Practice Profile for the Essential Components of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
## Data-Based Problem Solving and Decision-Making

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Colorado has defined MTSS as a prevention-based framework of team-driven, data-based problem solving for improving the outcomes of every student through family, school, and community partnering and a layered continuum of evidence-based practices applied at the classroom, school, district, region, and state level.

Essential Components of MTSS Implementation

Colorado has identified **five Essential Components** fundamental in implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports framework. These components are complementary and iterative; they are neither mutually-exclusive nor hierarchical. If these components are integrated and effectively-implemented, student and system outcomes will improve.

1. Team-Driven Shared Leadership
2. Data-Based Problem Solving and Decision-Making
3. Family, School, and Community Partnering (FSCP)
4. Layered Continuum of Supports
5. Evidence-Based Practices
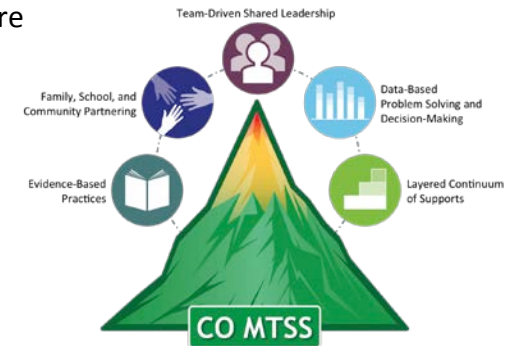
Purpose of this Practice Profile

A Practice Profile is utilized to support the adoption and implementation of an innovation; in this case, the innovation referred to is the MTSS framework, with each profile representing one of five essential components. A Practice Profile is an instrument used to operationalize the features of a practice, program, and/or system. This Practice Profile defines the guiding principles and critical components of **Data-Based Problem Solving and Decision-Making,** an essential component of MTSS implementation. This profile defines this essential component according to the ideal or "gold" standard of implementation, acceptable variation, and unacceptable variation.

Data-Based Problem Solving and Decision-Making Defined

A process used by stakeholder teams from multiple settings to analyze and evaluate information related to planning and implementing effective instructional strategies matched to student need.

> *RELATED TERMS:* **Universal Screening:** *a type of assessment that is characterized by the administration (usually three times a year) of quick, low-cost, repeatable data collection of academic and behavioral skills of all students. It shows how functional the curriculum and instruction are in the school and detects whether or not students are making acceptable progress in the curriculum.* **Progress Monitoring:** *a systematic approach to gathering academic and behavioral data using a variety of data collection methods. Student performance is examined frequently, over time, to evaluate response to instruction and intervention.*

	Ideal "Gold Standard"	Acceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation
Team Members	The team consists of representatives from multiple settings including school, home, and the community. Staff member representation includes (but is not limited to) administration, teachers, and specialists in the area of academics and behavior.	Representatives include school and home only without representation from the community.	Representatives on team only include school setting personnel. Representatives are not inclusive of all educational expertise. Substantive decisions are made without consultation, communication, or collaboration.
Teaming Practices	A formal and predictable process is used by a group of people to build and implement solutions; the process includes defined roles and responsibilities, team norms, clear expectations, decision rules, and intentional measurement of their own teaming effectiveness and practices.	A formal process is used by a group of people to build and implement solutions. Expectations for meeting team norms are inconsistently applied or are unclear. Teaming effectiveness is measured by anecdotal data only.	A process that a group of people use to build and implement solutions is not documented or formalized. Meeting foundations are not established. No considerations are made for teaming effectiveness, processes, or practices. The focus is not on building and implementing solutions, but on admiring the problem.
Problem Solving Steps	The problem solving process includes the following steps: problem identification (*defining with a precise problem statement*), problem analysis (*clarifying root cause*), plan implementation (*composing and delivering a well-articulated plan that is matched to need*), and plan evaluation (*using fidelity and outcome data to determine decisions about supports and interventions*).	All stakeholders are developing proficiency and fluency in the problem solving process. A problem solving culture is desired and is a known aspiration for members of the system.	The problem solving process is not sequential, does not use consistent protocol (steps/process), or is not based upon data. Interventions or supports determined through the problem solving process become permanent. No entrance or exit criteria are defined for decisions. Evaluation only includes review of outcomes without focused attention on fidelity.
Problem Solving Applications	Decision-making begins with known information about alterable variables to inform the process. The process is applied uniformly to academic and behavioral domains. A systematic application of these steps occurs at all levels of the MTSS framework (Tier I, II, and III). The process persists and is used to support decisions for every student.	The problem solving process exists, but application is limited and not yet developed across the continuum of supports (MTSS Framework). The process is used for academics and behavior; consistency in applications is pursued.	Problem solving is used at Tier III only. Problem solving is only applied to academics or behavior. Selected students or student groups are excluded from problem solving processes.
Data Use	Data collection is deliberate and ongoing with frequency matched to intensity. Progress monitoring and outcome data are linked. Thoughtful analysis of collected data informs the quality of instruction, student performance, intervention practices, fidelity of implementation, and the efficient use of resources.	Progress monitoring and outcome data are isolated to individual student data and not yet applied to system level implementation decisions.	Frequency of data collection, review, and analysis does not match intensity of intervention. Data is not aligned with individual, group, or system-wide intervention plans. Items within measures are not discrete enough to inform decision making. Data are collected, but not analyzed. Decisions are made without use of sensitive measures that reveal change over time.

	Ideal "Gold Standard"	Acceptable Variation	Unacceptable Variation
Purpose and Use of Screening and Progress Monitoring	Universal screening data is collected and used (3x/yr) to evaluate the quality, equity, & efficiency of a school's Universal instruction and supports in order to create a responsive system.	Universal screening data informs evaluation of a school's Universal instruction and supports.	Universal screening is conducted without concern for connection to change in system level practices.
	Universal screening data provides information on students' performance compared to expected levels or targets.	Universal screening data is incomplete and is supplemented for the capacity to make performance comparisons.	Universal screening data do not connect to expected levels/targets & is used to make judgments for placements.
	Universal screening data is used for goal setting across levels of application (e.g., individual student, classroom, school-wide) and signals if there is a need for more intensive monitoring across academic and behavioral domains.	Universal screening data is used for individual goal setting and indicates if intensity across academic & behavioral domains might be considered.	Universal screening data is not linked to goals or monitoring.
	Evidence-based progress monitoring tools are used to build decision-making practices that are explicit and specific, continuous across tiers, and scientifically-based.	Progress monitoring tools are matched to instruction & intervention that are articulated in implementation plans. Moderate links exist between progress monitoring & decision-making.	Progress monitoring tools are not used or are not matched to instruction or intervention implemented.
	Student-level progress monitoring data provides a basis for evaluating instructional programming as the instruction is occurring. Student-level progress monitoring data provides timely information that is analyzed fluently by stakeholders to determine if the response merits change in frequency, duration, and intensity of supports.	Progress monitoring data allows for instructional programming to be evaluated within teaching and learning cycles. Timely data collection occurs; analysis for use is conducted by designated data analysts as stakeholder data fluency is developed.	Progress monitoring is an end: assessment of learning, not assessment for learning. Progress monitoring data is collected and reviewed infrequently (or not at all).
	Progress monitoring is regular, consistent, and uses the same tool over time. Student-level progress monitoring data is used to proactively guide the process of matching and adjusting goals, materials, levels, and grouping to student needs.	Student-level progress monitoring informs plans and actions with moderate adjustments made.	Progress monitoring data is not used to inform plans or actions.
Format	Student-level progress monitoring data is displayed in a graphic format that can be used for review, analysis, and to aid communication with stakeholders (students, staff, families).	Student-level progress monitoring data, collected and displayed graphically, have no plans for communication.	Graphic displays of data are not available for analysis.
Stakeholder Input	Data purposes, applications, and practices are known by every stakeholder (i.e., students, staff, families) as noted in descriptive matrices/notes.	Data purposes, applications, & practices are noted in descriptive matrices with plans for communication.	Educational staff does not have fluent knowledge of data purposes, applications, and practices.
Effective-ness	Responses to data are combined with fidelity measurement to evaluate next steps according to a Data-Based Problem Solving and Decision Making Process.	Responses to data are known, & fidelity measures contribute to the Process but are not yet integrated efficiently.	Measures of fidelity are not considered or collected. Processes for use are inconsistent or unknown.