District Implementation Infrastructure Series
Communication Plan Participant Workbook

Version 1.0
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Communication Plan

The workbook contains the activities and support materials that support the District Installation Series: Communication Professional Learning Series.

Foundational Elements

The communication plan and the process to address implementation challenges are part of effective implementation. Both infrastructure components are considered organizational drivers
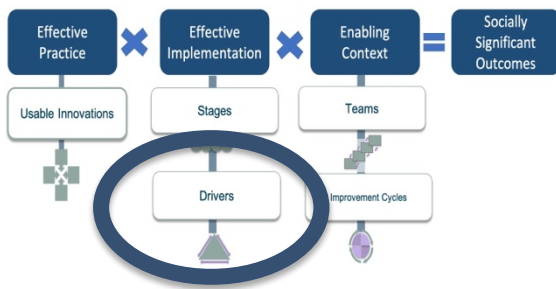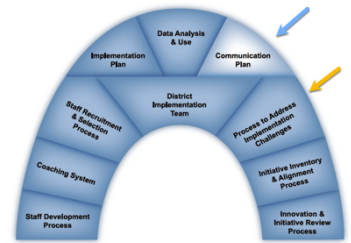

Figure 1. MDE's five essential components of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework

Activity Connecting Infrastructure to AIF

Word Bank

MTSS	team	enabling	ten	effective
Infrastructure	implementation			

Fill the blank

- To get to outcomes a district must have an _____ practice, effective _____, and provide an _____ context.

- There are ____ components in that make up a district infrastructure which support effective implementation.

- The enabling context includes _____ and improvement cycles.

- District _____ and the MDE _____ Practice Profile are connected and have intentional overlap.

- Communication is essential to support_____ _____.

Why?

Effective communication is essential to the success of any initiative in a district.

Activity Communication Factors

Use this table to record factors to enhance and minimize when creating your communication plan.

Positive Communication-Do more of this	Poor Communication- Do less of this

Communication Plan

To facilitate and sustain practitioner use of an innovation, organizations need to create new ways of working, a hospitable environment, and they must remove implementation challenges

(Nilsen & Birken, 2020)

Components of Communication Plan

1. Identified Groups / Teams (e.g., internal, external)
2. Designee/persons responsible for communication with each group
3. Protocol (process) for what information needs to be gathered and disseminated to each group / team, in what format, and in a pre-determined timeframe
4. Communication survey and the dates to assess the effectiveness of communication

Activity Making Connections (How)

Table 1. Excerpt from the MDE MTSS Practice Profile (2020)

Practice Profile Team-Based Leadership Expected Use in Practice
1.4 The district team maintains a **formal** communication plan, that is consistently used over time, to ensure effective communication with internal and external stakeholders regarding the implementation of MTSS. • The plan includes a list of internal and external stakeholders (e.g.: staff, families, ISD, community partners, school board), person(s) responsible for the communication, frequency, type of information disseminated and gathered, methods, and measures of communication effectiveness. • • The plan is evaluated annually for effectiveness and stakeholders report that communication has been effective.

Table 2. Excerpt from the District Capacity Assessment

DCA item:	2 points	Data Source
10. District uses a communication plan	The plan is written and accessible to all staff **-AND-** The plan includes: List of internal and external stakeholder groups (e.g., internal staff represented in the organizational chart, necessary outside agencies, families) Person(s) responsible for communication with each group Frequency of communication (e.g., following each monthly meeting) Type of information to disseminate and gather from identified stakeholder Methods of communication (e.g., regularly scheduled meeting, email) Communication effectiveness survey and timelines for gathering communication survey data **-AND-** Plan is consistently used **-AND-** Stakeholders report that communication has been effective	Communication Plan Stakeholder report summaries including communication has been effective

Question: How will strengthening and systematizing this part of your infrastructure support your MTSS efforts?

Activity: District MTSS Communication (What)

Read the excerpt of the Practice Profile. Each key action has implications about how the district will communicate and ensure a process is occurring. Consider the following as the starting point of the WHAT the district should be communicating to support an MTSS Framework.

Table 3 MDE MTSS Practice Profile subcomponent excerpts

Practice Profile Tiered Delivery System Expected Use in Practice	Current communication method
2.1 The district team defines data, systems, and practices for Tiers 1, 2, and 3 and all schools/centers within the district are aligned with the common definitions.	
2.3 The district team ensures that educators are provided guidance and direction on how to best differentiate instruction to meet the diverse cognitive, physical, behavioral, social, and emotional needs of learners.	
2.4 The district team has developed a formal process, that is consistently used over time, to provide learners with access to **interventions** and supports.	
2.5 The district team ensures that educators are provided with guidance on the continuum of strategies used to intensify interventions based on learner needs.	
Practice Profile: Selection and Implementation of Instruction, Intervention and Supports **Expected Use in Practice**	**Current communication method**
3.4 The district team engages families and community members, in a variety of ways, to obtain input and feedback throughout the selection and alignment process.	
Practice Profile: Comprehensive Screening and Assessment System **Expected Use in Practice**	**Current communication method**
4.3 The district team ensures that educators are provided guidance on assessments annually.	
4.4 The district supports a process for schools/centers to ensure learners and families are informed about assessments	
4.5 The district team has developed a written process, that is consistently used over time, for monitoring the fidelity of implementation	
Practice Profile: Continuous Data-Based Decision-Making **Expected Use in Practice**	**Current communication method**
5.5 The district supports a process for schools/centers to communicate about continuous improvement with staff, learners, families, school board, ISD and community stakeholders	

For a complete understanding of each of the subcomponents listed in the table refer to the **MDE MTSS Practice Profile.** The goal of the activity was to get you started think about what the communication responsibilities of the District Implementation Team will be to enact an MTSS Framework.

Activity: Communication Methods

1. Read through the examples of informal and formal communication methods.
2. Reflect on your current methods of communication regarding MTSS literacy, MTSS SEBH or any other initiatives you have recently installed and implemented.
3. What have you used?
4. How do you gain feedback from your critical groups and partners that the method works for them?
5. Which have been successful?
6. Are there methods you may want to consider to use in the future?

Informal Communication Methods

- Texts
- Phone Calls
- Hallway Conversations
- In context of another meeting
- As needed

Formal Communication Methods

- Written Guidance
- Checklists
- Calendars
- Scheduled Reminder Messages (email, phone, text)
- Newsletters / Updates
- School Board Updates / Annual Reports
- Scheduled check in meetings (e.g., Superintendent / MTSS Coordinator, Curriculum Director / MTSS Coordinator, MTSS Coordinator / School Coaches

Recall: The Communication Plan Critical Components

Use table to note if component is in place and elements that might be useful as you create or enhance your districts communication plan.

1. Written
   a. Identifies
   b. Team or group
   c. Designee or contact
   d. Information given and received
   e. Format or method
   f. Frequency
2. Explain how the communication plan's effectiveness will be measured

The communication protocol is an agreement between the DIT and the critical group.

What information you need from them and what do they need from the DIT?

Activity: Practice Writing a Communication Protocol

Your Turn

1. Select one group or team to focus on

2. Can you name the point person that communication or messaging currently flows through?

3. What is the critical information?

4. How (format and frequency)

5. Share your protocol with your partner. Partner: look for the follow success criteria and give feedback.
   Success criteria

   • Identifies Critical Groups/Teams

   • Identifies Designees/Contacts

   • Identifies information to give and get

   • Identifies methods and frequency

Table 4 Critical components of a communication plan

Critical Component	Example 1	Example 2
Written		
Identifies Critical Groups/Teams		
Identifies Designees/Contacts		
Identifies information to give and get		
Identifies method/format		
Identifies frequency		
Explains how effectiveness will be measured		

Example 1

Groups/ Teams	Need to Knows: From DIT	Need to Knows: To DIT	Designees (Name & Role)	Frequency	Method
Critical Group 1					
Critical Group 2					

Example 2

Critical Group / Partner	Types of Information to be Communicated	To Whom / By Whom	When	How

Communication Protocol Best Practices

- Identify specific people within groups as the contact
- Collaborate with the critical group on the information to give and get
- Formalize but be flexible to meet the communication needs of the district

Tips for Consistent Use

- Communication liaison role during meeting
- Communication agenda topic
- Include communication effectiveness in all perception surveys
- Regularly update in formal ways your MTSS progress

Michigan's MTSS Technical Assistance Center

Formal District Communication Examples

Example 1 Potential Audience: All Staff, Administrators, School Board, Public School Academy Authorizers

MTSS Update: Reading and Literacy

Our commitment to strengthening a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for reading and literacy remains steadfast. As a district, we recognize the critical need for a robust infrastructure that empowers teachers to deliver exceptional instruction for all students. Our district capacity scores highlight areas for growth in refining our processes and protocols to achieve these goals.

Progress and Achievements:

- **Tier 1 Reading Systems**: Our elementary schools have made steady progress in strengthening Tier 1 reading instruction. This foundational layer of support ensures that all students have access to high-quality, evidence-based practices.

- **Intervention Systems**: While there is still work to be done, significant strides have been made in improving interventions for students requiring additional support. These efforts align with the

actionable insights gained from the Reading Tiered Fidelity Inventory, which continues to guide our progress and next steps.
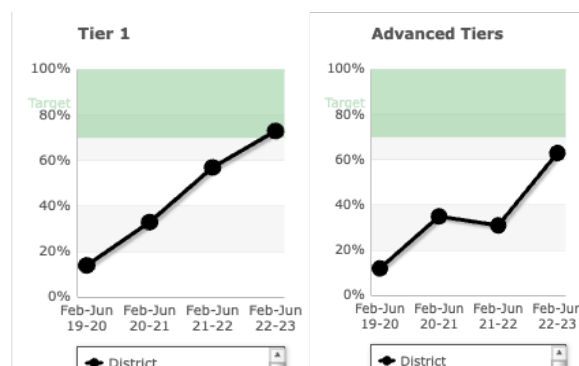
Student Outcomes: Data from our **Acadience Reading Composite Scores** for first graders reveals a direct correlation between the duration of effective instruction and the likelihood of students reaching grade-level proficiency. This progress underscores the impact of sustained, high-quality instructional practices across the district.
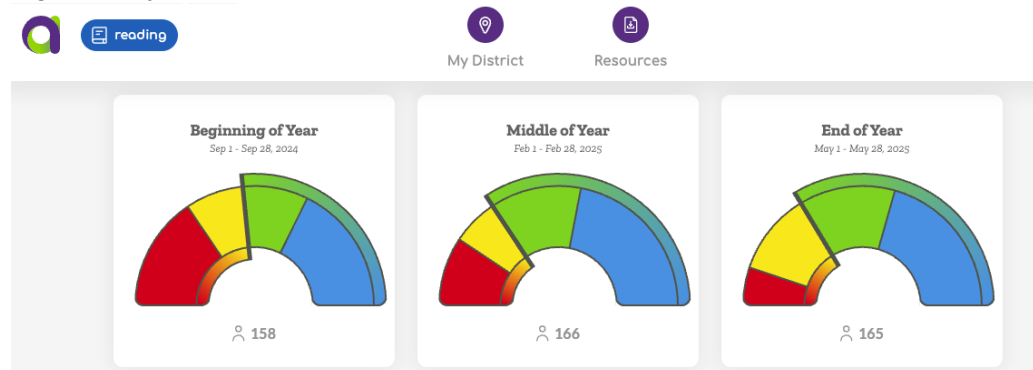
Next Steps: We remain focused on refining intervention systems and ensuring consistent implementation across schools. By leveraging our current momentum and addressing identified areas for improvement, we aim to ensure equitable access to literacy success for every student.

Your dedication to this work is making a difference, and we look forward to building on these achievements together. Thank you for your ongoing efforts to support our students' literacy development!

Example 2 *Potential Audience Families, Community and School Board*

Michigan School District MTSS Update

Building a Strong Reading and Literacy Foundation for All Students

Dear Families and Community,

At Michigan School District, we're committed to ensuring every student succeeds in reading and literacy through a strong **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)**. This comprehensive approach helps us provide the right instruction and interventions to meet every child's needs.

Our recent efforts have focused on enhancing our reading systems and infrastructure to support our teachers and students better. Here's a look at our progress and what's ahead!


What's Happening in Our Schools?

Elementary Success in Tier 1 Reading Systems: Our elementary schools have made steady progress in strengthening Tier 1 reading instruction, which provides foundational, high-quality teaching for all students.


Improving Interventions:
We've also made strides in our intervention systems, focusing on helping students who need additional support. While there's more work to be done, the progress this past year has been encouraging!
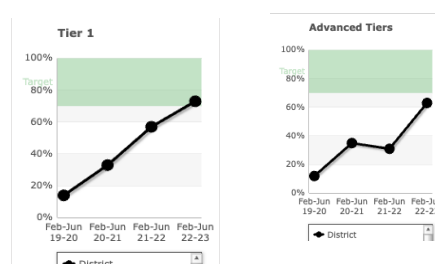
Data That Inspires Us

Recent **Acadience Reading Composite Scores** for our first graders show exciting results:

- The longer students receive consistent, effective instruction, the more likely they are to achieve grade-level proficiency.
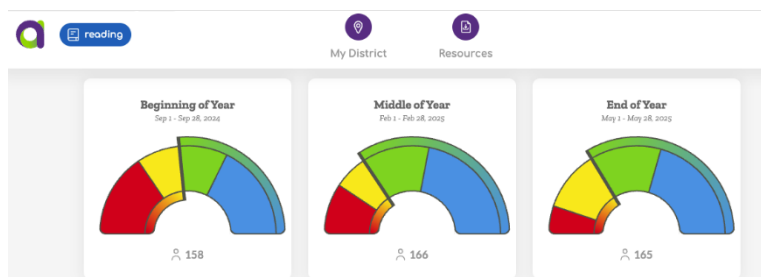
This success reaffirms the importance of our commitment to high-quality teaching and early interventions.

What's Next?

Strengthen Processes and Protocols: We're refining how we approach MTSS to ensure consistent and effective implementation across all schools.

Focus on Interventions: Continuing to improve intervention systems will be a key priority, ensuring every student gets the support they need to thrive.

Guided by Data: Tools like the **Reading Tiered Fidelity Inventory** will help us track progress and guide our next steps.

Thank You for Your Support!

The hard work of our teachers, staff, and community is making a difference. Together, we're building a brighter future for our students, one word at a time.

Warm regards,
Aurora Sunshine
Michigan School District

Big Ideas

- Effective communication is essential to the success of any district initiative
    - Effective Practice x **Effective Implementation** x Enabling Context = Outcomes
- Communication should be intentional and systematic
- Development and use of a communication plan ensures efficient and effective communication to critical groups and partners
- The district communication includes developing and supporting guidelines to enact an MTSS framework

Assignment

1. Effective practice work
    a. **(SEB/Academic/Integrated) MTSS**. Consider what type of communication can be sent about the work you are doing to support this component of an MTSS framework
    b. Continue the initiative inventory
2. Team-based leadership
    a. Continue your selection and recruitment process for your teams within your MTSS framework. The District Implementation Team will be the keystone to drive the work.
    b. What communication needs to occur?
3. Create Communication Protocols
    a. Who are your critical groups and team?
    b. Make a list and start working on your communication agreements
4. Formalize your Communication Plan
    a. Review the key components of a communication plan.
    b. What do you have in place? What needs to be developed?

Resources

MDE MTSS Practice Profile
(https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/school-performance-supports/mtss/content/mde-mtss-practice-profile)

References

National Implementation Research Network (n.d.). *Organizational Drivers*. Retrieved from
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