



TIPS FOR USING IMPLEMENTATION STAGES TO LEAD MTSS– TIER 1 CHANGES

THE SITUATION

Tier 1 within a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), the “universal tier”, is generally expected to provide a common set of learning experiences for all students, with some differentiation. Equitably meeting the needs of all students rests upon the foundation of a sufficient Tier 1 system.

THE CHALLENGE

The challenge is supporting educators and other stakeholders to enhance and improve Tier 1 so that it meets the needs of at least 80% of students without also providing them Tier 2 or 3 supports. Status quo usually wins out; student needs change, but Tier 1 remains largely the same. This requires using what we know from implementation science to help lead change that sticks.

THE TIPS

- **Engage in professional learning** to learn more about how implementation stages should inform leadership decisions, such as <https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/module-1>.
- **Identify and use a measure of MTSS implementation** that provides detailed information about Tier 1 implementation, and what implementation stage your school is in.
- **Identify and deploy** strategies for supporting changes based on the implementation stage your school is in.
 - **Exploration:** Form or leverage existing team to guide work, identify specific Tier 1 needs, provide information to impacted stakeholders, answer questions, use consensus-based decision-making.
 - **Installation:** Ensure resources in place to support needs (including communication), update policies and procedures to support Tier 1 changes, establish collaborative learning and coaching structures, secure needed educational materials, leverage data systems.
 - **Initial Implementation:** Use implementation and student learning data to make ongoing adjustments to implementation.
 - **Full Implementation:** Maintain high levels of implementation, using data to adjust Tier 1 if changes occur.
- **Include planning for sustainability at each stage** of implementation instead of waiting until full implementation is in place.
- **Don't be too rigid** about stages, they are not perfectly linear.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Using the right strategies to ensure implementation sticks requires knowing what stage your school is in.