

MTSS Readiness Diagnostic Tool (District Level)

This diagnostic tool is designed for superintendents, chief academic officers, and student support leaders to assess district readiness for implementing or strengthening a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). It is organized into four domains: Systems, Culture, Instruction, and People (SCIP). Each domain includes indicators aligned with nationally recognized MTSS frameworks, such as those from the Center on Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS Center). Districts can rate themselves on a 4-point scale to identify strengths, gaps, and priorities. This tool is not evaluative but intended for readiness assessment and continuous improvement.

Facilitator’s Guide: MTSS Readiness Diagnostic

Purpose

This guide supports district leaders (superintendents, CAOs, student support leaders) in using the MTSS Readiness Diagnostic Tool to:

1. Assess district readiness across Systems, Culture, Instruction, and People (SCIP).
2. Identify strengths, gaps, and trends across schools.
3. Use results to guide continuous improvement planning through the PDSA cycle.

How to Use the Diagnostic

Participants: District leadership team, principals, MTSS leads, and central office staff.

Process:

1. Review each domain and its indicators.
2. Team members independently score each indicator (1–4).
3. Facilitate a group calibration discussion to agree on consensus ratings.
4. Capture evidence/examples to justify scores.

Timing: Expect 2–3 hours for a full district session.

Scoring

Use the 1–4 rubric:

- 1 = Emerging – No evidence or inconsistent pilot efforts.
- 2 = Developing – Some schools piloting, limited district structures.
- 3 = Established – District-wide implementation, some refinements needed.
- 4 = Sustaining – System-wide practice with continuous improvement loop.

Aggregating Data

Use the Excel scorecard to input ratings.

Heat map shows immediate strengths/gaps by indicator.



Summary sheet calculates average score by domain.

Use the bar chart to visually compare readiness across Systems, Culture, Instruction, and People.

Sample Evidence Statements

Instead of vague statements like “We don’t have good data,” consider statements such as:

“Universal screening occurs in K–3 reading, but not consistently in math or behavior.”

“Progress monitoring tools are in place, but schools use different systems.”

“Tier 1 instruction is aligned to HQIM in ELA, but Tier 2 interventions rely on teacher-created materials.”

Using PDSA for Next Steps

After scoring, facilitate a PDSA reflection for each domain:

- Plan: Which area is the first priority?
- Do: What step will we test in the next 90 days (e.g., standardize screening process)?
- Study: What evidence will show progress (trend data, fidelity checks, intervention use)?
- Act: How will the district scale or adjust strategies?

Facilitation Tips

Encourage evidence-based scoring, not opinions.

Allow healthy disagreement — gaps often emerge between central office perception and school-level reality.

Emphasize that this is not evaluative; it is diagnostic for planning.

Close the session by naming 3 district priorities and connecting them to resource allocation.

Scoring Framework

Each indicator should be rated on a 4-point scale:

1 = Emerging (no evidence or inconsistent practice)

2 = Developing (pilot or limited implementation)

3 = Established (consistent across schools with some refinement)

4 = Sustaining (system-wide practice with continuous improvement loop)

Domain 1: Systems

Indicator	Score (1–4)	Evidence / Notes
District policy framework for MTSS is clearly defined and communicated.		
Universal screening processes are in place for academics and behavior across all schools.		
Data systems integrate information from multiple sources (academic, attendance, behavior, whole-child support).		
Tiered intervention menu (Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3) is documented and accessible to all staff.		
Progress monitoring tools are standardized across schools.		
Resources (time, budget, staff) are allocated specifically for MTSS implementation.		

PDSA Reflection

- Plan: Which system-level element needs immediate attention?
- Do: What first step will be implemented in the next 90 days?
- Study: What evidence will be collected to monitor system readiness?
- Act: How should the system be adjusted or scaled based on results?

Domain 2: Culture

Indicator	Score (1–4)	Evidence / Notes
District leaders and staff believe MTSS is designed to support all students, not just those in interventions.		
Principals and teachers view MTSS as a framework for continuous improvement, not compliance.		
Families and community partners are engaged in MTSS design and decision-making.		
Cross-department collaboration (curriculum, special education, federal programs) supports MTSS implementation.		
Practices are responsive to cultural and linguistic diversity of students and families.		

PDSA Reflection

- Plan: Which system-level element needs immediate attention?
- Do: What first step will be implemented in the next 90 days?
- Study: What evidence will be collected to monitor system readiness?
- Act: How should the system be adjusted or scaled based on results?

Domain 3: Instruction

Indicator	Score (1–4)	Evidence / Notes
Tier 1 instruction is rigorous, standards-aligned, and accessible to all students through HQIM.		
Tier 2 supports are targeted, timely, and aligned to core instruction (not separate curriculum).		
Tier 3 supports are intensive, individualized, and integrated with Tier 1/2 content.		
Clear entry and exit criteria exist for interventions to reduce over-identification and ensure equity.		
Fidelity checks are in place to ensure interventions are implemented as designed.		

PDSA Reflection

- Plan: Which system-level element needs immediate attention?
- Do: What first step will be implemented in the next 90 days?
- Study: What evidence will be collected to monitor system readiness?
- Act: How should the system be adjusted or scaled based on results?

Domain 4: People

Indicator	Score (1–4)	Evidence / Notes
Clear roles and responsibilities exist for MTSS leads, principals, coaches, and interventionists.		
Professional learning is provided on MTSS practices, data analysis, and intervention delivery.		
Staffing capacity exists to implement MTSS at scale (not just in pilot schools).		
Leadership development includes MTSS competencies to ensure sustainability.		
Coaching and technical assistance are available for continuous improvement.		

PDSA Reflection

- Plan: Which system-level element needs immediate attention?
- Do: What first step will be implemented in the next 90 days?
- Study: What evidence will be collected to monitor system readiness?
- Act: How should the system be adjusted or scaled based on results?

References

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