Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports & Alignment

Reading: Implementation

Implementation Guide for Reading
2022-2023 Academic Year

TASN
Introduction to Document

The Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: Building Leadership Team Reading Implementation Supplement has been created to assist schools in implementing the reading of specific data analysis and instructional matching procedures. While the MTSS framework is a model integrating reading, math, and behavior supports, certain procedures are specific to the content areas. This document provides guidance on those steps that are designed to identify students’ individual reading needs and to provide the appropriate instruction and curriculum to meet those needs. In addition, this information will be used in conjunction with other data collected to provide the most comprehensive support in reading, math, and behavior for each student in a school’s system.

Content-area-specific documents for mathematics and behavior are companion documents to this one. All Kansas MTSS and Alignment documents are aligned with the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: Innovation Configuration Matrix (ICM), which describes the critical components of an MTSS and what each looks like when fully implemented, and the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: 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 to sharing wisdom from the field and the research. As the list of individuals and districts that have contributed to this effort over the past 10 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 documents.

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Step 1: Review and Validate Universal Screening Data

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<th>Critical Components:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who: Building leadership teams and collaborative/grade-level teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What: Universal screening data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When: After every universal screening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where: Building leadership team and collaborative team meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why: To ensure that the data collected are valid and reliable in order to make the most accurate instructional decisions</td>
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</table>

Validation of screening data at the building, grade, class, and individual student level is a critical first step for the collaborative teams and building leadership team. In addition to supporting collaborative teams in considering the validity of scores for individual students, the building leadership team needs to review systemic issues that might affect the validity of screening data. The building leadership team should consider whether fidelity of administration was present in the universal screening assessment. 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 the collaborative teams verify individual student data?

It is important that the members of the building leadership team review the procedures established for collecting data during the universal screening process. Building leadership team members should ask, “How do we know?” regarding each of the issues listed above to verify that adequate information about assessment fidelity has been collected.

The Kansas MTSS encourages districts to select assessments with strong predictive validity, reliability, efficiency, and established cut-scores. Predictive validity indicates that the measure is a strong predictor of future performance and can accurately classify students as at risk or not at risk. If a test is reliable, two testers who assess the same students will get very similar—if not identical—scores. Efficiency refers to how quickly the screener can be administered, scored, and analyzed. The cut-score is a necessary component of universal screening to identify which students may be at risk. Even when a strong assessment is selected, if it is not administered with fidelity, the above key features are compromised (Gersten & Newman-Gonchar, 2011, pp. 29, 30). Ensuring the validity of data is a process that applies not only to universal screening data. All data collected throughout the implementation process, including systems-level, screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring data, must be reviewed to ensure that teams have confidence in the results.
Step 2: Analyze Data

Critical Components:

| Who: Building leadership and collaborative teams |
| What: Universal screening data reports (percent at each tier, growth across benchmarks, etc.) |
| When: After every universal screening |
| Where: Building leadership and collaborative team meetings |
| Why: Determine overall progress |

Building Level Considerations

After every universal screening, the building leadership team will review building-level data to determine if the core curriculum has sufficiently met the needs of most students (80% or more students at or above benchmark). If not, the team will provide general information regarding how many students might need additional Tier 2 or Tier 3 support from the system. Each data system can provide reports that will visually represent the percentages of students within each tier of risk.

If the system does not generate a composite score, MTSS state trainers can provide some options for building-level status discussions. In some buildings, the building leadership team must consider the question, “What is our core curriculum?” and ensure that staff members are, in fact, using that core curriculum. A review of the materials the teachers are expected to use at each grade level as part of the core curriculum could be required.

The building leadership team should also review any information that has been collected about the fidelity of the implementation of the core curriculum. A lack of fidelity in teaching the core is often identified as a problem, and it is a first consideration when trying to increase the number of students who are at benchmark. In addition to the issue of curriculum fidelity, the building leadership team might want to review core instructional practices.

The building leadership team will also need to consider whether there are any needs regarding professional development within the building. It is important that there be clear two-way communication about grade-level results and any issues related to the core between the building leadership team and the collaborative teams as well as between the building leadership team and the district leadership team.

Any issues with the core curriculum need to be addressed prior to focusing on adding interventions. However, building leadership teams must be cautious about making changes to the core curriculum based on limited data. The leadership team will need multiple data points and time to examine patterns across grade levels before making significant adjustments to core curriculum and instruction. To assist the building leadership team in analyzing data at the building level, a building-level status discussion worksheet has been developed for each universal screening period with questions specific to that time of year. The worksheet is designed to lead your building team through a discussion around the universal screening data and get a picture of how your system is functioning at the building level.
**Building and Collaborative Considerations**

The building leadership and collaborative teams should review grade-level reports and consider the number of students within the Benchmark (Tier 1), Supplemental (Tier 2), and Intensive (Tier 3) ranges. The goal for buildings is to have 80 percent of students within the on-track range or above. If the building has fewer than 80% of students within the on-track range, then several issues should be considered:

- Are core instruction and the core curriculum (including social and behavioral expectations) being implemented with fidelity? How do we know?
- Is core instruction explicit, systematic, and scaffolded?
- 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 this current grade?
- Are professional development or supports needed for the teachers regarding the core curriculum or instruction?

When a high percentage of students in a particular grade level fail to reach the on-track range, there is an indication of possible problems with core instruction and curriculum. The leadership team must consider the data for all grades in the school and look for patterns across the grade levels that might indicate systemic issues. Often, issues with core curriculum and instruction need to be a primary concern. Even outstanding supplemental and intensive interventions cannot serve to support students who are failing because of issues within the core.

**Grade Level and Classroom Considerations**

Grade-level/collaborative teams also need to review grade-level reports and set goals for growth. When reviewing grade-level data from the initial universal screening of the academic year, teams should focus on questions similar to the following:

- What is the current grade-level status?
- What should the goal for this academic year be?
- What are the strengths/needs of the current group of learners?
- What are the implications of the grade-level results for differentiation of core instruction and curriculum?
- Are there instructional or curriculum concerns that the building leadership team needs to address?
- Are there areas in which professional development is needed for staff to implement the core more effectively across the grade level?
- What do the individual skills assessed help determine regarding the skills taught in the core? Are there any skills that need to be taught more explicitly and systematically?
- What additional supports or resources are necessary to achieve learner goals at a particular grade level?

Most building leadership team members will be participating in classroom-level data analysis as a member of a collaborative/grade-level team. The building leadership team should:
• Support the work of the collaborative teams.
• Review data to determine if any classrooms appear to be problematic.
• Consider the current distribution of building personnel and/or resources and determine whether they need to be distributed differently.
• Consider issues reported to the leadership team by the collaborative teams.

Classroom-level data is important, not as a tool to compare teachers, but as a way to determine where to best use resources. If one class has significantly higher needs, for example, it would make sense to place additional assistance in that classroom during core instruction.

**Additional Academic Reports Available in Winter and Spring**
As subsequent universal screening data is collected, both building and collaborative teams will analyze the effectiveness of their interventions. It will be important to determine whether individual students are making sufficient progress. Some assessment systems provide a snapshot view of the effectiveness of core, supplemental, and intensive interventions for individual students. A focused conversation can provide a format for data discussions.

**Step 3: Use Data to Group Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Components:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who:</strong> Collaborative teams</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>When:</strong> After every universal screening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Where:</strong> Collaborative team meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Classwide vs. Small Intervention Groups (elementary)**

The first decision the collaborative team must make is whether there is a need for a classwide intervention for any of the classrooms at that grade level. To make this determination, team members should follow the steps below for each of their own classrooms (steps also noted on classwide flowchart):

1. Adjust your system’s student scores report so scores are ranked from high to low.

2. Find the median (middle) score. Note: some systems report the median score on the screening report at the bottom.

3. Compare the median score to the benchmark for that time of year. If the median score is below the benchmark, there is a need for a classwide intervention. Even if the median score is above the benchmark, teachers might want to look at the next few scores below the median. If those students show need for tiered support, the teacher might consider implementing a classwide intervention.

When more than half the students are below benchmark, a traditional Walk to Intervention small-group model is not robust enough to move the needle for such a
high number of students. Most schools do not have the resources to provide adequate group size when more than half of the students are demonstrating Tier 2 or Tier 3 needs. A classwide intervention allows for a rapid response that should lower the number of students demonstrating need in a shorter amount of time. Conversations around the core should also take place if this is a widespread issue across grades within a building.

**Small-Group/Walk to Intervention Groups**

Once a small-group approach is established as the best choice, collaborative teams are ready to begin the grouping process. Grouping students according to the recommendation for tiered support (e.g., Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3) is not sufficient, because these recommendations only indicate the intensity of support the students need for success. Collaborative teams must also determine the skill focus for instruction.

When grouping students for reading, it is essential to consider the predictive indicators associated with the grade level and the time of year the assessment is given. Consider how resources are currently allocated to support instructional groups and whether any changes in resource allocation are warranted.

The building leadership team reviews the decision rules currently in place to ensure that they have been implemented as planned and consider whether any of the decision rules need revision. The decision rules that each team created (e.g., cut-scores and guidelines for movement among and between groups) can be found in the comprehensive assessment plan.

Other building leadership team responsibilities for this step are as follows:

- Conduct fidelity checks to ensure that the collaborative teams have met and conducted the sorting and diagnostic processes correctly.
- Conduct checks to ensure that students are grouped correctly based on both the instructional intensity recommendation and the instructional focus for skill development.
- Review the data to determine whether any classroom needs to implement a classwide intervention and whether that intervention has been planned.
- Consider any needs for professional development

**General Grouping Guidelines**

- Locate class or grade list reports.
- Review the students’ scores compared to the benchmark.
- Identify students who need strategic or intensive instructional interventions.
  - Can this be validated? What other measures can we consider? (State assessments, attendance, reading/writing/spelling screeners, etc.)
- Follow the recommendations of your assessment system or the KS MTSS and Alignment recommendations for the grade level and the time of year.
Students are initially grouped using the Universal Screening Assessment data. When available, a four-group instructional grouping worksheet, such as the generic one illustrated below, is used to provide an efficient way to organize data into four groups to determine the instructional focus for each student.

More detailed grouping information for all grade levels and grouping worksheets are located in the appendix of the implementation manual.

**Grouping Worksheet Format**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determining Instructional Focus Using Oral Reading Fluency Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 1: Accurate and Fluent</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>May need enrichment in addition to core instruction</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 2: Accurate but Slow</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>May need fluency and vocabulary/comprehension instruction</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 3: Inaccurate and Slow</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Focus on Accuracy with Phonological Awareness/Phonics/Sight Word Recognition</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 4: Accurate and Fluent but Low Comprehension</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>May need support in vocabulary/comprehension</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Step 4: Determine Focus of Instruction**

Once the initial grouping is complete, teams will have the task of making sure the intervention groups are homogenous in need, appropriate in size, effectively staffed, and equipped with curriculum that matches the instructional focus for that group. It is critical to have a good match between the knowledge of the instructor and the intervention the instructor will teach. Therefore, it is important to know the strengths and professional development needs of the instructional providers (e.g., teachers, building aides, and para-educators). Building leadership teams should consider how certified and noncertified staff can best be utilized to teach intervention groups. Instructional effectiveness depends on the use of strong evidence-based instruction and staff training to provide the intervention.

In addition, the building leadership team will need to select appropriate interventions from those documented in the Tier 2 and Tier 3 protocol to identify the protocol interventions to be used with each group.

**Determining Classwide Instructional Focus**

Once the need for a classwide intervention is detected, each classroom will need to determine the focus of instruction for his/her individual classroom. It is quite possible that different classrooms at the same grade level will need a different classwide intervention. A flowchart in the Appendix illustrates the process for determining the classwide focus.

For grades K and 1, the focus could be phonological, phonics, or both. Classroom teachers will need to look at the detailed reports for subtests that make up the composite score. Which subskills show at least a third to half of the students at risk? Those subscores indicate areas that need focus in a classwide intervention.

For grades 2-6, classroom teachers should first look at the number of students who are inaccurate. If a third to half of the students are demonstrating less than 95% accuracy, it is recommended that teachers begin with a phonics intervention. Rather than giving all students an informal diagnostic assessment on specific phonics skills, teachers may want to look at the last phonics skill that should have been mastered in the previous grade as a starting point.

To assist teachers in determining specific skills to begin classwide interventions, the Kansas MTSS team has developed materials that provide skill descriptions and free curricula matching those skills to allow teachers to place students in a classwide intervention as quickly as possible. The goal is to reduce the percentage of students at risk in a short amount of time, so the typical small group instructional format can be utilized with greater efficiency.

The link to these materials is provided [here](#). In addition, a webinar providing more detailed information can be accessed [here](#).

**Determining Instructional Focus for Small Groups**

When it has been determined that a class does not need a classwide intervention, planning for small-group instructional focus begins. Once the initial instructional sorting has been completed, the diagnostic process starts. More specific information can be found by following the links to grade-level specific grouping tools.

- For grades K-1, follow [this link](#) for steps to problems solve and group students.
- For grades 2 and above, follow [this link](#) to problem solve and group students.
  - The grouping worksheet is located [here](#).
The building leadership team will need to take into consideration grade-level recommendations between older elementary and adolescent readers and determine which methods make sense for their building configurations. In her book, Educators as Physicians (2010), Dr. Jan Hasbrouck states, “The CBM research on oral reading fluency has indicated that these assessments lose some of their predictive power once students reach the Grade 6 reading level.”

Students in Group 3 on the Oral Reading Fluency Grouping Worksheet (grades 2 and above) need additional assessment to determine their instructional focus. This group should be given a phonological awareness assessment (e.g., PAST or PASI), phonics assessment (e.g., QPS or PSI), or possibly both to determine their instructional needs. These assessments are based on skill continuums. “Using phonological awareness and phonics continuums allows teachers to see that students need to master skills in a predetermined order. Whenever a student struggles with a skill that is assumed to be mastered at a set grade level, intervention is needed” (Hall, 2011).

Students should be placed in an intervention group that addresses the lowest skill or skills not yet mastered but expected to be mastered for the students’ grade level. For purposes of the Kansas MTSS, a student must score at least 90% on a phonics diagnostic task to be considered as having mastered that skill. For Phonological Awareness diagnostic tasks, the Kansas MTSS and Alignment recommends 80% or more for a student to demonstrate mastery. Once a student masters a skill, the student will receive instruction on the next skill that was missed on the continuum.
Yellow highlighted boxes indicate skills assessed with typical universal screening measures.
It is important to have a good match between the knowledge of the instructor and the intervention the instructor will teach. Therefore, it is important to know the strengths and professional development needs of the instructional providers (e.g., teachers, para-educators). For instance, some teachers are confident in teaching advanced phonics skills, while others are more skilled at teaching reading comprehension. Building leadership teams need to consider how certified and noncertified staff members can best be used to teach intervention groups. The building leadership team should plan to provide any needed professional development to ensure that instructional staff members have the necessary skills to provide reading instruction. Instructional effectiveness depends on the use of strong evidence-based instruction and staff training to provide the intervention.

In addition, the building leadership team will need to choose appropriate Tier 2 and 3 interventions from those documented in the implementation protocol (from Structuring) to identify the protocol interventions to be used with each group and document the interventions selected for each group.

It is critical that there be an explicit connection between the students’ needs, the level of strategic or intensive instruction, and the focus of instruction. The most successful groupings and progress occur when specific student skill deficits are pinpointed and aligned with the appropriate intervention. Building leadership teams will need to transfer appropriate Tier 2/3 interventions from those documented on the implementation protocol (from structuring) to the oral reading fluency grouping summary for use by the collaborative teams. The building leadership team should communicate clearly to teachers and interventionists that protocol interventions selected for each group come from the Tier 2 and Tier 3 protocol. When conducting universal screening, it is essential to revisit and refine the alignment of student needs with the levels of intervention intensity and the instructional focus of the groupings.

Remember that programs do not teach. Success does not depend on a program but on how well trained the interventionists are in those materials as well as in strong instructional practices.

For further professional development in the five areas of reading, the LETRS modules are designed to provide deep foundational knowledge that will enable interventionists to be optimally effective when delivering instruction. The latest information on LETRS training can be accessed through the KSDE\textsc{tasn} website.

Finally, if your screening system does not provide grouping details, it is important to document the final instructional groupings in order to organize the students in the variety of groups that will be needed. The document should include details such as the names of the students in the group, the focus of instruction, the name of the interventionist, the progress monitoring tool and frequency, and other important information. This approach ensures clear communication, organization, and understanding of the instructional groupings so the groups can be implemented in an efficient manner. A sample of the instructional assignment worksheet for reading is in the Appendix; it can be revised or created to suit the school’s needs.
Notes for Building Leadership Teams

The responsibilities of the building leadership team for this step are as follows:

- Conduct fidelity checks to ensure that the collaborative teams have met and performed the diagnostic process correctly and that they are following the guidelines for assigning curriculum and instruction to match the students’ needs.
- Conduct checks to ensure that students are placed into groups correctly according to their level of intensity and based on the data from the diagnostic process.
- Consider any needs for professional development.
- Consider how resources are currently allocated to support instructional groups and whether any changes in resource allocation are warranted.
- Ensure that the Tier 2 and Tier 3 protocol is being used and determine if modifications to the protocol are needed.
- Consider any needs for professional development.

To ensure that an effective, coherent system is created that uses feedback to continually meet the needs of all students and staff, an impact cycle is a must for leaders/teachers. The Kansas MTSS and Alignment Inquiry/Impact Cycle can be found in the Appendix. It provides leaders with enhanced visibility into school performance and improved decision making based on evidence. Teachers have a clear understanding of what works best in raising student achievement, and students are able to demonstrate achievement.
**Step 5: Progress Monitoring**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Components:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who:</strong> Building leadership team and collaborative teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What:</strong> Intervention logs, individual progress monitoring charts, research-based practices resource, list of steps for intensifying an intervention, list of steps for customizing an intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When:</strong> As determined by frequency of collaborative team meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Where:</strong> Collaborative team meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Why:</strong> Ensure that appropriate instructional adjustments are made in a timely manner dependent on student response to the intervention</td>
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</table>

“Often principals try to alleviate the stress level of teachers by postponing progress monitoring. However, by postponing progress monitoring you will lose the data that motivate teachers to keep going because progress monitoring documents the improvements that students are making” (Hall, 2011 p. 3). Ongoing progress monitoring is essential for students receiving interventions to ensure all students are achieving adequate progress. Data from progress monitoring tracks how students are responding to an intervention; without this data, instruction is just a best guess.

The purpose of progress monitoring is to determine if the instruction provided is working and beginning to close the gap. It should provide a teacher not with summative information but more of a GPS to determine what comes next for each student. Therefore, it is critical for the progress monitoring tool to match the focus of the intervention.

“A progress monitoring protocol that includes assessment frequent enough to make informed and student-centered decisions is important to any intervention system” (Riccomini & Witzel, 2010, p. 46). The building leadership team will determine the frequency of progress monitoring data collection and review for the building. When determining the frequency of progress monitoring data collection, it is important to consider: 1) how quickly students typically learn the skills that are the focus of instruction and 2) how frequently collaborative teams will meet to review progress monitoring data for instructional adjustments based on the decision rules of the system. The frequency of progress monitoring is influenced by how quickly instructional adjustments can be made. The recommended frequency of progress monitoring for instruction and weekly for students receiving intensive (Tier 3) instruction.

Progress monitoring of students in intervention is critical to ensure appropriately targeted instruction leading to student growth. Students whose teachers monitor progress regularly and use that data to make instructional decisions demonstrate more academic progress than students whose teachers do not monitor progress. Teachers' accuracy in judging student progress increases when progress monitoring is used consistently (Stecker & Fuchs, 2000). It is through frequent progress monitoring that the ultimate goal of returning students to less intensive instruction in a short time period can be achieved.

Before informed decisions can be made regarding whether students receiving
interventions are making progress, it is important for the building leadership team to review any issues that may be impacting the validity of the progress monitoring data, including whether the directions of the test administration were followed, if shadow scoring was used, the level of staff training, and whether time recommendations of the assessment were being followed.

At the same time, the building leadership team supports the collaborative teams in determining whether individual students receiving interventions are making progress. The leadership team also needs to consider whether any patterns or trends can be seen across all the progress monitoring results. If most students are progressing sufficiently, then all staff members can celebrate how well the system is succeeding. However, if a large percentage of students are not making progress, the leadership team needs to consider the effectiveness of the interventions and what might be changed to enhance their effectiveness.

The building leadership team’s responsibilities for progress monitoring include:

- Determining the frequency of progress monitoring data collection for supplemental and intensive intervention.
- Determining the frequency with which collaborative teams should meet to review the progress monitoring data.
- Reviewing the decision rules regarding the number of data points needed to determine if student performance indicates that adjustment to instruction may be appropriate.
- Conducting fidelity checks to ensure that the collaborative teams are following the guidelines for frequency of progress monitoring.
- Considering whether staff has been informed about the data point decision rules of the system.

Matching PM to Instructional Need

Some curricular materials contain measures for assessing student growth that are frequently labeled progress monitoring measures. However, these measures are actually pre- and post-assessments in that they reflect whether students are learning the skills taught by that program. While they serve an important role in guiding the curriculum, they do not measure whether students are improving in all the critical skills measured by an integrated screening and progress monitoring data system. Progress monitoring using CBM measures and carefully identified behavioral measures can provide information about the effectiveness of the curriculum, whether students in intervention are closing the achievement gap with their grade level peers, and whether instruction needs to be adjusted. The tools recommended for academic progress monitoring should match the universal screener that was originally used to identify students requiring interventions (Torgesen, 2006).

Setting Ambitious Progress Monitoring Goals

A common practice in the past has been to progress monitor a student at a lower grade level instead of the actual grade in which the student is currently enrolled. Consult your assessment system to determine if this practice is appropriate for the tools you are using. As a general rule, if a student is performing close to grade level, then the progress monitoring materials used and goal should be set at grade level. Grade-level end-of-year benchmarks and target scores should be used for the goal.
If a student is not performing close to grade level, the collaborative teams will need to refer to their assessment system for progress monitoring guidelines. For many systems, the recommendation is to progress monitor the skill being taught or even to progress monitor at grade level. In other systems, backwards testing will be used to determine the appropriate level for progress monitoring.

When setting goals within your system, it’s important to have an end-of-year target that is both ambitious and realistic. It is more effective to involve students in setting their own goals and in monitoring their own progress (Chappuis, 2005). Research has indicated that ambitious goals produce better results than less ambitious goals (McCook, 2006). Without ambitious goals, students in interventions can make progress but continue to lag behind grade level without closing the achievement gap between themselves and their peers who are receiving high-quality interventions. It is appropriate to expect more than a year’s growth in a year’s time, even if the student has not achieved that rate of growth in the past. Fuchs, Fuchs, and Deno (1985) found that, when teachers and students established high goals and increased them based on the data, the student’s progress was more rapid than that of students who had lower performance goals that remained fixed.

Many progress monitoring systems set the aimline for teachers, using an algorithm with the expected rate of improvement (ROI). Teachers will want to ensure that the system is not setting a goal way above the benchmark. If a student is scoring at benchmark for that time of year, teachers will want to know this and change their intervention placement. While there are many factors to consider, a good starting place for setting a goal if the system does not do this automatically is to start with the rate of improvement goal that corresponds to the students’ instructional reading level rather than their current grade level (Hasbrouck, 2010). Below is a general guide of what might be expected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Realistic Goal</th>
<th>Ambitious Goal</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When reviewing progress monitoring data, it is important to look at both the increase in accuracy as well as the rate. It is common for the accuracy to improve before the rate improves. Educators must make sure a skill is accurate before working on increasing a student’s fluency with that skill. Reading fast is never the end goal; reading for understanding is the ultimate goal.

**Using Progress Monitoring to Guide Intervention Instruction**

Perhaps the most innovative use of progress monitoring tools is the ability to rapidly and frequently ascertain whether an intervention is actually working and make instructional adjustments based on this data. Placement in an intervention should be flexible. It is not necessary to wait until the next universal screening date to consider changes. Instead, the data should drive continual evaluation of student progress. In this manner, instructional adjustments and self-corrections should allow gaps to close much more quickly.

Teams will need to meet frequently enough to review progress monitoring data and make instructional adjustments based on the decision rules of the system. A key question building and collaborative teams need to ask is: Do we have enough data to make a confident instructional decision? It is important that teams collect a reasonable number of data points to establish a trend. Examine the most recent consecutive scores to determine instructional success. The analysis of progress monitoring data is a two-step process: (a) determine whether the student is making progress and (b) determine whether the rate of growth is sufficient to close the achievement gap. The most valid means of defining progress is through analysis of slope and level (Fuchs & Deshler, 2007). When analyzing slope, the team determines whether the student is making progress by comparing the student's current level of performance to the identified goal. When looking at level, the team determines if the student's progress is sufficient to close the achievement gap by comparing the student's current performance to the final desired level of performance, which is typically the grade level benchmark. Thus, the analysis of progress monitoring data involves two steps: (a) determine whether progress is being made (slope) and (b) determine whether the achievement gap is closing (level).

The following are some general patterns teams may encounter as they analyze an individual student’s progress monitoring data. Consider these two questions when looking for growth:

- Is the student growing?
- Is the growth enough to close the achievement gap?

**Consecutive Data Points Above Aimline**

If a student has data points consecutively above the aimline, the intervention is having a positive impact and progress is being made. The intervention needs to continue until the student meets criteria based on the decision rules determined. Collaborative teams will need to ensure that the decision rule is followed. Once the criteria for the decision rule is met, options include:

- Regrouping to work on next missing skill.
- Increasing the student’s end-of-year performance goal until he/she is at grade level (academics).
- Exiting the supplemental intervention and continuing the student in the core curriculum with periodic progress monitoring, only if the student has met the benchmark for his/her grade level.
The ultimate goal for students in intervention is to close the achievement gap between where the student is currently performing and the grade-level performance of peers. The chart of a student who is closing the gap will show a trend line that will intersect with the goal line before the end of the year (or other monitoring period of time).

**Consecutive Data Points Below the Aimline**

If consecutive data points are below the aimline, an adjustment to the intervention may be needed. Many things can influence whether a student makes progress, so it is important to have a systematic process for analyzing the cause, starting with the most basic and easiest adjustment.

**How to Adjust an Intervention**

In analyzing a lack of progress, the team must look into each of the following adjustments in sequence:

1. Check to ensure that the skill being progress monitored is the same as the instructional focus (what is being taught).
2. If the skill and the progress monitoring measure are consistent, check the fidelity of instruction.
3. If both of the previous adjustments are happening, consider increasing the pace of the instruction. Academically, teachers often respond to a student having difficulty in learning by slowing the pace of instruction, when in fact they need to increase it. Slowing the pace of instruction can result in lower levels of student attention and motivation, while a faster pace can keep students engaged. The pace of instruction is related to the number of student-teacher interactions per minute. For intensive intervention with groups of three or fewer, students should be expected to provide five correct responses per minute (via choral or individual responses).
4. Consider modifying the pace of intervention. For example, the pace of intervention can be slowed by reducing the number of new skills introduced each week. If new skills are being introduced at the rate of five per week, consider introducing only three per week and providing a greater amount of practice on each skill before moving to the next skill.
5. Ensure the alignment of programs. Teams need to ensure that vocabulary and instructional routines are used the same way in both core curriculum and interventions.
6. Adjust the instructional materials. Examples include:
   - Add manipulatives.
   - Use decodable text until ready for authentic text.
   - Change the intervention program.
   - Move the student to a different intervention group.

Again, the slope and level of the progress monitoring graph can support teams in making decisions regarding changes to intervention and must be analyzed.

Sometimes, a minor adjustment is not enough to change the trajectory of a student’s progress. In this case, we are looking at two specific slope and level types.
In the first example graph below, the student is making progress, but not at a fast enough rate to close the gap. If the team determines the student is showing growth, but at a rate insufficient to close the gap, the team needs to determine how to increase the intensity of the current instruction (see below).

- Increase the number of student responses in a minute by reducing group size.
- Increase the number of questions and error corrections the student receives in a minute.
- Increase the scaffolding by breaking down the task into smaller steps or providing more structure so the student can succeed.
- Spend more time using “I do” and “We do” guided practice before the student practices independently.
- Increase the number of repetition cycles for each skill before determining whether mastery is achieved.
- Use a more systematic curriculum so that skills are taught in a prescribed manner, with the teacher asking questions and cueing with the same language for each routine (Hall, 2008).

Not Making Progress – Customize the Intervention

In this example, both slope and level are cause for concern. If the graph of student performance shows a nonresponse by level and slope, then teams should consider customizing the intervention.
When a student receiving intervention fails to show progress, teams should consider issues related to the instruction, curriculum, setting, and the individual when reviewing student progress monitoring data. The research-based practices tool offers a way for teams to discuss underlying causes of the student’s lack of progress.

Research-Based Practices to Consider Regarding Intervention Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Fidelity of instruction</td>
<td>• Appropriate match between learner and intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Modeling and guided practice prior to independent practice (I Do, We Do, You Do)</td>
<td>• Instructional focus based on diagnostic process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explicit teaching</td>
<td>• Relation to post-school outcomes and student interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pace of instruction</td>
<td>• Variety of activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunities to respond</td>
<td>• Provides for explicit approach to teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time allocated</td>
<td>• Appropriate independent work activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
  - Intervention in addition to core |
  - Intervention time daily |
  - More intervention time needed |
| • Sufficient questioning, check for understandings | • Teaches skills to mastery |
| • Clear directions | • Provides adequate opportunities for practice and review |
| • Sufficient practice, application, and review | • Progress is being monitored on the appropriate skill |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Individual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Classroom routines and behavior management support learning</td>
<td>• Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appropriate person teaching the intervention group</td>
<td>• Task persistence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Group arrangements for instruction</td>
<td>• Social skills/peer relationships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
  - Size of group |
  - Student is in appropriate group |
  - Movement to group using decision rules |
| • Interruptions to class are infrequent | • Commitment to school |
| • Academic learning time is high | • Self-efficacy |
| • Transitions are short and brief | • Attendance |
| • Time devoted to homework with monitoring | • Learning strengths |
| | • Pattern of performance errors reflect skill deficits |
| | • Connection with school, community, adults, and family |
| | • Home-based reading and reading activities (practice, no new learning) |

**How to Customize an Intervention**

1. Make sure the student is receiving an intensive protocol intervention with fidelity.
2. Determine whether a revision to the program is needed to boost the student’s rate of improvement. Add one researched instructional practice to the protocol intervention.

3. Analyze the progress monitoring data on the added instructional practice before adding another instructional practice.

Building leadership team responsibilities for this step are to:

- Communicate regularly with all collaborative teams to ensure that progress monitoring data are collected, reviewed, and used to inform instruction.
- Consider any needs for professional development.
- Consider whether staff members have the needed materials and know the procedures for maintaining an intervention log.
- Consider how staff members and resources are currently allocated to support instructional groups and whether any changes in staff/resource allocation are warranted.
- Conduct fidelity checks to ensure that the collaborative teams are following the progress monitoring guidelines for their assessment system.

**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 usable for teams to determine when to make an adjustment in intervention. Keeping both data sources easily accessible for all stakeholders is a good method to ensure its use by interventionists and core classroom teachers.

There are different ways to keep these data visible and usable. Charts are best for visual representations to help staff members interpret the progress monitoring data in relation to the student’s goal. Assessment cards are an additional option for displaying both screening data and progress monitoring information to staff. Examples from schools in Kansas are shown below. Whatever method of data display is used, it is important to ensure that the data are maintained in a confidential manner, but readily available to staff members who work with the students.
Building leadership teams also need to consider how individual student data will be shared with parents. Specific suggestions on how to share data with families can be accessed through KPIRC, the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (www.ksdetasn.org/kpirc).

Interventions also need to be logged once students are placed in the appropriate groups. The student intervention log and the progress monitoring graph should be consistently updated so that an accurate record of the interventions and results can be maintained. It is critical for teachers to document both the instruction they are providing and the intervention sessions that each student actually attends. This documentation is pivotal as a source of information when analyzing student growth. This cycle of assessing, adjusting, and adding to the data graph or log continues as long as a student requires intervention. Some assessment systems currently allow teachers to keep all of this within the progress monitoring system.

Among students who continue to be non-responsive to interventions, it becomes critical to begin moving from a group problem-solving model to a more individualized format. The individual student problem-solving process is what schools have traditionally used for general education interventions, often conducted by student improvement teams. Within the Kansas MTSS model, the collaborative teams conduct the work of the general education intervention or student improvement team. In any case that a building leadership or collaborative team suspects a student could have an exceptionality, the team must refer the student for an initial evaluation. Any parent request for a special education evaluation must be reported to the building administrator or to the appropriate staff member, as designated by district special education procedures. The Kansas MTSS should not delay a student from receiving a special education evaluation. A student does not have to move through all the tiers before a referral for a special education evaluation is made. Conversely, having received all tiers of instruction or needing Tier 3 instruction alone does not indicate that a student should be referred for a special education evaluation.

When the Kansas MTSS is implemented, all parents must be informed of the nature of student performance data being collected, the general education services being provided, strategies for increasing a student's rate of learning, and parents’ right to request an evaluation (K.A.R. 91-40-10(f)(2)). Staff members and parents need to understand that a student can be referred for a special education initial evaluation when: (a) the school has data-based documentation indicating that general education interventions and strategies would be inadequate to address the areas of concern for the student or (b) the school has data-based documentation that:

- The student was provided appropriate instruction by qualified staff in regular education.
- The student was provided repeated assessment of academic achievement to demonstrate the student's progress during instruction.
- The assessment results were shared with the parents.
- The results indicated that an evaluation is appropriate (K.A.R. 91-40-7(c)).
References


General Recommendations 2nd-12th
Individual Student Decision-Making

Step 1: Administer Screening Assessment(s)
- Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) and/or
- Comprehension Measure

**Step 2: Validate the scores**
(compare to course grades, state assessments, standardized tests, attendance, etc.)
Note: Students in Grades 7-12 with a validated below benchmark comprehension score will need an ORF administered.

**Step 3: Place students in appropriate groups based on assessments.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP 1:</th>
<th>GROUP 2:</th>
<th>GROUP 3:</th>
<th>GROUP 4:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At or above ORF AND comprehension benchmark criteria.</td>
<td>Below ORF benchmark criterion, BUT has equal to or greater than 95% accuracy.</td>
<td>Below ORF benchmark criterion AND less than 95% accuracy.</td>
<td>At or above ORF benchmark criterion, BUT below comprehension benchmark criterion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Group 1:** LOW RISK
Focus on:
Continue with quality core instruction.

**Group 2:** FLUENCY
Focus on:
Fluency intervention. Include vocabulary, and/or background knowledge.

**Group 3:** PHONICS
Focus on:
phonics deficiencies (use a phonics and/or phonological screener to identify), use targeted decoding intervention. Focus on improving both accuracy and rate.

**Group 4:** COMPREHENSION
Focus on:
comprehension and vocabulary. Use an intervention that develops background knowledge, oral language, and vocabulary.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1: At or above benchmark ORF and comprehension</th>
<th>Group 2: Accurate and not fluent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Likely to need enrichment</td>
<td>Additional support on improving fluency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>WCP M</th>
<th>Accuracy %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 3: Inaccurate and not fluent</th>
<th>Group 4: Fluent but below benchmark in comprehension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional support on phonics</td>
<td>Vocab/Comprehension/support needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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</table>

Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) Grouping Summary for Elementary Students
### Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) Grouping Summary for Adolescent Readers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1: At or Above Benchmark on ORF and comprehension</th>
<th>Group 2: Accurate and not fluent Additional support on improving fluency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continue with quality core instruction. Likely to need enhancement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### PROTOCOL INTERVENTIONS

**Group 1:**
- Look at extension/enrichment options within your core curriculum to take a concept or topic deeper. (often found in the margins of the teacher’s guide)
- Create vocabulary or morphology units that provide deeper level skill development with words from texts the students are reading
- Create higher order thinking skill comprehension questions and long-term projects from read texts for discussion groups and individual activities
- Use above grade level text and participate in literature circles, author studies, or writing in response to reading
- Create topics for advanced writing prompts that emphasize expository/research writing, etc.

**Group 2:**
- Instruction on automaticity at the word, phrase, sentence and passage level. Repeated and assisted reading of passages
- Instruction on grouping words to make meaning, pacing and attention to punctuation
- Use both narrative and informational texts
- Deep word knowledge instruction (phonology/orthography/morphology/semantic and syntactic features)
- Check on advanced PA skills optional

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 3: Inaccurate and not fluent Additional support on phonics, phonological awareness or sight words depending on further assessments</th>
<th>Group 4: Fluent but below benchmark in Comprehension Additional support in comprehension and vocabulary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### PROTOCOL INTERVENTIONS

**Group 3:**
- Instruction on missing decoding skills
- Instruction on missing high frequency words
- Work on applying skills to connected text at instructional level
- Work on fluent reading at independent level using decodable text.

**Group 4:**
- Instruction on monitoring for meaning
- Instruction on determining main ideas
- Instruction on fix-up strategies
- Instruction on specific words and word learning strategies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROTOCOL INTERVENTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan of Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Combined intervention of comprehension/vocabulary/word study/fluency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fluency practice with content-specific text (not homework help but texts designed to build background knowledge in current content courses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Check on advanced PA skills optional</td>
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<tr>
<th>Group 4: Fluent but below benchmark in Comprehension</th>
<th>Additional support in comprehension and vocabulary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan of Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consider vocabulary/word study as part of this intervention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Instruction on missing decoding skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Instruction on missing high frequency words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work on applying skills to connected text at instructional level</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan Of action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on content text to task work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Build comprehension through vocabulary/background knowledge/creating a schema within the student’s mind.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>