

# What Does It Take to Implement MTSS? Finding Professional Development Resources to Support Implementation

In this webinar, the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII), the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform (CEEDAR), the Center on Response to Intervention at American Institutes for Research, and the IRIS Center shared training modules, resources, and supports that can be used by practitioners, teacher educators, and local and state education agencies to support the implementation of multi-tiered system of support (MTSS).

## Webinar Q&A

**Question:** Which states are involved in intensive technical assistance with the CEEDAR Center?

**Answer:** Since 2013, CEEDAR has been working intensively with a cohort of states. Each year they have added five states. Participating states are in the following table. Find out more about the types of technical assistance that CEEDAR provides by visiting <http://ceedar.education.ufl.edu/intensive-technical-assistance/>.

2013	2014	2015
California	Georgia	Arizona
Connecticut	Montana	Michigan
Florida	New Hampshire	Missouri
Illinois	Ohio	Oregon
South Dakota	Utah	Tennessee

**Question:** What is the difference between response to intervention (RTI) and MTSS and where does data-based individualization (DBI) fit in?

**Answer:** There is no official definition or single model for either MTSS or RTI. Many states, schools, and districts have developed their own definitions of these terms and the models associated with them. As Dr. Lynn Fuchs mentions in the video “MTSS, RTI, Special Education...OH My! Gaining an Understanding of MTSS and RTI From Drs. Lynn Fuchs and Joe Jenkins,” available at <http://www.intensiveintervention.org/video-resource/mtss-rti-special-education%E2%80%A6oh-my-gaining-understanding-mtss-and-rti-drs-lynn-fuchs>, “I think that they both refer to multi-tiered prevention system. I think often they both rely predominantly on three tiered models that...intertwine assessment with instruction and intervention that’s evidence-based for the purpose of decreasing school failure. I think that there are many models of RTI, and many models of MTSS, and I think that there is probably more variation within practice associated with each term than there are differences between the two terms.” Regardless

of the term used, as Fuchs highlights, both focus on providing a framework that is a seamless, integrated system of academic and behavioral interventions that vary in intensity, are matched to students according to need, and whose implementation is driven by team and data-based decision making.

DBI, NCII's approach to intensive intervention, is a systematic method for using assessment data to determine when and how to intensify intervention in reading, mathematics, and behavior. DBI relies on the systematic and frequent collection and analysis of student-level data, modification of intervention components when those data indicate inadequate response, and use of teachers' clinical experience and judgment to individualize intervention. DBI is typically implemented within the context of a multiple prevention system as discussed by Fuchs in the video. This could be MTSS, RTI, or positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS, a tiered behavioral framework. See <https://www.pbis.org/> for more information) and may be thought of as Tier 3 within those frameworks. The DBI process can be used to support those students who truly need intensive and individualized support and for whom core and supplemental instruction have not been sufficient to meet their needs. The DBI process does not occur in isolation, but rather in addition to the interventions that a student is receiving at the universal and secondary levels. For example, DBI involves adapting and individualizing interventions that are implemented at the secondary level. In addition, DBI may be used for students requiring intensive intervention in one skill area (e.g., mathematical problem solving) but receiving core instruction or secondary intervention in other areas (e.g., numeracy, computational fluency). In this way, DBI is intimately connected to the full continuum of intervention supports that make up the multi-tiered framework. The quality and fidelity with which universal and secondary intervention levels are implemented are critical and set the foundation for successful implementation of DBI. Although DBI and intensive intervention benefit from a relationship with MTSS, PBIS, or RTI, DBI or intensive intervention is not reliant on the framework, and DBI can be used to support students, including those with disabilities, even if there is not a strong multi-tiered intervention framework in place.

To learn more about DBI and its origins visit

<http://www.intensiveintervention.org/resource/data-based-individualization-framework-intensive-intervention>.

**Question:** What is the difference between IRIS and CEEDAR modules?

**Answer:** Although both types of modules can be used by faculty and professional development providers, the format of the modules from the IRIS Center and CEEDAR Center differ. The CEMs are designed to be delivered by an instructor or professional development provided, while the IRIS modules can be used for self-paced learning or incorporated into professional development or coursework.

The Course Enhancement Modules (CEM) developed by the CEEDAR Center include the following components:

- *Description and overview*—rationale of the content for ensuring that students with disabilities achieve college and career readiness

- *Learning resources*
  - Connections to standards—references to the content standards that will be addressed in the CEM
  - Anchor presentation—a PowerPoint presentation covering the content
  - Speaker notes—language the instructor or facilitator can use or adapt to go along with the anchor presentation, including direction on using additional handouts or resources
  - Sample activities—activities that can be implemented to promote learning or use of the content
- *Multimedia*—audio and video related to the content
- *Course and PD outlines*—examples of course syllabi and professional development that relate to the content
- *References*—a reference list of supporting citations and materials

Learn more about the CEDAR CEMs at <http://cedar.education.ufl.edu/cems/>.

The *STAR* (Software Technology for Action and Reflection) *Legacy* modules from the IRIS Center were designed to help introduce and balance the features of learner, knowledge, assessment, and community centeredness for instructional settings. The modules can be used to support individual learning or embedded in coursework or professional development opportunities. The format of the IRIS modules uses an inquiry cycle that anchors learning, is easy to understand, and is pedagogically sound. The cycle includes the following five steps:

1. *Challenge*—The modules are organized around case-based scenarios that are identified as challenges.
2. *Initial Thoughts*—In this step, users are asked to generate their own ideas in order to explore what they currently know about the challenge. This step focuses on discovering the extent of users' prior knowledge and experiences about the challenge.
3. *Perspectives and Resources*—Next, users' access resources relevant to the challenge. These resources are presented as nuggets of information and may include text, interviews with experts, videos, and interactive activities.
4. *Wrap Up*—The cycle continues with a summary and an opportunity for the user to review his or her final thoughts. The final thoughts are the same questions asked in the Initial Thoughts section of the module and provide an opportunity to compare their current thinking with their initial ideas about the challenge.
5. *Assessment*—The concluding step provides assessment opportunities to apply what they know, with the opportunity to return to the Perspectives and Resources section if needed.

Learn more about the background of the IRIS STAR Modules

<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/research-evaluation/iris-and-adult-learning-theory/> and

view a video to assist with navigating the STAR Legacy modules  
<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/home/navigating-the-iris-website/navigating-an-iris-star-legacy-module/>.

**Question:** Where can we access resources focused on supporting implementation of MTSS at the secondary level?

**Answer:** A number of resources on this topic are available on the Center on Response to Intervention at the American Institutes for Research website ([www.rti4success.org](http://www.rti4success.org)). The High School Tiered Interventions Initiative, which was supported by the National Center on Response to Intervention, National High School Center, and Center on Instruction, developed a number of resources related to implementing MTSS at the high school level. Additional resources on the Center on RTI site focus on implementation at the middle school level. View all resources related to implementing MTSS at the secondary level at <http://www.rti4success.org/related-rti-topics/secondary-schools>.

**Question:** Are the materials, videos, and so on appropriate to use in a preparation course by university professors?

**Answer:** All of the materials shared are appropriate for use in preparation programs. Although the IRIS and CEEDAR modules are developed with a teacher preparation audience in mind, the modules from NCII and the Center on RTI also can be incorporated in lessons.

**Question:** Do you have resources on effective structures for student support teams within a multi-tiered system of supports?

**Answer:** NCII has developed a series of data meeting tools that can be helpful in supporting student support teams. These student meeting protocols are intended to support data team meetings for students receiving intensive intervention but may be adapted to support students at other levels. The documents are split into three sections: premeeting, initial meeting, and progress monitoring meetings.

- The premeeting documents are intended to support teams as they develop a holistic sense of the student, including relevant background information, current performance, current supports, prior intervention efforts, and other relevant data.
- The initial meeting documents are intended to support teams as they analyze data and design intensive intervention plans for students.
- The progress monitoring meeting documents are intended to support teams as they review student progress monitoring data after the initial intervention plan has been put in place and determine whether the student is making progress at an acceptable rate or adaptations to the intervention plan is necessary.

The documents are intended as examples, and many have been posted in word-processor format so that you can adapt them to meet the needs of your school's team. The data tools are available at <http://www.intensiveintervention.org/tools-support-intensive-intervention-data-meetings>.

**Question:** Are there any conferences on MTSS/RTI?

**Answer:** Many conferences include presentations that focus on MTSS and RTI. Some examples are

- [The National Association for School Psychologists Annual Conference](#)
- [Council for Exceptional Children Special Education Convention & Expo](#)
- [Title I Conference](#)
- [RTI Innovations Conference](#)

Many states also have state specific conferences where MTSS and RTI are addressed. Connect with your state department to see whether there are any local opportunities.

**Question:** Where is a list of Tier II Academic Interventions?

**Answer:** NCII provides a review of academic interventions that may be used at the Tier II or secondary level. These are available at <http://www.intensiveintervention.org/chart/instructional-intervention-tools>. The presence of a particular program on the chart does not constitute endorsement and should not be viewed as a recommendation. NCII publishes this chart to assist educators and families in becoming informed consumers who can select intervention programs that best meet their individual needs. The IRIS Center also provides evidence-based summaries, available at [http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/ebp\\_summaries](http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/ebp_summaries) that may be helpful to reference.

**Question:** Can or should you use a running record for progress monitoring?

**Answer:** While running records can be a great source of diagnostic data, they cannot be used to reliably measure student progress. Some of the challenges with the use of running records for progress monitoring include potential difficulty differences within the text (e.g., texts are normed). This creates variation across passages. In a research study looking at the reliability of running records, Fawson, Ludlow, Reutzel, Sudweeks, and Smith (2006) found that “using a single score obtained from reading a single passage to portray that student’s universe score would be highly questionable” (p. 124). They found that students’ responses on leveled passages varied widely from passage to passage, and in order to receive reliable results using a running record, three passages would need to be used and errors averaged across the scores.

In addition, the difference between levels is not an equal interval (growth from one level to another level might not be the same as the subsequent growth to the next level). This makes it difficult for us to see whether students are making improvement in a linear way.

Although running records do not provide strong progress monitoring measures, they can provide a lot of great diagnostic information to support decisions about student reading.

For additional information on this topic, view [Session 1: What Do I Do Now? Intensifying Academic Interventions When Standard Approaches Flop](#).

To learn more about the studies conducted by Fawson and colleagues (2006) view the citation below.

- Fawson, P. C., Ludlow, B. C., Reutzell, D. R., Sudweeks, R., & Smith, J. A. (2006). Examining the reliability of running records: Attaining generalizable results. *Journal of Educational Research*, 100(2), 113–126.