OKLAHOMA TIERED INTERVENTION SYSTEM *of* SUPPORT

OTISS Implementation Guide
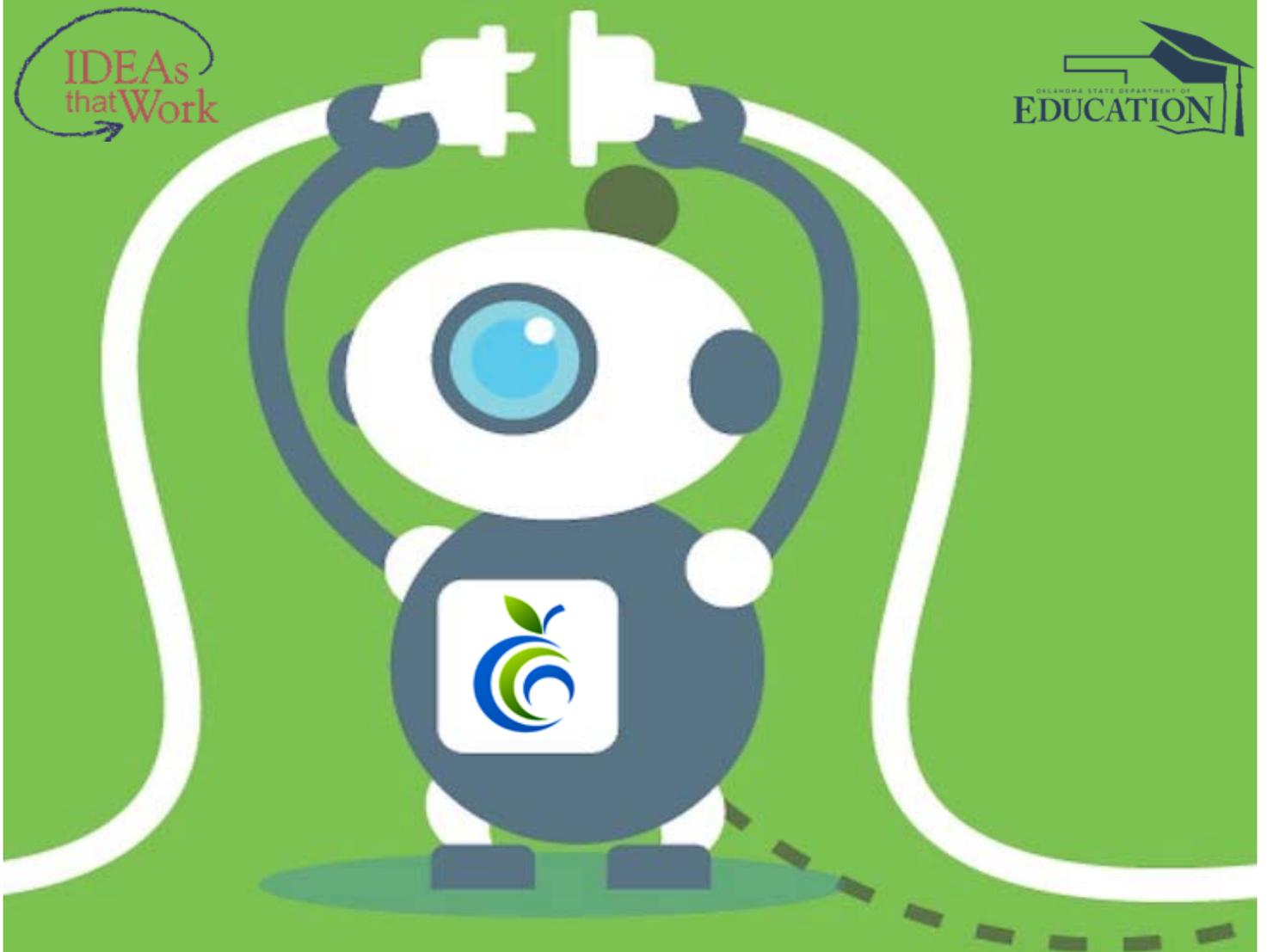
OKLAHOMA TIERED INTERVENTION SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

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INTRODUCTION

Oklahoma Tiered Intervention System of Support (OTISS) is Oklahoma's intervention model that allows educators to identify and address academic and behavioral difficulties that interfere with PreK-12 student success. More precisely, it is the blending of academic intervention models (i.e. Response to Intervention) and behavioral intervention models (i.e. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports). The primary goal is to improve student achievement using research based interventions matched to the instructional need and level of the student. Monitoring student response to a series of increasingly intense interventions assists in guiding instruction to ensure school success.

In our ever-changing society, it is imperative that schools recognize the challenges inherent in meeting the diverse needs of Oklahoma students. Academic, social, and behavioral expectations are rising and the reality is that many students will require additional services in order to meet these rising expectations. The rigorous framework for student success established through OTISS ensures students experiencing difficulties are provided timely and appropriate interventions. Schools that implement OTISS with fidelity will see improvements in school climate, instructional quality, and student outcomes.

This framework is the overarching structure that aligns all current initiatives and programs in a continuum of support. The Reading Sufficiency Act (RSA) and Oklahoma Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (OSRCL) grant are examples of programs that can effectively function within the OTISS framework. OTISS can be an effective tool for aligning a variety of efforts to support student academic and behavioral success.

The purpose of this guide is to provide information, guidance, and resources designed to support the implementation of the core components of the OTISS model. It is designed to assess readiness for implementation, establish priorities, develop a multi-year plan, implement the plan, monitor the plan, and evaluate implementation and student outcomes.

Successful OTISS implementation is built upon focused and collaborative leadership and practice among all educators. By combining resources, sharing knowledge, and determining the most effective utilization of staff and other available resources, effective practices can be developed for implementing the OTISS model.

The diversity across educational institutions will require the structuring of OTISS to meet the needs of each school's unique population, resources, and demands. Hence, OTISS may look different wherever it is implemented, but implementation should reflect a common set of core components implemented with fidelity.

Section

1

ESTABLISHING ORGANIZATIONAL AND STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS

O TISS implementation is a complex, multi-year system change process that requires the re-alignment and re-engineering of the institution's infrastructure. School curriculum, instructional practices, behavioral strategies, scheduling, use of data, professional development, staff and financial resources are among the areas affected by OTISS implementation. Implementing OTISS involves careful planning, implementation and continuous monitoring and evaluation.

To organize an effective OTISS model, several distinct areas must be carefully addressed, organized, and managed at the school level.

Administrative Commitment

Focused and purposeful commitment from administrators is essential for early intervention and prevention of academic and behavioral difficulties. Administration plays a strategic role in organizing the school-wide tiered delivery approach. Furthermore, the administration sets the tone for accepting change.

Administrative Components

- Articulating the OTISS framework to staff

- Coordinating OTISS activities, including the development of an administration schedule, securing classroom coverage for teachers if needed and communicating with parents

- Scheduling for instruction, intervention and teaming

- Coordinating and/or providing embedded staff professional development

- Developing a system for continuous monitoring of all levels of tiered instruction that ensures program fidelity and intervention integrity

- Understanding the data analysis component of OTISS and ensuring sound decision-making for all students

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> *"The administration sets the tone for accepting change."*

- Establishing a communication system that keeps parents informed of student progress and provides opportunities for parental involvement

- Ensure resources and policies are consistent with and supportive of OTISS implementation

OTISS cannot exist in isolation and requires the commitment and understanding of the entire staff. Administration from all levels should be involved in supporting and implementing OTISS, including but not limited to: superintendent, directors, principal/assistant principal and lead teachers, special education administrators, specialty support program personnel such as reading and math remediation, support personnel such as school psychologists, speech pathologists, school counselors, EL specialist, reading and math specialists, parents, as well as others non-certified personnel.

There are several other roles, essential to the success of OTISS, which must be filled by various personnel and explicitly assigned so that there is no confusion about roles. These roles must be performed by personnel with the skills necessary to accomplish the job duties. Examples of these job duties include maintaining a site data base of all OTISS related data and the current status of students within the process, identifying and managing intervention resource materials and organizing and maintaining school wide assessments and assessment data.

Change is a difficult process and there will be staff members who resist change. As the system begins to make the changes in this process, it is the job of administrators to point out the positive outcomes occurring and expected. Success sells! This is why the administration should share data with the staff on a frequent and consistent basis. Data can be shared on office discipline referrals, number of students in Tier II and Tier III interventions, and strategies in place to remediate the students who are struggling.

Coaching

"Coaching" is a term that has become common in recent years. While it's used often, people have differing interpretations of exactly what it means. A very basic definition of Coaching might look like this: Coaching is a collaborative, solution focused, result-orientated, systematic process in which a coach facilitates learning and performance improvement.

Within the context of OTISS, coaching has been specifically defined. OTISS Coaching is a developmental process/strategy through which members of the OTISS Team are supported to:

1. Learn about OTISS, its rationale, core components, and implementation strategies;

2. Identify the strengths and weaknesses in their current system for serving students at risk;

3. Develop goals and actions to remedy weaknesses;

4. Identify and build on the skills and capabilities that are within themselves, as well as the external resources that are available to them, to work more effectively to accomplish their goals;

5. Monitor progress towards achieving their goals; and

6. Serve as a communication/training link between the team and other school staff to build and sustain capacity to implement the OTISS model with fidelity.

Coaching in OTISS is carried out by designated OTISS Coaches, either at the district or site level, or both, who are key members of an OTISS Team and the leaders of team efforts. OTISS Coaches need the following knowledge and skills to be most effective at performing their role:

1. Ability to establish and maintain positive relationships

2. Ability to work effectively in groups and facilitate team meetings/processes

3. Knowledge of the essential features of a tiered intervention system of supports

4. Ability to facilitate self-assessments, monitoring tools, and data collection processes

5. Ability to provide technical assistance and professional development to team members and faculty regarding the implementation of the OTISS model

Effective coaching can build the capacity of a site or district to develop, nurture, and sustain the systemic conditions necessary to establish and maintain the OTISS model.

Team Approach

The purpose of the team within the OTISS model is to guide implementation and assist in making decisions. Decisions important to the functioning of the OTISS model must be made regarding many aspects of OTISS implementation such as the structure and allocation of resources, the organization of personnel, and the evaluation of assessment data at many levels. Because these decisions are broad ranging and impact the entire system, teams representing the various stakeholders at each level within the system should be created to assist in these decision making activities. A benefit of the team approach is that when decisions are made, expertise from different areas can be employed, which in turn will result in better decision making and increased buy-in from all personnel.

Number of Teams

The OTISS model requires that decisions occur at various levels of the school structure (i.e. district level, school level, grade level, class level and student level). Therefore, it will be necessary to create more than one team to manage the OTISS process. The number of teams will be based on the size of the system, the resources of the system and the availability of personnel within the system. Larger systems will necessarily require more teams, thereby spreading the workload across multiple teams and personnel. Smaller districts may have personnel that serve on multiple committees in which the same group of school based personnel will function as the district committee or the school committee depending upon the task at hand. Regardless of the size of the district, decisions will need to be made at the various levels of school structure described above and the membership of teams at each level should consist of personnel with the ability to make decisions and change at those levels. For example, personnel serving on a district level committee must be able to

"The team is responsible for making decisions based upon data collected at various levels."

make decisions regarding district level implementation of all aspects of OTISS (i.e. curriculum director, assistant superintendent). If the committee must get permission to make decisions, then they are not truly making the decisions and will be hindered in their ability to function.

Team Membership

Teams should be made up of various personnel, as well as a parent representative and possibly a student representative. The goal of team formation is to identify personnel who have various expertise and represent different roles or disciplines to ensure a well-informed collective. Typically, these teams have representatives from general education, special education, administration, and specialist areas such as School Counseling, School Psychology, Speech Pathology, Reading, and Math. In addition the teams can solicit assistance from other fields (social work, medicine, etc.) when information is presented that is beyond the expertise of the team.

Roles & Responsibilities of the Team

Various activities must be accomplished within the OTISS team meeting. Below is a list of jobs related to the efficient operation of the team. It is possible that one person may assume the responsibilities of more than one role or that responsibilities may be shared between one or more team members; however, it is crucial that these responsibilities are explicitly assigned to specific team members.

SCHEDULER:

Handles the logistics of OTISS Team meetings, including scheduling meetings, reserving a meeting location, arranging coverage when necessary to allow team members to attend meetings, and notifying/reminding team members and teachers of scheduled meetings.

COACH (ES):

As the coaching role consists of many important responsibilities, some sites may distribute these duties between two staff members with each coach's responsibilities clearly defined.

Facilitates the conduct of team meetings (e.g., develops meeting agendas, presides at meetings, discourages side-bar conversations, reminds team members to focus their problem-solving discussion on those factors over which they have control--e.g., classroom instruction).

- Assists team to complete pre and post OTISS Assessment tools.
- Assists team to develop and prioritize goals.
- Assists team to develop and monitor Action Plans.
- Guides the team through the stages of the problem-solving process.
- Checks for agreement between team members at important discussion points during meetings.

Site based coaches will also meet with the teacher(s) of students receiving interventions to refine problem identification decide what additional data should be collected for the student, and check that the intervention plan is running smoothly.

TIME-KEEPER:
Monitors the time allocated to each stage of the meeting and informs members when that time has expired.
RECORDER:
Creates a record of all team meetings, including personnel in attendance, details regarding implementation of the model, targeted concerns for students, interventions implemented, progress-monitoring plan, responsible parties, and decisions made regarding tiered status. Asks the OTISS Team for clarification as needed about key discussion points, including phrasing of teacher 'problem-identification' statements and intervention descriptions.

Team Decision Making

The team is responsible for making decisions based upon data collected at various levels. When decisions are made they are based on all the objective data available. In other words, decisions are not based on beliefs, feelings, or desires of team members, but on reliable and valid data generated from the OTISS process. Decisions should reflect the consensus of the team and when a consensus cannot be obtained a majority should be sought. Typically, when decisions are difficult it is likely that sufficient data are not present to make an informed decision. Essentially, when decisions are difficult the team should request more data before a final decision is made.

Develop a Problem Solving Approach

OTISS serves as a framework for the types of services offered at different levels of student need. How individual problems are defined and matched to specific evidence-based interventions within OTISS is termed problem-solving. Problem-solving is an inductive, consultative methodology that focuses on precisely identifying and altering observable, measurable student behaviors (Bergan & Kratochwill, 1990).

The purpose of the problem-solving model is to minimize problem admiration and emphasize problem solutions. Problem admiration is defined as using labels or broad problem descriptions to excuse student performance or lower standards for a student. In contrast, the problem-solving model states all problems are specific deficits between the student's current performance and the expected performance. To engage in problem-solving, one needs a measure of both the student performance and the expectations within the setting they are expected to perform. The goal of problem-solving is to bridge the gap between these two domains. In this fashion, the concern has been framed as a person-environment discrepancy, where the purpose of consultation is to best prevent deficits and/or inform remediation through effective instruction (Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003).

The problem-solving model is commonly broken down into five steps:

- Problem Identification,

- Problem Analysis,

- Plan Development,

- Plan Implementation, and

- Problem Evaluation.

Steps of Problem Solving

1. Problem Identification

2. Problem Analysis

5. Plan Evaluation

3. Plan Development

4. Plan Implementation
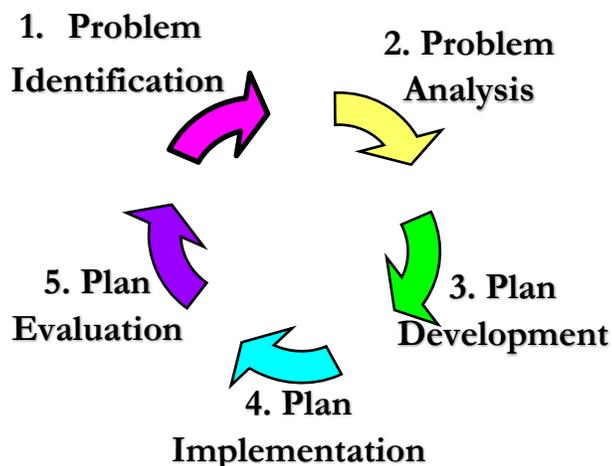
In Problem Identification, a problem is reported and consultation is used to narrow the problem down to highly specific, observable, student behaviors. Problem-Analysis is where the problem is verified, baseline performance established, and a tentative intervention recommended. In Plan Development, the results of the Problem-Analysis inform the selection of an evidenced based intervention matched to the problem. Plan Implementation is where the intervention begins, with a particular focus paid to whether the plan is implemented as the team had recommended it should be (i.e., intervention fidelity). Finally, in Problem Evaluation, the team convenes to determine whether the criterion for success has been met. If it hasn't, the team returns to problem identification. Using this model, the team can definitively state whether a student has responded to an appropriate intervention and confidently recommend next steps.

Resources

OTISS is a collaborative, resource allocation process that will require significant shifting in resource (general, special, remedial) utilization, but should not require additional resources. Some costs in professional development and intervention programs may be incurred as they would in any implementation effort. The identification of separate OTISS teachers, classrooms, etc. is counterproductive to the collaborative nature of OTISS.

Funding Sources

IDEA
Coordinated Early Intervening Services. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) allows a district to use up to 15% of the amount it receives under IDEA Part B for any

fiscal year, in combination with other funds, to develop and implement coordinated, early intervening services for students in K-12. A particular focus is placed on students in grades K-3 who have not been identified as needing special education but who need extra academic and/or behavioral support to succeed in the general education classroom. Accordingly, a district may choose to support a scientific, research-based model for early literacy intervention and prevention components such as staffing, substitutes, materials/equipment and other related expenditures. See 34 CFR § 300.226 Early Intervening Services [IDEA 2004 §613(a)(2)(C)].

Title IA
According to the purpose of a school-wide program, Title I, Part A funds, as well as other Federal, State, and local funds, may be used to upgrade the "educational program" of the school. [Section 1114(a)(1)]. Schools eligible for funding under Title I, Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged, of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) 2015, may choose to budget their funds for academic interventions if needs, based on student data, indicate it would be appropriate. Schools that implement a school-wide Title I program are required to conduct a thorough needs analysis of student data, determine needs, and develop goals, objectives and action steps aligned with their needs.

Title IA & Title IIA
The most important aspect of school improvement is the inclusion of sustained, scientific research-based professional development designed to address specific student needs. Accordingly, targeted assistance Title I schools, too, can include in their plans, sustained, scientific research-based professional development designed to meet the needs of targeted students.

Title IA & Title IIA funding can be used for expenditures such as:

- Professional development (consultants who provide support to schools)
- Substitutes for teachers to attend professional development.
- Stipends for teachers to attend professional development during off contract hours.
- Title IA funding can be used for expenditures such as
  - Interventionist to assist struggling students.
  - Supplemental curriculum/software.

For more information regarding allowable expenditures for Title IA & IIA funds, consult the district federal programs coordinator or contact Title I, II, III, IV and V offices at the Oklahoma State Department of Education (405) 521-2846.

Resource Allocation

Staffing
The OTISS framework, by design, promotes shared ownership of student learning across staff and programs. Previously siloed services provided by general education, special education, Title I, English Learner [EL], Migrant, and paraprofessional staff are now aligned as all staff assumes an active role in each level of tiered instruction.

Restructuring how and when staff is assigned, changing teachers' schedules and the nature of their work and approaching instruction as a school-wide responsibility may present some challenges that must be

addressed. Open communication, comprehensive planning, involving personnel in decision making and checking for understanding throughout the first several months of implementation are essential for success.

Scheduling

Scheduling is an essential component for the implementation of a successful OTISS process and should address aspects of all tiers. Examples of scheduling considerations are:

- **Core instructional blocks**, where the majority of Tier I activities occur, should be scheduled so that they are distributed throughout the instructional day and by grade level to ensure maximum utilization of all instructional personnel. For example, all first graders receive reading instruction during the same time, allowing for support services to focus on this grade during that period of time.

- **Common planning times** are also encouraged for schools with multiple classes across each grade level to allow for more efficient collaboration between professionals. For example, this allows grade level teachers to reteach behavioral expectations as needs arise, based on school-wide data generated from an informational system such as School-wide Informational System (SWIS). If data show an increase in third grade inappropriate behaviors on the playground for the previous week, the school's third grade team would focus their team time to plan for re-teaching appropriate behavior on the playground. For examples see "Scheduling Considerations for RTI at the Elementary Level" (http://www.rtinetwork.org/rti-blog/entry/1/99).

- **Scheduling personnel** is also important to match resources to need. Tier II and Tier III activities should be scheduled taking into account the number of students an interventionist can effectively support. It is a good idea to review, in early spring, estimates of the number of students who will require Tier II and Tier III intervention upon return in the fall in order to adequately allocate the appropriate resources.

Other Sources of Support

Districts as well as individual schools have benefactors who are interested in supporting the success of students. Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Chamber of Commerce, and other community based entities could assist with fund raising for printing, professional development, and other minor expenses associated with OTISS. Local businesses are also resources for funds which could be allocated for OTISS purposes.

Donors Choose: www.donorschoose.org is an organization which will fund school projects through crowdsourcing philanthropists. Additionally, direct sources of funding can be obtained through corporate sponsors such as Sonic and Walmart.

- Sonic Limeades for Learning: https://www.limeadesforlearning.com/

- Wal-Mart Community Grant: http://giving.walmart.com/apply-for-grants/local-giving

ASSESSING READINESS

I t is essential that readiness be assessed when beginning to implement the Oklahoma Tiered Intervention System of Support (OTISS) using a deliberate and systemic process. Collecting good assessment data is key. School curriculum, instructional practices, behavioral strategies, scheduling, use of data, professional development, staff and financial resources are among the areas affected by OTISS implementation. The process of implementing OTISS involves comprehensive self-assessment, careful planning, systematic implementation and continuous monitoring and evaluation.

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District Capacity Assessment

Before districts can move forward in initial implementation of OTISS the proper infrastructure must be in place to support all the activities necessary for effective school based implementation. The district's role in supporting OTISS, at the site based level, is to provide the necessary resources for implementation, to ensure district policy supports implementation, and to identify and provide the professional development needed by staff for effective implementation. The District Capacity Assessment (DCA) is designed to evaluate current district practice with regard to five key areas of district support most associated with the district's role in OTISS. The five key areas are Leadership and Teaming, Structure, Data-Based Decision Making, Communication, and Professional Development.

"Collecting good assessment data is key."

OTISS Fidelity Assessment

The first step in the process of school based implementation will be for the OTISS team to evaluate their site's current functioning relative to the eight core components of the model using the OTISS Fidelity Assessment. Once completed, the results of the assessment will be reviewed and a list of areas of implementation weaknesses will be generated. This list will be used to guide further examination and ultimately will become the foundation of the prioritized areas of need developed for the site. The team will confer with other site and district staff and review all related district and/or site materials and products to more clearly define the areas of need. Once these areas of need have been agreed upon, they will serve as target areas for goal development for the remainder of the academic year.

Action Steps:

- **Complete the OTISS District Capacity Assessment**

- **Complete the OTISS Fidelity Assessment**

PLANNING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

When planning for implementation, it is important to apply a structure to guide the process. This guide contains several tools constructed to assist leadership in creating a list of priorities, developing a multi-year implementation plan, and building action plans for the purpose of structuring activities which will assist in the development of an OTISS model implemented with a high degree of fidelity.

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When implementing OTISS, it is most efficient to begin at the broadest, Tier I level. Tier I assessment, intervention and decision making activities should be planned, implemented and evaluated prior to initiating activities associated with more focused tiers. **If Tier II or Tier III implementation activities begin prior to having Tier I firmly in place, resources will not be effectively utilized, resulting in reduced student outcomes.**

Establishing and Prioritizing Goals

Once the areas of need are identified through the completion of the OTISS District Capacity Assessment and the OTISS Fidelity Assessment, goals for improving each area of need should be established and documented on the Goal Development and Prioritization Worksheet. This should be completed both at the district level and the site level and care should be taken to ensure alignment across priorities. These goals will consist of performance indices, which, if accomplished, will indicate an area of proficiency as opposed to an area of need. All questions that were responded to with a rating of 0, 1, or 2 are considered areas of weakness and will become the foundation for the development of site goals. Teams should review these areas and develop goals to address each area of weakness.

> *"It is essential that goals be well developed and objectively written."*

It is essential that goals be well developed and objectively written. Keep in mind that effective goals are action oriented, clear (who, what, where, by when), and are related directly to the problem. Goals will be developed that meet the criterion of being SMART goals:

OTISS SMART Goals:		
S	Specific	• Are focused on specific weak areas identified on the OTISS Fidelity Assessment. • Answer the questions: What will change? or Who will change?
M	Measurable/ Results- Based	• Are stated in observable/measurable terms. • Describe the level of expected behavior/performance in concrete terms. • Answer the questions: How will we know this change (and the level-amount of change expected) has occurred? What evidence confirms it has occurred
A	Achievable	• Can realistically be accomplished with the resources (financial, personnel, etc.) and the amount of time available. • Answer the question: Can this change actually be accomplished?
R	Relevant	• Align with the district/site's overall goals for its students <u>and</u> the OTISS Framework. • Answer the question: Does this change mesh with our district/site vision for students?
T	Time-bound	• Clearly define target date for completion. • Answer the question: When will this change be accomplished?

For example, if the area of need is the absence of sufficient screening data in math and writing, then an appropriate SMART performance goal may be to identify assessment tools, train teachers, conduct assessment, summarize and evaluate math and writing screening three times per year by the end of the current academic year. Each identified area of need will be accompanied by a corresponding SMART performance goal. These goals will be created through a collaborative effort between the Coach, the core members of the site based OTISS team, and district administrator(s).

Once the goals are established a prioritized list will be created to guide the development of the action plans. The prioritized list will be created by core members of the site based OTISS team in collaboration with the Coach. When developing the prioritized list of needs the team will be guided by four aspects of system change:

- **Breadth of impact:** the degree of influence a change has on the system in which it is made. Priority will be given to goals that have large breadth of impact.

- **Ease of change:** the time and resources required to enact a change. Consider utilizing momentum and building on success by starting with goals that will be easily accomplished. Do not try to achieve goals that are exceptionally difficult to accomplish or require resources that cannot be accessed.

- **Efficient use of resources:** changes that improve the efficiency with which currently available resources are employed. Priority will be given to goals that have a positive effect on the use of resources.

- **Likelihood of success:** the probability that the goal is accomplishable under the current conditions in a reasonable time frame. Goals that have a higher likelihood of success will be prioritized above goals with a smaller probability of success given the current status of the site based system.

ACTION STEP: COMPLETE THE GOAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRIORITIZATION WORKSHEET

Developing a Multi-year Implementation Plan

Following the completion of the OTISS Goal Development Prioritization Worksheet, the OTISS Team will use these identified goals to develop a three to five year implementation plan. As implementation of OTISS is a broad reaching and complicated process, it is likely that there will be more goals identified than can be accomplished in a one year period. If this is the case once all the goals are prioritized they should be sequenced across multiple years. To accomplish this, the Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP) should be completed. This form is designed to create a three to five year timeline for addressing all goals as you move to full implementation. Completing this form will allow users to map out their efforts for the next few years and can be revisited intermittently to revise as goals are met or modified. The team will determine the specific year in which each goal will be addressed and write the goal in the appropriate year. The goals should follow the prioritization; however, it is possible that some goals may be addressed out of sequence if logistics and/or resources make that the most reasonable course of action.

> *"…it is likely that there will be more goals identified than can be accomplished in a one year period."*

ACTION STEP: COMPLETE THE MULTI-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Developing Annual Action Plans

Action Plans are developed by the OTISS team to provide structure for creating the detailed actions necessary to achieve the goal. **An Action Plan should be developed both at the district level (District Action Plan) and the site level (Site Action Plan) for each of the goals targeted for the current year**. Each Action Plan will specify:

- The goal to be addressed
- Each step in achieving that goal
- Party(ies) responsible for completing these actions
- Timeframe showing when each step is to be initiated and completed
- Barriers that may need to be addressed for each step
- Resources available or needed to accomplish each step
- Evidence that each step has been accomplished

ACTION STEP: COMPLETE A DISTRICT ACTION PLAN AND SITE ACTION PLAN FOR EACH GOAL

IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING OTISS

Using Action Plans to Guide Implementation

Action Plans are the building blocks for full implementation of the OTISS model. Every month the OTISS team should review their Action Plans to determine how many of the steps designed to achieve their goals have been accomplished and if any modifications need to be made. It is normal to find that some steps may need to be revised, some may need to be added, or some may need to be dropped over the course of a year. It is also normal to find that some goals may need to be modified and occasionally new goals may be added or moved up in the sequence of the Multi-Year Implementation Plan. As each Action Plan is accomplished, the team moves closer to its goal of full implementation of the OTISS model.

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ACTION STEP: REVIEW ACTION PLANS MONTHLY

Using the Goal Attainment Form to Gage Progress Toward Attainment of Goals

As a method of formative assessment, the OTISS team should complete a Goal Attainment Form based on their updated Action Plan each month. The purpose of the Goal Attainment Form is to track progress on goals described in the Action Plans by measuring the percentage of action steps completed each month for each goal, and summarizing the attainment of all goals. It also provides the opportunity to reflect on progress to date and make plans for the future.

"A graph … can be a helpful visual tool in determining if goal attainment is on track."

If progress on achieving goals is adequate (high percentage of action steps/goals accomplished), the team should note what supports are currently in place to sustain progress (i.e. ongoing training, coaching, data systems, facilitative administration, regular OTISS teams meetings). If progress is not adequate (percentage of action steps/goals achieved is low), the team should examine what barriers or challenges are impeding

achievement and make plans to remedy deficiencies. This progress monitoring of the implementation process is essential for making data based modifications to the Action Plans.

After examining action steps and goal achievement using the Goal Attainment Form, a graph that illustrates performance on the defined goals against an aim line can be a helpful visual tool in determining if goal attainment is on track.

ACTION STEP: COMPLETE A GOAL ATTAINMENT FORM

Using the Fidelity Assessment to Evaluate a Site's Level of Implementation of the OTISS Model

Midway through the school year and again at the end of the school year, the OTISS Fidelity Assessment should be conducted to monitor the progress of the site in implementing the OTISS model. This assessment is designed to objectively identify at what stage of implementation of the model the site is currently functioning.

The midyear administration of the fidelity assessment is usually conducted by the OTISS team. While the end-of-the-school-year administration can also be completed by the OTISS team, a more impartial evaluation may result if it is conducted by someone knowledgeable of the OTISS model but not connected to the site.

The results of the mid-year OTISS Fidelity Assessment provide an opportunity for the OTISS team to make modifications, if needed, to their goals and/or timeframe, while still having several months to work on their plans. The results of the end-of-year administration provide a summative indication of the extent to which the site has remedied the weaknesses identified at the beginning of the year and what stage of implementation has been achieved.

ACTION STEP: COMPLETE A MID-YEAR AND AN END-OF-YEAR FIDELITY ASSESSMENT

UNDERSTANDING THE OTISS FRAMEWORK

T he Oklahoma Tiered Intervention System of Support (OTISS) approach incorporates a multi-tiered system of service delivery in which each tier represents an increasingly intense level of service. Students move fluidly from tier to tier. The multi-tiered concept aligns all available resources to support and address students' needs regardless of their eligibility for other services (e.g. Title IA, Title IIA, and Title III). It is important to note that OTISS is not a Special Education referral or placement model; rather, OTISS is a flexible service delivery model designed to increase academic and behavioral performance in the areas of need for each student.

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📖 Definitions

Oklahoma has defined its OTISS framework around the following eight major core components:

- Leadership

- Teaming

- Family Engagement

- Professional Development

- Universal Screening/Benchmarking

- Tiered Levels of Interventions

- Progress Monitoring

- Decision Making

These components are essential for ensuring high levels of fidelity.

Component 1 – Leadership

Leadership is important with regard to allocating time and resources, putting the right people in the right role to improve success for students, and ensuring personnel have the skills necessary to implement the model. To ensure the success of OTISS, good leadership:

- Ensures that time, resources, personnel, and training are allocated appropriately.

- Provides adequate to conduct assessments, review data, provide interventions, and make decisions about student response. Site administrators are also responsible for ensuring that time is available for teachers and support personnel to accomplish these goals.

- Identifies and allocates physical resources, such as materials and programs, necessary to implement this model.

- Makes personnel decisions regarding the assignment of various roles and responsibilities within OTISS.

- Identifies the professional development needs and ensuring that the training required to fully implement OTISS is provided to personnel.

- Ensures policy is consistent with OTISS implementation.

Component 2 – Teaming

Teaming is also a crucial aspect of OTISS. There can be two types of teams involved in implementing this model: District Level Teams and School Based Teams. If a district decides to implement OTISS district wide, it will have both a district level team and individual school based teams; however, districts in the initial stages of OTISS implementation may begin at one or more schools and as a result may only have school based teams.

District teams are composed of administrators and other district and community representatives such as the superintendent, curriculum specialists/coordinators, the special education director, site based administration representatives, and parents. This team makes decisions concerning district policy and procedures regarding OTISS and the coordination of all instructional programs and resources as they function within this model. District level teams generally meet quarterly to review policies and procedures as well as make decisions regarding district wide data.

School based teams are composed of various site based personnel (teachers, administrators, reading and math specialists, school counselors, speech pathologists, school psychologists, etc.). School based teams make decisions regarding the implementation of OTISS at their school site. School based teams generally meet twice a month to review data in order to make decisions regarding school wide, as well as individual student academic and behavioral concerns.

Teaming requires communication and collaboration. Sufficient time must be allocated for teams to meet and discuss implementation and students concerns, and arrive at solutions. Effective teams also reduce the likelihood that decisions will be made in isolation or by only a few individuals. The systematic process of reviewing data and making decisions should occur within the team structure and be transparent to all key stakeholders impacted by the decisions.

Component 3 – Family Engagement

Parent involvement in an OTISS model, or any service delivery system, should be characterized by consistent, organized, and meaningful two-way communication between school staff and parents with regard to student progress and related school activities. (Responsiveness to Intervention: How to Do It, 2006)

Parent involvement in any process affecting student performance is not only best practice, but also a requirement under No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA 2004). Educators need to inform parents about the OTISS process and the associated assessments.

Individual benchmark assessment results should be communicated to parents. Ideally, all parents should receive a written summary of their students' scores after each school-wide screening. A description of each indicator administered and the strategies recommended for the home setting should be included.

Parent-teacher conferences provide educators an opportunity to further explain OTISS components, goals, and individual student results. Conferences, allow parents to ask questions about their child's development and improvement. In some cases, parents are unsure of the important questions to ask regarding their child's academic progress or they are unfamiliar with the terminology used by educators to describe student progress.

Parent involvement is important for all students. However, parents of at-risk students must become the informed consumers of assessment results and the OTISS service delivery system to advocate for their child's school success. Parents of at-risk students will require knowledge and understanding of their child's specific academic or behavioral difficulties and the desired outcomes. Teachers should share progress monitoring data with the parents of at-risk students. A district policy should be established that creates a uniform procedure for dissemination of progress monitoring data. This policy determines what and when information is shared with parents. It is recommended that Tier II data be shared with parents but is required at Tier III.

To better serve diverse parent needs, progress monitoring data should be shared in multiple formats. Visual inspection of graphed data and a brief, narrative summary (in their native language) are both appropriate, as are direct conferences where parents receive information verbally.

Individual districts make policies regarding procedures for informing parents. As a general rule, activities that are considered typical remediation require notification while activities that may lead to decisions about Special Education eligibility require informed consent. It is also important to note that if the OTISS process is used as part or all of the Special Education evaluation process, the parents have the right to request and inspect the data. It is important that data be maintained for future examination.

Involving parents in the OTISS process has many benefits. Although teachers have valuable knowledge regarding learning and behavior appropriate for the child's age and grade level, the parents have more complete knowledge about their individual child. The knowledge and expectations from each viewpoint must be valued. A positive partnership between the family and the school will ensure children are learning to the best of their ability and feel safe and supported. Parents will be well informed and involved in making decisions that affect their child's school experience. Research has proven that when parents and teachers work together to help students learn and feel successful, everyone benefits (Jeynes, 2012).

Component 4 – Professional Development

Professional development is a critical component to establishing an effective Three-Tier Model. The knowledge and skills of all educators must lead to higher student achievement. Researchers have stated that in order for a school to change and make substantial improvement, there must be a critical mass of 50-75% of teachers implementing new and better practices. The reality is to reach all students, all teachers must systemically apply research-based practices.

Areas of Professional Development Need

Targeted, ongoing, job embedded professional development and technical assistance is required to develop and sustain the skills of the school community to improve student outcomes. Data identifying the instructional needs of students and the specific needs of teachers and other school staff are used to design and implement professional development. Professional development should produce staff competencies in the areas of:

- Effective instruction: design and delivery; principles of differentiation; universal design for learning
- Reading and math core instruction
- Formative assessment and progress monitoring
- Parent engagement
- School-wide behavior support
- Standard protocol interventions
- Data analysis teaming
- Universal screening
- Classroom behavior management
- Function based intervention

Professional Development Plan

The development of teacher knowledge and skill will take a consistent and persistent effort over several years; therefore, the planning process should be a thoughtful and intentional one. Long-range planning for professional development takes time, so enough time should be allotted for the process. Planners should be aware of budget and time constraints that affect the scheduling of professional development activities. They should also know who holds the final approval for critical decisions. For sustainability, the plan must incorporate and cultivate the commitment of key supporters and must build a system that inspires trust.

A professional development plan will be focused on the greatest area(s) of teacher and student need and will contain a wide-range of delivery models including traditional workshops, book studies, instructional, and grade-level team meetings. The following suggestions for professional development plans present some important considerations:

- Focus on one or two topics for professional development per year.
    - Connect all sessions to these topics.
    - Provide follow-up sessions.
- Start with the area of greatest need as derived from the OTISS Fidelity Assessment data.
- Provide a variety of professional development activities for teachers.
- Decide the number of professional development hours necessary for effective goal attainment and space the hours over the course of the school year.
- Consider hours of training based on time of day or time of year. Research suggest:
    - Conduct no more than one-hour sessions after school.

- o   Plan no more than one week during summer.
- Deliver all scheduled school professional development/trainings to all staff.
- Plan for ample classroom-based practice with feedback and reflection.
- Administrator should provide fidelity checks for implementation

Professional Development Approach

Scaffolding or supporting new content and instructional strategies for teachers can be facilitated by careful planning of professional development. Teachers and administrators, as they gain new knowledge, progress from a beginning, or awareness stage, to partial implementation to full implementation and, finally, to maintenance or an institutionalization of new behaviors. Activities such as awareness level seminars, book studies or study groups, state or national conferences, graduate classes, or visiting model programs help the teacher who is just beginning to learn about a new topic or initiative. Increasingly, more sophisticated activities give teachers in-depth knowledge and classroom experience as they progress from tentative to confident implementation. The type of professional development discussed in this section provides intensive and wide-spread classroom support for teachers. Sustained help and reinforcement for classroom teachers related to the very basic issues of instructional change is necessary if staff development efforts are ever to lead to improved teacher practice and significant gains in student learning.

A professional development plan remains a living, relevant document only to the extent that first, the effects of the plan are monitored and evaluated, and second, the plan is revised and refined in response to what is discovered during monitoring and evaluation. Teachers monitor their own learning when they journal, map curriculum, build portfolios, conduct action research, participate in team meetings, discuss books, analyze student work with colleagues, and observe other classrooms. Administrators monitor learning through activities such as walk-throughs, which are quick, non-evaluative observations of teacher implementation of specific strategies. Information from all monitoring activities needs to be shared with teachers, as well as with school level and district administrators. Professional development plans should also include a multi-faceted evaluation component. The evaluation determines whether the goals targeted by the professional development have been achieved. Thomas Guskey in his book, Evaluating Professional Development (2000), suggests evaluating professional development by gathering and analyzing evidence of:

- Participants' reactions

- Participants' learning

- Organizational change and support

- Participants' use of new knowledge and skills

- Student learning outcomes

Ultimately the most meaningful and powerful professional development will occur when teachers assume a great part of the responsibility for their own learning and when they together focus their professional work and discussions on student work and the classroom practices that lead to improved results for all students.

Component 5 – Universal Screening/Benchmarking

Universal screening is the primary method for early identification of students at risk of academic or behavioral difficulties. All students are screened multiple times per year. Screening instruments should be research-based and must provide information on benchmark performance as well as typical student performance. Students not at benchmark for a particular skill, or in danger of not attaining the next benchmark, are provided further assessment and intervention. Screening instruments must be selected carefully and administered with fidelity. Results should be analyzed by classroom teachers and used to determine appropriate instructional groupings and to design appropriate instruction.

> *"Screening instruments must be selected carefully and administered with fidelity."*

Screening Tools

These tools provide initial data for identifying students' needs. They should be research-based, brief, and easily administered. Screening must be highly correlated to skills assessed and should have benchmarks that are predictive of future performance. Materials that are nationally normed with specific benchmarks and rates of progress are preferred over locally developed materials. These often have alternative forms for ongoing progress monitoring and will assist the OTISS team in determining which students need universal support, targeted group support, or intensive support.

- Universal Support: Approximately 80% of students will need only the structures and systems typically set in place within the school-wide system.

- Targeted Support: Approximately 15% of the students will require additional attention in academics and/or behavior; however, these students will not require intensive support.

- Intensive Support: Approximately 5% of students will intensive daily support in academics and/or behavior.

A database capable of generating easy to read reports based on results from the universal screener is available from many vendors or may be developed by the site or district prior to intervention. These reports make it easy to evaluate data categorized by grade and teacher for each assessment domain.

Administration

Screening measures must be administered efficiently, consistently, and with fidelity. It is imperative that, for screening to have true meaning, all staff administering and interpreting screening assessments be thoroughly trained. A range of strategies from classroom teachers screening their own classroom to a more varied administration with school based personnel completing assessments as groups may meet a school's needs.

These must be well planned as even the most subtle issue (who enters the data) may undermine the efficiency of the system.

Analysis

Results of screening are of little value unless a mechanism is in place that allows for analysis of screening results soon after administration. A method for evaluation of screening data should be decided upon and implemented at the broadest level first with subsequent analysis further narrowing the scope of view. In other words, teams should evaluate school-wide, grade level and classroom data prior to evaluating and addressing individual students for further assessment or intervention. The process of analysis of screening results will be discussed in the section entitled "Component 7 – Decision Making".

Once students are identified as at-risk, further diagnostic assessment to identify deficits may be necessary before interventions can begin.

Component 6 – Implementation of Interventions

The OTISS three tiered intervention framework provides quality core instruction to all students and appropriate intervention to students identified as in need of additional support.

Tier I: Core Instruction and Support for All Students:

Definition: Standards-aligned instruction and school-wide differentiated instruction are provided to all students through the general education core curriculum.

Tier I includes:

- High quality, effective differentiated instruction designed to engage and challenge students.

- Clear and high expectations for student learning and behavior.

- Effective support to enhance student engagement academically and behaviorally in the learning process and to promote school completion.

- Periodic progress monitoring benchmark assessments.

- Differentiation of instruction based on data analysis of progress monitoring results.

Tier II: Strategic Instruction for Some Students:

Definition: Academic and behavioral strategies, methodologies and practices designed for students who are not making expected progress in Tier I, the general education core curriculum, and those who are at risk for academic and/or behavioral failure. Students receive additional academic and behavioral support to successfully engage in the learning process and succeed in the general education core curriculum. It is stressed that these resources are in addition to core instruction.

Tier II includes:

- Quality core instruction with supplemental, small group instruction which may include specialized materials

- The use of Standard Protocol Interventions. (The Standard Protocol Intervention is an evidence-based intervention focused on a specific skill area which is matched to the student problem type, but typically not based on the function or reason for the deficit.)

- The use of specialists to assist with strategic instruction in the general education classroom and small group instruction, as needed

- A minimum of twice monthly progress monitoring

Tier III: Intensive Instruction for a Few Students:

Definition: Academic and behavioral strategies, methodologies, and practices designed for a few students who have received Tier II and are still below established grade-level benchmarks in the general education core curriculum or who demonstrate significant difficulties with behavioral and social competence. It is stressed that these resources are in addition to core instruction.

Tier III includes:

- Use of Standard Protocol Interventions

- Use of supplemental instructional materials for specific skill development

- Small, intensive, flexible groups

- Additional tutoring provided by specialists as part of the school day

- Minimum of weekly progress monitoring

- Instructional changes based on data-based decision making

Student access to tiered resources is driven by progress monitoring data. Students not responding to a present level of resources will receive more instructional resources. Responding is closing the gap between where the student is now and the benchmark.

It is imperative that intervention programs be delivered with fidelity. Staff must be trained in delivery and students must receive the time and intensity required by the intervention. The school must have a process in place to monitor and collect the data necessary to guide student movement through the tiers. Data review and collection is an ongoing process that occurs throughout the year.

Flexible grouping means that students are <u>temporarily</u> grouped for intensive work on a particular skill. When mastery of the skill is achieved, students no longer receive supplemental instruction and are moved to a different group for additional intervention in another skill area, if needed.

Common Models for Grouping:

Pull-out – supplemental interventions in a location other than the general classroom.

Push-in –instruction in small groups within the classroom.

Horizontal – instruction provided to students in same grade level grouped by need.

For example, two or more of the same grade-level classes can be divided into three groups. One or more teachers teach the enrichment lesson to the students who have mastered the core curriculum. An aide or teacher instructs students who need re-teaching and practice in specific targeted areas in order to master the core curriculum. The most skilled teacher or intervention specialist in the subject area teaches individual skills to students needing the most intensive instruction and support.

Students must be grouped for instruction based on skills targeted for intervention. Groupings may require frequent change and the optimal fit may not be discovered until the intervention instruction begins. It is also important to remember that children acquire missing skills at different rates. As new data are collected and analyzed, teachers must review current groups and make regrouping adjustments. Teacher information based on classroom performance, subsequent benchmark assessments, and progress monitoring scores, (including other formal and informal assessments), must be considered.

> *"Students must be grouped for instruction based on skills targeted for intervention."*

Component 7 – Progress Monitoring

Student progress must be monitored in an ongoing manner. Progress monitoring using alternate forms of screening assessments is conducted on a regular basis with students who are performing below benchmark and are receiving intervention instruction. Measures of progress monitoring evaluate growth on skills over time and are used to determine if the student is progressing adequately. These frequent assessments in the areas identified as deficient provide valuable information to teachers regarding the effectiveness of the interventions and allow them to adjust instruction to individual student needs.

In order to monitor progress appropriately, the correct progress monitoring techniques must be used. To accomplish this, it must be determined:

- What to monitor

- How progress will be measured

- Assessment materials needed

- Frequency of measurement

What to Monitor

If the targeted skill has been identified correctly, then determining what to progress monitor is simple; progress monitor the dimension of the skill targeted for intervention. In most cases what will be monitored will be the same skill and dimension receiving intervention. For instance, if educators are intervening on oral reading fluency, then they will progress monitor oral reading fluency. If educators are intervening on words spelled correctly on a spelling test, they will monitor the percent of words correct out of total words attempted.

In instances where it is difficult to identify what to progress monitor, it is likely the targeted skill is poorly defined and the identified skill should be revised.

How Progress will be Measured

Once it is determined what will be monitored, it must be determined how it will be measured. This is the actual physical process of collecting the assessment data. If oral reading fluency is being monitored, then educators will likely collect a timed reading of student performance; however, it must be determined if they will collect one measure or use the median of three readings to produce the progress monitor score. One reading takes less time than three, but is more susceptible to random variability than three measures. Another example of this issue would be progress monitoring reading comprehension. If the dimension to be measured will be accuracy of responses to comprehension questions, how many questions will be asked and what type of comprehension questions will be asked? Will five questions evaluating literal understanding be sufficient to produce a reliable and valid estimate of the student's skill set, or will ten or more questions combining both literal and inferencing questions be required? Again, more questions generally produce more reliable responses, but the cost benefit relationship must be evaluated.

Assessment Materials Needed

The materials used to conduct this assessment are also very important. The assessment materials must be at least comparable to the materials used in baseline, otherwise an adequate comparison cannot be made. Careful control over the difficulty level of the material is important. If the materials are of a different or inconsistent difficulty level across the progress monitor assessments then changes in performance may not be attributable to actual changes in student skill. Changes may only be due to fluctuations in difficulty level of the materials used.

Frequency of Measurement

Frequency of progress monitoring is also an important aspect of this process.

- **How often should this data be collected?** Is daily too much? Is monthly not enough? The answer to these questions will depend on the characteristics of the target concern and the intervention used.

- **How sensitive is the target to change?** Specifically, the sensitivity to change of the target behavior and the frequency and intensity of the intervention dictate the maximum frequency of progress monitoring. Skills that are very sensitive to change can be progress monitored more frequently than skills that are less sensitive. Math fluency is very sensitive to change and can be measured every few days; however, more complex skills like oral reading fluency are less sensitive to change and therefore less frequent measures are appropriate.

- **How intense is the intervention being implemented?** In addition to the characteristics of the target skill, the intervention used must also be taken into account. Frequent and intense interventions (i.e. Tier III interventions) will have a more rapid impact on performance. Therefore, measuring progress can occur more frequently. Less intense or less frequent interventions (i.e. Tier I interventions) will take longer to impact performance and measuring progress should occur less frequently.

At a minimum, Tier I interventions should be monitored <u>at least once every other week</u> and Tier II and Tier III interventions will necessarily be monitored more frequently.

Component 8 – Decision Making

An important hallmark of the OTISS model is the use of data to make decisions about students' need for intervention and their response to those interventions. The culmination of the fully functioning OTISS model is defensible decisions based on objective data generated from the essential components of assessment and intervention.

In the OTISS process, collaborative teams of educators and other designated personnel, address the needs of struggling students through a systematic procedure referred to as problem solving.

Problem solving incorporates data-based decision making to:

- Identify a population of at-risk students.

- Identify target skill(s) for intervention.

- Link targeted skills to specific interventions.

- Measure the progress in response to the intervention(s) (Progress Monitoring).

- Evaluate the response to the intervention(s).

> *"hallmark of the OTISS model… defensible decisions based on objective data."*

Identifying a Population of At-Risk Students

Prior to evaluating at-risk status, the designation of at-risk must be clearly defined. The two most commonly used approaches to identifying at-risk students are: targeting the lowest performers in a group or evaluating performance relative to a standard. Regardless of the approach, data chosen from the district screener must be systematically evaluated relative to the predetermined risk status criteria. This evaluation must also take place soon after the data are collected and should consider all variables potentially effecting student performance (curriculum, teacher, etc.).
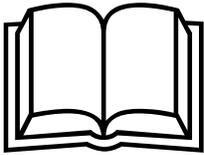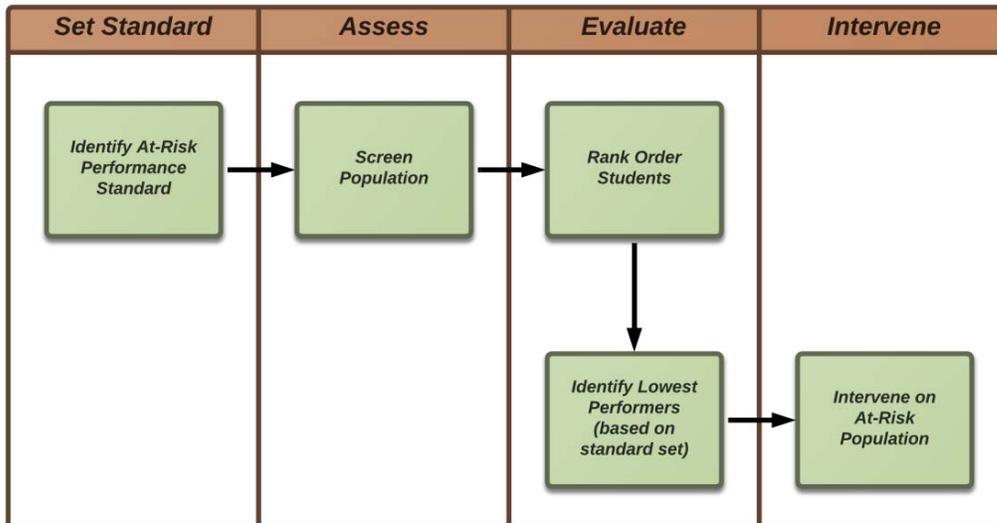
At-risk students are students whose current level of performance on a given skill indicates a high likelihood of failure in the future.

Targeting lowest performing in a group is accomplished by identifying the group to be evaluated (a single class or grade level), then identifying the lowest performing members of that group. When defining risk status through this method, student performance on the screener is ranked and the lowest performing students (bottom 10 or 15%) are categorized as at-risk students. The team must decide who makes up the comparison group. In other words, before we can determine the lowest performing 10% or 15%, we need to know if we are identifying the lowest performers in the class, the grade, or the grade across all schools in the district.

The benefit of this approach is the ease with which these at-risk students can be identified. It takes no special training to identify the lowest performing 10 or 15% of students in a group; however, the simplicity in this method may also result in gross over or under identification of students. For example, if screening results do not differentiate (all students perform poorly), then the bottom 15% of students may not be meaningfully different in their performance from the average student. Conversely, it is also possible that the bottom 15% of students is functioning in the normal range and should not be considered at-risk simply due to performance that is less than that of their above average peers.
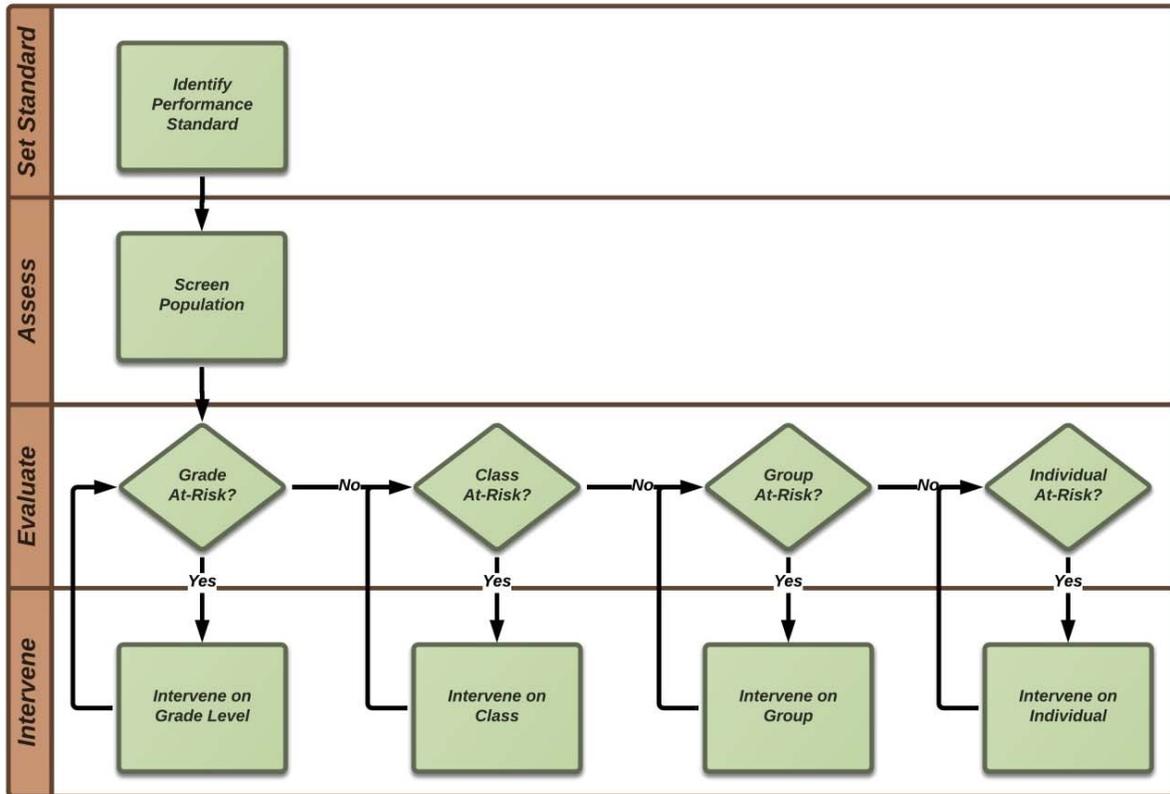
Targeting Lowest Performing Students

Set Standard	Assess	Evaluate	Intervene

Identify At-Risk Performance Standard → **Screen Population** → **Rank Order Students** → **Identify Lowest Performers (based on standard set)** → **Intervene on At-Risk Population**

Evaluating performance relative to a standard is accomplished by comparing student performance on the screener to a research-based or evidenced-based criterion level related to a meaningful performance outcome (i.e. a national norm or local norm). National comparisons determine risk status based on deviation from a comparative sample from across the nation (like Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills [DIBELS] or AIMSweb), while local comparisons determine risk status based on deviation from a comparative sample within the school or district. If the district is evaluating screening data against a benchmark or norm, then the evaluation should examine the data at its broadest level first and then systematically narrow the evaluation until an appropriate group of at-risk students is identified. If a large number of students are considered at-risk at the grade level, then the grade level itself should be considered at-risk and a more targeted analysis of the data is unnecessary. Likewise, if large numbers of students are at-risk at an individual classroom level, then the individual classroom should be considered at-risk. However, if only small numbers of students are at-risk in individual classrooms, then this smaller group of students should be considered individual at-risk students. By utilizing this procedure, educators will ensure interventions target at-risk students in the most efficient manner possible. Non-student based issues (poor curriculum, poor teaching) are also examined within this framework.

National comparisons have the benefit of evaluating performance against that of a larger sample, while the local norms make comparisons to the students who are receiving instruction under similar conditions. Evaluating performance relative to a standard has advantages over targeting the lowest performers in a group because of its potential correlation to important outcomes (such as Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test performance). However, one disadvantage is that these correlations take specific expertise to create and maintain. In addition, because at-risk status is based upon performance compared to an identified standard, it is more likely that the number or percentage of students identified as at-risk would be more accurate. Both approaches have benefits and drawbacks and a district must select the approach that provides the most accurate identification for their students.

Evaluating Screening Relative to a Standard

| Set Standard | Identify Performance Standard |
Assess	Screen Population
Evaluate	Grade At-Risk? → No → Class At-Risk? → No → Group At-Risk? → No → Individual At-Risk?
Intervene	Intervene on Grade Level / Intervene on Class / Intervene on Group / Intervene on Individual

Ultimately, in order to make equitable decisions for determining who is at-risk, a district **must have** specific criteria in place prior to evaluating screening data.

Identifying Target Skills for Intervention

Once an at-risk population is identified, the skill(s) which will be targeted for intervention must be identified and defined. Depending upon the scope of the identified at-risk population (grade level, class, etc.), educators may be attempting to define a problem that encompasses the entire grade level, an entire classroom, a small group of students, or an individual. *Regardless of the size of the at-risk population, the approach to identifying a target skill is the same.* Dealing with academic concerns typically involves deficits in academic production; therefore, defining the target skill(s) begins by asking a simple question: <u>What should the at-risk population be able to do that they are not currently doing?</u> In contrast, dealing with behavioral concerns may involve either deficits or excesses in performance. As a result, we must define the target relative to the direction of the desired behavioral change. The question to ask in regards to behavior is: <u>What</u> should the at-risk population stop doing and what is the replacement behavior? However, in order for this answer to assist in the later stages of intervention development, we will need to ensure that our answer to this question is **specific**, **measurable**, and **relevant**.

> *"...the skill(s) which will be targeted for intervention must be identified and defined."*
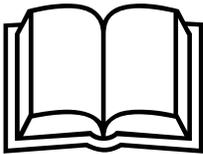
Academic or Behavioral Deficit: student does not perform the desired skill accurately, fluently or in the correct context.

Behavioral Excess: when a student engages in a behavior at inappropriate rates or at inappropriate times.

Targeting Specific Skills

The skills that are targeted must be specific skills. Target skills do not refer to general academic skills or student behaviors, but to narrow aspects within a broader general classification. For instance, poor *Number Sense* may be the general classification of the skill to be targeted, but number sense consists of multiple narrow or discrete skills, such as knowledge of place value and one to one correspondence, that combine to form this classification of *Number Sense*. Hence, stating that the at-risk population is having difficulty with *Number Sense* is not specific enough. A more appropriate target might be *Identifying Place Value to One Hundred*. Similarly, poor reading fluency may have initially identified the at-risk students as in need of assistance, but reading fluency may be a symptom of a more fundamental problem such as accurate decoding.

When target skills are sufficiently specific, they describe a singular skill that typically cannot be broken down into more discrete skills.

Targeting Measurable Skills

Targeted skills must also be measurable skills. A skill is measurable when the evaluation of performance consists only of the observable characteristics of the skill. This is not to say that less objective aspects of skill development are not important, but subjective evaluations are difficult to interpret when making decisions

about a student's response to the intervention(s). These objective characteristics may consist of aspects of performance such as rate or accuracy. For example, if the targeted skill is *Addition Sums to Nine*, then targeting accuracy or percent correct would be considered a measurable aspect of the skill. If the targeted skill is *reading speed*, then *fluency* or *words read correctly per minute* would be the measurable aspect. Aspects of skill development that do not lend themselves to objective measurement are things like self-confidence, attitude, or conceptual understanding. Although these aspects of a student's performance may be important, these constructs cannot be reliably defined or measured and should not be the target of intervention.

There should be a meaningful link between the skill targeted for intervention and the aspect of the skill identified to be measured.

Targeting Relevant Skills

Targeted skills are also relevant. Relevance is somewhat of a subjective concept, but refers to the importance of the skill for continued or enhanced success in the future. To state this more directly, if the deficit skill is improved, something important will also improve for the student. If a student has a deficit in oral reading fluency, then addressing the deficit should not only improve reading fluency, but positively impact accuracy of comprehension and make work completion easier for the student. However, if we improve a student's attitude toward reading there is no known relation to academic performance. In this case, oral reading fluency is a relevant skill and attitude toward reading is not.

Prioritizing Multiple Skills

All of these issues can be, and often are, complicated when the at-risk population exhibits more than one deficit skill area. In this case, determining the skill to target will follow the same course as with a single skill; however, prior to intervention, the target skills identified and defined will need to be prioritized to determine which skill or skills will be addressed first. When educators prioritize multiple target skills, the various problems are ranked from first (most important) to last (least important). The skill ranked first should be one that if improved will likely have the greatest impact on overall student performance. It is important to note that when multiple concerns are identified within the same domain (i.e. reading), it is typically best to only address one concern at a time. Addressing more than one concern within the same domain may result in overly complicated interventions attempts and may also confuse students.

Linking Targeted Skills to Specific Interventions

The goal of intervention is to identify or construct an evidenced/researched-based intervention designed specifically to impact the identified target skill. It is important to note that all interventions implemented within the OTISS model must be evidenced/researched based or contain these components. The link between the skill and intervention must not only be specific to the skill area (reading, math, etc.), but also to the particular aspect of the skill being targeted (fluency, accuracy, etc.). This link is essential to increase the likelihood of success. To accomplish this, one must be able to answer the question: <u>What aspect of the target skill is being addressed?</u> If the target skill has been identified correctly, this question is easily answered. If this question is not easily answered, then it is likely the targeted skill has not been adequately defined. Time should be taken to further clarify the target skill and more assessment data may need to be collected to ensure an appropriate target skill has been identified and defined in reference to the aspect addressed. Identifying

interventions is considered by many the most challenging aspect of a tiered intervention process. **When in doubt, it is almost always better to stop and gather more assessment data.**

Typically, students experiencing <u>academic concerns</u> demonstrate deficits related to one of three skill dimensions: **accuracy**, **fluency** and **generalization**.

- **Accuracy:** If the targeted skill is currently inaccurate, then interventions should focus on improving accuracy. An example of an intervention for improving accuracy would be one that incorporates the use of modeling and corrective feedback. These intervention components can be embedded in different ways based on the characteristics of the student, the teacher, and the resources available. However, the essential components targeting accuracy must be evident.

- **Fluency:** If the targeted skill is currently being performed accurately but too slowly (as defined by an objective criteria) then the intervention should focus on improving fluency. An intervention for improving fluency might incorporate the components of explicit timing, goal setting, and reward.

- **Generalization:** If the targeted skill is currently being performed accurately and fluently in one context, but not in another, the intervention should focus on improving generalization of skills. Intervention components designed to improve generalized responding might utilize intervention components of programming common stimuli and training multiple exemplars (see Stokes & Osnes, 1989 for a description of these generalization procedures).

Students who experience <u>behavioral concerns</u> may demonstrate deficits related to their academic success. In some cases their lack of success is impeded by behavioral concerns rather than true academic skill deficits. Behavioral concerns include two major components: **behavioral excesses** and **behavioral deficits**.

- **Behavioral excess:** A behavioral excess refers to behaviors occurring much more than is desired. Excesses can refer to desirable behaviors that occur too often (constant hand raising for no specific reason) or undesirable behaviors that occur even once (fighting).

- **Behavioral Deficit:** A behavioral deficit refers to situations where the student does not engage in a desired behavior such as not completing homework or classwork.

In addition to an appropriate link between the target skill and the intervention, the intervention must be accompanied by: **written intervention directions**, a **baseline**, and a **goal**.

- **Written directions:** a list of steps to be followed in order to correctly implement the intervention. Written steps increase the likelihood of implementation accuracy and provide a record of the component steps to ensure accountability for students.

- **Baseline:** performance on the targeted skill or present levels of performance prior to the initiation of the intervention. In order to evaluate the effect of the intervention in later stages of the OTISS process, it is important to have a measure of performance before the intervention begins – a baseline.

- **Performance goal:** performance level indicative of no risk for the student based on grade level standards. The performance goal is essential and should be relative to baseline, achievable, and related to some important outcome. This goal will be used in later evaluations of performance to determine the level of success. Finally, this goal and baseline should be related to the dimension targeted in the intervention. For example, if the targeted dimension of the skill is accuracy then the baseline and goal should be measured in terms of accuracy.

It is essential that the intervention selected is both evidence/research-based and clearly linked to the dimension of the skill being targeted. If the intervention is not appropriate, the likelihood of success is limited.

Measure the Progress in Response to the Intervention(s)

In order to make accurate decisions within the OTISS model, data on progress must be measured and examined. Progress monitoring data becomes the primary evidence by which decisions are made; however, if this data are not adequately measuring the skill of interest, decisions may be invalid. To ensure progress monitoring is conducted appropriately, please review **Component 4: Progress Monitoring** in the above section.

Evaluate the Response to the Intervention(s)

When evaluating the response, the effect of the intervention on the specific aspect of the targeted skill must be measured. If the intervention targeted *math accuracy of addition facts sums to nine*, then the response evaluated must be the student's accuracy on addition facts sums to nine. It would be inappropriate to evaluate fluency of addition sums to nine if the intervention was designed to improve accuracy of addition facts.

Intervention Integrity

Prior to any evaluation of student response, the level of intervention integrity must be assessed. Intervention integrity refers to the degree to which the intervention was implemented as planned. This should be evaluated by examining both the **frequency** and the **delivery** of the intervention.

Frequency can be evaluated by simply asking the question: **"Was the intervention implemented as often as intended?"** For instance, if the intervention was to be implemented three days a week over the course of a month, then was the intervention implemented three days a week or did it just happen two or even one day per week? This question is essential and must be evaluated in an objective manner. A typical method used to calculate integrity is to divide the total number of intervention sessions completed accurately by the total number of sessions intended and multiply by 100 (18 sessions completed ÷ 20 sessions intended x 100 = 90% integrity). Integrity of less than 80% is insufficient and will prohibit evaluation of any intervention outcome.

Delivery can be evaluated by asking the question: **"Was the intervention implemented correctly?"** For instance, if the intervention consists of ten separate steps, were all the steps implemented as described in the directions? One method used to evaluate integrity of delivery is to objectively monitor the implementation of the steps as they are delivered. To accomplish this there must be a detailed intervention with the steps articulated and an observer must be present to monitor the implementation of these steps. Integrity would then simply consist of calculating the number of steps implemented and dividing them by the number of total steps and multiplying by 100. Integrity of 80% or below is considered inadequate and should be addressed.

Without an evaluation of integrity, it is impossible to determine if a lack of effectiveness is the result of an inappropriate intervention or an intervention not conducted with integrity (frequency or delivery).

Evaluation of Response

If integrity is 80% or better, evaluating a response is accomplished by simply comparing current performance from the progress monitoring data to that of the baseline data and the established goal. This comparison should be guided by a series of questions.

The first question relates to the effectiveness of the intervention. **Was the intervention effective?** To answer, compare the progress monitoring data to the baseline data. If there has been no improvement over baseline, then the intervention is not effective and modifications should be made to the intervention. These modifications can take the form of intensifying (moving up a tier) or changing the intervention. It is important to note that every child can learn. The absence of improvement over baseline can only be viewed as the result of an ineffective intervention or an intervention that is a mismatch for the student's needs. In situations where the intervention is ineffective, decisions should focus solely on intervention modifications. Inferences about student responsiveness should be avoided. However, if the progress monitoring data are an improvement over baseline, the intervention was effective and additional questions can be asked.

The second question relates to the degree to which the current performance approximates the established goal. **Has the student's performance reached the goal?** If performance has reached the established goal, then the intervention has been successful. If performance has not reached the established goal, then additional questions must be asked to complete the evaluation of response. These additional questions evaluate the degree to which the effective intervention is on target for achieving the goal.

- Will the intervention ultimately result in the achieving the goal?

- Will this occur in a reasonable amount of time?

- Can the level of support necessary to continue the intervention as a general education support be maintained until the goal is reached?

Reaction to Response

Initially, decisions should be made about the status of the intervention. Should the intervention continue as is? Should it be modified? Should it be replaced with another intervention? Additionally, decisions about the student's status within the tiered system can be made. Should the intensity increase or decrease? Should the student continue at the same tier of support? These decisions should be made by the OTISS team based on available data. The primary function of the problem solving team is to systematically address the needs of struggling students. The team must institute an efficient process to gather and analyze data to adjust instruction. Team members must be trained in both these processes and in understanding the instructional implications of each data source. If the team does not have sufficient data, decisions should not be made until more data is gathered.

Evaluating Response to Intervention