

Selecting Improvement Strategies:

When selecting Major Improvement Strategies, CDE recommends that schools and districts consider a range of factors. The goal of these considerations is to identify strategies that meet identified needs, have a high level of evidence supporting their implementation, and can be implemented effectively within the context of the school and district. An intervention may be listed as a strategy or a strategy may encompass multiple interventions within it.

Purpose of document

This document is intended to provide a tool that can be used for two primary purposes.

Selection of strategy: The strategy on the following pages was a common strategy within Unified Improvement Plans during the 2017-18 year. This document can be used to inform the decision process about selecting strategies, identifying the key components that research has shown are essential for impact, and provide a model that can inform schools' planning.

Analysis and critique of current strategy: If the strategy identified on page 2 has already been selected and implemented, this document can be used to ensure all components are being considered and to identify any areas for ongoing development or focus. Implementation tools referenced on Pages 4 and 5 can be used to further evaluate fidelity of implementation. Specific action plans can be identified based on this review.

- **For example:** School A identified that they were implementing 3 of the 5 building-level components of the strategy, but they did not have the overarching building leadership team doing systematic work. Three action steps they identified based on this were:
 - Leadership team participate in the district-led MTSS training, set up meeting schedule of the team for the year, and establish team norms and operating procedures;
 - Prioritize focus area(s) and begin to build a school-level action plan;
 - Identify a facilitator who can lead the building leadership team focused on improving MTSS infrastructure and support weekly individual student problem solving meetings.

Selecting the Best Intervention or Strategy

Is the strategy **clearly defined** and supported by **high-quality research**?

Does the strategy address **needs** and **align to staff skills** and **competencies**?

Is there **leadership support, resources**, and **necessary time** for implementation?

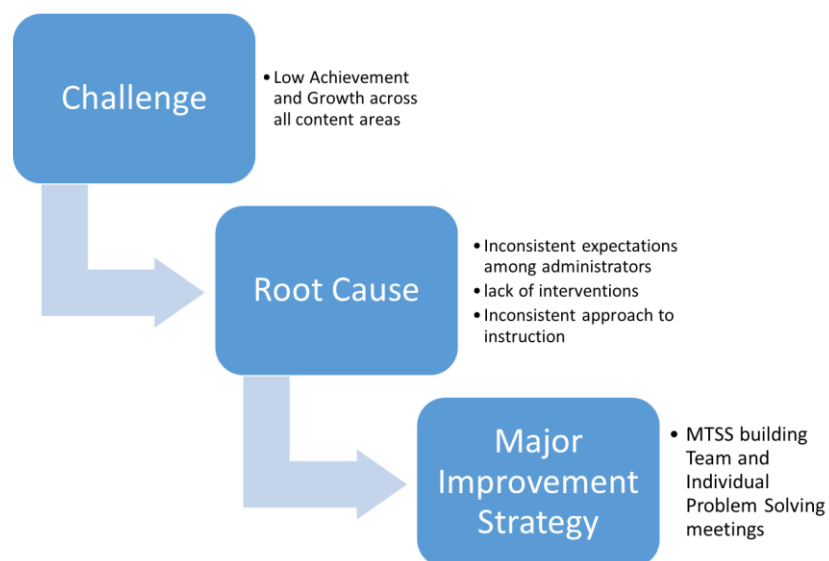
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – Evidence Base

ESSA defines levels of research based on the quality of the study, levels 1-4, with level 1 being the most rigorous type of study and level 4 offering a rationale based on research (often called research informed). CDE requires that schools and districts identify the research base for strategies that they select for their Unified Improvement Plans, and for applications for school improvement funds in the EASI application.

- CO-MTSS is a research informed framework that is focused on supporting districts and schools in implementing high level evidence based practices that meet evidence levels 1-3.
- The components of CO-MTSS are based on research that meets Levels 1-3.
- For definitions of the levels defined in ESSA: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/essaplanningrequirements>

Four Domains for School Improvement			
Culture of Performance	Academic Systems	Turnaround Leadership	Talent

Sample Strategy: Implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports



Challenge: *School A*, an elementary school, found that they were struggling with Academic Achievement and Growth across subject areas and student groups.

Root Cause: When working to identify why this was the case, *School A* identified that administrators had different expectations for teachers based on areas they supervise, lack of interventions for students, and inconsistent approaches to instruction across grade levels and classrooms.

Major Improvement Strategies: In order to address the challenges and root causes, *School A* elected to implement MTSS at the school level. The district had been implementing MTSS for the past year. The description of their approach is: *“Using the MTSS framework, we will be able to increase the consistency of implementation of initiatives and interventions. To do this we will focus on implementing effective teaming practices and meeting foundations to ensure effective decision-making and implementation support across all levels of the school and its stakeholders.”*

Evidence supporting this strategy: The School included the following in their UIP.

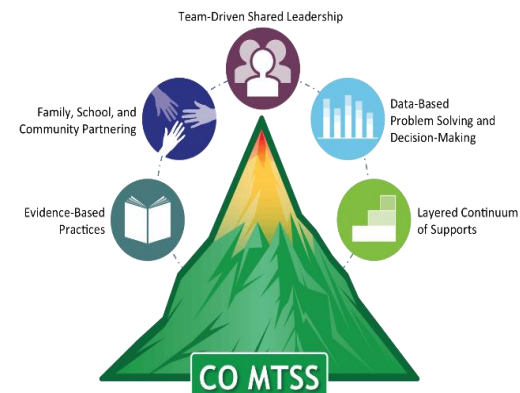
“MTSS is a framework that will help our team ensure that we are selecting evidence based practices as we decide on new initiatives and interventions for students. In addition, this framework is built off of research on effective implementation and the key structures needed to ensure fidelity so will help our team with selection and implementation.”
<https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/resources/implementation-research-synthesis-literature>.

Contextual Fit: The school included the following in their UIP.

“This strategy was selected as it builds off of work done at the district level in the previous year, helps the school effectively implement evidence-based interventions, and will provide some needed structure to leadership and student support meetings.”

What does effective CO-MTSS implementation look like at the District or BOCES level?

CDE defines CO-MTSS as a prevention-based framework of team-driven data-based problem solving for improving 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. Leveraging the Active Implementation Frameworks (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005), CO-MTSS aims for effective collaboration of adults to align district systems with school-based implementation. District leadership teams focus priorities for change so that school teams can customize district guidance according to their needs. Schools use CO-MTSS to organize adult collaboration activities and design service delivery to improve student performance. The table below highlights the core features and function at the district and school level.



CO-MTSS Component	District/BOCES-Level Function
Team-Driven Shared Leadership: Teaming structures and expectations distribute responsibility and shared decision-making across school, district, and community members (e.g. students, families, generalists, specialists, district administrators, etc.) to organize coordinated systems of training, coaching, resources, implementation, and evaluation for adult activities.	A district MTSS leadership team (MLT) establishes infrastructure, including policies, procedures, practices, and teaming structures to create real systems change.
Data-Based Problem Solving and Decision Making: A consistent process is used by stakeholder teams and applied at multiple levels to analyze and evaluate relevant information to plan and implement strategies that support sustainable improved student and system outcomes.	The MLT establishes a problem solving culture through the coordination of adult learning, policies, processes, practices, and data-based decision making.
Family, School, and Community Partnering: The collaboration of families, schools and communities as active partners in improving learner, classroom, school, district, and state outcomes.	The MLT ensures the equitable engagement of every member of the learning community. Families and community partners are active participants in the educational system and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to staff, and to what students are learning.
Layered Continuum of Supports: Ensuring that every student receives equitable academic and behavioral support that is culturally responsive, matched to need, and developmentally appropriate, through layers that increase in intensity from universal (every student) to targeted (some students) to intensive (few students).	The MLT establishes hierarchical tiers of instruction and support, resulting in a collective capacity to match supports to need.
Evidence-Based Practices: Approaches to instruction, intervention, and assessment that have been proven effective through research indicating improved outcomes for students.	The MLT engages in intentional selection and adoption of evidence-based practices with measurement of the effectiveness of capacity-building efforts.

For more information on what building and school-level infrastructure “looks like”, take a look at the following CO-MTSS resources:

- Guidance Document: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/mtss/whatismtssarticle>
- District/BOCES Level CO-MTSS Infrastructure Self-Assessment: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/mtss/mlt-selfassessment>

What does effective CO-MTSS implementation look like at the school level?

CDE defines CO-MTSS as a prevention-based framework of team-driven data-based problem solving for improving 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. Leveraging the Active Implementation Frameworks (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005), CO-MTSS aims for effective collaboration of adults to align district systems with school-based implementation. District leadership teams focus priorities for change so that school teams can customize district guidance according to their needs. Schools use CO-MTSS to organize adult collaboration activities and design service delivery to improve student performance. The table below highlights the core features and function at the district and school level.



CO-MTSS Component	School-Level Function
Team-Driven Shared Leadership: Teaming structures and expectations distribute responsibility and shared decision-making across school, district, and community members (e.g. students, families, generalists, specialists, district administrators, etc.) to organize coordinated systems of training, coaching, resources, implementation, and evaluation for adult activities.	The Building Leadership Team (BLT) is a cadre of committed people with decision-making authority that aligns data, systems, and practices.
Data-Based Problem Solving and Decision Making: A consistent process is used by stakeholder teams and applied at multiple levels to analyze and evaluate relevant information to plan and implement strategies that support sustainable improved student and system outcomes.	The BLT establishes a problem solving culture that requires the usage of data to define the needs and strengths of the school; a clear process or sequencing action planning activities; and a process to monitor and evaluate implementation and outcomes.
Family, School, and Community Partnering: The collaboration of families, schools and communities as active partners in improving learner, classroom, school, district, and state outcomes.	The BLT prioritizes systems for families to be active participants in the educational system and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to staff, and to what students are learning. The school community respects and includes every family.
Layered Continuum of Supports: Ensuring that every student receives equitable academic and behavioral support that is culturally responsive, matched to need, and developmentally appropriate, through layers that increase in intensity from universal (every student) to targeted (some students) to intensive (few students).	The BLT establishes a system of prevention-focused, hierarchical tiers of support matched to student need.
Evidence-Based Practices: Approaches to instruction, intervention, and assessment that have been proven effective through research indicating improved outcomes for students.	The BLT engages in intentional problem solving processes for selection and adoption of evidence-based practices.

For more information on what building and school-level infrastructure “looks like”, take a look at the following CO-MTSS resources:

- Guidance Document: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/mtss/whatismtssarticle>
- Building Level CO-MTSS Infrastructure Self-Assessment: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/mtss/mtss-schoolself-assessmentevaluationtool>

Reference

Fixsen, D. L., Naoom, S. F., Blase, K. A., Friedman, R. M., & Wallace, F. (2005). *Implementation research: A synthesis of the literature*.

Florida: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, The National Implementation Research Network (FMHI Publication #231).