

Grade Level Problem-Solving Guide

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Michigan's Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative (MIBLSI) is a Grant Funded Initiative (GFI) funded under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) through the Michigan Department of Education.



Table of Contents

Grade Level Problem-Solving Guide	3
Meeting Reminders	3
Tier 1 Reading Focus	3
Effective Team Meeting Process	3
The Foundations of Classroom PBIS and Effective Instruction	5
Routines and Procedures:	6
Grade Level Reading Components	7
Step #1: Problem Identification	7
Step #2: Problem Analysis	9
Step #3: Plan Development	11
Step #4: Plan Implementation & Evaluation	17



Grade Level Problem-Solving Guide

A workbook to guide your grade level problem solving process for the school year. Bring this book with you to benchmark data meetings and on-going grade level meetings to help provide focus and actionable steps to maximize Tier 1 reading instruction.

Meeting Reminders

Tier 1 Reading Focus

(R-TFI 1.4)

By following the guidelines in this section, teams will:

- Ensure the right people are attending the meeting to focus on Tier 1 instruction

Take Action:

Table 1. List the members of your grade level team below.

Team Member Roles:	Team Member Names:
Principal	
Staff who provide core reading instruction	
Staff who provide supplementary reading instruction	

Effective Team Meeting Process

(R-TFI 1.5)

By following the guidelines in this section, teams will:

- Schedule meetings at least every 4-6 weeks to discuss Tier 1 instruction
- Assign meeting roles to ensure efficient and effective problem solving
- Know where to access the Grade Level Instructional Plan
- Develop a plan for updating absent team members to keep them in the loop
- Develop team purpose and norms
 - Example Norms: Stay engaged – Focus on what we can do – Listen to learn
 - Example Purpose: To determine effectiveness of core reading and behavior programs and make necessary adjustments to instruction.

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Take Action:

Table 2. Schedule of GLPS meeting dates for the school year.

Benchmark Data Meeting Dates:	On-Going Meeting Dates:
Beginning of the Year (BOY):	Between BOY & MOY Dates (at least 2 dates):
Middle of the Year (MOY):	Between MOY & EOY Dates (at least 2 dates):
End of the Year (EOY):	

Table 3. Assign meeting roles for the current school year as well as back up members

Assigned Meeting Roles:	Team Member Name:	Back Up Team Member:
Facilitator		
Recorder		
Data Analyst		
Time Keeper		

GLPS Action Plan

Determine where the action plan for your grade level team will be stored (Google Doc, Dropbox, hard copy, etc.) Make sure all team members know how to access it.

Record where you will find your action plan below:

Absent Team Member Plan

Create a buddy list for your grade level team. If one person is absent from the meeting, the buddy can update this person prior to the next meeting.

Buddy List for 2018-19

Team Purpose & Norms

Purpose of our grade level team:

Our team norms are:



The Foundations of Classroom PBIS and Effective Instruction

Implementing classroom PBIS practices in all classrooms helps to maximize instructional time and creates safe and predictable environments for student learning. Three of the foundations of classroom PBIS practices are:

- Establishing classroom routines and procedures (e.g., whole group instruction, small group instruction, independent seat work, arrival and dismissal)
- Using the school-wide expectations to define what behavior looks like and sounds like during each of the established classroom routines and procedures by developing the classroom behavior matrix
- Teaching behavioral expectations for every routine and procedure in the classroom

At the start of each of the Grade Level Team benchmark meetings, the grade level team should reflect on the following prompts:

- Has each teacher at our grade level:
 - Participated in the classroom PBIS training?
 - Defined the classroom routines and procedures specific to his or her reading block?
 - Developed his or her own classroom matrix that includes the routines and procedures specific to his or her reading block?
 - Taught and re-taught behavior expectations for the routines and procedures of the reading block?

Grade-level teams will record the number of teachers that have each component in place in the table in the *Grade Level Instructional Plan*.

Table 4. Insert responses to Classroom PBIS questions in the table below.

Classroom PBIS	Participated in the Classroom PBIS training	Routines and Procedures Written	Matrix Completed	Taught and/or Re-taught
BOY				
MOY				
EOY				



Routines and Procedures:

- Routines help to establish predictable patterns and activities within the classroom
- Increase instructional time by preventing problem behavior
- Reduces anxiety levels and help promote a safe & predictable environment
- Routines begin to manage the classroom rather than the teacher
- Routines need to be taught and posted in the classroom

Example Routines

Arrival Routine

- Hang up coat and backpack
- Put notes and homework in the “IN” basket
- Sharpen two pencils
- Go to desk and begin the warm-up activities listed on the board
- If you finish early, read a book

Whole Group Instruction

- Sit in your assigned seat on your bottom with your legs crossed
- Hands are folded in your lap
- Face the teacher
- Eyes and ears are open
- Mouths are closed

Small Group Instruction

- Sit in your assigned seat
- Sit on your bottom with your feet in front of your chair
- Sit with your tummy touching the table
- Use one hand to hold the book and the other hand to point to the words

Classroom Matrix:

- Developed using the school-wide expectations and the classroom routines
- Defines what student behavior looks like and sounds like within each routine
- Consider the following when developing your classroom behavior matrix:
 - Can students talk? If so, what voice level?
 - How will students get assistance if needed?
 - What behaviors do you want the students to do to show you they are participating?
 - Will students be moving / out of seat? If yes, what are they to do?



Example Classroom Matrix:

The following is an excerpt of a full classroom matrix. A complete matrix would have a column for each routine or procedure in the classroom.

Behavior Expectations	Arrival
Be Safe	Walk slowly Keep feet, hands, materials to self Hang up coat and backpack
Be Respectful	Use an “indoor” voice Help others if needed or asked Follow specific teacher directions
Be Responsible	Turn in notes and homework in the “IN” box Sharpen 2 pencils Get started on warm-up activities If you finish early, read a book

Grade Level Reading Components

Step #1: Problem Identification

(What is the problem?) (R-TFI 1.9)

By following the guidelines in Step #1, teams will use the School Overview Report by Grade to examine the DIBELS Next Composite Score, capture what it means for core instruction, and set an overall Composite Score Goal.

Table 5. Record current DIBELS Next Composite Scores

DIBELS Composite Score	% Above Benchmark (Blue)	% At Benchmark (Green)	% Below Benchmark (Yellow)	% Well Below Benchmark (Red)
BOY				
MOY				
EOY				



- A. Add the % Above Benchmark to the % At Benchmark to determine the overall % of students who are At/Above Benchmark. What is the overall %?
- Is the core program sufficient for most students at the grade level (80% or more at/above benchmark?)
 - Circle one: Yes No
- B. If available, look back at historical DIBELS Data. Reports that might be helpful are: Multi-Year Percent At Benchmark, Multi-Year Boxplots, and Histograms and Boxplots. Then answer these questions below:
- How much movement did the team see last year (and prior years) between each benchmark?
 - Use this information to encourage that the team's next goal should be higher than the previous year(s) data.
- C. Using the information from above, have the team set a SMART Composite Score Goal to increase the number of students At/Above Benchmark **by the next benchmark period**. Use the sentence frame below to record the team's Beginning of the Year (BOY) Composite Score Goal.

BOY DIBELS Next Composite Score Goal:

By the middle of the year benchmark, _____% of our students will be At/Above Benchmark as measured by DIBELS Next.

- D. **Complete the following part at the Middle of the Year (MOY.)** Use the following sentence frames to update and check in on the goal for the MOY.

MOY Update: DIBELS Next Composite Score Goal

Based on the BOY goal, circle the best response below:

- We met our goal!
- We did not meet our goal, but we are on track to reaching it.
- We did not meet our goal, and we are not on track to reaching it.

Update the BOY Composite Goal, using the sentence frame provided below:

By the EOY benchmark, _____% of our students will be At/Above Benchmark as measured by DIBELS Next.

- E. **Complete the following part at the End of the Year (EOY.)** Use the following sentence frames to check in on the goal for the End of the Year (EOY.)

EOY Update: DIBELS Next Composite Score Goal

Based on the MOY goal, circle the best response below:

- We met our goal!



- We did not meet our goal, but we are on track to reaching it.
- We did not meet our goal, and we are not on track to reaching it.

Step #2: Problem Analysis

(Why is it happening?) (R-TFI 1.9)

By following the guidelines in Step #2, teams will use the School Overview Report to prioritize which big idea of reading is currently the most important common instructional need for the majority of students.

Table 6. Record each measure’s score below that apply to your grade level. Add the % Above Benchmark to the % At Benchmark to determine the overall % of students who are At/Above Benchmark

DIBELS Next Measure	% At & Above Benchmark	Big Idea (Instructional Focus)
FSF: First Sound Fluency		Phonological Awareness
PSF: Phoneme Segmentation Fluency		Phonemic Awareness
NWF CLS: Nonsense Word Fluency Correct Letter Sounds		Alphabetic Principle/Basic Phonics
NWF WWR: Nonsense Word Fluency Whole Words Read		Alphabetic Principle/Basic Phonics
DORF Accuracy: DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency Accuracy		Advanced Phonics
DORF Words Correct: DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency Rate		Advanced Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, Comprehension
Retell		Comprehension (oral reading)
Daze		Comprehension (silent reading)

- Go back to the first measure on the continuum above where there was 80% or less At & Above benchmark. Circle that score and the Big Idea (Instructional Focus) that is represented by the DIBELS Next measure.
- Use the Changing Emphasis of Big Ideas chart (Figure 1) to identify the point in time and at what grade level students should “own that skill” that was identified as the instructional focus.



	K	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
Phonemic Awareness	Blend & Segment	Phoneme Analysis (Addition, Deletion & Substitution)				
Phonics	Sounds/ Basic Phonics	Advanced Phonics & Multisyllabic			Multi-Syllabic & Word Study	
Fluency	Sounds & Words	Words & Connected Text			Connected Text	
Vocabulary	Listening		Listening & Reading		Reading	
Comprehension	Listening		Listening & Reading		Reading	

Figure 1. Changing Emphasis of Big Ideas of Reading

Table 7. Use the following table to capture the progress with the DIBELS Next Measure Specific Goal over the school year.

DIBELS Next Measure:	% Above Benchmark	% At Benchmark	% Below Benchmark	% Well Below Benchmark

BOY				
MOY				
EOY				

BOY Measure Specific Goal(s):

By the MOY benchmark, _____% of our students will be At/Above Benchmark as measured by this DIBELS Next Measure: _____.

MOY Measure Specific Goal(s) Update:

Based on the BOY Measure Specific Goal, circle the best response below:

- We met our goal!
- We did not meet our goal, but we are on track to reaching it.
- We did not meet our goal, and we are not on track to reaching it.



Update the BOY Measure Specific Goal, using the sentence frame provided below:

By the EOY, _____% of our students will be At/Above Benchmark as measured by this DIBELS Next Measure: _____.

EOY Measure Specific Goal(s) Update:

Based on the MOY goal, circle the best response below:

- We met our goal!
- We did not meet our goal, but we are on track to reaching it.
- We did not meet our goal, and we are not on track to reaching it.

Step #3: Plan Development

(What is the plan to improve the health of the core?) (R-TFI 1.9)

By following the guidelines in this section, teams will create an agreed upon plan to address the instructional focus selected in Step #2. The plan will include grade level decisions on:

- Determining which core reading materials will be used
- Selecting the instructional routine to teach that focus skill
- Selecting engagement strategies to incorporate into the instructional routine
- Applying the plan to meet the needs of whole and small group instruction
- Creating action items and next steps to put this plan into motion

Curriculum (Core Reading Materials)

- A. Use the following chart (Figure 2) to get a closer look at how the big ideas progress across grade levels.
 - a. Find the instructional focus in the first left column and then find your grade level.
 - b. Review what skills should be taught for your grade level, as well as what was taught in prior grade level(s).
 - c. What information do we have to know if students have “owned the skills” that were previously taught?



	Kindergarten	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade
Phonemic Awareness	Sound/Word Comparison Rhyming Blend & Segment: Sentences Syllables Onset-rime					
	Blend & Segment: Individual Phonemes					
	Phoneme deletion & manipulation					
Phonics	Letter sounds Short vowels					
	Irregular Words/Sight Words					
	VC & CVC recoding words					
			VC & CVC words Consonant Blends Consonant Digraphs Silent e Vowel in each syllable Inflectional endings			
			Vowel teams			
			Multisyllabic words Prefixes & Suffixes			
					Morphology Accurately read unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context/out of context	
Fluency	Sound & Words					
	Decodable Text 95-100% Accurate					
		90%	>95%	96-97%	97-98%	98-99%
		30-50 WCPM	40-100 WCPM	70-100 WCPM	100-140 WCPM	100-140 WCPM
Comprehension*	Answering Text Based Questions Makes predictions Retelling & Summarizing Making Connections					
	Main Idea and Details Point of view Making Inferences Monitoring Comprehension					
	Analyze structure of text					
	Author's Purpose/Point of View Informational Text Structure/Charts, Maps, Graphs, Tables, Insets Compare and contrast text					

Figure 2. Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Common Instructional Needs Chart.

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- B. Does the team have the appropriate core reading materials to address the big idea we identified in Step #2?

The core program might not address the skills identified based on what students should already know and be able to do. These skills may require supplemental materials. List the skills that might not be in the core program below:

- C. As a grade level team, determine what core reading materials and any supplemental materials you will use to teach the instructional focus identified in Step #2. (Examples for a phonics instructional focus: sound-spelling cards, decodable text, phonics lessons provided in core, prior grade level material if needed, etc.) List more than just the program's name – hone in on specific lesson components & materials that align to the instructional focus. List the specifics below:
- Core reading materials that all grade level teachers will use:
 - If needed, list any supplemental materials all grade level teachers may need to use.

Instruction

(What instructional routine will be used to teach the focus skill?)

- As defined in Explicit Instruction: Effective and Efficient Teaching by Archer and Hughes, an instructional routine is a “set of teaching behaviors that can be used again and again in presenting new information or providing practice on information.”
 - For this section, the core program materials and MIBLSI's “Instructional Support Focus Tool” documents will be used to help define the team's instructional routine.
 - MIBLSI's Instructional Support Focus Tool is meant to support teams in strengthening core reading instruction using the routines provided. The teams would review their core program guidelines and the routines presented in the tool for the instructional focus selected. This tool provides the team with examples of research-based instructional routines for phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension.
- A. Use the document, “*Instructional Support Focus Tool*,” to read more about the instructional routines that align to the team's instructional focus.
- B. Review how the core program teaches the instructional focus selected. Does it include an instructional routine that covers all key components listed in the “*Instructional Support Focus Tool*?”



- C. Use the following questions to guide the team’s discussion for selected instructional focus.
- Phonemic Awareness: Does your core program have students blend, segment, add, delete, and substitute at the appropriate level (syllable, onset-rime, phoneme) daily?
 - Phonics: Does your core program have the right instructional routine that addresses all 5 steps in the Decoding Routine daily, and includes a phonemic awareness warm-up?
 - Fluency: Does your core program provide students opportunities to “own the skills” at sound, word, and connected text level? What additional practice opportunities could teams provide to strengthen the instructional focus?
 - Comprehension: Does your core program provide enough support and guidance for before, during and after reading strategies?
- D. As a grade level team, select an instructional routine to implement on a daily basis that will target the instructional focus selected. List the routine selected:
- E. What does the grade level team need in order to use this instructional routine (time to learn the routine, training/support, time to work together as a team to develop the routine using the core program, etc.?) Ensure that these needs are captured on the action plan (Grade Level Instructional Template.)

Environment

(Engagement: How will grade level teams incorporate active engagement into the instruction?)

Now that teams know which core materials will be used and what instructional routine will be deployed on a daily basis, it is time to make the routine come to life with student engagement strategies.

Teams will now work to develop an agreement on which category of engagement strategies work best for the instructional routine selected.

- Verbal Responses
- Written Responses
- Action Responses

This category selection does not mean that teams only use this category. Teams will be selecting the category that will continue to be practiced and discussed for on-going meetings.



Table 8. Select an Engagement Strategy category to integrate into the daily instructional focus routine.

Engagement Strategy	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal Response 	Choral Partner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think-write-share • Look-lean-whisper Team/Huddle Groups Individual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whip around or pass
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White boards • Graphic organizer • Completing a sentence frame • Response cards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting out/gestures • Hand signals • Response cards • Facial expressions

Whole Group Focus:

Now that the plan is set, classroom teachers will begin differentiating the instructional focus routine to meet the needs for whole group instruction in the classroom. All teachers will use the agreed upon plan, but it might look differently in classrooms depending on the data (e.g., one classroom may benefit from extra practice and more teacher led instruction while another classroom might need less practice and more partner time.)

Grade level teams still work together to complete this table for each individual classroom.



Table 9. Compare School Overview Report by class to the School Overview Report by grade level. Brainstorm options for differentiating the instructional focus routine to meet classroom needs and record decisions.

Grade/Classroom	Status Report % At/Above Benchmark	Differentiation of the Instructional Focus Routine
Grade Level		
Insert Teacher's Name		
Insert Teacher's Name		
Insert Teacher's Name		

Small Group Focus:

Teams will now make decisions as a grade level as to what materials to access for small group instruction. The table below is for teams to create a common list of materials that should be used for small group instruction that supports core reading instruction.

Individual teachers can use this to help create plans for their small group instruction. Tools that can be helpful for individual teachers designing small group instruction:

- The Classroom Report (dibels.net): Breaks down the composite score so teachers can target areas of need
- Response Patterns inside DIBELS assessment booklets: Teachers can review how students responded to different tasks helping to differentiate needs

It is important to note that students should be placed into small groups based on skills, not by composite scores. Many core programs have resources available (placement tests as well as materials) for small groups that are designed to meet the needs for students who may be below, at or above grade level. Teams may have other materials available that supplement the core instruction for different instructional focus areas.

Table 10. Record common materials that can be accessed in a variety of ways during small group instruction.

Instructional Focus	Well Below	Below	At	Above
Phonemic Awareness				
Phonics				



Instructional Focus	Well Below	Below	At	Above
Fluency				
Comprehension				

Step #4: Plan Implementation & Evaluation

By following the guidelines in this section, teams will:

- Create an action plan to capture tasks and on-going discussion items for upcoming meetings.
- Share communication updates with the school leadership team, including accomplishments as well as possible barriers
- Evaluate the instructional plan using MOY and EOY benchmark data, highlighting what worked well and what may need to be strengthened/modified

Plan Implementation

Table 11. Capture the grade level team action items below and use the list to guide the on-going team meeting and discussions

Action Item	Who Will Do it?	By When?	Status

Communication is also a vital step in the process. Sharing specific celebratory successes, identifying potential barriers, and seeking insight and support from the School Leadership Team help to solidify the plan.

Table 12. Capture communication items to share with the School Leadership Team regarding the grade level instructional plan

Communication Update	Who Will Do It?	By When?	Status



Plan Evaluation

Using the Effectiveness of Instructional Support Report, review the following questions.

Table 13. Complete the table below to answer the question: How effective is our support for students who start the year scoring *at/above benchmark*?

BOY	BOY-MOY	MOY-EOY
% of Students At/Above Benchmark:	% of students still At/Above Benchmark:	% of students still At/Above Benchmark:
Did we meet the goal of maintaining 95%?	Circle: Yes or No	Circle: Yes or No

Table 14. Complete the table below to answer the question: How effective is our support for students who start the year scoring *below benchmark*?

BOY	BOY-MOY	MOY-EOY
% of Students Below Benchmark:	% of students who moved to At/Above Benchmark:	% of students who moved to At/Above Benchmark:
Did we meet the goal of moving 80-100%?	Circle: Yes or No	Circle: Yes or No

Table 15. Complete the table below to answer the question: How effective is our support for students who start the year scoring *well below benchmark*?

BOY	BOY-MOY	MOY-EOY
% of Students Well Below Benchmark:	% of students who moved to At/Above Benchmark:	% of students who moved to At/Above Benchmark:
	% of students who moved to Below Benchmark?	% of students who moved to Below Benchmark?
Did we meet the goal of moving 80-100%?	Circle: Yes or No	Circle: Yes or No



Questions to have teams discuss at the middle and end of the year:

- Is our plan being implemented as intended? How do we know?
- Is the plan resulting in the desired change? Have we established our goal?
- Does student data indicate the plan needs to be modified? If yes, how?
- What is the date for the next Grade Level Team meeting?

Questions to guide conversations around barriers to implementation:

- Does everyone understand how and when to use the plan?
- Is the plan feasible to implement?
- Are there ways that the plan can be modified to make implementation more likely?
- What supports can be provided to the implementers?

Cycle back to Step #1 and make any necessary updates or adjustments.

- Use the information above to capture what worked well and what may need to be adjusted or changed
- Modify the plan/goals as needed
- Continue to create, revise and update action items