

### **Defining Core**

Teams will need to take time to clearly define Core (Tier I) for academics and behavior/social-emotional skills. Many teams choose to undertake this through the lens of “Environment, Curriculum, Instruction and Data-Evaluation” across all content and grade levels. This level of specificity allows all stakeholders to know and understand the expectations for Core and monitor implementation. In order to begin with common understanding, the following are the MTSS definitions of these terms.

- **Environment**: The expectations for students and staff across the school and classroom settings. This includes climate, management, scheduling, and instructional grouping used to serve all students. In addition to behavioral expectations begin clearly defined across settings, the team should also define appropriate responses to problem behavior, standards for student engagement, the agreed upon acknowledgement system and other procedures used with all students.
- **Curriculum**: The materials, instructional programs, texts, lessons and mapping (for academics and behavior/social-emotional functioning) delivered to all students. These should be evidence-based, aligned with student needs, provide clear mapping towards meeting standards, take into account student skill deficits, and align with school resources. The chosen curriculum should be evaluated often for effectiveness but with a keen eye first on implementation fidelity. In other words, before abandoning a program, the team should ensure it was implemented as it was designed because this is a common cause of poor outcomes.
- **Instruction**: The practices used to deliver the curriculum (academics and behavior/social-emotional functioning) to all students. This should align with student need and resources, be evidence-based, include a variety of methods, and ensure cultural responsiveness.
- **Data-Evaluation**: A comprehensive Data-Evaluation plan for MTSS will include two broad types of data: 1) implementation measures and 2) student measures. Implementation measures are those pieces of data that examine the practices and programs being implemented across a district and building. In the simplest terms, they measure what the adults are doing. Examples of implementation measures could include adherence to the master schedule, instructional walk-throughs, program fidelity measures, and staff professional development/coaching attendance. Student measures within MTSS should fulfill the following purposes:
  - 1) inform instruction,
  - 2) identify students who are at risk,
  - 3) determine why students are at risk,
  - 4) monitor student progress and
  - 5) determine if we met outcomes.