

A primary goal of the Illinois MTSS Network is to provide research-based professional learning and coaching to assist school districts in building educators' capacity and confidence in implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). The purpose of this guide is to share information about two common approaches to system-wide implementation of Tier 2: the *standard treatment protocol* approach and the *problem-solving* approach.

Definitions

The *standard treatment protocol* approach involves implementation of a select number of research-validated programs and/or strategies for students who require supplemental support. The *problem-solving approach* utilizes systematic steps to identify needs, develop plans, monitor, and evaluate plans for groups of students who require supplemental support.

Critical Difference

A critical difference is in the selection process for intervention programs and/or strategies. In the standard treatment protocol approach, districts consider several factors, such as the needs of their students, strengths and weaknesses of their core program, and evidence of effectiveness to pre-select a small number of intervention programs/strategies. In contrast, the problem-solving approach utilizes a systematic step-by-step process, including problem identification, problem analysis, plan development, and plan evaluation, to design, monitor, and evaluate interventions as problems arise.

Application

Some districts choose to implement a hybrid—a combination of problem-solving and standard protocol approaches. For example, districts may implement a standard protocol approach for Tier 2 and problem solving for students in Tier 3 who do not make adequate progress with standard protocol interventions that are implemented with fidelity.

It is important to consider the following factors when selecting or refining your approach to Tier 2 implementation:

- By pre-selecting a small number of Tier 2 interventions/strategies and providing quality professional learning opportunities, districts will increase the fidelity of implementation of targeted interventions/strategies.
- By providing staff with quality professional development and opportunities to engage in systematic problem solving, districts will increase the fidelity of the problem-solving process, a process that may be used to address a wide variety of challenges.
- For each approach (standard protocol, problem-solving, or a hybrid), districts need to consider the alignment of interventions/strategies to core, evidence of effectiveness, alignment of interventions/strategies to the needs of the students, cost, complexity, and other factors related to treatment acceptability.
- For each approach, districts need an efficient screening process to determine who might need Tier 2 support, a plan for monitoring progress for students receiving Tier 2 support, a plan for measuring the fidelity of Tier 2 interventions/strategies, clearly identified decision rules, and a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of Tier 2 interventions/strategies.

Guiding Questions

1. Given what you know about your students and resources, will a Standard Protocol, Problem Solving or Hybrid process be most effective in supporting all students? Consider the capacity of your system to support each option (time, space, personnel, knowledge, resources etc.).
2. What process will be used in selecting evidence-based interventions that align with the core and are appropriate for student needs?
3. How will data be used to identify students in need of support and ensure program effectiveness?

For more information:

- Vanderheyden, A., *Approaches to RtI*, www.rtinetwork.org/learn/what/approaches-to-rti
- Batsche, G. M., Elliott, J., Graden, J., Grimes, J., Kovalski, J. F., Prasse, D., Reschly, D. J., Schrag, J., & Tilly III, W. D. (2005). *Response to Intervention: Policy considerations and implementation*. Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Inc.
- *Guiding Tools for Instructional Problem Solving* (GTIPS), www.florida-rti.org/docs/gtips/pdf