

Ch. 5: ASSESSMENT PLAN IN AN RtI/MTSS MODEL

Screening, Diagnostic, Progress Monitoring & Outcome
Assessments

MDCPS
Office of Academics, Accountability & School
Improvement
2013-2014

ASSESSMENTS

A major feature of the RtI/MTSS Model is the use of data to drive the decision-making process at the school, classroom, and individual student levels. To support RtI/MTSS's fluid approach, reliable screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcome information must be available to:

- Identify academic and behavioral needs of individual students or groups of students
- Examine learning rate over time
- Inform the problem-solving process
- Design and modify instruction to meet student needs
- Evaluate the effectiveness of instruction at different levels of the system (e.g., classroom, school, and district).

An efficient system that streamlines increasingly limited resources is paramount. Therefore, RtI/MTSS uses a tiered system of assessments that increase the frequency and intensity of support as greater needs are revealed. Timely, reliable assessments indicate which students are falling behind in critical skills and need more intensive instruction and allow teachers to design instruction that responds to their learning needs (Colorado State RtI).

By regularly assessing student progress in learning and behavior, teachers can identify who needs more help to reach grade level benchmarks, which students are likely to make adequate progress without additional help, and which students need more intensive instruction to close the gap. In addition, teachers and schools can determine whether instruction and intervention efforts are producing desired results.

An effective assessment plan has four main objectives:

1. To identify students as early as possible who are at risk, or already experiencing difficulties and need extra instruction or intensive interventions. Additionally, students who have reached benchmarks are identified for enrichment to achieve beyond standards.

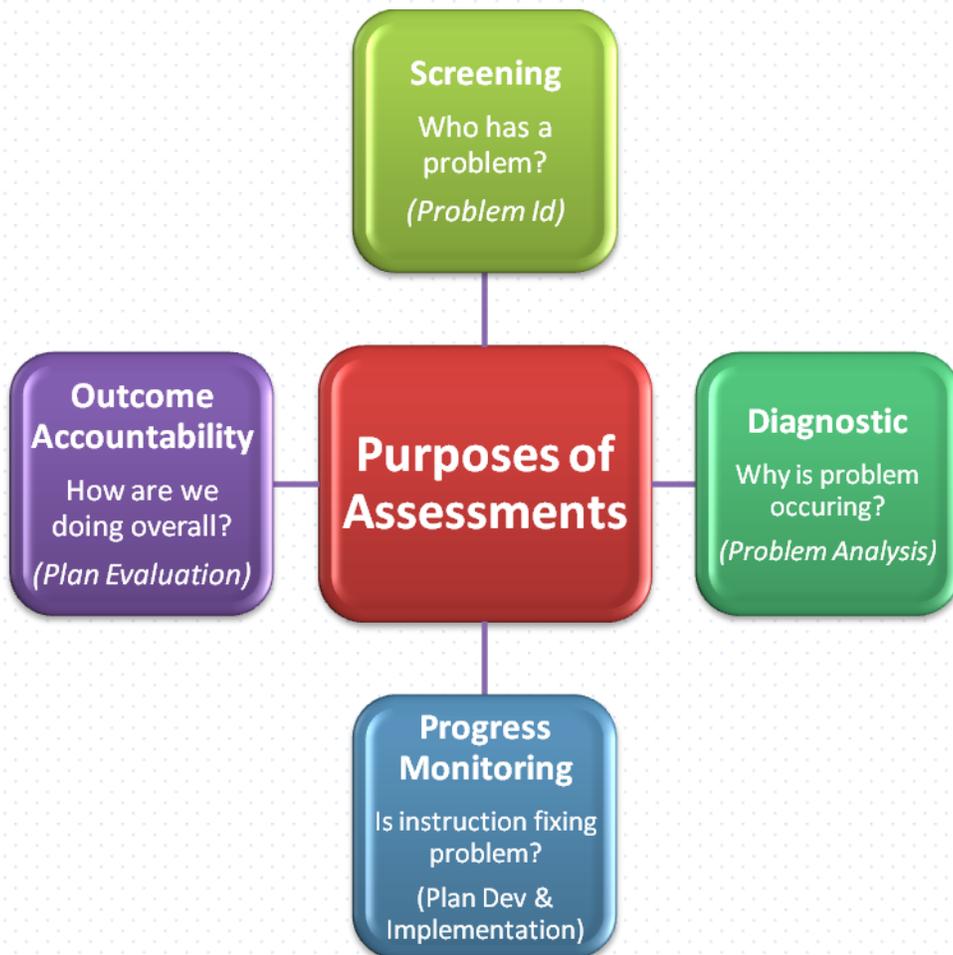
Use data to drive the decision making process

Maximize/re-allocate existing school resources to meet the needs of all students

Regularly administered assessments assist in identifying students in need of additional support

2. To monitor students' progress during the year to determine whether students are making adequate progress in critical skills and to identify students who may be falling behind or is in need of enrichment.
3. To inform instructional planning in order to meet the most critical needs of groups or individual students.
4. To evaluate whether the instruction or intervention will enable all students to learn a year's content in an instructional year, or for students who are behind to catch-up (gap is closing) within a reasonable time.

The four objectives outlined can be achieved through four types of assessments conducted during the school year (screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic, and general outcome measures). They correspond roughly to the four objectives, but all play a key role in helping to plan effective instruction and interventions (Colorado State RtI).



SCREENINGS

Universal *screening* is used to identify individuals or group of students who are at risk, and might be in need of closer monitoring in their general education curriculum or those who need more intense levels of intervention.

Universal screenings are used to identify students who are at risk and in need of additional support systems.

Screening is important as it represents the best opportunity to assist students in a timely manner. Screening is not a one-time process but is a *recurring* process during the school year and across grade levels.

Universal screenings provides an additional advantage in that it allows schools to add systematic formative evaluation to current practice, as seen below:

For Teachers (and Students)

- Early Identification of at risk students, and who may need further assessment
- Instructional planning for Tier I and Tier II
- Identifies students who may need more frequent progress monitoring

For Parents

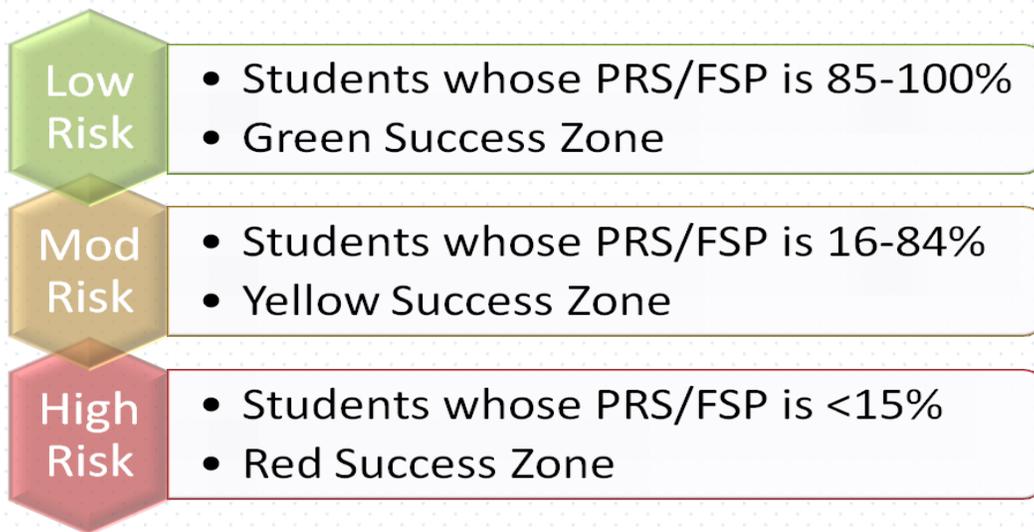
- Opportunities for communication/involvement

For Administrators

- Resource allocation/planning and support
- Provides greater self-determination of year end accountability outcomes

Cut Scores

Accuracy of screening is also determined by what cut scores are used. A **cut score**, also called cut point, is the score that represents the dividing line between students who are less likely to be at risk and those who are most likely to be at risk. As an example, Florida Assessments *for* instruction in Reading (FAIR) established the following cut scores.



For a complete list of scores that can be utilized for monitoring refer to Ch. 7 Ongoing Progress Monitoring Across All Tiers of Support/MDCPS RtI/MTSS Guide 2013-14.

Behavioral Screening

Criteria for student identification may include:

- administrator, teacher or parent nomination
- students flagged on the student at risk profile report (T-0515P71-01) with a rating of 2 or more
- 3 or more behavioral referrals during the previous or current school year
- 3 or more incidents of outdoor suspensions
- 3 or more incidents of indoor suspension
- 3 or more unexcused absences
- 2 or more course failures in a grading period
- D and F conduct grades in a grading period

DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENTS

Purpose of Diagnostic Assessments

A diagnostic assessment delves deeper than a screener to identify specific foundational skill deficits of a student (e.g. Targeted Diagnostic Inventory in FAIR or Diagnostic Assessment of Reading-DAR, Diagnostic mathematics assessment, mathematics benchmark testing).

Diagnostic tests are not given to all students, unless there is a clear expectation that they will provide new information about a child's learning difficulties or identify a child who demonstrates early behavior warning signs that indicate a risk for developing an emotional or

behavioral disability, and can be used to provide more focused, or more powerful instruction/interventions.

An example of an appropriate use of a reading diagnostic instrument would be to **discover which components of reading are impaired** in a child who demonstrates a need for further analysis.

In this case, it would be useful to know if the child is impaired in phonemic or phonics elements, reading fluency, accuracy, knowledge of word meanings, general background knowledge, or use of efficient comprehension strategies. For example, if the diagnostic test revealed that the child was non-fluent based on universal oral reading fluency norms, or an inaccurate reader, it would suggest a need for instruction to be strengthened in these particular areas.

If schools are already using a reliable and valid screening/progress monitoring assessment with embedded diagnostic elements, **additional** diagnostic testing might not be necessary if the teacher or school is already using the data provided to target instruction.

Additionally, other factors contribute to academic achievement. These include motivation, attitudes about school, parental support, extent and richness of the child's knowledge base, language ability and or social, emotional and behavioral functioning. Information gathering which explains why a problem exists and helps determine what to do about the problem may be as diagnostic as formal testing.

For students with behavioral difficulties, a Functional Assessment of Behavior provides information about the nature of the problem and guides selection of appropriate intervention methods.

PROGRESS MONITORING

The *National Center on Response to Intervention* defines progress monitoring as repeated measurement of academic performance **to inform instruction/intervention** at the school, grade, and classroom level across all three tiers of support.

- it should occur in both general and special education settings
- it is conducted at frequencies that commensurate with level of need (Refer to Ch. 7 OPM/MDCPS RtI/MTSS Guide 2013-14) and,
 - estimates rates of improvement,
 - validates instructional efforts

- identify groups and/or individual students who need increased or modified support and,
- compares the effectiveness of different forms of instruction to maximize effective instruction.

Progress monitoring assessments are conducted minimally at three assessment periods to evaluate the **health of Tier I** instruction, Ongoing Progress Monitoring (OPM) assessments are conducted at least monthly to evaluate the **health of Tier II** instruction, and students receiving **Tier III** support may be progress monitored even more frequently, sometimes on a daily/weekly basis to inform instruction and to determine the general outcome of the tier 3 plan. For additional information please refer to Ch. 7 OPM/MDCPS RtI/MTSS Guide 2013-14.

Progress monitoring assessment data must be collected, evaluated, and used on an ongoing basis for the following purposes:

- determine rate of a student(s) progress
- determine rate of progress compared to peers and grade level benchmarks
- determine mastery of discrete skills
- provide information on the effectiveness of instruction at each tier of support, and modify intervention if necessary
- Analyze and interpret gaps between benchmarks and achievement.

Key Features of Progress Monitoring

- Brief assessments conducted frequently based on level of need
- Assessments which occur throughout core/intervention instruction
- Results are used to find instruction/intervention that works
- Results which are regularly charted/graphed/analyzed by the School RtI Leadership teams to determine student progress (individual or group gap analysis, aimline, standard)
- Decisions rules which determine when a student(s) is not adequately responding to the instruction/intervention (positive, questionable & poor response)

What is Progress Monitoring at Tier 1?

General Education/ Core Classroom Instruction

- Assess all students minimally three times per year to monitor student progress (example, **Reading:** Screening at FAIR AP1, Progress Monitoring at AP2 and AP3, **Behavior:** School wide behavioral data such as; attendance reports, suspension reports, course failures, conduct grades, SCM reports, student at risk profile report (T-0515P71-01).

A “healthy” tier is defined as effective instruction where most students learn a year’s content in an instructional year or are on track to close the gap.

- Teachers then use the data to determine if the core academic instruction or core behavioral program is effective to create more responsive learning environments for all students through small group differentiated instruction.
- In creating a more responsive learning environment for particularly lower-achieving students, teachers can continue to monitor their progress through formative assessments for mastery of skills taught and/or conduct re-teaching if necessary.
- Decisions at this tier of support determine which students are not progressing adequately, compared to peers, benchmarks, local/national norms and are in need of additional support

What is Tier II Ongoing Progress Monitoring (OPM)?

Additional Instruction/Intervention (Tier 1 + 2)

- Assess students minimally on a monthly basis to monitor their response to the intervention (e.g., Oral Reading Fluency, WonderWorks Unit Assessment).
- Assess some skills more frequently to monitor skill mastery (i.e. in-program assessments).
- Response indicates overall effectiveness of the intervention at the group level, or identifies individual students who may be in need of problem solving at Tier 3 to design more intensive or different types of support.

What are the 3 types of Response to an intervention provided?

Positive Response: Closing the gap

Questionable Response: Gap remains the same (not widening/closure)

Poor Response: Gap continues to

What is Tier III Ongoing Progress Monitoring (OPM)?

Individualized Problem Solving/PS (Tier 1 +2 + 3)

- Assess students at a frequency that is commensurate with the intensity of intervention, to monitor growth based on the Tier III individualized intensive intervention (iii) plan designed by the SST team.
- Response is reviewed by the SST team in order to determine if interventions are effective in closing the student's academic or behavioral gap.

Tools for On-Going Progress Monitoring

As mentioned before, timely, reliable assessments tools must be used to indicate which students are falling behind in critical skills or which students need more intensive instruction. Additionally these tools allow teachers to design instruction that responds to the learning needs. For additional information please refer to Ch. 7 OPM/MDCPS RtI/MTSS Guide 2013-14.

OUTCOME ASSESSMENTS

Outcome assessments are given at the end of a school year to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the instructional programs and to evaluate progress toward meeting the grade level goals set out by a school or district. Examples in MDCPS (Student Progression Plan, CRRP)

End of Year outcome assessments & targets for MDCPS are:



Kindergarten:
FAIR AP 3 Benchmarks/SESAT



Grades 1 & 2:
40% Percentile & Above (SAT-10)



Grades 3-12:
FCAT Level 3 +