Measuring Tiered Systems of Support: Decision Guide[1]

Background and Purpose

Given that many tools exist for measuring tiered systems of support, it can be hard deciding which tool to use. Some tools are focused on the behavioral "side" of a tiered system (e.g., the Tiered Fidelity Inventory; Algozzine et al., 2019), while others are focused on the academic "side" of a tiered system (e.g., Reading Tiered Fidelity; St. Martin et al., 2015). Other tools aim to measure both sides of a tiered system, like the MTSS Fidelity of Implementation Rubric (AIR©, 2023). One tool, the Integrated MTSS Fidelity Rubric, or IMFR (Gandhi et al., 2024), assesses the degree to which a school strategically combines the academic and behavior "sides" of a tiered system. **Consider the three questions below to help your school/district make an informed decision about assessing tiered systems. Then, use Table 2 to select one or more measures to use.**

1. **What are you trying to implement?** First, identify what the school/district intends to implement. Think carefully about this, because what your school/district intends to implement may be different from what is being implemented. Review Table 1 to identify which tiered system your school is implementing, regardless of what that system is called.

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[1] Draft developed for OLAC/ODE AcceleratED Leadership & Learning2025 Keynote presentation. Visit https://www.air.org/resource/guidetoolkit/integrated-mtss-fidelity-rubric-imfr for final version.

Table 1. Types of Tiered Systems of Support

Name of tiered system of support	Other names	Purpose	Distinguishing feature of tiered system
Positive Behavior Intervention Support (**PBIS**), Schoolwide PBIS (Sugai & Horner, 2009)	• Effective Behavior Support (EBS; Lewis & Sugai, 1999) • PBS (Sugai & Horner, 2002) • MTSS-Behavior (MTSS-B; Sugai & Horner, 2020)	Improving student behavioral outcomes	Focused on providing behavior supports
Response to Intervention (**RTI**; Fuchs et al., 2003)	• Response to Instruction (Kame'enui & Simmons, 1998) • MTSS-Reading (MTSS-R; Baker et al., 2010)	Improving student academic outcomes	Focused on providing academic supports
Multi-Tiered System of Support (**MTSS**; Sugai & Horner, 2009)	• State-specific names	Improving student academic and behavioral outcomes	Focused on providing academic and behavioral
Integrated MTSS (**I-MTSS**; McIntosh & Goodman, 2016)	• Comprehensive Integrated Three-Tier models (Ci3T; e.g., Lane et al., 2009) • Interconnected Systems Framework (ISE; e.g., Eber et al., 2020)	Improving student academic and behavioral outcomes	Focused on providing strategically combined academic and behavioral supports

2. **What questions do you want to answer?** Now, identify what questions your school/district wants to answer about implementation. You might consider these research questions if you are conducting a study using a tiered systems measure, or your evaluation questions if you are working at a school/district and want to better understand implementation status. Examples of questions might be:

   • To what degree are we integrating academic and behavioral supports schoolwide?

   • To what degree are Tier 1 behavioral supports in place?

- To what degree does the school infrastructure support I-MTSS implementation?

- How does RTI implementation relate to student achievement?

Once you know what questions you want to answer, you can select a tool that provides the most relevant data. Before doing that, move on to item 3.

3. **What other features of the measure are important to consider?** Now, consider other aspects of the tool. For example, is it important that the tool is valid and reliable? Valid and reliable tools provide data that the school/district can feel confident are accurate. Other factors to consider are how often the tool can be used, the amount of time it takes to administer the tool, who is involved in the administration, and the grade level for which it is intended to be used. Table 2 lists numerous tools, what they measure, reliability and validity data (if available), and other features to consider like time to complete.

Table 2. Measures of Tiered Systems of Support

Tool	Focus	Reliability	Validity	Grade Level	Administration Schedule	Approximate Time To Complete	Completed By
Integrated MTSS Fidelity Rubric (IMFR) Gandhi, A., Lembke, E., Riley-Tillman, T. C., Pierce, J., Smith, H., Casasanto-Ferro, J., Majeika, C. E. (2024). Integrated MTSS fidelity rubric (IMFR): Materials packet. American Institutes for Research.	School-level integration of academic and behavioral tiered systems	Inter-rater reliability: Kappa=.752	Content validity: 13/14 item-measure correlations greater than .40 Substantive validity: Social validity: Time to complete is challenging but data are valuable and useful for improving implementation	Psychometrically validated for elementary level For adapting to other grade levels, contact the study team at IMFR@air.org	Annually or up to three times per year	180-240 minutes	External coach, evaluator, or researcher and school-based team
Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) Algozzine, B., Barrett, S., Eber, L., George, H., Horner, R., Lewis, T., Putnam, B., Swain-Bradway, J., McIntosh, K., & Sugai, G (2019). School-wide PBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory. OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. www.pbis.org	School-level positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) of all tiers	α = .96 r = .995 (test-retest)	Concurrent: r = .64 (BoQ), .55, (SAS), .54 (TIC), .51, (BAT Tier 2), .72 (BAT Tier 3)	K-12	Quarterly, then annually after 70% fidelity achieved	90–120 mins	External coach, evaluator, and school-based team

Tool	Focus	Reliability	Validity	Grade Level	Administration Schedule	Approximate Time To Complete	Completed By
Schoolwide Evaluation Tool (SET) Horner, R. H., Todd, A. W., Lewis-Palmer, T., Irvin, L. K., Sugai, G., & Boland, J. B. (2004). The School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET): A research instrument for assessing schoolwide positive behavior support. Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 6, 3–12. doi:10.1177/10983007040060010201	School-level PBIS, focus on Tier 1	α = .96 r = .97 (test-retest)	Concurrent: r = .75 (SAS), .51 (BoQ)	K-12	Annually or biannually	Minimum of 120 minutes	External coach or evaluator
Team Implementation Checklist (TIC) Sugai, G., Horner, R. H., Lewis-Palmer, T., & Rossetto Dickey, C. (2012). Team implementation checklist, Version 3.1. *Eugene, OR: Educational and Community Supports, University of Oregon*.	School-level PBIS, focus on teams and Tier 1	α = .91–.95	Concurrent: r=.59 (BoQ)	Not specified	Monthly or quarterly	Data unavailable	School-based team, with or without support from coach or external evaluator
Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) Childs, K. E., Kincaid, D., & George, H. P. (2011). The revised school-wide PBS Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ). *OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports*.	School-level PBIS, focus on Tier 1	α = .96 r = .87 (interrater)	Predictive: Hedges's g=.10 for math and .12 for reading on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)	Not specified	Quarterly, then annually, after 80% fidelity achieved	45 minutes	External coach, evaluator, and school-based team

Tool	Focus	Reliability	Validity	Grade Level	Administration Schedule	Approximate Time To Complete	Completed By
Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) Kittelman, A., Izzard, S., McIntosh, K., Morris, K. R., & Lewis, T. J. (2024). Self-Assessment Survey: Evaluation of a Revised Measure Assessing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*, 15345084241235226.	School-level PBIS	$\alpha = .96$	Not available	Not specified	Annually	20–30 minutes per person	Self-administered by school team
Individual Student System Evaluation Tool (ISSET) Anderson, C.M., Lewis-Palmer, T., Todd, A.W., Horner, R.H., Sugai, G., and Sampson, N.K. (2012)	Tiers 2 and 3	$\alpha = .74–.96$	Concurrent: $r = .61$ (SAS)	Not specified	Quarterly, then annually, after 80% fidelity achieved	120–180 minutes	External evaluator
Benchmarks of Advanced Tiers (BAT) Anderson, C., Childs, K., Kincaid, D., Horner, R. H., George, H., Todd, A. W., ... & Spaulding, S. (2009). Benchmarks for advanced tiers (BAT). *Educational and Community Supports, University of Oregon & University of South Florida.*	Tiers 2 and 3	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Not specified	Quarterly, then annually, after	Data unavailable	School-based team, with or without support from coach

Tool	Focus	Reliability	Validity	Grade Level	Administration Schedule	Approximate Time To Complete	Completed By
Monitoring Advanced Tiers Tool (MATT) Horner, Sampson, Anderson, Todd & Eliason Educational and Community Supports, University of Oregon (2012).	Tiers 2 and 3	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Not specified	Monthly or quarterly	15–20 minutes	School-based team, with or without support from coach or external evaluator
MTSS Fidelity of Implementation Rubric AIR©, 2023 https://mtss4success.org/resource/essential-components-mtss-rubric	School-level RTI implementation	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	K-12	Annually	Data unavailable	School-based team, with or without support from coach or external evaluator
Reading Tiered Fidelity Inventory (RTFI) St. Martin, K., Harms, A., Walsh, M., & Nantais, M. (2023). Reading Tiered Fidelity Inventory Elementary-Level Edition. (Version 2.2). Michigan Department of Education, Michigan's Multi-Tiered System of Supports Technical Assistance Center	School-level reading instruction within a three- tiered system	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Elementary and secondary versions available	Annually	60–180 minutes	External coach or evaluator and school- based team

Tool	Focus	Reliability	Validity	Grade Level	Administration Schedule	Approximate Time To Complete	Completed By
Self-Assessment of MTSS (SAM): Stockslager, K., Castillo, J., Brundage, A., Childs ,K.,& Romer, N. (2016). Self-Assessment of MTSS(SAM). Florida Problem Solving/Response to Intervention Project and Florida's Positive Behavior Intervention and Support Project, University of South Florida	School-level MTSS	α = .79-.91	Concurrent: r = .31 (BoQ) Predictive: r = -.14 (number of out- of- school days), r = .1 (English language arts proficiency on Florida Standards Assessment), r=.19 (mathematics proficiency on Florida Standards Assessment)	Not specified	Annually	Data unavailable	School-based team
Self-Assessment of Problem Solving Implementation (SAPSI) Florida Problem Solving/Response to Intervention Project Developed by the Florida PS/RtI Statewide Project — http://floridarti.usf.edu	School-level MTSS	α = .64-.91	Predictive: No significant associations	Not specified	Annually	120–180 minutes	School-based team, with or without support from coach or external evaluator
Data-Based Individualization (DBI) Fidelity Rubric (AIR©, 2015) https://intensiveintervention.org /sites/default/files/DBI_Impleme nRubric_2015.pdf	Tier 3 academics and behavior	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	K-12	Monthly or quarterly	15–20 minutes	School-based team, with or without support from coach or external evaluator