

Addressing Implementation Challenges

Participant Workbook

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District Installation Series: Addressing Implementation Challenges

The purpose of this document is to capture and process the information from the District Installation Series—Addressing Challenges session.

Review

Let's take a minute to pause and review the two previous sessions (DIT Readiness & Teams and Communication Plan).

MTSS Vision

Why is MTSS a priority for the district?

This aligns with the practice profile key action item 1.1 under team-based leadership.

Implementation Science

How are we going to install and sustain our MTSS Framework?

Attending to the active implementation framework (effective practice x effective implementation x enabling context = socially significant outcomes) will increase the likelihood that the effective practice the district wants to support will lead to outcomes. The MTSS Practice Profile was created based on the theoretical elements of the Active Implementation Framework.

Team-Based Leadership

Identify and establish the necessary teaming structure to support MTSS across the organization.

- District Implementation (Leadership) Team
- Multidisciplinary Team (may also be known as an Intervention Response Team or Child Study Team)
- School Leadership Team
- Grade-level teams / Department Teams (teachers meet to review data to inform classroom implementation)
- Classroom teachers
- Staff providing intervention

Communication Plan

A written plan to intentionally communicate with an emphasis on bi-directional information/feedback being shared.

Foundational Elements



Figure 1. MDE's five essential components of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework

The process to address implementation challenges is part of effective implementation. This infrastructure component is considered an organizational driver. The process to address implementation challenges is a unique process but depends on high functioning communication to result in efficient and effective resolution of implementation challenges.

Implementation Challenges

Challenges are inevitable when districts install and implement new practices or refine existing practices!

Activity 2.1 Initial Brainstorming

- What are some implementation challenges that school staff may face?
- How does your district currently learn about implementation challenges?
- How does your district currently address/resolve implementation challenges?
- Additional ideas and notes from the groups

Activity 2.2 Identifying Critical Components with in a Process to Address Implementation Challenges

Review the key action from the practice profile and the district capacity items that align with a process to address implementation challenges. Use this information to begin to identify components that are critical to include in the process to address implementation challenges. Consider how the process to address implementation challenges is linked to your communication plan.

Practice Profile Team-Based Leadership Expected Use in Practice
<p>1.5 The district team has developed a formal process, that is consistently used over time, to address internal and external barriers. The process includes steps to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify, remove, and follow-up on internal barriers. • report policy relevant information to outside entities that have the authority to remove external barriers (e.g., ISD, state).

DCA item:	2 points	1 point	Data Source
11. District uses a process for addressing internal barriers	<p>A <u>written</u> process is in place outlining steps needed to identify and address barriers -AND- The process is consistently used internal barriers (e.g., policy and guidance documents are resided to support new ways of work, resources are allocated/re-allocated, competing or ineffective initiatives are modified or removed) -AND- Follow-up determines if barrier was addressed effectively</p>	<p>The process is informal -OR- The process is used inconsistently</p>	<p>Guidance document outline process</p> <p>Documentation showing how the process has been used in the past six months (e.g., examples of identifying barriers, defining solutions, and implementing the solution with effect)</p>
12 District uses a process to report policy relevant information to outside entities	<p>A written process is in place to gather policy relevant information to help identify: Strengths of the state system Barriers that need to be resolved at the regional and/or state level to support the district implementation efforts (e.g., state/federal laws, mandated use of funds, interpretation of legislative language) -AND- The process is consistently used by staff and executive leadership for reporting information to identified contact liaison with the Regional Agency and or the State Agency (SEA)</p>	<p>A written process is in place and is used inconsistently</p>	<p>Guidance document outline process</p> <p>Gathering of information from districts and regions</p> <p>Documentation of reporting the gathered information (e.g., reports, meeting minutes, agendas)</p>

List features you will need to include in a process to address implementation challenges within your organization:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Effective communication is the best way to prevent and solve problems
-Bradford Winter

Steps to Address Implementation Challenges

Step 1: Add Challenge to Agenda and Implementation Challenges Log

- An “Implementation Challenges” agenda topic is added to the following meeting agendas:
 - <list teams/meeting spaces>
- The Implementation Challenges Log is linked to the meeting agendas identified above.
- When an implementation challenge is identified, a Google Form is submitted, and information in the form automatically transfers to the District Implementation Challenges Log.

What type of challenges do you expect the schools to handle?

What type of challenges do you expect the district to handle?

Does everyone (all classroom teachers) have access or is there a process to vet the challenge to make sure it is being addressed at the appropriate level?

Step 2: DIT Review of Challenges Log

- The Implementation Challenges Log is reviewed and updated at monthly DIT meetings.
- When a new challenge is identified, the DIT reviews the information provided and engages in the steps detailed below populate the remainder of the challenges log.

Step 3: Assign Personnel to Address Implementation Challenge

- The DIT uses the table in the District Personnel to Address Implementation Challenges to identify the individual or group with the appropriate decision-making authority to remove the challenge.
- If the individual/group with decision-making authority is not on the DIT, the DIT will assign a designee from the team to communicate with that individual/group until the challenge is resolved.
- The designee will provide monthly updates to the DIT on the challenge’s status.

Consider developing a chart or table that identifies who is in charge of specific areas. Smaller districts this typically falls solely on the superintendent or just a very few numbers of people. It is still good to articulate where to turf concerns to. It saves time.

Sometimes districts may have to consult with people who are not part of their DIT. How are you going to communicate the challenge and ask if the option the DIT wants to use is viable?

Step 4: Identify Steps to Remove the Challenge

- Individuals/groups assigned in Step 3 identify the steps and timelines to address the challenge and record these in the log.
- It can be helpful to put identified steps into a list format.

Step 5: Provide Status Updates

- During monthly meetings, the DIT reviews information in the Implementation Challenges Log.
- DIT members assigned to support the removal of challenges provide the team with updates on the status of activities to resolve the challenges, as well as timelines.
- If the challenge has not been removed, there is an opportunity to determine if additional steps must be taken.

Some challenges take a long time to resolve and include a fair number of people. Where will your district consistently document the challenge, steps to remove with timelines, individuals responsible for the steps and progress notes?

Step 6: Communication around Challenge Removal

- When the challenge is resolved, this information is confirmed and recorded in the log.
- The DIT designee assigned to support the removal of challenges communicates the challenge removal to the individual/group that originally reported the challenge.
- One month following the removal of the challenge, the individual/group that originally reported the challenge to the DIT will be asked if the challenge with addressed sufficiently.
- Feedback is documented in the challenges log. If additional planning is necessary, include this information in the challenges log, also.
- Once a challenge has been removed, this will be indicated in the challenges log (e.g., a checkbox indicating “busted” in a column, color-coded to indicate it has been removed).

Following up to make sure the challenge was sufficiently addressed is an important step. Often at the district level policies or solutions are put into place but sometimes they don't have the consequence we intended. Checking in is good practice and helps support buy in for the overall initiative or practice you are trying to implement. One month after is a good rule of thumb to check to make sure things are running smoothly.

Activity 2.3 Implementation Challenge Scenarios

Review the brief implementation challenge descriptions. Consider which team would be best positioned to address the implementation challenge. As you think of each of the implementation challenges consider each in the frame of the made-up district described below.

District Context: Four Building District
 High School, Middle School, Elementary (grades 2-4) Early Elementary (Daycare & PreK- 1)
 MTSS Framework Integrated reading and social, emotional, behavioral health

Implementation Challenge	School	District	Unsure
Training/compensating all K-6 staff to complete Acadience Essentials workshop 8 hours training.			
High school staff given choice to use the acknowledgement system developed by the school leadership team in their classroom			
Enrollments not updating in the universal screening system K-6 via Skyward (SIS) and Clever. Students are still in last year's grade.			
Out of classroom time from behavior (suspension/detention) is three times the rate at the secondary than the elementary. Current board approved handbook gives more flexibility toward implement restorative practices at the elementary.			
Three of our four buildings indicate they lack parent involvement according to their SWPBIS Tier 1 TFI and School Climate survey.			
Reading interventionists report that over the past month they have had less than 75% of their intervention sessions due to the sessions being cancelled by field trips, assemblies, and class parties.			
Acadience Reading Composite Score Data, NWEA and M-STEP Reading/Literacy for grades 2-4 over the past 3 years has indicated that there is a large percentage (>40%) of students who are not reading at grade level.			
Beyond Classroom Teaching staff (noon-aids, bus drivers, custodians, paraprofessionals, secretaries/admin assistants) have not received training to support our PBIS initiative/District-wide expectations-consistent response, teaching/reteaching			

Typical District Implementation Challenges

- People
- Policy
- Money



Logging Implementation Challenges

DIT can only address challenges that are known

Strategy 1 Google Form

Link Google form to all team agendas

Sample Questions:

1. Name of individual or team with the challenge
2. Describe the implementation challenge
3. What steps have you already taken towards solving this implementation concern?

Strategy 2 Link Implementation Challenges Log to all team agenda

Strategy 3 Leverage Communication protocol to identify implementation challenge with MTSS Coordinator logging challenges

Implementation Challenges Log

Districts have used many different forms to keep track of the implementation challenges that arise in their district. There is no one right way. The function of a log is to keep track of the challenges, who is working on the issue, and when a resolution might be expected. In the electronic resources there is a spreadsheet that might be able to get you started.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	Date	Challenge Identified (Step 1)	Individual/Team Raising Challenge (Step 1)	Challenge Type (Step 1)	Individual/Team Identified to Remove Challenge (Step 3)	DIT Designee (if person assigned is not on the DIT) (Step 3)	Steps to Remove the Challenge (Step 4)	Status Update (Step 5)	Challenge Removal (Y or N) (Step 6)	1-Month Follow Up (Step 6)
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										
11										
12										
13										
14										
15										

Activity 2.4 Who has the final say?

Consider the following types of decisions that often cause implementation to slow down or pause.

1. Review the series of chart below.
2. Consider the major topic areas that often intersect with a district's MTSS framework include funding, special education services, curriculum, instruction and assessment, student behavior, human resources, and technology.
3. Pick one or two topics to get started with discussing.
4. Reflect on the two columns and might be the people or person to fulfill this role in your district: Teams or individuals potentially involved (input) and who is the person with the final say.
5. Make a plan to return to this topic if you and your team found this activity useful.

Funding

Decision Types	Involvement of Additional Individuals/Teams	Person with Decision Making Authority
Title I questions related to appropriate use of funds	N/A	
Approval for use of any type of funds (excluding IDEA)		
Requests for flexible use of state or federal funds (requiring MDE approval)		<p>MDE (OEII or OSE) Staff (add person name) would be the designee from district to initiate a request</p> <p>Determine if the request goes to the appropriate ISD leadership (e.g., superintendent or assistant superintendent) who in turn, makes the request on the district's behalf</p>

Special Education

Decision Types	Involvement of Additional Individuals/Teams	Person with Decision Making Authority
Learning Support Services (LSS)		

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Decision Types	Involvement of Additional Individuals/Teams	Person with Decision Making Authority
Secondary curriculum and instruction		
Science and Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction (PreK-12 th Grade)		
Literacy and Math Curriculum (PreK-4 th Grade)		
PK-12 Assessment		

Student Behavior

Decision Types	Involvement of Additional Individuals/Teams	Person with Decision Making Authority
Behavior Interventions and Code for Student Conduct		

Human Resources

Decision Types	Involvement of Additional Individuals/Teams	Person with Decision Making Authority
Personnel issues concerning general education staff		
Personnel issues concerning special education staff		
Personnel issues concerning non-certified staff (paraprofessionals, aides)		

Technology

Decision Types	Involvement of Additional Individuals/Teams	Person with Decision Making Authority
Access to supports for district approved technology		
Purchasing / licenses / compatibility with existing technology		

Big Ideas of Process to Address Implementation Challenges

- Challenges are inevitable when districts install or refine initiatives
- Identify some differences between school challenges and district challenges
- Take time to identify the key decision-makers
- Share with the school leaders how to voice their challenges
- Make time to use the process in monthly
- Document the steps you took to address the challenge
- Follow up to make sure the solution worked

Assignment

1. Effective practice work
 - a. **(SEB/Academic/Integrated) MTSS.** Consider how the use of a process to address implementation challenges will support implementation and use of the effective practices within your MTSS framework.
 - b. Continue the initiative inventory
2. Team-based leadership
 - a. Check on the status of team formation at both the district and school level
 - b. Consider the role schools teams will play in the process
3. Draft Process to Address Implementation Challenges
 - a. Consider the critical components necessary
 - b. Draft a list of steps (process) that school teams and the DIT will follow to address implementation challenges
4. Formalize your Process to Address Implementation Challenges
 - a. Explain the process to a few critical groups who use it most often.
 - b. Get feedback. Make any adjustments and finalize

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