

# DCI-MTSS FACILITATOR CONVERSATION PLANNING GUIDE



**DCI-MTSS**  
Multi-Tiered System of Support



Suggested citation: MoEdu-SAIL. (2023). *DCI-MTSS Facilitator Conversation Planning Guide*. Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: Northern Arizona University, Institute for Human Development.

The contents of the DCI-MTSS Facilitator Conversation Planning Guide were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (#H323A220012). However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.



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Institute for Human Development

Personnel from the Institute for Human Development (IHD), at Northern Arizona University, provide training, education, and service for people with disabilities and conduct research focusing

on improving educational and disability systems. For over ten years, this team has worked closely with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Special Education to infuse research into professional development and the Statewide System of Support. This translation of research into practice occurs through the reciprocal exchange of information, between community members, partner organizations, state agencies, and the IHD. IHD is part of a national network of University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD).

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## DCI-MTSS

The overarching goal of District Continuous Improvement Multi-Tiered System of Support (DCI-MTSS) is to improve literacy outcomes for all students, especially students with disabilities, by providing high-quality Professional Development focused on district- and building-level implementation within a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS).

To accomplish this goal, districts implementing DCI-MTSS need to create a cohesive system that focuses on increasing both academic and behavioral outcomes to equitably support the varying needs of all students.

### Purpose of this Guide

This *DCI-MTSS Facilitator Conversation Planning Guide* was designed for MTSS Facilitators and Coaching Support Team (CST) members working with District Leadership Teams (DLTs) to identify needs and select evidence-based strategies within the DCI-MTSS framework and content. DCI-MTSS districts will analyze an integrated set of data related to literacy, behavior, and instruction. The *DCI-MTSS Facilitator Conversation Planning Guide* provides a process for helping MTSS Facilitators design conversations to answer the fundamental questions of Where is the district going?, Where is the district now?, and How can the district close the gap?

The process outlined below serves as a guide to ensure integrated data is used in action planning. This document is not meant to be shared or distributed to districts, nor is there an expectation that all guiding questions must be asked and answered by a district. Action planning conversations are likely to be held over several sessions and this document can be used to identify and plan conversations that will help districts move forward in their DCI-MTSS journey.

A companion to this *DCI-MTSS Facilitator Conversation Planning Guide* is the *DCI-MTSS Practice Profile*, which operationalizes the core elements of DCI-MTSS. Practice Profiles are useful for understanding a program/practice, planning for implementation, providing feedback/coaching, and self-monitoring progress toward a goal. The *DCI-MTSS Practice Profile* outlines implementation criteria using a rubric structure with specific practice-level characteristics. Four levels of implementation (exemplary, proficient, close to proficient, and far from proficient) are anchored by Essential Functions. The following six Essential Functions have been identified as important for District Leadership Teams in the effective implementation of DCI-MTSS.

1. District leaders maintain a collaborative culture and climate to build capacity for an outcome-driven approach to school improvement.
2. District leaders maintain an assessment system designed to support educational teams in making informed instructional and programmatic decisions to support students.
3. District leaders engage in cycles of data-based decision making to meet the needs of all students.
4. District leaders maintain a tiered system of supports that provides efficient, effective, and equitable allocation of resources to support all students.
5. District leaders select and align effective teaching and learning practices to increase the probability that instruction, interventions, and supports meet the needs of all students.

6. District leaders provide staff with ongoing support to ensure the integration and sustainability of their continuous improvement efforts.

## G.A.I.N.S. and DCI-MTSS

The path to continuous improvement must be data-informed to be effective. It involves continuous cycles of data analysis, planning, and implementation. As teams collect and analyze data, the use of the G.A.I.N.S. process can guide districts in data-based decision making, developing action plans, and monitoring implementation. The G.A.I.N.S. process is described below.

1. **Gather** district data sources that will help identify and prioritize areas needing improvement.
2. **Analyze** district data to identify problematic trends/behaviors and determine practices to be initiated or strengthened for high impact on student learning.
3. **Intentionally act** by clearly defining the change needed; identifying and communicating a vision for outcomes; and developing and implementing an action plan.
4. **Notice and adjust** by monitoring the effectiveness of the plan and making changes as needed.
5. **Systematically repeat** the process.

## The MTSS Facilitator and CST Role

The role of the MTSS Facilitator and CST is to support the DLT in collaborative, data-based decision making that both aligns the district's current goals and supports them in the development of an effective action plan for DCI-MTSS implementation. To that end, it is essential that the MTSS Facilitator promotes ownership of the data analysis, resultant action plan, and leadership within the DLT. They are the experts regarding their district, buildings, and programs.

In the following sections you will find a number of questions to support the process of DCI-MTSS data analysis and planning. Facilitators and CSTs will select questions that seem most appropriate based on what they know about the district and where the district is in the DCI-MTSS process. The questions and sections serve as a guide to the DBDM process. While you may not need to ask every question, it is important to ensure the DLT has enough information and conversation to make thoughtful, data-based decisions and develop purposeful action plans. To prepare for your conversations with the DLT, review this guide and jot down key elements that reflect the district's current stage of planning. Note that at the end of this guide there are templates for planning and note-taking use.

## Gathering Background Information

When gathering district background information, consider the following areas.

### A. Behavior

#### **What data are the district currently collecting related to behavior?**

- What strategies does the district use to identify students, including universal screening?
- What are the data decision rules for teacher referral?

#### **What approach(es) are used in the district to support student behavior?**

- Has the district participated in School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports (SW-PBS)? If yes...
  - Which schools have participated?
  - What was their most recent year of SW-PBS participation?
  - How many years have they participated in SW-PBS?
  - How would they describe the fidelity of their implementation? How do they know?
  - Did the district or specific buildings stop implementing PBIS? If so, why?
  - How do implementation levels differ between buildings?



- Which buildings have received recognition? What level (bronze, silver, gold)?
- What have been the district’s past areas of focus related to behavior?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Systems	<input type="checkbox"/> Discouraging Unexpected Behavior
<input type="checkbox"/> Function-Based Thinking	<input type="checkbox"/> DBDM for Behavior
<input type="checkbox"/> Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Classroom ETLP
<input type="checkbox"/> Clarifying Expected Behavior	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching Expected Behavior	
- Has the district used a different intervention for improving student behavior? If yes...
  - What is the name of the intervention?
  - How does this intervention address the following?
    - A collaborative use of data to inform improvements to student behavior
    - A system for providing ongoing professional learning support across the district
- Do they have a curriculum that all buildings use to address student behavior needs? Do some buildings use curriculum/programs to support student behavior needs?
- What Professional Development and/or coaching does the district provide for teams related to effective teaching and learning practices to address classroom management?

## B. Academics

### What data is the district currently collecting related to academics?

- What strategies do the district use to identify students needing additional literacy support, including universal screening?
- What are the data decision rules for teacher referral?

### What approach(es) are used in the district to support student academic achievement?

- Has the district participated in DCI? If yes...
  - What was their most recent year of DCI participation?
  - How many years have they participated in DCI?
  - What was their most recent district level DCI implementation zone?

## PREPARATION

- How do implementation levels vary between buildings?
- What have been their past areas of focus?
  - CFA
  - CT
  - CTE
  - DACL
  - DBDM
  - SBIC
  - Other
- Has the district used a different framework/intervention for improving academic achievement? If yes...
  - What is the name of the framework/intervention?
  - How does this framework/intervention address the following?
    - A collaborative use of data to inform improvements to student achievement
    - A system for providing ongoing professional learning support across the district

### **Has the district participated in Literacy Training, specific to the Science of Reading? If yes...**

- What areas of reading training/coaching has the district already received?
- Which buildings/staff have received training/coaching?
- How do implementation levels differ between buildings/grade levels?

### **C. Current Implementation of Tiered Intervention Support**

#### **Does the district currently implement a tiered intervention support system for academics and/or behavior? If yes...**

- What does the district's Tier 1 system look like for literacy, instruction, and/or behavior?
- What universal screening tools are currently being used for literacy, instruction, and/or behavior?
  - How frequently are universal screenings administered?
  - What buildings and grade levels participate in universal screenings?
- At what buildings and grade levels are Tiers 2 or 3 implemented?
- What does the district's Tier 2 system look like for literacy and behavior?
  - How are students identified for Tier 2 supports?
  - What decision rules are used to move students between tiers?

- How is intervention determined for students needing Tier 2 support?
- What does progress monitoring look like for students in Tier 2 intervention?
- What does the district's Tier 3 system look like for literacy and behavior?
  - How are students identified for Tier 3 supports?
  - What decision rules are used to move students between tiers?
  - How is intervention determined for students needing Tier 3 support?
  - What does progress monitoring look like for students in Tier 3 intervention?

#### **D. Current Efforts Around Family and Community Engagement**

**Describe the district's current efforts around family and community engagement.**

- What does family engagement look like in the district?
- How does the district include and engage other community partners?
- What will families and community partners need to know about DCI-MTSS implementation?
- What communication strategies are used to inform families and community partners?

#### **E. Other Important Considerations**

**What other considerations are important as the district plans for DCI-MTSS implementation?**

- How does internal coaching currently occur in the district?
- What is the district's timeline for coaching and training?
- When can leaders receive coaching and training?
- What policies may impact your implementation of DCI-MTSS or the sharing of data?
- Where/how does the district keep student data?

### Where is the District Going?

It is important to begin with the district's goals regarding DCI-MTSS implementation. Choose those questions that will help the DLT uncover their expectations as they begin their journey. If the district does not already have a vision/mission, the team may choose to add the development of a vision/mission specific to DCI-MTSS to their action plan.

#### Questions to Consider Regarding Vision/Mission

- What are three words that best describe the district?
- As a district, of what are you most proud?
- What was the last successful initiative the district put into place?
- What were the key elements that made that initiative successful?
- How does the district typically communicate with stakeholders?
- Why did the district choose to engage in DCI-MTSS?
- What benefits to the district and students will implementation of DCI-MTSS provide?
- What are known fears and/or barriers regarding the implementation of DCI-MTSS?
- How does DCI-MTSS currently align with the district vision, CSIP, and other initiatives?
- What initial goals does the district have for the implementation of DCI-MTSS?

#### Questions to Consider Regarding Initial Outcome Needs

- What concerns does the district have regarding student outcomes in terms of instruction, literacy, and behavior?
- Are there any gaps in student performance related to instruction, literacy, and behavior that need to be addressed?
- How have student outcomes improved over the last year? How do you know?
- What does student engagement look like across the district?
- What percentage of students are on track to graduate and how does this compare to previous years?
- Does the team have other student outcome concerns?
- What is the district's student attendance rate?
- How many days were lost to out-of-school suspensions and in-school suspensions last year?
- Are there certain demographic groups that have better outcomes than others?

## Where is the District Now?

An understanding of the district's data is key to informed decision making. The DLT will collect and analyze data to identify current district needs. It should be noted that while the data described below focuses on ways it will be used by the DLT, many of these same data elements will also be used by Building Leadership Teams (BLTs) for building action planning and by collaborative teams to plan for individual student needs. The required data elements the district will need to collect as part of their participation in DCI-MTSS include the following.

### District Data Elements

#### Literacy

**Universal Screening Tool(s) K-8.** The DLT will use universal screening tools to help identify the number of students who may be at risk of reading difficulties across the district and gauge the status of Tier 1 literacy support (required in the fall and spring, recommended in the winter).

#### Behavior

**Self-Assessment Survey (SAS).** The DLT will use this survey to understand staff perceptions regarding the status and priority of behavior systems and fidelity of implementation. Data can be reported and analyzed at the following levels: 1) schoolwide, 2) non-classroom (e.g., cafeteria, hallway, playground), 3) classroom, and 4) individual student (required in the spring).

**Tier One - Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI).** The DLT may use this information to monitor Tier 1 behavior implementation at the building level. The Tier 1 scale is informed by a building walk, as well as staff and student interviews (required in the spring).

**District Systems Fidelity Inventory (DSFI): Executive Function.** The DLT may use this as a self-assessment of DLT systems and functions. The Executive Functions portion of the DSFI measures stakeholder engagement; funding and alignment; policy; and workforce capacity (required in February).

**Office Discipline Referrals (ODR).** The DLT will use this information to identify and monitor building progress towards behavior goals (ongoing collection).

#### Instruction

**Collaborative Work Implementation Survey (CWIS).** The DLT will use the survey results to understand staff perceptions regarding the implementation of DCI practices. The CWIS is a 24-question survey regarding the DCI processes and practices (required in the spring, optional in the fall).

**DCI District Implementation Survey.** The DLT will use the survey to examine the essential elements and criteria from the of the DCI Implementation Practice Profile. It is used as a tool to document a district's status and identify action steps for critical systems-level change (required in February).

### Other Data Sources

**DCI-MTSS District Implementation Inventory.** The DLT will use the inventory to examine the essential elements and criteria from the DCI-MTSS Implementation Practice Profile. It is used as a tool to document a district's status and identify action steps for critical systems-level change (required in February).

The use of multiple sources of data provides more clarity and validity in decision making. The district is likely to have other data that will help inform both strengths and needs related to literacy, behavior, and instruction. Examples might include common formative assessment (CFA) data, climate surveys, special education data, etc. In addition to the required data, also note optional data the DLT is interested in considering.

### District Data Plan

Once the required and optional data sources are decided, the MTSS Facilitator will support the incorporation of DCI-MTSS into the district assessment plan. Make note of any data sources that still need to be gathered.

### Question to Consider for Assessment Planning

- What is currently included in the district assessment plan?
- Who is responsible?
- What additional data need to be added to the district assessment plan?
- Who will be responsible for collecting new data elements?
- When will the data be collected?
- When will the data be reviewed?
- Who will be responsible for collecting and organizing newly added data elements?
- Who will need training to administer new assessments?
- What training will staff need to administer assessments?
- Who will be responsible for planning/organizing assessment training?
- When will training happen?

### Organize and Analyze the Data

When the DLT has gathered all available data (and planned for the collection of any missing data elements), the data should be organized in a manner that will support DLT analysis. Some type of visual summary that reflects the number of students at Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 for behavior and academics is likely to be helpful. Many of the tools used for assessment will generate reports designed to support data analysis at the district, building, and student levels. The DLT will look primarily at this data from both the district and building levels to identify trends, patterns, and areas of need.

If they do not have one, the DLT will also need to select a data analysis protocol to support them as they analyze their data. If the DLT has a protocol they already use, the MTSS Facilitator and CSTs should plan to use their process. If the DLT does not already have a data analysis protocol, the following resources may provide a structure for the team and are provided as examples.

[Data Protocols](#)  
[Protocols for Examining Data](#)  
[ATLAS: Looking at Data Protocol](#)

### **Questions to Consider when Analyzing Data**

- What have we learned from the data?
- How many students fall into Tiers 1, 2, and 3 for literacy?
- How many students fall into Tiers 1, 2, and 3 for behavior?
- What does the staff perception data (CWIS and SAS) tell us about the needs and concerns of staff?
- What do the DSFI, TFI, and DCI Implementation Survey tell us about our district systems?
- What is most surprising about the data?
- What is most concerning about the data?
- What types of data might be missing? When can it be collected?
- What learning needs are evident?
- What are the district's strengths and needs related to literacy?
- What are the district's strengths and needs related to behavior?
- What are the district's strengths and needs regarding instruction?
- What inferences and explanations can we draw from these data sets?
- What important points seem to stand out?
- What are some patterns or trends that are emerging?
- What do you notice about subgroup performance?
- What hunches do you have to explain the performance?
- How strong is the evidence overall?

### How Does the District Close the Gap?

#### Selecting a Priority Focus

Careful and strategic data analysis enables DLTs to uncover trends regarding instructional challenges. Reflecting on these challenges enables the DLT to pinpoint a priority focus based on data. The following questions can be used to support the DLT in determining the priority focus of the district and building goals.

#### Questions for Selecting an Area(s) of Focus

- Which area(s) needs immediate attention based on the data?
- Given the data, should the primary focus of the district be on Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3 in literacy, instruction, and/or behavior?
- What focus will provide the most impact at this time?
- How will this focus align with the district CSIP?
- How will the focus fit/align with the needs of buildings?
- Based on the district's data, what will be their priority focus?
- At the building level, which DCI-MTSS content is most closely aligned with the area(s) needing support?
- How do the building goals align with the district's priority focus?

#### Action Planning

Action planning is a process that turns ideas into tangible actions. An effective action plan describes specific steps that will be taken to achieve the goals set forth by the DLT for DCI-MTSS implementation.

#### Each action step should include the following.

- The specific action planned
- The person responsible for carrying out the action (person or group)
- The timeline as to when the action is to be carried out
- The resources and/or support needed to complete the action
- Results showing what happened after the action was taken

#### Questions for Action Planning

- Are the goals measurable?
- How will the goals be measured?
- What data elements will we use to monitor implementation?
- Are the goals attainable given time and resources available?
- What action steps need to happen to achieve the goals?
- What is the timeline for each action step?



- Who will monitor implementation of each action step?
- What resources are available to attain these goals?
- What Professional Development is needed for training and coaching in the district's priority area(s)?
- What is the timeline for training and coaching of staff?
- How might communication protocols be established to produce consistent understanding of DCI-MTSS and disseminate information to all stakeholders?
- What will be your schedule/timeline for DCI-MTSS training and coaching?
- How will the DLT monitor progress on the DCI-MTSS action plan and what benchmarks will be set?
- What is the schedule/timeline for ongoing review of the DCI-MTSS action plan?

# ACTION PLAN

## Action Planning and Notes Templates

These final two sections include both examples of action planning and notes templates that may be helpful as you organize and plan with a district. Facilitators and CSTs are free to modify these examples or use other templates that better fit their needs.

### DCI-MTSS NEXT STEPS Actions=Results

District \_\_\_\_\_ Action Planning Date \_\_\_\_\_

District Contact \_\_\_\_\_

District Leadership Team \_\_\_\_\_

Data-Based DCI-MTSS Goals \_\_\_\_\_

Focus Areas \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Action Planned</b>	
<b>Responsible Person(s)</b>	
<b>Timeline</b>	
<b>Resources/Support Needed</b>	
<b>Results</b>	

**Where are we NOW?**

**Where are we GOING?**

**CSIP Goal/  
Focus Area**

By \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_% of staff  
will be proficient in

\_\_\_\_\_ supported by the practice  
of \_\_\_\_\_  
as measured by \_\_\_\_\_

**Support  
Practice**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**CSIP Goal/  
Focus Area**

By \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_% of staff  
will be proficient in

\_\_\_\_\_ supported by the practice  
of \_\_\_\_\_  
as measured by \_\_\_\_\_

**How do we CLOSE THE GAP?**

**How do we support staff and  
monitor progress?**

## Background Information

Guiding Questions	Notes
What data are the district currently collecting related to behavior?	
What data are the district currently collecting related to academics?	
Has the district participated in Literacy Training specific to the Science of Reading?	
Does the district currently implement a tiered intervention support system for academics and/or behavior?	
Describe the district's current efforts around family and community engagement.	
What other considerations are important as the district plans for DCI-MTSS implementation?	

## Where is the District Going?

Guiding Questions	Notes

## Where is the District Now?

Guiding Questions	Notes
Assessment Planning	
Required Data Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy Universal Screening K-3</li> <li>• Literacy Universal Screening 3-5</li> <li>• Literacy Universal Screening 6-8</li> <li>• SAS</li> <li>• Tier 1 TFI</li> <li>• DSFI: Executive Function</li> <li>• ODRs</li> </ul>	
Data Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does the data tell us?</li> <li>• How many students fall into Tiers 1, 2, and 3 for literacy?</li> <li>• How many students fall into Tiers 1, 2, and 3 for behavior?</li> <li>• What does the staff perception data (CWIS and SAS) tell us about the needs and concerns of staff?</li> <li>• What do the DSFI, TFI, and DCI Implementation Survey tell us about our district systems?</li> </ul>	

## How does the District Close the Gap?

Guiding Questions	Notes
Selecting a Priority Focus	
Action Planning	



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