MTSS Glossary of Terms

Accommodations	Accommodations are changes to instruction or assessment administration that are designed to increase students' access to materials or enable them to demonstrate what they know by mitigating the impact of their disability. They also are designed to provide equity, not advantage, for children with disabilities.
Aim Line	The aim line, which is sometimes referred to as the *goal line*, represents the target rate of student progress over time. The aim line is constructed by connecting the data point representing the student's initial performance level and the data point corresponding to the student's year-end goal. The aim line should be compared to the trend line to help inform responsiveness to intervention and to tailor a student's instructional program
Baseline data	Baseline data is the data that is collected before an intervention or program change begins.
Behavioral Expectation	Behavioral expectation is the specific, positively stated behavior of all students that are explicitly taught, modeled, and reinforced school-wide.
Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP)	A behavioral intervention plan (BIP) is developed and implemented by a collaborative team, which includes the student and the parent. The plan includes positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), identified skills for school success, and specific strategies for behavioral instruction. Best practice is for a team to use a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) to create the plan.
Benchmark Assessment	Benchmark assessment is an assessment administered periodically throughout the school year at specified times during a curriculum sequence to evaluate students' knowledge and skills relative to an explicit set of longer-term learning goals. The design and choice of benchmark assessments is driven by the purpose, intended users, and uses of the instruments. Benchmark assessments can inform policy, instructional planning, and decision making at the classroom, school, and/or district levels.
Comprehensive Assessment System	A comprehensive assessment system is a coordinated system of multiple assessments, each of which is valid and reliable for its specified purpose and for the population with which it will be used. The system organizes information about the process and context of children's learning and development and provides a comprehensive and multi-faceted picture of students' academic and/or behavioral knowledge, abilities, and dispositions in order to help educators make informed instructional and programmatic decisions at different times in the learning process.
Convergent source of data	Convergent source of data is several sources of data (e.g., progress monitoring results, classroom performance, observations, standardized assessments, parent information) that validate a hypothesis.
Core, Universal Instruction – Tier 1	Core or universal instruction (Tier 1) refers to general academic and behavior instruction and support that is designed and differentiated for all students in all settings.
Criterion-Referenced Assessment	Criterion-Referenced Assessment is an approach to measure student performance in relation to a specific standard. It typically is used to identify a student's strengths and weaknesses in relation to an age-group or grade-level standard; however, it does not compare students to other students
Cross-Battery Assessment	Cross-Battery Assessment is a process by which psychologists use information from multiple test batteries (i.e., various IQ tests) to help guide diagnostic decisions and to gain a fuller picture of an individual's cognitive abilities.

Culturally Appropriate	Culturally appropriate describes a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system or agency or among professionals that enables effective work in cross-cultural situations.
Culturally Responsive	Culturally responsive refers to the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning.
Curriculum	Curriculum means an evidence-based written plan that describes program practices for supporting the learning of each child based on the child's individual developmental levels. Curriculum is aligned to state standards and adopted at the local level.
Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBA)	Curriculum-Based Assessment is an assessment that has three components: (1) measurement materials that are aligned with the annual curriculum, (2) measurement that occurs frequently, and (3) assessment data that are used to formulate instructional decisions. CBA is an umbrella term that includes curriculum-based measurement.
Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM)	Curriculum-Based Measurement is an approach used to screen students or to monitor student progress in mathematics, reading, writing, spelling, and other content areas. CBM is a distinctive form of curriculum-based assessment because of three additional properties: (1) Each CBM test is an alternate form of equivalent difficulty; (2) CBM measures are overall indicators of competence in the target curriculum; and (3) CBM is standardized, with its reliability and validity well documented. These properties allow teachers and schools to look at student growth over time.
Decision-Making Model	A decision-making model is a model that identifies and analyzes a problem through a series of questions and steps that include plan development, implementation, and evaluation. *See a decision-making model at* http://www.azed.gov/mtss/files/2015/03/decision-making-model-2-9-15.pdf
Developmentally Appropriate	Developmentally appropriate describes any activity involving children that is based on knowledge of the age and stages of child development, while understanding that each child is unique.
Diagnostic Assessment	Diagnostic assessment is used to diagnose strengths and areas of need in students. Diagnostic assessment involves gathering and carefully evaluating detailed data involving students' knowledge and skills in a given learning area.
Differentiated Instruction	Differentiated instruction is the way in which a teacher anticipates and responds to a variety of student needs in the classroom. To meet student needs, teachers differentiate by modifying the content (what is vexing taught), the process (how it is taught) and the product (how students demonstrate their learning).
Direct Behavior Rating (DBR)	Direct Behavior Rating is a tool that involves a rating of target behavior immediately following a specified observation period. It is based on the notion that teachers can reliably and accurately rate student behavior on a continuum following some specified period of time. These ratings then are used as the data to monitor student progress and response to behavior intervention and to determine whether intervention changes are needed.
Evidence-Based	Evidence-based refers to scientific, research-based methods that exhibit substantial evidence of effectiveness through multiple outcome evaluations. In other words, programs, strategies, and assessments shown to have had positive outcomes with a given population.
Exclusion Factors	Exclusion Factor is a condition that excludes a student from being determined eligible as a student with a specific learning disability (i.e., vision, hearing, or motor disability; mental impairment; behavior/emotional disorder; cultural factors; environmental or economic disadvantage; or limited English proficient).

Explicit Instruction	Explicit Instruction is a structured, systematic approach that includes a set of delivery and design procedures derived from effective schools research merged with behavior analysis; Explicit Instruction is characterized by a series of supports or scaffolds, whereby students are guided through the learning process with clear statements about the purpose and rationale for the learning, clear explanations and procedures in small steps, checking for student understanding, and achieving active and successful participation by all students.
Fidelity of Implementation	Fidelity of implementation refers to the application of an intervention, program, or curriculum according to research findings and/or to a developer's specifications.
Formative Assessment	Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provide feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievements of intended instructional outcomes. (CCSSO, FAST, SCASS, 2007)
Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)	Functional behavioral assessment is the process used to identify problem behavior, determine the function or purpose of behavior, and develop interventions to teach acceptable alternatives for the behavior.
Gap Analysis	Gap Analysis is a method for measuring the difference between the student's current level of performance and benchmark expectations.
Goal Line	The goal line, also known as the aim line, represents the expected rate of student progress over time. A goal line is constructed by connecting the data point representing the student's initial performance level and the data point corresponding to the student's year-end goal. The goal line should be compared to the trend line to help inform responsiveness to intervention and to tailor a student's instructional program.
Informal Diagnostic Assessment	Informal Diagnostic Assessment refers to data that may be used to identify a student's specific skill deficits and strengths. These data may be derived from standardized measures, error analysis of progress monitoring data, student work samples, and behavior rating forms, among other tools. Use of informal diagnostic assessment should allow teachers to identify a student's specific area(s) of difficulty when lack of progress is evident. This assessment also can inform decisions about how to adapt and individualize interventions for students.
Instruction	Instruction requires teachers to understand the standards and expectations, along with the essential concepts and skills, and to utilize a variety of methods and strategies to teach and reinforce the desired academic or behavioral outcome(s). It includes providing access to the general education curriculum for all students. Effective instruction engages teachers in a process that uses student data and assessment data to make sound instructional decisions to meet the needs of individual students.
Intensive Interventions and Supports – Tier 3	Intensive intervention and support (Tier 3) is the most intense instruction/intervention levels, which is based on individual student needs, is provided in addition to and aligned with Tier 1 and 2 academic and behavior instruction and supports. Intensive interventions are characterized by increased intensity (increased time, narrowed focus, and reduced group size).
Intervention	Intervention is the systematic and explicit instruction provided to accelerate growth in an area of identified need. Interventions are provided by general education teachers, reading interventionists, trained paraprofessionals or the special education teachers. This instruction is designed to improve performance relative to specific, measurable goals. Interventions are based on valid information about current performance, realistic implementation and include ongoing student progress monitoring data.

Leadership Team	Leadership team is a group of teachers and administrators that work toward implementing and sustaining a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) for academics and behavior.
Last Restrictive Environment	As defined in IDEA 2004, the least restrictive environment indicates that to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities (including students in public or private institutions or other care facilities) are educated with students who are not disabled; special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of students with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.
Local Education Agency (LEA)	A local education agency is a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a state for either administrative control or direction of or to perform service functions for public elementary or secondary schools.
Modification	A modification is an adaptation to instruction or the administration of an assessment that change, lower, or reduce performance expectations for demonstration of a learning outcome.
Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)	Multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) is a coherent continuum of system-wide, data-based problem-solving practices supporting a rapid response to the academic and behavioral needs of all students. This comprehensive system of supports includes an assessment system (universal screening, diagnostic assessment, progress monitoring, formative assessment, and outcome), research-based instruction, and interventions. This instruction/intervention is delivered across multiple tiers dependent on the individual student needs identified by student outcome data.
Norm-Referenced Assessment	Norm-referenced assessment compares a student's performance to that of an appropriate peer group or normative sample.
Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)	Positive behavioral Intervention and support is an implementation framework that is designed to enhance academic and social behavior outcomes for all students by emphasizing the use of data for informing decisions about the selection, implementation, and progress monitoring of evidence-based behavioral practices.
Problem Solving	Problem solving is the recursive, self-correcting, systematic process of finding solutions by accurately identifying problems, analyzing relevant data to understand why a problem is occurring, designing and implementing probable solutions, and measuring the effectiveness of the solutions that were implemented.
Professional Learning	Professional learning is the planned and organized learning process that actively engages educators in cycles of continuous improvement. Professional learning is guided by the use of data and active inquiry around instructional or leadership practices.
Progress Monitoring	Progress monitoring is the ongoing assessment conducted for the purpose of guiding instruction, monitoring student progress, and evaluating instruction/intervention effectiveness.
Rate of Progress	Rate of progress is a student's progress toward grade-level achievement goals. Rate of learning is determined by reviewing assessment data as plotted on graphs.
Reliability	Reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results.
Scaffolding	Scaffolding is the systematic sequencing of prompted content, materials, tasks, and teacher and peer support to optimize learning. Students are given support until they can apply new skills and strategies independently.

Scientific, Research-Based	Scientific, research-based is a term used to describe reliable, trustworthy, and validated practices and programs that have been thoroughly and rigorously reviewed to determine whether they produce positive educational results in a predictable manner.
Specific Learning Disability	Specific Learning Disability refers to a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations and may result from conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of intellectual disability; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.
Summative Assessments	Summative assessments are tests administered after the conclusion of instruction to provide information regarding the level of student, school, or program success.
Sustainability	Sustainability is the ability of a leadership team to persistently and skillfully maintain its core beliefs and values and use them to guide program adaptations to changes and pressures over time.
Targeted Supplemental Interventions – Tier 2	Targeted supplemental interventions (Tier 2) are the individual or small group strategic instruction/interventions and supplemental supports, in addition to and aligned with Tier 1 academic and behavior instruction and supports.
Trend Line	A trend line is a line on a graph that presents the line of best fit drawn through a series of data points. The trend line can be compared against the aim line to help inform responsiveness to intervention and to tailor a student's instructional program.
Universal Screening, Academic	Academic universal screening is a systematic process for assessment of all students within a given grade, school building or district on critical academic skills. The universal screening is a brief assessments or inventories focused on target skills that are highly predictive of future outcomes.
Universal Screening, Behavior	Behavioral universal screening refers to the informal inventories of behaviors (internalizing and externalizing) to indicate if students need additional support in specific behavior skills.
Validity	Validity is the indication that an assessment instrument consistently measures what it is designed to measure, excluding extraneous features from such measurement.