:**

1. What's your reaction to this data?
2. What pleases or excites you? What are you proud of?
3. What surprises you?
4. What concerns you?
5. What data makes you think?
6. What do you think parents'/the community's reaction to this data would be?
7. What data seems consistent with your experiences?

**Interpretive Questions:**

1. What year-to-year trends or patterns emerge?
2. What trends or patterns emerge when comparing multiple different data sources? (for example, state assessment data as compared to screening data)
3. Where are you strong or weak relative to the expectations?
  - a. What might be the cause of this strength or weakness?
4. What does this tell you about your impact on student learning?
5. What are some similarities and differences you are noticing among the content areas?
6. What might be some underlying causes?
7. What are some emerging themes in all this information?
8. Considering these trends, what areas need immediate attention?
9. What areas may benefit from long-term goals?
10. What area(s) are most important to you? Why? What needs to be dealt with first?

**Decisional Questions:**

1. What areas do you hear the group saying are the highest priorities for the improvement of your district?
2. What priority area(s) do you most need to focus on improving first? Why?

When discussing the decisional questions, it will be necessary to review and utilize the group’s decision-making method. Once the data has been analyzed, is important that these priorities and the focus of the district be communicated clearly and consistently. As Jay Westover has noted in his book, Districts on the Move, “The issue at hand is a lack of clarity and precision that diminishes the impact on equitable improvement of student learning outcomes” (Westover, 2020).

***Document your District Goals/Focus Areas:***

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Data will be continually examined at all levels of the school district. There are five steps to this process through Kansas MTSS and Alignment.

**Step 1: Review and Validate Universal Screening Data** – This means that the teams will consider the validity of scores for their students. Discuss and review any information collected regarding the following issues:

- Were the directions for the administration of the screening assessment followed exactly?
- Were the time limits for each test followed exactly?
- Was shadow scoring used to check scoring fidelity (academics only)?
- Were assessments given within the window for administration as outlined on your assessment calendar?
- Were all staff members who administered the assessment adequately trained?
- Did Collaborative Teams verify the individual student data?

**Step 2: Analyze Data** – The goal of the district should be to have at least 80% of their students within the On Track range or above. If the district has fewer than 80% of students in this range, several potential causes should be considered:

- Are core instruction and core curriculum (including social and behavioral expectations) being implemented with fidelity? How do you know?
- Is core instruction taught using evidence-based practices?
- Are concepts being taught to mastery?

- Are there sufficient examples, explanations, and opportunities for practice to support new learning?
- In terms of differentiating the core, what thoughts arise with regard to the strengths and needs of district staff?
- Are professional development or supports needed for teachers regarding the core curriculum or instruction?

**Step 3: Use Data to Group Students** – Grouping students according to instructional recommendation is not sufficient. Selecting the appropriate interventions to match individual student needs requires deeper data analysis. Specific instructions and tools to be used for grouping students for reading, math, and behavioral supports can be found in these respective guides.

**Step 4: Determine Focus of Intervention** – Once the initial grouping is complete, teams face the task of making sure the intervention groups are homogeneous in need, appropriate in size, effectively staffed, and equipped with a curriculum that matches the instructional focus for that group.

**Step 5: Progress Monitoring** – Ongoing progress monitoring is essential for students receiving interventions to ensure that all students are making adequate progress. Data from progress monitoring tracks how students are responding to an intervention; without this data, instruction is just a best guess.

**Step 6: Document Interventions** – It is critical for teams to keep a record of what has occurred for a student in addition to their progress monitoring data. Both universal screening and progress monitoring data need to be organized so they are useable for teams to determine when to make an adjustment in intervention. Keeping both data sources easily accessible for all stakeholders is a good method for ensuring its use by interventionists and core classroom teachers.

**Developing A Rationale for the Implementation of Kansas MTSS**

1. With the District Leadership Team, review the data and other circumstances that have led to the application and desired implementation of the KS MTSS.
2. Summarize the data and information and draft into concise statements.
3. Plan to communicate the rationale for the implementation of KS MTSS with all stakeholders.

The choice to move toward the implementation of Kansas MTSS is up to the leadership and staff members within the school/district. There must be strong support and a commitment to complete the work necessary to create a sustainable system. It is important to understand and be able to communicate to others the importance of spending time and energy toward this effort. With the basic information covered thus far, leadership teams can begin describing why it might be important to engage in this work and what is to be achieved.

1. What are the current situations (concerns, circumstances, traditions, etc.) that led to participation in Kansas MTSS implementation?

2. Describe the current situation that you believe the Kansas MTSS will improve.

3. What relevant data and analysis led to the determination that the situation needs to be improved and that you should build an MTSS?

***Our rationale for implementing the KS MTSS:***

- \_\_\_\_\_ -
- \_\_\_\_\_ -
- \_\_\_\_\_ -

## Identify a Shared Vision, Mission, and Core Beliefs

1. Review the district's vision and mission statement.
2. Discuss whether these statements need revision or should be better communicated among all stakeholders.
3. Within the district leadership team (DLT), individually brainstorm the core beliefs of the members of the DLT.
4. Combine the individual core beliefs into categories that are similar. Identify DLT members who will draft core belief statements to be shared with the whole team for final revision and approval.
5. As a team, determine and document the behaviors, actions, and decisions throughout the district that indicate alignment with the district's core beliefs. Discuss and document those behaviors, actions, and decisions that are not in alignment with the district's core beliefs.

Culture is defined as the behaviors and beliefs that are characteristic of a particular group. Culture affects how people act on what they believe. Culture is a blend of the group's vision, mission, beliefs, and values.

A vision/mission is a statement about what the organization wants to become, speaking in terms of possibilities, not probabilities. A vision/mission should stretch the organization's capabilities and image of itself, giving shape and direction to the organization's future. It is a guiding image of success and ensures that everyone is working toward the same goals. Vision/mission statements often include information related to the mission of the organization, providing a blueprint for the work that will be conducted. The vision/mission statement should be something that resonates with all members of the organization and helps them feel proud, excited, and part of something much bigger than themselves.

When creating a shared vision/mission, it is essential that the leadership team work with all staff members to cultivate the shared picture of an idyllic future. Such a shared vision/mission captures the collective imagination of everyone in the school. It is a vivid picture of a place that could be very different because the school community collectively committed to creating it (Conzemius & O'Neill, 2001).

A well-crafted vision/mission has many benefits and will generate commitment, create meaning in the work being done, establish a standard of excellence, and bridge the present to the future for all stakeholders (Nanus, 1992). The vision/mission motivates stakeholders to act and create as well as change what is not working for students. Stakeholders should easily identify their roles in assisting the school to fulfill the vision/mission.

A shared vision/mission ultimately helps schools answer these questions:

- Where do we want to be in the future?
- How great can we become?
- What do we want to create together?

Often a school already has a vision and/or mission statement in place. If that is the case, a review of the statement is necessary to ensure that it is still accurate in representing the vision of the staff and is successful in establishing a culture of commitment and change. During the review of the current statement, if any sections are determined to be in conflict with MTSS practices and principles, the leadership team should make the appropriate revisions.

If a school currently does not have a vision/mission statement, it is imperative that the leadership team work together to create one. As the district moves forward with the Kansas MTSS, practices that support regularly scheduled reviews of the vision/mission will be taught. It is critical that the vision/mission be projected as the inspiration or ideal for which the team is striving. Identifying measurable objectives or goals that will aid in moving the building forward toward the vision/mission based on the data being collected is an important way for teams to gauge their progress. For example, a building can create a vision/mission that states, “All students will graduate with 21st-century skills.” One commitment that might be identified to attain this vision/mission is “We will improve attendance by 20% by the end of this school year.” This is a small step in moving closer to the vision/mission. Indeed, students cannot graduate with 21st-century skills if they do not attend school.

The challenge is to create a vision/mission that is grand enough to inspire people while also being sufficiently grounded in reality so that people can start to believe that it can and will happen. No Olympic athlete ever got to the Olympics by accident; a compelling vision/mission of his or her stellar performance helped surmount all of the sweat and frustrations for many years. A powerful, attractive, valuable vision/mission makes the effort rewarding and worthwhile. Sometimes organizations far surpass their initial visions/missions; as progress happens, the extent of possibility expands. Nonetheless, the projected picture of success is a reminder of why you are working so hard and will continue to inspire success.

Core beliefs are the internal shared convictions and related actions by which staff members want to live, as seen by those external to the system. They are operating principles and, as such, serve as the standard against which all decisions are measured. For example, one of the Kansas MTSS Core Beliefs is, “Every member of the education community continues to grow, learn, and reflect.” If the leadership team determines that instructional aides and paraprofessionals will not be included in professional development, this core belief is not truly being reflected in practice.

The Kansas MTSS Core Beliefs were created by stakeholders from across the state. This list is helpful in providing a frame of reference about the intention of Kansas MTSS as a whole; however, ultimately, each district must agree to and adopt core beliefs that are contextually meaningful and relevant in guiding local decision-making.

The ultimate success of the Kansas MTSS within a building depends on the agreement of all stakeholders about their shared beliefs. Therefore, to build a Kansas MTSS that is supportive of all students, it is necessary to ensure that the beliefs are explicit and that they drive the decision-making process. If a plan, decision, or set of actions conflicts with the beliefs, then it is likely that dissatisfaction, conflict, and indecision will occur. When plans, decisions, and actions are aligned with beliefs, then the focus, commitment, and energy help complete the tasks at hand.

Examples of belief statements:

- We believe each student can learn; thus, we must set and support clear and high expectations.
- We believe that school connectedness is vital to the success of all students; thus, all employees have a role and responsibility in each student’s success.
- We believe that schools belong to the community and, as a result, we must be accountable.
- We believe that we must provide a quality learning environment for each student; thus, we must establish a welcoming, safe, and well-maintained school.

***Our Vision:***

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***Our Mission:***

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<b>These are the core beliefs of:</b>		
We believe:	This means:	This does not mean:
Value(s) Related to this Core Belief:		
Commitment Related to this Core Belief:		
We believe:	This means:	This does not mean:
Value(s) Related to this Core Belief:		
Commitment Related to this Core Belief:		
We believe:	This means:	This does not mean:
Value(s) Related to this Core Belief:		
Commitment Related to this Core Belief:		

## Controlling the Narrative

1. **Identify stakeholder groups within your school system.**
2. **Make a list of what needs to be communicated and who will provide the communication to each of these stakeholder groups.**
3. **Discuss the feedback and/or input that will be requested from each of these groups. Make decisions as to how this feedback will be used.**
4. **As a DLT, discuss how you will tell stories about your strengths instead of defending your weaknesses.**
5. **Identify priority areas and/or set goals for establishing a positive school climate with stakeholder groups.**

If you had 15 seconds to tell your district's story (what you stand for and believe in), what would you say? Is it consistent with what others would say? Why or why not?

What tangible things can your district do to control the narrative in a positive way and begin to build social capital?

In order to control the narrative of your school system, you must first identify what that narrative is – what are you trying to say at this time, what is the image/tone you wish to project, how do you want your system to be perceived? Make sure this narrative is consistent with who you really are, including the core values that define your system. In controlling your narrative, you have a number of different communication platforms to use, including direct emails, phone calls, your school's social media profiles, newsletter, communication app, in-person meetings, and even local media. Learn what's at your disposal and what platforms are best for you to use depending on the circumstances.

When the long-term success of a system is important, we must ask ourselves, “To whom do the schools belong?” and “Who has a vested interest in the success of our students?” Internal stakeholders are those who work within the school system on a daily basis and who largely control what goes on. They include school staff, district staff, and (to some extent) school boards. External stakeholders are those outside the day-to-day work of the schools who have a strong interest in school outcomes, but we do not directly determine what goes into producing those outcomes. The families who send their children to our schools, the taxpayers who support the schools, and the businesses who hire our graduates are sample stakeholder groups with a vested interest. In this light, external stakeholders can be highly motivated and can become powerful drivers to help achieve and sustain positive change in our schools (Sustaining Reading First, Engaging Stakeholders, 2009).

Your brand dictates how people feel when your school is mentioned. The most success comes from starting with the great things going on in your classrooms. Dialogue alone doesn't ensure a successful partnership; information sharing must be transparent, and achievement data must be clear, accurate, and meaningful. All effort should be mission oriented and data driven. People's perception becomes their reality, and we need to shape that perception

to create the reality we want people to have when they think of our schools. As leaders and administrators, you are responsible for branding your schools and creating your realities.

### Stakeholder Mapping Activity

<b>Stakeholder Group</b>	<b>What information do they need?</b>	<b>Who will provide the communication and how?</b>	<b>What feedback/input will be requested?</b>	<b>How will this feedback be used?</b>
<b>Students</b>				
<b>Faculty &amp; Staff</b>				
<b>Parents</b>				
<b>Administration</b>				
<b>Board of Education</b>				
<b>School Groups (Booster Club, PTO, etc.)</b>				
<b>Site Council</b>				
<b>Community Leaders/ Business Entities</b>				
<b>Local Media Sources</b>				
<b>Legislative Contacts</b>				
<b>Other District Partnerships/ Organizational Stakeholders:</b>				

## Action Communication Plan

1. **Make a list of what needs to be communicated and who will provide the communication to each of these stakeholder groups.**
2. **Intentionally document further MTSS work that needs to be done within your system.**

An Action Communication Plan will ensure communication is efficient and received by all relevant stakeholders. Districts should use the communication plan consistently, refer to the plan before each meeting, and assign communication tasks to appropriate team members after each meeting.

When creating your Action/Communication plan, consider these questions:

- Who needs the information?
- What information do they need?
- When will communication occur?
- Who will provide the information?
- How will the communication be provided?
- What feedback/input will be requested?
- When will feedback/input be shared with the leadership team?
- How will the feedback/input be used?

As your district works through the MTSS process, it will be important to consider the information that is being communicated to staff members who are not attending training. This is an example of a way in which leaders control the narrative related to what is happening within their district. The table below provides an example of some of the items that might need to be communicated with staff members as a district moves through the process.

Progress into MTSS	Communication Topics to Consider
Exploration and Beginning of Phase 1	Rationale for adopting MTSS Description of current state/situation to be affected Description of the desired actions Create a sense of urgency for change Method and frequency at which the group will receive information How decisions are made How staff will be supported Timeline of activities/change How each group can have input
Phase 1 into Phase 2	Core beliefs Vision Commitments/Non-negotiable items that guide decisions Timeline for activities/change decisions that have been made Decisions that have yet to be made How each group can have input
Phase 2 and Phase 3	What is being done Timeline for activities Expectations of staff What the data is showing How staff members can get more opportunities for collaboration

Through your work with Kansas MTSS and Alignment, the following action plan will be used:

### KS MTSS Action/Communication Plan

Actions to consider with **EACH** session:

1. What are our next steps based on today's learning?
2. What information needs to be disseminated to other leadership teams (CTs, BLT, DLT) and by whom?
3. How can we follow-up and ensure new knowledge is being applied?

Session 1				
Tasks	Person Responsible	Begin Date	Completion Date	How will we know this has been completed? (Fidelity Check)

Communicate What?	To Which Stakeholders?	When and How?	By Whom?	Feedback Requested?

- What feedback was received from other teams that needs to be addressed?

## **Inquiry Cycle for Measuring Impact**

- 1. Understand the importance of measuring the evidence of impact for work within schools.**
- 2. Determine a process for implementation that emphasizes planning and monitoring effectiveness.**
- 3. Continually evaluate initiatives and adjust to maximize effectiveness.**

School leaders and teachers are responsible for inquiring periodically into the impact they are having on the learning lives of students. In other words, they consistently evaluate their practices and adjust them according to evidence they have collected and analyzed that allows all teachers and students to succeed (Corwin Visible Learning Foundation Series).

The use of an impact/implementation cycle provides structure to the review of implementation within a school district. The Kansas MTSS and Alignment has adopted an impact cycle structure that can be utilized by school districts to provide this structure. The Kansas MTSS and Alignment impact cycle consists of 6 steps.

**Step 1: Change Readiness** – Within this step, the school district should evaluate its capacity for change. This might include looking at current district initiatives, available resources (both financial and personnel), etc. Additionally, school districts should examine the question, “What problem is this supposed to solve?” before beginning a new process through the impact cycle.

**Step 2: Investigation** – During initial implementation, this step involves looking at baseline evidence associated with the initiative the district intends to implement. Data should be gathered and examined at multiple levels in order to identify the problem being addressed by the initiative. This step can also be revisited later in the process as a district moves from piloting a new initiative to implementing it in additional classrooms, grade levels, or buildings.

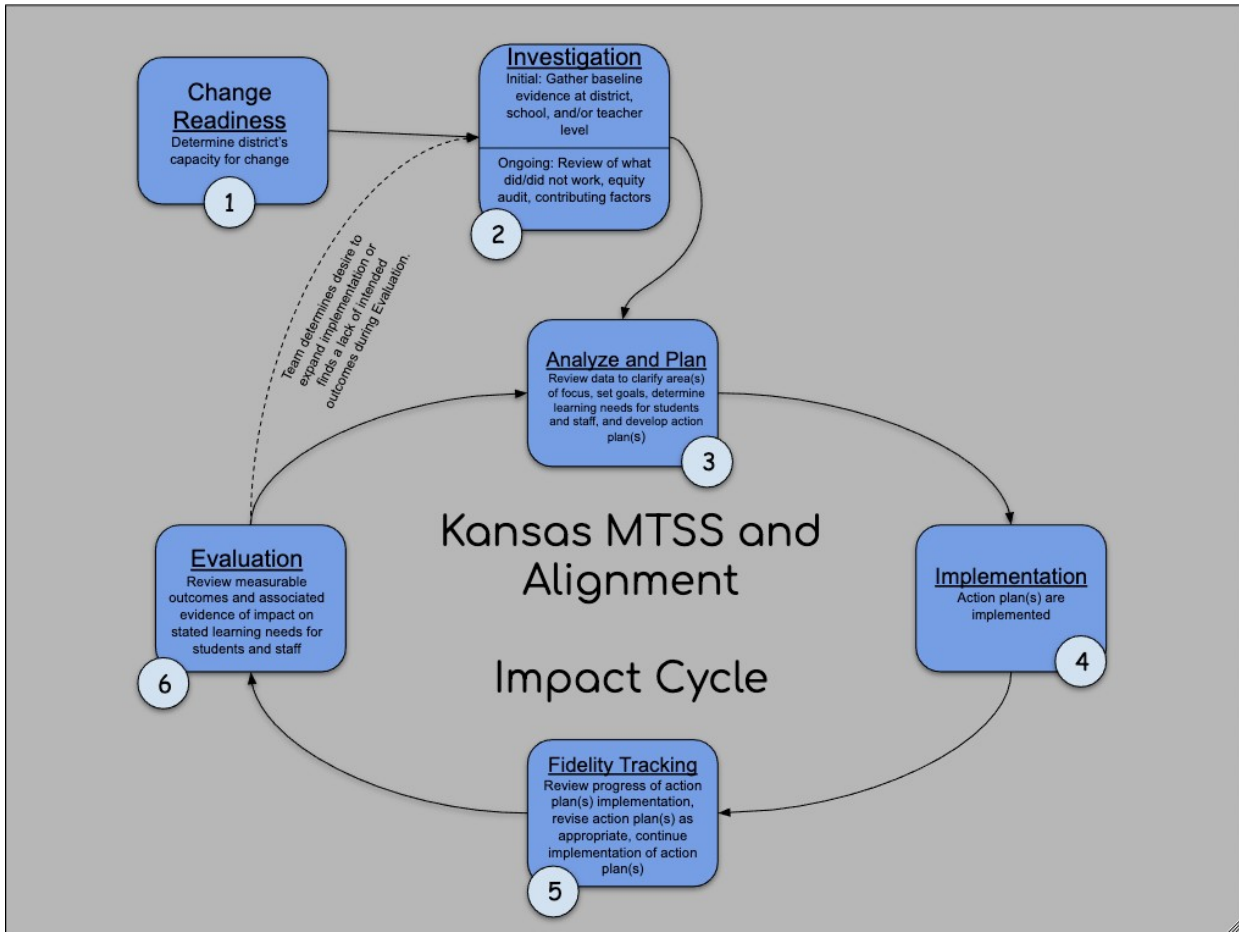
**Step 3: Analyze and Plan** – This step involves creating the structure for implementation. Teams should review the data in order to set goals for the success of the implemented initiative. School leaders also should determine the learning needs of their staff in order to both implement and set the plan for the implementation successfully.

**Step 4: Implementation** – The action plan that was created in Step 3 is implemented. This action plan can include selected classrooms, grade levels, buildings, or the entire staff.

**Step 5: Fidelity Tracking** – As the action plan is being implemented, school or district leaders monitor the fidelity with which the action plan is being implemented. Adjustments are made as necessary, and expectations are communicated and monitored by leadership.

**Step 6: Evaluation** – After an amount of time determined during the planning step, data will be reviewed for effectiveness of implementation. Adjustments can be made at this step based on the data. Effective initiatives should be continued and will remain in the cycle. Effective initiatives piloted in select groups can be scaled to increase their impact. Ineffective initiatives can be adjusted or discontinued.

School leadership teams must be aware of the capacity of their school system. This knowledge allows the school or district leadership team to control the quantity of initiatives in which the building or district remains focused. All implemented initiatives should be continually evaluated to determine their effectiveness and make the necessary adjustments.



School districts might already have a system in place for monitoring the impact and implementation of their initiatives. Use the area below to document any structures used, outside of the Kansas MTSS and Alignment Impact Cycle, by the school district.

## Analyze Data from the Initiative Inventory

1. **Access the district’s results from the KERII site and review the data submitted from your staff.**
2. **Identify the factors that will determine which initiatives will continue and which will discontinue and how the decision will be made.**
  - a. **Take into consideration the fit of these initiatives with the goals of the district, the evidence behind the current initiatives, the impact of the current initiatives on student achievement, and the capacity of the staff to implement the current initiatives.**
3. **Sort the initiatives into three categories: District Initiatives, Non-Initiatives, and Initiatives to Discontinue.**
4. **Use these categories and the district’s decision-making methods and processes to determine which initiatives the district will focus on, narrow down those that will become part of curriculum protocols, and determine which assessments will become part of the comprehensive assessment plan.**

The Law of Initiative Fatigue states that, when the number of initiatives increases while time, resources, and emotional energy are constant, then each new initiative – no matter how well conceived or well intentioned – will receive fewer minutes, dollars, and ounces of emotional energy than its predecessors (Reeves, 2010).

In an effort to determine what is taking place within a district, align systems and efforts, reduce initiatives, focus on the things that make an impact for students, and eliminate things that do not help the district reach its goals, Kansas MTSS has developed the Kansas MTSS Educational Resource and Initiative Inventory (KERII). The KERII is to be administered to all certified staff members in the district and gives teachers the opportunity to provide feedback in order to determine potential inefficiencies or areas of focus for the district.

Initiatives to be included in this survey include:

1. Curriculum and Instruction – Adoption and implementation of curricular programs or instructional practices meant to address specific areas or student needs.
2. Assessment – Assessment systems including screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic, interim, formative, or summative assessments used for monitoring, and making decisions based on student data.
3. Hiring practices – Efforts made by the system in hiring, onboarding, and retaining quality staff.
4. Professional Learning/Educator Development – Adoption and implementation of system-wide and/or building-wide professional learning plans for staff.
5. Climate/Culture – Initiatives beyond academic goals in order to impact the overall atmosphere of the school or district.

The Kansas MTSS District Alignment Specialists will work with district leadership teams to analyze the information and data generated by the KERII and help align efforts, improve efficiency, and improve the implementation of the initiatives on which the district will focus.

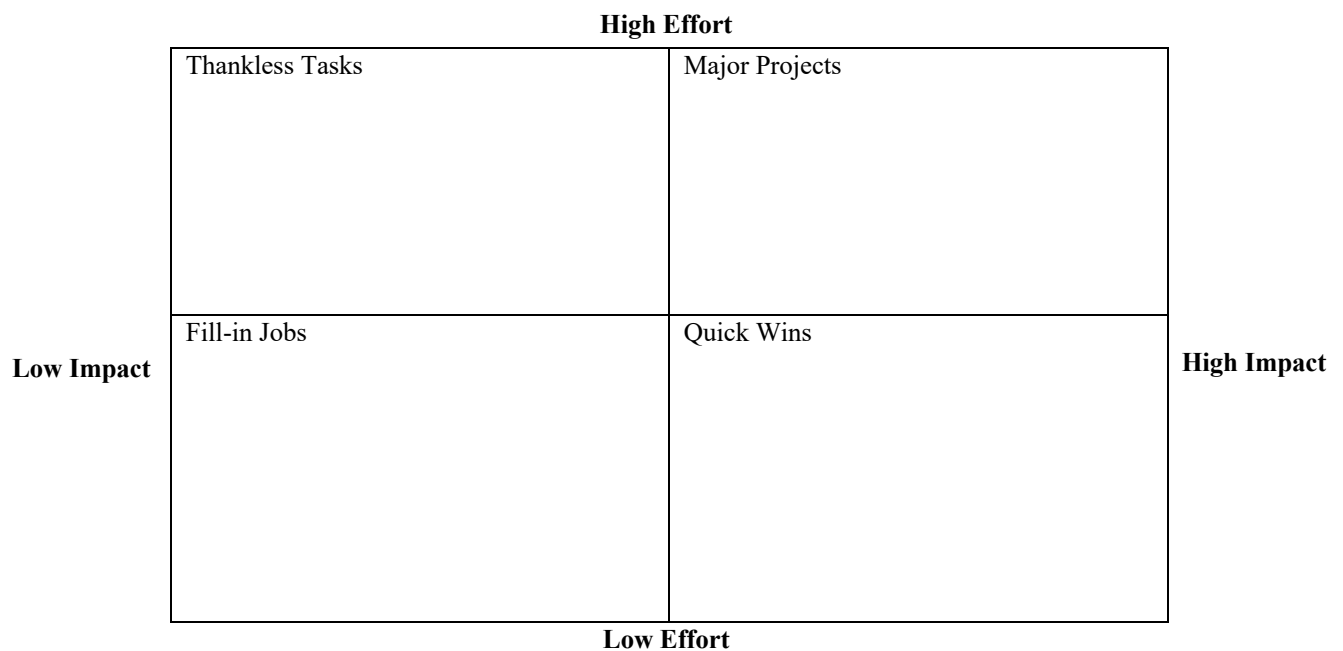
The district leadership team will identify factors that will determine which initiatives will continue and which may be discontinued. Questions to consider during this discussion should include the following:

- If we have evidence that something works for students, but is only being done in pockets of our district, how can we scale up this initiative?



- If we are doing something for students that does not have evidence that it works, why are we allowing that item to take time away from other initiatives?
- What data do you have to measure the success or impact of the initiative on intended outcomes?
- How well aligned is the initiative with your strategic plan or KESA goals?
- Are there initiatives that are required?
- Are there decisions that will require us to gather more information?
- How can we communicate decisions made during this process?

**The district leadership team should sort initiatives into four quadrants:**



This step enables districts to develop a process for selecting and adopting new initiatives as well as discontinuing initiatives that do not lead to improved student outcomes or are in conflict with the direction and goals of the district. The development of this process will be described in the next step.

## **New Initiatives**

- Upon completion of the work regarding the initiative inventory, school district leaders should determine a process that will be taken when considering the implementation of future initiatives.
- This process should include the examination of current district initiatives as well as consideration of the new initiative being considered.

In order to maintain a coherent system with well-defined purpose, districts should be intentional when considering new initiatives once the initiative inventory process has been completed. Below is an example process for selection of new district initiatives:

### **Current Focus Initiatives of the District**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Considerations for the New Initiative**

What problem is being solved by the new initiative?

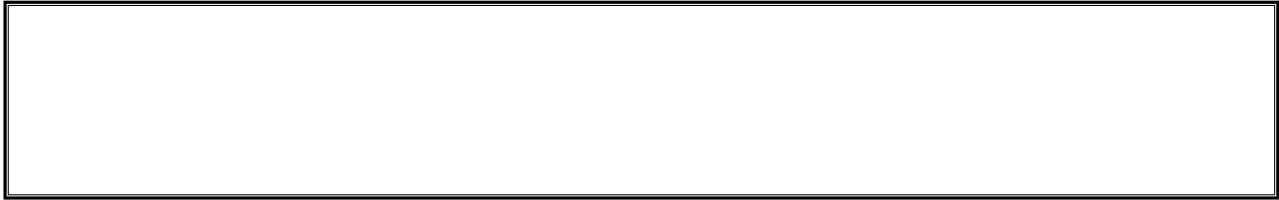
Is there evidence to support the new initiative?

Does the new initiative align with our current district vision, mission, core beliefs, and/or goals?

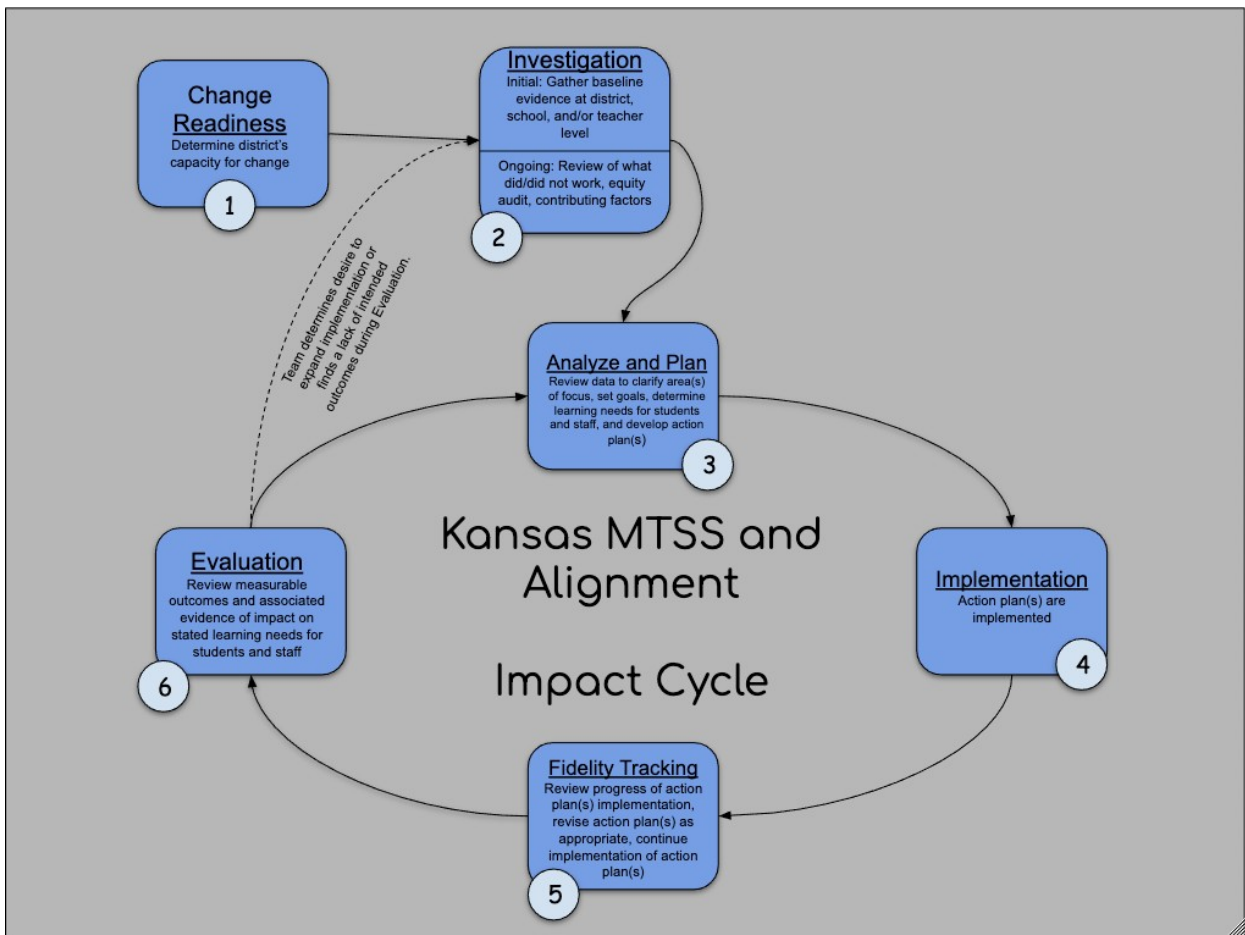
Which of our current initiatives will be replaced by the new initiative? Or are we willing to add a new focus for the district without removing one of our current initiatives?

When adding the new initiative to our district timeline, what benchmarks and professional development must be considered? What will be our timeline for determining effectiveness?

Can the initiative be implemented into our current structure? (Would we need additional teams or new committees in order to implement it?)



In addition to the previous questions, districts should utilize cycles of inquiry whenever attempting to implement a new initiative. Below is the Kansas MTSS and Alignment inquiry cycle for measuring impact for reference as a potential process to undergo when new initiatives are being implemented in order to increase the potential for successful implementation.



## Develop the Self-Correcting Feedback Loop

- Review the information about the Self-Correcting Feedback Loop (SCFL).
- As a team, brainstorm regarding which currently existing teams serve the purpose of district leadership teams, building leadership teams, and collaborative teams.
- Do an audit of teams that exist outside of the SCFL and describe the purpose of each team.
- Using the district’s decision-making method and process and necessary input from other stakeholders, determine which teams will continue and why and which teams can possibly be merged into the SCFL.
- Either develop a graphic that represents your district’s SCFL or adapt the one from KS MTSS to fit your context.
- Consider options for scheduling collaborative time into your schedules.
- Communicate the graphic and revised method of communication and data analysis throughout the system to all stakeholders.
- Review the building leadership team description with building-level administrators. Have each building administrator select appropriate representative team members to make up the Building Leadership Team (BLT).
- Get feedback from all stakeholders, including Special Education, Title Services, EL Department, etc.
- As a district leadership team, review the BLT membership to ensure appropriate representation.
- Plan for communication about the creation of BLTs and when the new BLTs will have their first meeting.

The defining element of an effective MTSS is a self-correcting feedback loop, achieved using a problem-solving process that continually collects data, analyzes results, and makes adjustments aimed at positively influencing student learning and achievement. While the term “self-correcting” suggests something that happens automatically, the reality is that there is nothing automatic about it. The forces behind the self-correcting feedback loop are teams working in concert toward a common vision. In order to ensure that all parts of the feedback loop are functioning, teams must utilize bi-directional communication in a clear, consistent fashion.

The cycle of **Improving Instruction** in the graphic represents the work of collaborative teams comprised of teachers and support staff who oversee analyzing data (screening, diagnostic, and progress-monitoring) at the grade, classroom, small group, and individual student levels. The collaborative teams use data to group students; identify the instructional focus of the groups; ascertain the materials used for core, strategic, and intensive instruction; and evaluate the effectiveness of the supports provided. Collaborative teams have the ultimate responsibility of informing the building leadership team of how the system is operating on the front lines. Members of the collaborative teams are “in the trenches,” so to speak, providing insights regarding potential system issues. Information is proactively communicated to the building leadership team for a timely, effective response.

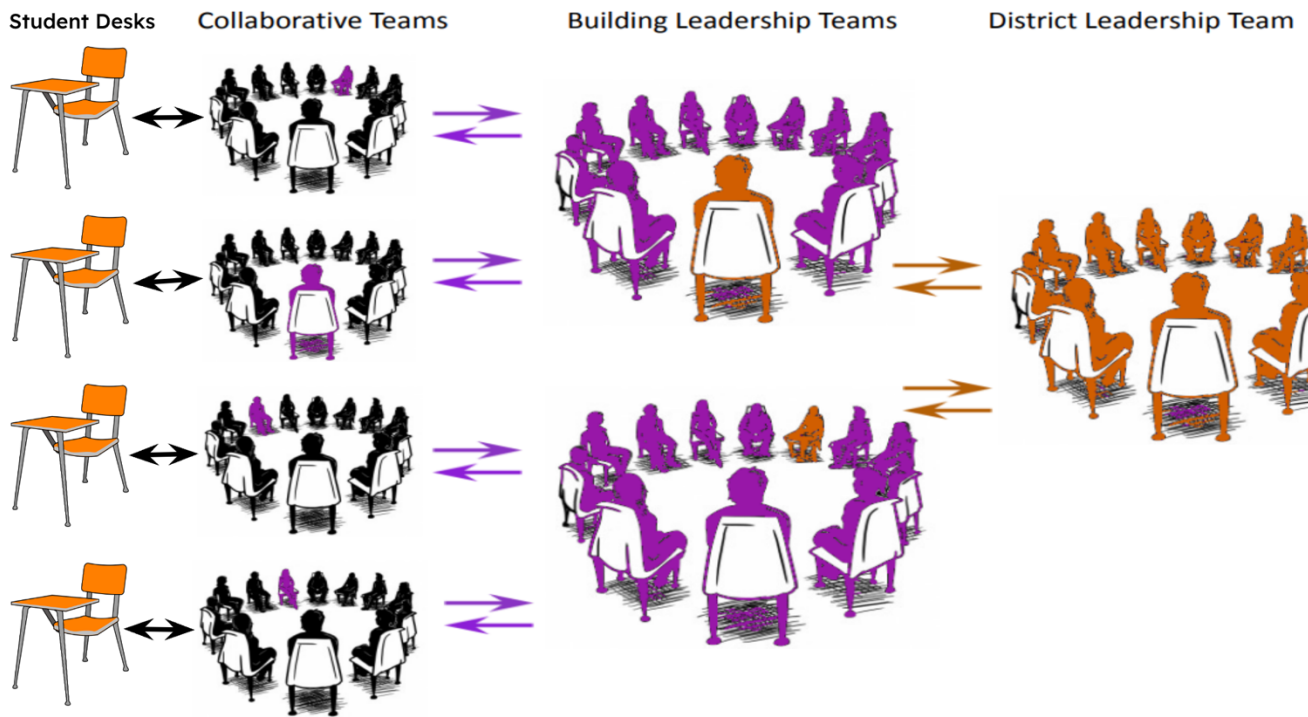
The cycle of **Improving the Building System** in the graphic represents the work of the building leadership team, made up of members of collaborative teams representing all grade levels as well as other appropriate staff members. The building leadership team, led by the building principal, is responsible for making all the pieces of the system function effectively and ensuring that student learning is monitored and evaluated. To accomplish this, the building leadership team analyzes input from the collaborative teams in addition to building-level student data. The leadership team determines whether components of the system demonstrate adequate effectiveness to determine if adjustments are needed.

When adjustments are required, the team determines what actions will be taken to refine the system. When results are not consistent with the goals, the building leadership team determines what course of action is needed to improve the system. The building leadership team, with the principal making final decisions, has the ultimate responsibility of ensuring that the system is intentionally redesigned for effective student learning.

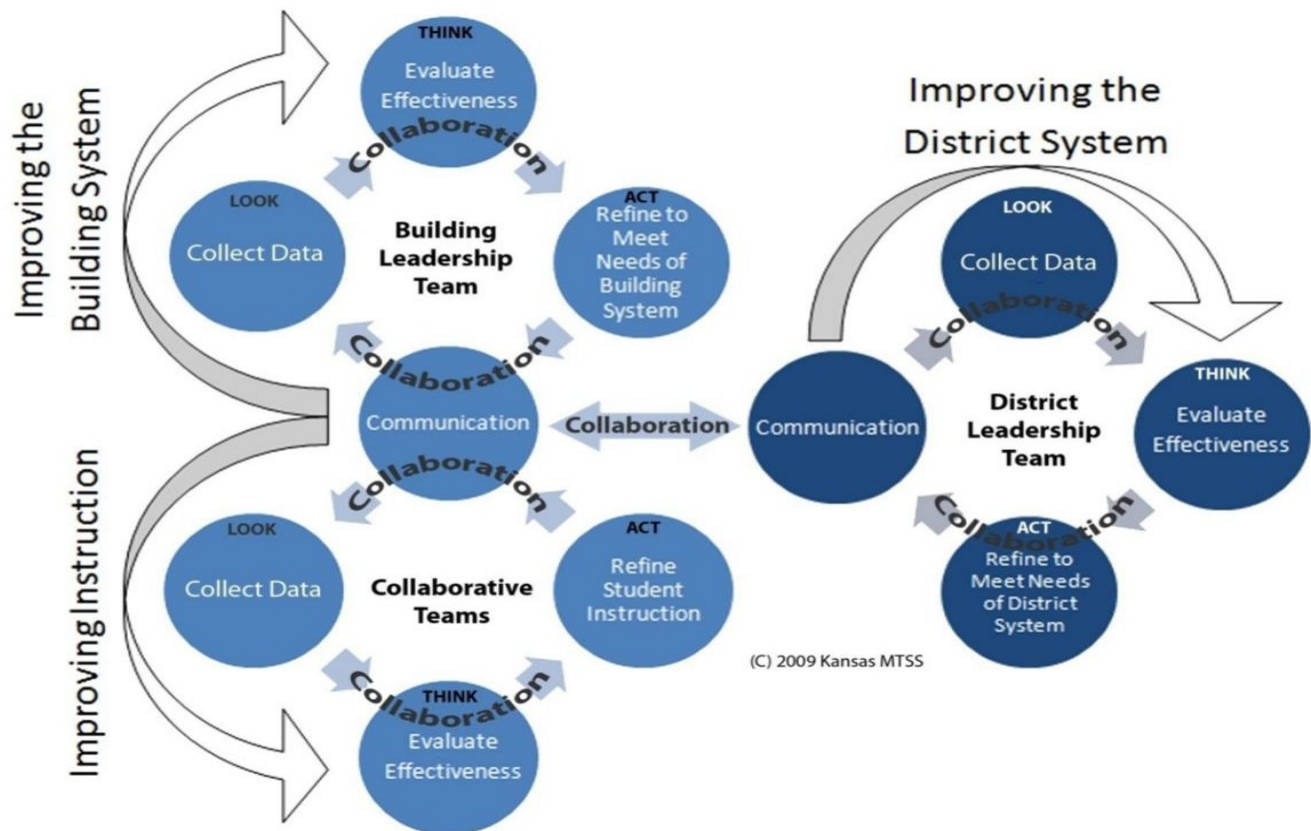
The graphic illustrates the intersection of the two cycles occurring at different levels for different purposes, each communicating with the other. At the intersection of the two circles, the anticipated actions are communicated to the collaborative teams. In addition to the crucial communication between the collaborative teams and the building leadership team, communication with the district leadership team must occur. This is a reciprocal communication, as the building leadership team seeks to share information about successes as well as any need for support from the district. The district then shares its decisions that the building leadership team needs to know so that it can determine the impact on the MTSS.

The district leadership team is made up of members representing schools in the district as well as district leaders. The cycle of **Improving the District System** in the graphic represents the work of the district leadership team. It is the responsibility of this leadership team to ensure that the district system has all of the pieces functioning effectively to support the growth of the MTSS in each building.

To accomplish this, the district leadership team analyzes district- and building-level input and data. Through this analysis, district leadership teams determine the adjustments needed in district supports and communicate what actions or resources will be provided to building leadership teams.



## Self-Correcting Feedback Loop



### Building Leadership Team Membership

Instructional leadership is essential in the process of creating a multi-tier system of supports. Marzano et al. (2005) suggested that an effective school leader is one with a broad array of complex skills. They acknowledged that finding a person with the capacity to master all of those skills is nearly impossible. The solution is to have a strong leadership team comprised of committed individuals who work together to create “a purposeful community of learning.” When identifying leadership team members, administrators must consider the roles and responsibilities to include members with appropriate representation, voice, expertise, and decision-making authority.

The leadership teams need to be large enough to meet responsibilities while remaining small enough to operate efficiently. The goal is to align all state, federal, and local programs/resources appropriately and effectively into a single system with multiple ways of supporting each student. The team should include administrators (including representation from state and federal programs), grade-level/content-area teachers, guidance counselors, and students (in a secondary setting) and community members when appropriate.

When preschool is included in the MTSS effort, it is important to include preschool staff members on appropriate leadership teams. These programs can be administered collaboratively with the school and sometimes outside of the school administrative structure. It is important to invite someone who can adequately represent the program and make appropriate decisions to be part of the leadership teams.

The role of the principal is the most critical component for the success of a multi-tier system of supports (McCook, 2006). The principal must actively support the change not only in actions, but also with the allocation of resources and full participation on the building and district leadership teams. The building administrator also ensures that the building leadership teams build and support the school's culture. The principal must take the leading role and participate in all aspects of the process to achieve success for all students (McCook, 2006).

The building leadership does not complete its work in isolation from stakeholders. The entire leadership team must have a foundational understanding of all issues being addressed. However, members of the leadership team can create workgroups outside of the leadership team when appropriate. Workgroups not only assist in the completion of tasks, but also provide information and recommendations.

The efficacy of building leadership teams is reflected in the development of the system. When identifying the leadership teams, the roles and responsibilities, appropriate representation, voice, expertise, and decision-making authority must be considered. Leadership team membership should represent all appropriate stakeholders, intentionally incorporating the collective strengths, weaknesses, and temperaments of individuals.

### **Collaborative Teams**

Within Kansas MTSS, data are constantly reviewed and shared within the self-correcting feedback loop. Collaborative teams review data related to student improvement, share data and ideas, and collaborate with other teams to refine instructional methods. The communication and collaboration opportunities with the self-correcting feedback loop result in teachers and support staff naturally assuming roles that further facilitate the shared use of data for decision-making. The shared responsibility and action allow the self-correcting feedback loop to function effectively.

The building leadership team is responsible for creating and training the building's collaborative teams. Collaborative teams are comprised of teachers and support staff and oversee analyzing data (screening, diagnostic analysis, and progress monitoring) at the grade, classroom, small group, and individual student levels. The collaborative teams use data to group students, identify the instructional focus of the groups, match protocol interventions to students' need for strategic and intensive instruction, and evaluate the effectiveness of the supports being provided.

In large elementary buildings, collaborative teams are often grade-level teams, while smaller elementary buildings could have a primary team and an intermediate team. In secondary buildings, collaborative teams are often departmental or inter-departmental teams or professional learning communities (PLCs). As collaborative teams and leadership teams engage in the steps of Kansas MTSS implementation, they carry out a problem-solving process.

The student improvement team approach is typically used in buildings that are not implementing the Kansas MTSS. Student Improvement Teams (SITs) carry out the steps of a problem-solving sequence, which results in the development of an intervention plan that documents the child's area of concern, interventions implemented, data reflecting the child's response to the interventions, and recommendations based on the child's response to the interventions. When buildings start to transition to the Kansas MTSS framework, the SIT team can continue to function as a single separate team.

However, once the building is fully implementing the Kansas MTSS, the collaborative teams within the building carry out the functions of the SIT and general education interventions (GEI) teams.

It is important to remember that, if at any time the collaborative team suspects that a student might have an exceptionality and/or a need for special education services, the team must refer the student for an initial evaluation. The Kansas MTSS process should not delay a student from receiving a special education evaluation, and parents must be informed of the nature of student performance data being collected, the general education services being provided, strategies for increasing the student's rate of learning, and their right to request an evaluation.



Buildings that fully implement the Kansas MTSS use collaborative teams comprised of teachers and support staff who are responsible for analyzing data (screening, diagnostic analysis, and progress-monitoring data) at the grade, classroom, small group, and individual student levels. Collaborative teams use data to group students, identify the instructional focus of the groups, ascertain the materials to be used for interventions, and evaluate the effectiveness of the supports being provided, thereby fulfilling the function of the SIT team.

Although the specific steps of implementation vary for reading, math, and behavior implementation, the steps for all the content areas of Kansas MTSS constitute a problem-solving process that meets GEI requirements. The collaborative teams use progress monitoring and other data to engage in problem solving so that changes can be made to intensify instruction for students not making sufficient progress, increase the difficulty of materials, or reduce intervention time for students exceeding the expected rate of growth.

Collaborative teams can use individual student problem-solving efforts to customize intensive intervention based on individual students' needs. At some point, a collaborative team might ask certain specialists in the building (e.g., behavior specialist, reading specialist, special education teacher, school psychologist, speech/language pathologist) to assist with individual student problem-solving efforts to design a customized intervention. However, for all tiers of intervention, the protocol intervention must be taught with fidelity before adjustments are made by the collaborative team to customize the intervention (KSDE, 2011).

The building leadership team establishes and provides dedicated time for collaborative teams to meet, review data, and refine instruction. Collaborative teams then share with leadership teams the effectiveness and efficiency of instruction and the intervention being provided and monitored.

As shown in the self-correcting feedback loop, the building leadership team is responsible for improving the system. For this to effectively occur, there must be collaborative teams that are focused on improving instruction and communicating information. This exchange ensures that decisions about the system are well informed by the data. Collaborative teams have three primary responsibilities:

1. Conduct group problem-solving using universal screening data at the grade, classroom, and individual student levels, which leads to additional diagnostic assessment procedures being conducted, as necessary, to establish effective instructional groups. This responsibility is carried out three times a year, immediately following the universal screening data collection.
2. Review progress-monitoring data on a regular basis to determine what instructional adjustments are needed for students receiving strategic and intensive instruction. This responsibility is carried out continuously throughout the year.
3. Conduct individual student problem-solving when students are not making sufficient progress from protocol interventions. This responsibility is carried out continuously throughout the year.

The challenge buildings face when adapting SIT groups is creating greater representation of single grade levels when fulfilling responsibilities related to group problem solving and reviewing progress-monitoring data. Such broad representation makes scheduling frequent meetings difficult. Buildings that have had the most success in restructuring SITs have created collaborative teams at each grade level. Buildings that have PLCs in place adapt these groups to function as collaborative teams without much difficulty. Many PLCs already exist as grade-level teams. Even in instances in which this is not the case, the structure easily allows for such an adjustment.

For example, PLCs meet regularly, so increasing scheduling for collaborative teams is a minor modification. Buildings with functioning SITs and PLCs sometimes divide the three primary responsibilities. The PLCs are responsible for addressing group problem solving and reviewing progress-monitoring data to determine necessary changes to instruction. The SIT structure remains in place but is accessed much less often – only in situations in which the grade-level collaborative team is unable to design interventions that enable a student to make sufficient progress. In the blended structure, all SIT members participate in at least one collaborative team. It is beneficial to keep members engaged in data analysis for instructional planning. With this regular experience, members of SIT can more effectively use the data brought from collaborative teams. This will ultimately support the process as a continuum in a collaborative process.

**Discussion Questions:**

What is the relationship between what you just read and your district's current system of communication, feedback, and data analysis?

Are there teams that can be re-purposed or collapsed to serve the purposes described?

Sketch your idea for your district's SCFL below:



### **The Building Leadership Team Description**

The leadership teams need to be large enough to meet responsibilities while remaining small enough to operate efficiently. The goal is to align all state, federal, and local programs/resources appropriately and effectively into a single system with multiple ways of supporting each student. The team must include administrators (including representation from state and federal programs), grade-level/content-area teachers, guidance counselors, and students (in a secondary setting) and community members when appropriate.

When preschool is included in the MTSS effort, it is important to include preschool staff on appropriate leadership teams. These programs can be administered collaboratively with the school and sometimes outside of the school administrative structure. It is important to invite someone who can adequately represent the program and make appropriate decisions to be part of the leadership teams.

The role of the principal is the most critical component for the success of a multi-tier system of supports (McCook, 2006). The principal must actively support the change not only in action, but also with the allocation of resources and full participation on the building and district leadership teams. The building administrator also ensures that the building leadership teams build and support the school's culture. The principal must take the lead role and participate in all aspects of the process to enable all students to achieve success (McCook, 2006).

The building leadership does not complete its work in isolation from stakeholders. The entire leadership team must have a foundational understanding of all issues being addressed. However, members of the leadership team can create workgroups outside of the leadership team when appropriate. Workgroups not only assist in the completion of tasks, but also provide information and recommendations.

Considering the amount of effort required to design a system, multiple workgroups can be beneficial to all staff members, especially if the building is working on multiple content areas. Multiple workgroups help prevent team member burnout (Shores & Chester, 2009). When multiple workgroups are used, communication is critical to ensure that the leadership team and all workgroups are aware of progress and decisions being made.

The building leadership team organizes and oversees decision-making during planning for MTSS and ensures that the self-correction feedback loop is functioning as intended within the building during implementation.

The building leadership team is responsible for:

- Ensuring communication between collaborative teams and the building leadership team
- Ensuring the fidelity of the Kansas MTSS and Alignment framework implementation

- Evaluating the effectiveness of the Kansas MTSS and Alignment components and making adjustments to the system
- Ensuring that student progress is monitored and continually improving
- Bringing staff to consensus regarding the Kansas MTSS and Alignment implementation
- Upholding core beliefs
- Engaging students, parents, and stakeholders in the Kansas MTSS and Alignment efforts
- Selecting and train curricula, assessments, strategies, and instructional practices
- Channeling communication with Collaborative Teams and the District Leadership Team
- Creating and manage a master schedule allocating resources, staff, and time as recommended by the Kansas MTSS and Alignment
- Making professional development decisions
- Empowering staff
- Analyzing building and grade-level data

Teachers, administrators, and staff members who are empowered to make decisions and have areas of expertise that contribute to the academic and social emotional growth of the students should represent Building Leadership Teams. Representation to consider may include but are not limited to:

- Representation from each grade level or grade band (elementary)
- Content area (secondary)
- Early childhood teacher
- SPED teacher
- Administrator
- MTSS coach
- Classified staff
- School psychologist/counselor/social worker
- Reading specialist
- Math specialist
- ELL specialist

### Building Leadership Team Membership

<b>USD Number &amp;Name:</b>	
<b>Building Name:</b>	

<b>Team Member Name</b>	<b>Represents/Voice of/Expertise</b>	<b>Specific Responsibilities</b>

Leadership Team Norms:

Decision-Making Method:

Frequency of Leadership Team Meetings:

## Collective Efficacy

1. Understand the idea of collective efficacy.
2. Determine how to improve collective efficacy within our district systems.
3. Utilize a questionnaire tool to collect information on presence of collective efficacy enabling conditions within our district system.
4. Plan for increasing collective efficacy within our district system.

When teachers believe that they can together impact student achievement they share a sense of collective efficacy. **Collective Teacher Efficacy** “refers to the collective self-perception that teachers in a given school make an educational difference to their students over and above the educational impact of their homes and communities” (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004). Collective efficacy is high when teachers believe that they are capable of helping students master complex content, foster students’ creativity, and guide students to believe they can do well in school. Educators with high efficacy encourage student autonomy, attend more closely to the needs of students who are not progressing well, and are able to modify students’ perceptions of their academic abilities (Ross & Bruce, 2007).

**Collective Leader Efficacy** is the shared conviction that a school’s instructional leadership team can make a significant contribution in raising student achievement (DeWitt, 2021).

The following list outlines some conditions that are conducive to developing Collective Teacher Efficacy (Donohoo, 2017):

- Goal consensus
- Teachers’ knowledge about one another’s work
- Cohesive staff
- Responsiveness of leadership
- Effective systems of intervention

School leaders should understand the importance of collective teacher efficacy and look for ways to promote this within their district, providing opportunities for growth within collaborative teams. As you think about the prior list, what areas are strengths in your district and what areas provide room for improvement?

School improvement requires collective efficacy in which all staff members understand their differing roles and are committed to the goals of improving student learning. Collective efficacy is not collaboration. Collective Efficacy moves beyond collaboration to ensure positive impact on student learning.

Within Kansas MTSS and Alignment districts should strive to have well-laid-out, systematic implementation of curriculum, programs, instructional practices, and assessments supported by ongoing professional development to help staff members move to higher levels of collective efficacy. In addition, utilizing the leadership practices of meaningful collaboration focused on increased student outcomes; empowering teachers; establishing clear, specific goals that maintain high expectations for all students; and interpreting results and providing feedback that focus on student achievement will help foster collective efficacy (Donohoo, 2017).

The following three target areas and reflective questions can be used by districts to intentionally think about ways to increase collective teacher efficacy (Donohoo, 2017).

### #1. Create Structures and Processes for Teachers to Engage in Meaningful Collaboration

- Are there opportunities to increase collaboration time?
- To what degree is the team work characterized by collective responsibility, interdependence, and group problem solving?

### #2. Promote Teacher Leadership and Extend Teachers’ Decision-Making Power

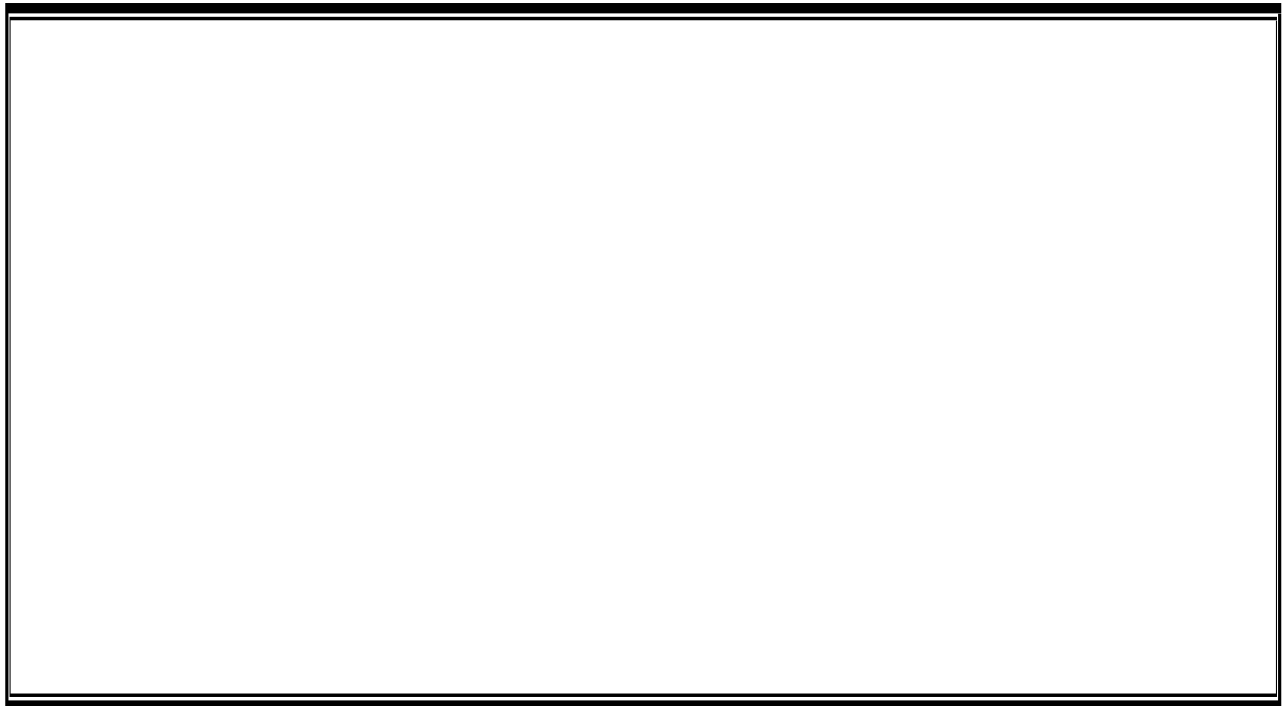
- Are there opportunities to increase the involvement of teacher teams in decision making?

- What are teachers' perceptions regarding their scope of influence?

#3. Build Awareness That Collective Efficacy Exists and that it is One of the Top Factors that Influence Student Achievement

- What are some examples we have seen of high collective teacher efficacy?
- How else can we foster collective teacher efficacy?

How can we build or improve collective efficacy within our system?



### **Audit Current Assessment Use and Develop a Comprehensive Assessment Overview**

- 1) Review the purposes of each type of formative assessment and the essential components of a comprehensive assessment overview:
  - a) Assessments being given
  - b) Schedule for when each assessment will be administered
- 2) Using the results of the KERII, identify which current assessments fit within the categories of screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcomes.
- 3) Using the district's decision-making methods and processes and keeping efficiency in mind, identify which current assessments will be used for screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring in reading, math, behavior, and social/emotional learning in both core and intervention instruction.
- 4) Document the decisions on the template, "District Assessment Overview" or develop a plan specific to your district.
- 5) Communicate this assessment overview to all staff members and make sure everyone understands which assessments will be given and at what time.
- 6) Provide necessary professional development to ensure fidelity to the administration of assessments.

Assessments in a multi-tier system of supports are used for a variety of purposes. Therefore, it is essential that a comprehensive and aligned assessment system be in place to facilitate the necessary instructional decisions for academics and behavior. A comprehensive assessment system includes valid and reliable assessments for the purposes of (1) universal screening, (2) diagnostics, (3) progress monitoring, and (4) outcomes in each area being addressed.

#### **Universal Screening**

Universal screening is designed to identify students who might need additional support.

For **academics**, universal screening assessments are administered two to three times per year depending on grade level. In **grades PK-8**, universal screening assessments for reading and math are curriculum-based measures that provide both accuracy and fluency (K-8) data of critical skills. In **grades 9-12**, universal screening for academics is a multi-step process that first involves group or computer assessment followed by a curriculum-based measure.

For **behavior**, universal screening consisting of office discipline referrals (ODRs)/behavior incident reports (BIR) is collected continuously throughout the year, and the formal screening measure is conducted three times per year. For social emotional and behavior, universal screening consists of a behavior-social screener that identifies students at risk. This is also combined with office discipline referrals/behavior incident reports, attendance, and course grades, which each look at trends.

#### **Diagnostic Assessments**

Diagnostic processes and assessments are administered when additional information is needed to allow teachers to determine the student's instructional focus.

For academics, the diagnostic processes involve the use of informal surveys and tests to probe a student's knowledge and skills in depth for the essential reading and math components. More formal standardized diagnostics assessments might occasionally be used for more in-depth information about a student's missing skills, but these often require training to administer and can be time consuming.

For **behavior**, the diagnostic process involves conducting a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) to customize interventions that focus on the function (e.g., attention, escape) of student behavior. Considerations for a wraparound process for students with significant mental health needs are appropriate to identify social emotional skills that need to be developed (e.g., self-awareness, emotional regulation, interpersonal skills). The FBA is used to determine the function of behavior so that individualized, function-based interventions can be designed to meet students' needs. The wraparound process is used to identify skills



that need to be developed as well as include community partners and families to develop the emotional needs of the whole child.

### **Progress Monitoring of Core Instruction**

Progress monitoring of core instruction is used to help teachers determine whether students have learned the concepts and skills taught so that instruction can be adjusted to re-teach the concepts or to provide additional practice on skills not yet mastered. For **academics**, these assessments progress monitor core instruction and are tied to content-area curriculum standards and instruction.

For social emotional and behavior, data from the screener, ODRs/BIRs, attendance, and course grades are used to progress monitor the core instruction of expectations and social emotional learning.

### **Progress Monitoring of Intervention**

Progress monitoring of intervention is used to ensure the effectiveness of intervention and to inform instructional decisions. For academics, these are assessments that progress monitor the intervention instruction and are curriculum-based measures aligned to the universal screening assessment that can show small increments of change in the accuracy and fluency of the skills targeted by intervention.

For social emotional and behavior, these assessments progress monitor intervention effects for individual students. ODRs/BIRs, grades, and attendance are used, or individual student monitoring data (e.g., point/goal sheets) can be used to determine the extent to which targeted behaviors improve because of intervention.

When developing a comprehensive assessment system, it is important to begin by taking stock of the school's current behavioral data and currently used assessment instruments for academics and behavior. Teams must review and evaluate each assessment currently being used or being considered for future use regarding reliability, validity, and a clear understanding of the purpose for which the assessment was intended and validated. Just because an assessment has been published does not mean the instrument has adequate technical validity.

## District Assessment Overview

Measure	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Reading Screener:											
Math Screener:											
Behavior, Social Emotional Screeners											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Validated Universal Risk Screener:</li> </ul>											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On Track Indicators (Attendance and Course Grades – ELA, Math, Science, Soc Stud)</li> </ul>											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Referrals: BIR(PreK) ODR (K-12)</li> </ul>											

Reading		Mathematics		Behavior/Social Emotional Learning	
<u>Screener</u>		<u>Screener</u>		<u>Screener</u>	
<u>Diagnostic</u>		<u>Diagnostic</u>		<u>Diagnostic</u>	
<u>Monitoring Interventions</u>	<u>Monitoring Core</u>	<u>Monitoring Interventions</u>	<u>Monitoring Core</u>	<u>Monitoring Interventions</u>	<u>Monitoring Core</u>
<u>Other data being collected (surveys, etc.)</u> <input type="text"/>					

Document should be updated yearly

## Curriculum

1. Take stock of the current curriculum used in reading, math, and social emotional learning for PreK through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
2. Document district approved resources for Tier 1, 2, and 3 instruction as well as approved supplemental materials and their purpose. Ensure that the curricula used are evidence or research based and effective.
3. Determine the potential curriculum needs of the district.
4. Develop processes for monitoring fidelity of curriculum implementation.

Throughout the multiple phases of work with Kansas MTSS and Alignment, districts will develop and complete the documentation of their curriculum from PreK through 12<sup>th</sup> grade in math, reading, and social-emotional learning. During phase 1, the process begins with documentation of the current state of curriculum in these areas. This information is gathered by surveying staff through the Kansas MTSS Educational Resource and Initiative Inventory (KERII) or other methods used to survey teachers.

Curriculum information gathered from staff surveys should then be categorized by content area. District leadership teams will examine this data for repetition, coherence, and effectiveness. The objective is to document the approved curricula for Tier 1 as well as interventions and supplemental materials. An example of this documentation might be as follows:

# Curricular Resources

District \_\_\_\_\_

Reading		Math		Social/Emotional Learning	
<u>Primary Tier 1 Resource</u>		<u>Primary Tier 1 Resource</u>		<u>Primary Tier 1 Resource</u>	
<u>District-Approved Supplementals</u>		<u>District-Approved Supplementals</u>		<u>District-Approved Supplementals</u>	
Resource	Purpose	Resource	Purpose	Resource	Purpose
<u>Intervention Materials</u>		<u>Intervention Materials</u>		<u>Intervention Materials</u>	

District Expectations for Fidelity:

This document allows the district leadership team to identify their primary core instructional resources for all three areas. There is also a portion allowing for documentation of the approved supplemental materials. For each supplemental material identified, the leadership team should also list the purpose. This provides clarity to the teaching staff regarding when the use of supplemental materials might be appropriate. Intervention materials should also be listed where appropriate and available. Finally, the leadership team will put in place expectations for fidelity to the approved district curricula.

Fidelity of implementation is a factor in linking student outcomes to instruction. Research suggests that positive student outcomes depend on the fidelity of implementation at both the school and classroom levels (Peirangelo & Giuliani, 2008). District leadership teams should determine the expectations for fidelity in their district that match district needs. Once these expectations have been set and documented, the leadership team should determine their current state in relation to these expectations and create an action plan to achieve their desired state.

In order to develop district wide expectations of fidelity, consider the following process.

1. Brainstorm to create, as an individual, a list of personal fidelity expectations.
2. Within the district leadership team, collaboratively refine individual lists to develop a district list of fidelity expectations.
3. Use a district Fidelity Workbook to explicitly state elements of fidelity for the district answering the following questions:
  - What expectations are you are willing to hold yourselves and your staff to?
  - What are the ways we can hold ourselves and our staff accountable to the above expectations?
  - What are the actions that need to be taken to move this work forward? What supports might be needed? What could hinder our progress?
4. The Fidelity Workbook is customizable to district needs, but it includes space for the district leadership team to reflect upon fidelity expectations and practices within Standards/Scope and sequence, instructional materials, instruction, assessments, and master schedule.

## Evidence-Based Instructional Strategies

1. Examine current practices as related to classroom observation and walkthroughs in order to determine how instruction is currently viewed.
2. Using available research, as well as collaboration with teachers, determine which instructional practices may be beneficial within the system.
3. Continually evaluate instruction and adjust to maximize effectiveness.

When you do walkthroughs, what do you look for in the classroom?

How do you engage teachers in dialogue around their instruction?

There is a strong base of research regarding best practices in education, and much of this research has been focused on instructional strategies that have been shown to be effective. Dr. John Hattie has synthesized more than 1,500 meta-analyses comprising more than 90,000 studies involving over 300 million students around the world in order to compile a database of what works best in increasing the impact on the learning lives of students (Hattie, 2017).

Leadership teams should use their current academic, behavioral, and social-emotional data in order to narrow the list of potential instructional practices to those most likely to have a positive impact on their students. It is important to recognize that these instructional practices do not have to be limited to certain content areas, as several practices can prove valuable across many, or all, areas. Teams also should determine what professional learning may be necessary in order to best equip the instructional staff to be effective in the implementation of any new strategies.

Any instructional practices that are implemented should be monitored for effectiveness. This can be done using short inquiry cycles in which leadership monitors both the fidelity of implementation and the impact of the instructional strategies.

## **Instructional Leadership**

1. School leaders should understand the importance of instructional leadership as compared to other leadership styles.
2. Once an understanding of the principles of instructional leadership has been established, school leaders set goals for themselves to improve as instructional leaders.
3. Leadership teams establish a walkthrough process designed to improve the instruction within their buildings.
4. School leaders determine multiple data sources to be used in order to measure their own evidence of impact.
5. Impact cycles are used as a formal process for implementing initiatives within districts, buildings, grade levels, and classrooms.
6. Leadership teams understand the importance of collective teacher efficacy and plan for how to increase it within their system.

In over 600 studies, including 17 meta-analyses collected by Dr John Hattie, the overall effect size of school leadership is 0.37. When the focus is narrowed to instructional leadership, the effect size increases to 0.42, which is the only leadership style with an effect size above the average effect of all influences (DeWitt, 2020). While school leaders have a wide variety of responsibilities, the importance of instructional leadership cannot be overlooked.

“Instructional leadership occurs when those in a leadership position focus their efforts on the implementation of practices that will positively impact students learning” (DeWitt, 2019). Peter DeWitt’s instructional leadership framework consists of 6 parts: Implementation, Focus on Learning, Student Engagement, Instructional Strategies, Collective Efficacy, and Evaluation. School leaders’ knowledge and application in these areas can increase their effectiveness as instructional leaders.

**Implementation** – School leaders should understand implementation science when setting plans for implementing initiatives within their school or district. The Kansas MTSS and Alignment has created an implementation cycle to support school districts. School leaders must work with teachers to understand the implementation process of the district.

**Focus on Learning** – School leaders should intentionally focus on the learning as well as the teaching that occurs within their schools or districts.

**Student Engagement** – Student engagement should be seen through two viewpoints: social/emotional learning and academic learning. Leaders should work with their staff to develop a common understanding of what student engagement means and then focus on strategies that can be implemented to increase student engagement.

**Instructional Strategies** – Research shows that certain instructional strategies are more effective for providing surface, deep, and transfer learning. School leaders should focus their efforts on promoting proven instructional strategies and then work with teachers to engage in collaborative dialogue around instructional strategies and use data to determine what is and is not working.

**Collective Efficacy** – Collective teacher efficacy “refers to the collective self-perception that teachers in a given school make an educational difference to their students over and above the educational impact of their homes and communities” (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004). School leaders should understand the importance of collective

teacher efficacy and look for ways to promote this within their district, providing opportunities for growth within collaborative teams.

**Evaluation** – School leaders should match their efforts to the evidence that can be collected and measured. This will allow them to be aware of their impact as leaders.

Once school leaders have established an understanding of the principles of instructional leadership, they should set goals for themselves to improve as instructional leaders. The Kansas MTSS and Alignment has created a format for identifying instructional leadership goals, along with their intended impact and action plans related to the goals. School leaders set goals, build action plans, and then implement those action plans. The evidence of impact of the goals should be continually monitored to ensure effectiveness and adjust the action plan as needed.



**Instructional Leadership Goal**

What is a goal you'd like to set for yourself as an instructional leader in your district?

Action plan items related to my goal:

Success Indicators – How will you know when you've made progress towards your goal or met your goal?

Collective Efficacy – What supports will you need to actualize the goal you just set? What is your plan for accessing these supports?

An important aspect of instructional leadership in school buildings is the use of a walkthrough process for school leaders to effectively get into classrooms. Walkthroughs and formal teacher observations should include a focus on academic and social emotional student engagement. Whether a school district has a walkthrough tool or needs support in creating a tool, the most important point is that the district has developed a process for the use of data gathered through the presence of school leaders in classrooms.

Questions to consider:

1. If your teachers were asked what a walkthrough is, what would they say?

2. What do you see as the benefits of conducting walkthroughs?

“Walkthroughs often become something leaders do *to* teachers as opposed to *with* them” (DeWitt, 2019). The walkthrough process should feel like a partnership between the school leaders and the teachers in order to improve instruction for in the classrooms. This process involves four major steps.

**Step 1** – Identify the instructional strategies on which you will be collecting data. Leaders should work to ensure that the strategies identified have evidence of success in situations similar to those of the school district. There is also value to including teachers in this conversation of strategy selection. Efforts should be made to limit the number of items being focused on during the walkthrough process. This is not a full evaluation. By selecting fewer items on which to focus, leaders can set goals with staff for improvement in those areas.

**Step 2** – Assessment of learner engagement and strategy implementation. The walkthroughs occur during this step. Walkthroughs should take approximately 5 minutes and be focused on student engagement as well as the strategies that have been chosen by the district or building.

**Step 3** – Analysis of the data collected. Leaders should have co-constructed goals with their staff related to the walkthrough tool. After walkthroughs have been completed, the leader analyzes the data. Data collected from walkthroughs might reveal the need for additional professional development, the need to adjust the strategies, or a reason to celebrate as goals are met.

**Step 4** – Reflection with the teacher. Reflection can be in many forms, such a prompt for the teacher or a reflective conversation.

Leaders should set a goal of ensuring that every teacher has a walkthrough with feedback at least every two weeks. Remember, the walkthrough is not an extended visit in the classroom. This is not an evaluation in which the leader is looking for an assortment of instructional pieces. The walkthrough process should be designed to improve instruction in an area of focus that has been discussed with teachers.

In developing your process, consider the following:

1. What are our instructional priorities?

2. How can we begin to engage teachers in a dialogue around walkthroughs and a common understanding of our instructional practices?

3. What are the barriers to implementing a walkthrough process? What solutions might address those barriers?

4. What are our first steps in beginning (or revising) our walkthrough process?

### **Plan for Professional Development that Focuses on the District's Initiatives**

1. Review the district's initiatives and goals.
2. Discuss what professional development is needed to help staff acquire the skills and knowledge needed to implement strategies and instruction to meet the district's goals. "Nothing superfluous to that purpose should be considered" (Yung, 2021).
3. List a variety of ways that the professional development could be delivered, and refer to the district timeline to determine when PD should be provided.
4. Develop a draft of a professional development plan, including specifics such as who will need the PD, when and how it will be delivered, and what the process is for ensuring fidelity.
5. Using the self-correcting feedback loop, determine when and how to share the professional development plan with staff.

**Professional Development** is another essential component of the Kansas MTSS. Effective professional development supporting MTSS practices requires a carefully designed and executed plan. Professional development must be designed so that all staff members receive initial training and implementation support. A comprehensive professional development plan also includes process and procedures to monitor fidelity and provide ongoing support to individual staff.

The district leadership team will have to plan to provide professional development that is in alignment with the vision, mission, and goals of the district. High-quality professional development is essential to increasing educators' knowledge of academic and behavioral content, enhancing teaching skills, and changing what educators believe about student learning and achievement.

To lead sustainable change, professional development must be planned from the onset of any new initiative. Supporting professional development around the MTSS practices requires a carefully designed and executed plan. Sustainability goes beyond the concept of whether something lasts and addresses how initiatives can be implemented without compromising the environment or others, now or in the future (Hargreaves & Fink, 2000). Sustainable initiatives plan professional development to support all educators. This is imperative for the ultimate buy-in and success of the change.

It is the leadership team's responsibility to ensure that adequate resources (time, budgetary allocation, and administrative follow-up and emotional support) are apportioned to professional development. Often buildings collaborate with the district on professional development to provide training in a more cost-effective way. It can be difficult for individual buildings to manage separate funding sources without district support. District staff members, in collaboration with building leaders, coordinate funding streams (Title, Special Education, and ESOL) so that focused professional development opportunities are equitably available to all staff.

## Professional Development Planning

Effective professional development is the result of collaboration among teachers, administrators, and the leadership team to methodically plan and implement a school-wide program such as MTSS. Professional development is necessary to ensure staff members are provided with the appropriate knowledge and skills to develop, implement, and sustain the program while maintaining a high level of fidelity. The following tool will help guide decisions and planning about professional development needs of staff.

Professional Learning Topic	Responsible party (Who will deliver it?)	Audience (Who needs it?)	Action Steps (How and when will it be delivered?)	Fidelity – How will it be monitored?	Fidelity – Who will monitor?

## Family Engagement

1. Discuss the current methods used for engaging families in the work of the school district.
2. Review resources provided by the Kansas MTSS as well as the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center.
3. Make a plan for collecting data from families, if not already being collected, regarding their level of engagement.

### Why Family Engagement?

According to Dr. John Hattie, the effect size of **parent involvement** is a 0.30 (as of July 2023). Dr. Hattie and his team defines parental involvement as the amount of participation a parent has when it comes to schooling and the child's life. This can occur through events and volunteer opportunities, school management, helping with homework, etc. ([www.visiblelearningmetax.com](http://www.visiblelearningmetax.com))

### How to Engage Families:

Kansas MTSS and Alignment recommends the use of the *Family Engagement Survey* annually, usually in the early spring (February-March). This survey is based on the PTA National Standards for Parent-School Partnerships and evaluates the engagement of parents/guardians within five separate domains.

1. Welcoming environment
2. Supporting Student Learning
3. Effective Communication
4. Sharing Power and Advocacy
5. Community Involvement

The Family Engagement Survey is quick and easy to complete online, resulting in a high response rate. When used in conjunction with other data, this survey provides leadership teams the opportunity to recognize strengths in their family engagement practices and create strategies for improvement.

What data are you currently collecting around family engagement? What is this data telling you? What are your strengths, challenges, or gaps?

How are you engaging, or have you engaged, your families in the work regarding MTSS in your district? How might you increase family engagement?



How might you increase family engagement?



Do you currently have a process for surveying families? (If not, consider the use of the family engagement survey.)



## **APPENDIX**



## Kansas MTSS and Alignment Existing/Desired State Information

	Strengths	Desired State	Weaknesses	Priority
1		Leadership teams review district data (math, reading, and behavior/social emotional learning) on regular intervals. Reviews include subgroup data.		
2		The district reviews current initiatives in practice and has a process for reviewing effectiveness, eliminating duplication, and ensuring alignment. A process has been developed for implementing new initiatives. Leadership team maintains a timeline including support of district priority initiatives.		
3		The district has a system for communication and data-based decision making including district leadership teams, building leadership teams, and collaborative teams. A regular cadence of meetings at all levels exists. Decision rules have been developed for all levels.		
4		The district has a defined "North Star" which guides decisions and reflects high expectations for all students. (This may include vision statements, mission statements, slogans, core beliefs, etc.)		
5		The district consistently reviews the effectiveness of its practices at all levels. This includes plans for implementation as well as a cadence for review.		
6		Leaders operate under the principles of instructional leadership including evidence-based instruction, building collective efficacy, and understanding implementation practices. Leaders set goals to improve themselves as instructional leaders.		
7		The district has created expectations for fidelity in all areas. This includes documentation and monitoring of district approved curriculum, assessments, schedules, instructional practices, etc.		
8		Professional learning is intentionally planned and aligned to the focus areas of the district and/or chosen based on district data.		
9		The district is intentional in controlling the narrative attached to their schools. This includes a mapping of all stakeholders and intentionality regarding the engagement of families.		

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