

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS (MTSS)

District Implementation Roadmap for Washington State School Districts

*An Evidence-Based, Peer-Reviewed Framework
for Systemic School and District Improvement*

Incorporating Findings from The Last Mile Project

Aligned with the National Center on Multi-Tiered System of Supports
Essential Components Framework (mtss4success.org)

Prepared for District Leadership

Special Education Administration | Teaching and Learning | Student Support Services

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MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS

District Implementation Roadmap

*An Evidence-Based, Peer-Reviewed Framework for Systemic School Improvement
Incorporating Findings from The Last Mile Project (2025)*

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Introduction

MTSS is a proactive, preventative framework that connects data and instruction within a multi-level prevention system, with the goal of supporting every student’s academic, social, emotional, and behavioral growth from a strengths-based perspective (National Center on MTSS, 2025). It gives educators a coherent way to make data-based decisions about instruction, intervention, and student engagement so that schools and districts can produce better outcomes for all students in a district (National Center on MTSS, 2025).

This roadmap walks your district through a multi-year implementation plan built around the four essential components of MTSS as defined by the National Center on MTSS (2025): (1) a multi-level prevention system, (2) screening, (3) progress monitoring, and (4) data-based decision making. The research is clear: districts that work on all four components at once, with consistent leadership behind them, get the strongest results for students (Fixsen et al., 2005; McIntosh & Goodman, 2016; National Center on MTSS, 2025).

Washington State Context. Washington school districts are in the middle of a required shift away from the ability/achievement discrepancy model toward an RTI-based process for identifying students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) under WAC 392-172A-03060. The Last Mile Project (Rasplica, 2025), a collaboration among OSPI, the Washington AIMS Project, and the ECSEL Project at the University of Washington Bothell, worked directly with three pilot districts (Pasco, Mount Vernon, and North Thurston) as they made this transition. Their real-world experience is woven throughout this document so the guidance you’re reading is grounded in what actually happened in Washington districts, not just what the research says in theory.

Core Guiding Principles of MTSS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All students can learn and achieve at high levels with appropriate support (Sugai & Horner, 2009).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instruction and intervention must be grounded in peer-reviewed, evidence-based practices (Burns & Gibbons, 2012).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data guide every decision: from individual students to system-wide resource allocation (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation fidelity is non-negotiable: even the best intervention fails without consistent delivery (Fixsen et al., 2005).

- Equity is embedded by design: MTSS is a vehicle for closing opportunity and achievement gaps (McIntosh et al., 2021).
- Family and community partnerships strengthen every tier of support (Epstein, 2010).

Section 1: Understanding MTSS — Research Foundation

1.1 Definition and Historical Context

MTSS grew out of two research-based frameworks that districts were already using separately: Response to Intervention (RTI) for academic support and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) for social-emotional-behavioral support. When ESSA (2015) and IDEA (2004) embedded MTSS in federal policy, it marked a real turning point: a move away from waiting for students to fail before stepping in, toward a proactive, tiered support structure (Sugai & Horner, 2009).

Fuchs and Fuchs (2006) called RTI a “seismic shift” in how schools identify and serve students with learning difficulties, and they were right. Instead of depending on a gap between IQ and achievement scores to flag a disability, RTI looks at how students respond to good instruction. MTSS takes that foundation a step further by bringing behavioral and social-emotional support into the same unified framework (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016).

The Last Mile of Implementation. In Washington State, the shift from discrepancy to RTI for SLD identification isn’t optional. The Last Mile Project (Rasplica, 2025) refers to the idea that the final leg of a journey is often the hardest. Project Director William Rasplica put it plainly: while national literature gives you the roadmap, ‘finalizing implementation of complex systems like RTI depends on skillful local leadership’ (p. 1). General guidance will only get your district so far. The last mile takes structured, district-specific support.

1.2 The Evidence Base for MTSS

The evidence behind MTSS has been building for decades, and it’s substantial:

- Burns and Gibbons (2012) demonstrated that systematic use of data within a tiered framework improved both academic outcomes and special education referral accuracy in district-wide implementations.
- Horner et al. (2010) conducted a randomized controlled trial showing schools implementing school-wide PBIS (Tier 1 MTSS behavioral supports) significantly reduced discipline problems and improved school climate.
- Sugai and Horner (2009) established the theoretical and empirical foundations of PBIS within a broader multi-tiered framework, emphasizing the importance of systems-level change.
- Fixsen et al. (2005) identified active implementation stages and drivers in their landmark synthesis of implementation science; it is a framework widely adopted to guide MTSS rollout.
- McIntosh and Goodman (2016) summarized research on integrated MTSS frameworks, identifying key levers including leadership, professional development, data systems, and family engagement.
- Daly et al. (2007) documented functional approaches to intervention design at Tier 3, emphasizing the importance of function-based, individualized problem-solving teams.
- Rasplica, W. (2025), through The Last Mile Project, provided field-based evidence from three Washington districts, documenting implementation challenges and effective strategies specific to the RTI for SLD transition required in Washington State.

1.3 Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety and MTSS Implementation

There's a principle from cybernetics that turns out to be a very good lens for understanding why MTSS has to be built as a complete system rather than a patchwork of separate programs: Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety (Ashby, 1956/2015). The core idea is straightforward: for a regulatory system to manage the range of problems it encounters, it needs at least as many different responses available as there are different problems coming at it. Put simply: only variety can absorb variety. A system with fewer response options than the challenges it faces will always lose control of those challenges.

Applied to your district, Ashby's Law makes a strong case for the full three-tier architecture. Students arrive with an enormous range of needs: different in type, intensity, duration, and cause. A district that offers only Tier 1 universal instruction, no matter how effective or inclusive, simply doesn't have enough response options to match that range. For special education purposes, a continuum or array of services is required. The result, confirmed by decades of research and field experience, is predictable: a significant portion of students won't respond to Tier 1 alone and will go without adequate support (Burns & Gibbons, 2012; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Tiers 2 and 3 aren't extras you add when the budget allows; they're the response capacity the system needs to actually serve the range of students in your buildings (Ashby, 1956/2015; Rasplca, 2025).

Ashby's Law also has something important to say about how you sequence your implementation. One of the most common mistakes districts make is holding off on building Tiers 2 and 3 until Tier 1 is "strong enough," which, unfortunately, is exactly when your screening data is starting to tell you that students need more intensive support right now. The Last Mile Project (Rasplca, 2025) saw this play out directly in Washington State pilot districts. Screening results in every district will surface students who can't be adequately served by Tier 1 alone; when that happens, Tiers 2 and 3 need to be ready. That's why this roadmap is built to develop all three tiers in parallel, with the phasing in Section 4 designed to make sure there's no gap in your response capacity when you need it.

The same logic applies beyond the tier structure and extends to everything your MTSS system is built on. Your data systems, team structures, professional learning, and family engagement all contribute to your district's overall response capacity. Take one piece away and you get gaps. A district with strong Tier 2 and 3 interventions but weak progress monitoring can't tell whether those interventions are working. A district with solid screening but no written decision rules can't turn data into action. Every one of the four essential components matters, and a gap in any of them limits what the whole system can do. The takeaway for your leadership team: you can't build one component to perfection before starting the others. All four have to grow together (National Center on MTSS, 2025).

Ashby's Law also has something direct to say about data quality: a dimension Hendrick (2026) develops well in the context of instructional design. Hendrick introduces a useful concept: the "disturbance space," which is the full range of ways that students can produce an acceptable surface outcome without actually doing the intended cognitive or behavioral work. In a classroom, that means arriving at a correct answer through guessing or pattern-matching instead of genuine understanding. The critical point Hendrick takes from Ashby is that a system can only regulate what it can actually detect. A system that relies on narrow, binary outcome signals (correct or incorrect, benchmark met or not) and is informationally thin as a regulator. It records success without being able to say anything about what produced it.

That has real implications for how your district thinks about data. Screening that flags students as "at risk" or "benchmark" without telling you much about the nature of their skill deficit leaves part of the disturbance space open; students may look like they're responding to intervention while the specific skills you're targeting remain unaddressed. Progress monitoring that tracks only whether a student's scores are trending up, without attention to whether the skills are actually sticking and transferring, narrows your detection channel in the same way. Fidelity data does something different and important: it expands what your system can see by telling you whether outcomes reflect genuine student response or just the appearance of progress when an intervention wasn't implemented consistently (Hendrick, 2026; Fixsen et al., 2005). Districts that invest only in outcome data (benchmark scores, tier placement rates, special education referrals) without also tracking process data are building a system too narrow

for the range of student needs it has to manage. This roadmap treats screening, progress monitoring, fidelity measurement, and data-based decision making not as compliance boxes to check, but as the detection infrastructure your district needs to actually regulate student outcomes.

Evidence-Based Instruction: The Core of MTSS

- MTSS is a delivery framework, not an instructional model. The tiers, teams, data systems, and decision rules described throughout this roadmap exist for one purpose: to ensure that every student receives evidence-based instruction and intervention matched to their needs. The framework is the structure; evidence-based instruction (EBI) is the substance it is designed to deliver. A well-functioning MTSS without high-quality, evidence-based instruction at its core is an administrative shell—organized, perhaps, but not effective (Burns & Gibbons, 2012; National Center on MTSS, 2025).
- EBI is non-negotiable at every tier. Tier 1 requires a research-validated core curriculum delivered with instructional fidelity to all students. Tier 2 requires small-group intervention using programs with a documented evidence base, implemented as designed. Tier 3 requires individualized, intensive intervention derived from a functional analysis of the student’s specific profile of need—not simply more time with a program that hasn’t worked. At no tier is effort, familiarity, or tradition a substitute for evidence (Fixsen et al., 2005; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; National Center on MTSS, 2025).
- Implementation fidelity is what makes EBI work inside the MTSS structure. Implementation science is unambiguous on this point: even the strongest evidence-based intervention, when implemented inconsistently or with low fidelity, produces outcomes indistinguishable from no intervention at all (Fixsen et al., 2005). This means that screening data, progress monitoring, and tier decision rules only tell you what you need to know when you can also confirm that what students received was actually the intervention—delivered as designed, at the intended intensity, by a trained implementer. Fidelity data is not a compliance measure; it is the verification that your MTSS structure is doing what it was built to do.
- The greatest risk in MTSS implementation is structural compliance without instructional substance. Districts can build teams, hold data meetings, fill out tier placement forms, and administer screening three times a year—and still fail students—if the instruction and intervention at the center of each tier is not evidence-based and faithfully delivered. MTSS done well is not a system for organizing students into tiers; it is a system for ensuring that every student encounters instruction that works. The structure serves the instruction, always (Burns & Gibbons, 2012; Fixsen et al., 2005; McIntosh & Goodman, 2016).

Section 2: Essential Components of MTSS

The National Center on MTSS (2025) is clear: there are four essential components your district needs to have in place for MTSS to actually move the needle for students: (1) multi-level prevention system, (2) screening, (3) progress monitoring, and (4) data-based decision making. And these aren’t a sequence; you build them together. Treating them as steps you check off one at a time is one of the most common ways districts stall (Burns & Gibbons, 2012; Horner et al., 2010; McIntosh & Goodman, 2016; National Center on MTSS, 2025).

Component 1: Multi-Level Prevention System

The multi-level prevention system is how your district organizes support: three tiers of increasing intensity matched to what students actually need (National Center on MTSS, 2025). Here’s how the National Center on MTSS (2025) defines each tier: Tier 1 is high-quality, schoolwide programming and support for every student, covering academics, social-emotional learning, and behavior. Tier 2 is small-group, standardized intervention using validated programs for students who need more. Tier 3 is intensive, individualized intervention for students with persistent, severe needs that Tier 2 alone can’t address. One thing worth emphasizing: students in Tier 3 don’t lose access to Tier 1; they continue receiving core instruction alongside their intensive support (Burns & Gibbons, 2012; National Center on MTSS, 2025).

	Tier 1: Universal	Tier 2: Targeted	Tier 3: Intensive
Student Population	All students (100%)	Some students (~15–20%)	Few students (~5%)
Instruction Type	Core curriculum, high-quality universal instruction	Small-group supplemental instruction	Individualized, intensive intervention
Frequency	Daily, ongoing	3–5x per week	Daily; multiple sessions
Data Review	3x per year (universal screening)	Every 4–6 weeks	Weekly progress monitoring
Research Base	Burns & Gibbons (2012); Horner et al. (2010)	Fuchs & Fuchs (2006)	Daly et al. (2007); Tilly (2008)

Last Mile Project Finding: Tier 1 Must Be Strengthened — But Don't Wait

- All three Last Mile districts acknowledged that Tier 1 instruction needs strengthening, especially explicit instruction for diverse learners (Rasplica, 2025).
- However, the project director cautioned against a common error: waiting for a “perfect” Tier 1 before developing Tiers 2 and 3. Ashby’s Law of Requisite Variety (Ashby, 1956/2015) reinforces that a system must have responses as varied as the challenges it faces, and Tiers 2 and 3 must be developed simultaneously with Tier 1 improvement.
- Research confirms: even schools with strong Tier 1 will have students requiring supplemental and intensive support. Screening data in every Washington district will reveal this need (Rasplica, 2025, p. 4).

Tier Entry, Movement, and Exit Criteria

Defining when students enter, move between, and exit tiers is essential for consistent, equitable decision-making. Districts must develop written decision rules and train all teams on their use (Tilly, 2008; WAC 392-172A-03060).

- **Tier 2 Entry:** Student scores below the district-established risk cut score on universal screening (typically the 25th percentile or below) at two consecutive screening periods, or teacher/specialist referral with supporting data reviewed by the grade-level team.
- **Tier 3 Entry:** Insufficient progress in Tier 2 based on a minimum of 8–10 data points showing a flat or declining trend line; or student presents with severe and immediate needs requiring individualized intervention from initial identification.
- **Exit Criteria:** Student meets or exceeds benchmark on universal screening AND demonstrates a sustained positive trend on progress monitoring data across a

minimum of 6–8 consecutive data points. Exit decisions are made by the problem-solving team, not based on a single data point.

- **Tiered Resource Matrix:** Each district should maintain a living document mapping validated interventions to each tier by domain (reading, math, written language, behavior, SEL), including program name, session frequency, duration, and the staff role responsible for delivery. This matrix becomes the decision-making reference for problem-solving teams and ensures intervention assignment is based on need and evidence, not staff availability or tradition.

Component 2: Screening

According to the National Center on MTSS (2025), screening is a systematic process for identifying students who may be at risk for poor outcomes: academic, behavioral, social, emotional, or related to school completion and college and career readiness. You’re generally screening three times a year, using data from reliable, valid tools tied to the outcomes you care about. Here’s the bottom line: without solid screening data collected on a regular schedule, the rest of your multi-level prevention system can’t do its job. Catching students early, before they fall too far behind, is the whole point (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; National Center on MTSS, 2025).

To make screening work, your data needs to: (a) be collected consistently with reliable, validated tools; (b) be organized so teams can actually analyze it together; (c) feed into data-based decision making at every level: individual students, classrooms, grade levels, schools, and the district as a whole (see Component 4); and (d) be reviewed by problem-solving teams on a regular schedule (Burns & Gibbons, 2012; McIntosh & Goodman, 2016; National Center on MTSS, 2025).

Data Type	Tool Examples	Purpose	Frequency
Universal Screening	DIBELS, AIMSweb, easyCBM, FastBridge, SWPBS screeners	Identify students at risk; benchmark all students	3x per year (fall, winter, spring)
Progress Monitoring	CBM probes, DIBELS PM, Behavior report cards	Track student response to intervention	Weekly to bi-weekly (Tier 2–3)
Diagnostic Assessment	CORE Phonics, KeyMath, FBA	Pinpoint specific skill deficits	As needed when standard interventions are insufficient
Outcome Data	State assessments, report card grades, office referrals	Evaluate system-level effectiveness	Annually
Fidelity Measures	Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI), MTSS Integrity Checklists, RTI/SLD Implementation Rubric	Ensure interventions implemented as designed; WAC 392-172A-03060 compliance	Semester/annually

Last Mile Project Finding: Screening & Progress Monitoring Gaps Are Widespread

- None of the three Last Mile Project districts had fully established consistent K–12 screening procedures or Tier 2/3 progress monitoring systems, a situation the project director described as likely reflecting statewide practice (Rasplica, 2025, p. 4).
- A critical technical error was identified: districts were using computer-adaptive assessments (designed for universal screening) as progress monitoring tools. These

are not interchangeable. Progress monitoring requires brief, sensitive, repeated Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) probes, not adaptive tests that change items based on performance (Rasplica, 2025).

- WAC 392-172A-03060 requires 'frequent progress monitoring utilizing a valid and reliable tool consistent with the intervention and tier at which it is being applied.' Districts must ensure tool selection aligns with this requirement.
- Effective screening and progress monitoring requires detailed district procedures, including guidance for evaluation teams on trend-line analysis and data-based decision rules for adjusting instructional intensity (Rasplica, 2025, p. 4).

Component 3: Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring is how you know whether your interventions are actually working for individual students. The National Center on MTSS (2025) defines it as the ongoing, frequent collection and use of data to (1) assess how students are performing, (2) measure how quickly they're improving in response to instruction and intervention, and (3) evaluate whether what you're doing is effective. Unlike screening—which identifies at-risk students across the whole population—progress monitoring tracks response to intervention for students already in Tier 2 or 3. The question you're trying to answer isn't just "is this student below grade level?" The better question is: is this student responding to this intervention? (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; National Center on MTSS, 2025).

3a. Principles of Effective Progress Monitoring

- Use curriculum-based measurement (CBM) or validated curriculum-embedded tools that are brief, reliable, sensitive to growth, and aligned to the intervention target (Deno, 2003).
- Set ambitious, research-based growth goals: use normative data or criterion benchmarks, not just the student's own baseline (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006).
- Graph data in real time and review it at regular problem-solving team meetings (at least monthly for Tier 2; weekly for Tier 3) (Burns & Gibbons, 2012).
- Use decision rules (at least 4–6 data points) before changing an intervention; avoid reactive decision-making based on one assessment (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). The Last Mile Rubric specifically references the 4-data-point rule, trend-line analysis, and intra-individual frameworks (Rasplica, 2025).
- Distinguish between lack of growth (insufficient response) and slow but adequate progress; adjust intervention intensity accordingly (Tilly, 2008).

WAC 392-172A-03060 and Progress Monitoring. For Washington districts using RTI-based SLD identification, the Last Mile Rubric (Rasplica, 2025) is explicit: proficient implementation means systematic, frequent, data-driven progress monitoring, with instructional adjustments tied to written, district-developed decision rules. Your district needs a progress monitoring schedule in writing, shared with every school and instructor carrying out the monitoring, with fidelity checks to make sure it's actually happening.

Component 4: Data-Based Decision Making

Data-based decision making is how your district turns information into action. The National Center on MTSS (2025) defines it as using screening, progress monitoring, and other data to make decisions about instruction, which tier a student is in, how intensively to intervene, where resources go, and, when state law applies, whether a student qualifies for special education. This isn't something that only happens at one level or in one meeting; it operates at every level from individual students all the way up to district-wide planning. And it works only when your team has written decision rules and a shared problem-solving process: a structure for figuring out what's wrong, what to do about it, what success

looks like, and whether your plan is working (National Center on MTSS, 2025; Burns & Gibbons, 2012; McIntosh & Goodman, 2016).

4a. The Problem-Solving Process and Implementation Stages

At the heart of data-based decision making is a problem-solving process your teams use across all three tiers. The National Center on MTSS (2025) describes four steps: identify the problem, analyze it, put a plan in place, and evaluate whether it’s working. That structure is what allows teams to take data off a spreadsheet and turn it into a real instructional decision. But the process only runs well when teams have both the skills to analyze data and the systems to act on it. Fixsen et al. (2005) mapped the stages districts move through as they build that capacity, from initial exploration all the way through full implementation and continuous innovation. Those stages, shown in the table below, don’t move in a straight line. Your district may be at different stages across different tiers at the same time, and your problem-solving process needs to be running at every stage.

Stage	Description	Estimated Duration
Exploration	Assess needs, build shared understanding, investigate MTSS frameworks, evaluate fit and feasibility	6–12 months
Installation	Develop infrastructure: data systems, team structures, professional development plans, family engagement protocols	12–24 months
Initial Implementation	Begin Tier 1 practices district-wide; pilot Tier 2 structures; collect fidelity and outcome data	1–2 years
Full Implementation	All tiers functioning with fidelity; data systems operational; continuous improvement cycles embedded	Ongoing
Innovation	Data-driven refinement; expanding to new populations; contributing to broader research/practice community	Ongoing

4b. Implementation Fidelity and Professional Learning (Infrastructure Supporting Data-Based Decision Making)

Fidelity and professional learning aren’t a fifth essential component; they’re the conditions that make data-based decision making possible and keep it running over time. Here’s the hard truth from implementation science (Fixsen et al., 2005): a strong, evidence-based intervention delivered inconsistently produces outcomes no better than no intervention at all, and sometimes worse. That’s why fidelity data matters so much. Tools like the MTSS Fidelity of Implementation Rubric (National Center on MTSS, 2023) and the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (Algozzine et al., 2014) give your team a way to answer a critical question: when student outcomes aren’t what you expected, is the problem the intervention itself, or the fact that it wasn’t implemented as designed? You need fidelity data to tell the difference. The professional learning structures below are what make consistent, high-quality implementation possible across your district.

- Initial MTSS foundations training for all staff (minimum 2 days; ideally embedded in school year)
- Ongoing coaching and job-embedded professional development; research shows coaching is the most powerful driver of fidelity (Knight, 2011)
- Building-level MTSS Leadership Team training: data analysis, problem-solving protocols, intervention selection
- Intervention-specific training for Tier 2/3 interventionists (e.g., structured literacy, CBM administration, behavior support planning)

- Annual district-level fidelity reviews using the MTSS Fidelity of Implementation Rubric (National Center on MTSS, 2023) as the primary national alignment tool, alongside the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (Algozzine et al., 2014) and the WAC 392-172A-03060 RTI for SLD Implementation Rubric (Rasplica, 2025)

Section 3: Organizational Infrastructure for MTSS

3.1 Team Structures

MTSS doesn't run on one person; it runs on layered teams at the district, school, and grade/classroom level. McIntosh and Goodman (2016) make this point clearly: sustainable MTSS depends on distributed leadership. If your district's MTSS hinges on a single coordinator or champion, it's fragile. When that person leaves, the system leaves with them.

MTSS Team Structure (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016)

- District MTSS Leadership Team: Superintendent or designee, curriculum director, special education director, school psychologists, data/assessment coordinator, family liaison. Meets monthly; oversees district-wide implementation, resource allocation, and policy alignment.
- Building Leadership Team (BLT): Principal, MTSS coordinator/coach, grade-level representatives, school counselor, special education rep. Meets bi-weekly; oversees building-level data, fidelity, and staff support.
- Grade-Level / Problem-Solving Team: Grade-level teachers, interventionist, school psychologist or counselor. Meets weekly–bi-weekly; reviews individual student data, plans interventions, monitors progress.
- Individual Student Problem-Solving Team (Tier 3): Specialists, parents/guardians, classroom teacher, building administrator. Meets as needed; develops individualized intervention plans.

Last Mile Project: The RTI for SLD Leadership Team. For Washington districts implementing RTI-based SLD identification under WAC 392-172A-03060, Rasplica (2025) recommends establishing a dedicated district leadership team specifically for this work. That team should include your Special Education Administrator, Teaching and Learning Administrator, Title I/LAP Administrator, Multilingual Services Administrator, and someone from the superintendent's cabinet. The composition matters: you need both the people doing the hands-on MTSS work (interventionists, teachers) and the people who can actually move resources and make decisions (administrators). Designate one person as the lead who keeps communication flowing between external project support and the team.

Accountability Structure. Effective MTSS depends on clearly distributed accountability across leadership levels. The Superintendent provides strategic alignment and establishes non-negotiables for district-wide implementation. Cabinet members ensure resource allocation and coherence across initiatives, preventing MTSS from becoming one more competing priority. The MTSS Director owns implementation oversight and monitoring, tracking fidelity and outcomes across buildings. Principals are accountable for Tier 1 integrity and building-level team fidelity—if core instruction isn't working, the principal has to see it and act on it. Data Teams execute the inquiry cycle and make instructional adjustments based on what the data shows. When these five levels are all pulling in the same direction,

MTSS is sustainable; when any one is unclear about its role, the system develops gaps (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016).

3.2 Data Systems

Your district needs a data infrastructure that actually works, not merely a system where data gets entered and sits there. Burns and Gibbons (2012) recommend investing in an integrated platform that connects screening, progress monitoring, intervention logs, attendance, discipline, and academic performance in one accessible place. And just as important as the technology: staff need training not just on how to enter data, but on how to read it and act on it.

- Select a validated, widely used data management system (e.g., Illuminate, PowerSchool, AIMSweb+, PBIS Rewards)
- Establish clear protocols for who enters data, when, and how errors are corrected
- Create standardized data displays (e.g., box plots, class at-a-glance reports) that support team-level decision-making
- Protect student data privacy in accordance with FERPA; establish family access portals where feasible
- Conduct annual data audits to ensure completeness, accuracy, and consistency across buildings

3.3 Family and Community Engagement

The research on family-school partnerships is consistent: when families are genuinely engaged (not just notified), student outcomes improve across every tier (Epstein, 2010). MTSS actually gives you a built-in structure for this. Use it.

- Translate all screening results and intervention plans into family-friendly language; offer multilingual materials
- Invite families into Tier 2/3 problem-solving meetings as genuine partners, not passive recipients of information
- Notify parents when a child begins a tier 2 and 3 intervention.
- Develop a family MTSS informational guide and host annual family information nights
- Include family voice in district MTSS Leadership Team decisions
- Use community resources (mental health agencies, libraries, nonprofits) as part of Tier 3 wraparound supports

3.4 Equity Considerations

Without intentional equity protocols built into your MTSS, the system can actually make disproportionality worse, not better (McIntosh et al., 2021). Equity isn't something you layer on top of MTSS as an afterthought; it has to be baked into every decision point. And in Washington State, it's not just aspirational: the Last Mile Rubric (Rasplica, 2025) identifies Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness as an exclusionary factor for SLD eligibility under WAC 392-172A-03060. That makes getting equity right a legal requirement, not just a value statement.

Equity Audit Checklist for MTSS (McIntosh et al., 2021; Rasplica, 2025)

- Are universal screening tools validated for all demographic groups served by the district?
- Disaggregate all screening and outcome data by race/ethnicity, gender, language status, and disability category; examine disproportionality at every tier.

- Review intervention assignment data: are students of color disproportionately assigned to Tier 2/3 due to cultural or linguistic differences rather than genuine skill needs?
- Ensure Tier 1 instruction is culturally responsive and reflects students' backgrounds and identities (required at Proficient level per Rasplica, 2025).
- Provide equitable access to intervention: distance, schedule, and language must not be barriers to support.
- Examine discipline data for racial disproportionality; MTSS behavioral supports must actively reduce exclusionary discipline.
- For SLD eligibility under WAC 392-172A-03060: document that cultural and linguistic differences were systematically considered and ruled out as a primary factor before initiating eligibility procedures.

Section 4: Multi-Year Implementation Roadmap

The roadmap below lays out a 4-year trajectory for building MTSS in your district, grounded in Fixsen et al.'s (2005) implementation stages and shaped by what McIntosh and Goodman (2016) have learned from integrated MTSS work in K–12 districts. Guidance from The Last Mile Project (Rasplica, 2025) is woven throughout to address the Washington State-specific requirements under WAC 392-172A-03060. Treat this as a planning scaffold, not a rigid prescription. Your district's starting point, context, and capacity will determine how you move through these phases.

Phase	Timeline	Key Activities	Lead Responsibility	Outcome Indicators
Phase 1 Foundation Building (Year 0–1)	Months 1– 12	Form District MTSS Leadership Team (including RTI/SLD team per Rasplica, 2025). Conduct district needs assessment. Establish shared vision. Select screening tools. Provide all-staff MTSS foundations training. Administer MTSS Fidelity of Implementation Rubric (National Center on MTSS, 2023) and Last Mile RTI/SLD Implementation Rubric (Rasplica, 2025) to establish baseline across all components. Develop family communication plan. Identify and train building MTSS coaches.	Superintendent, Curriculum Director, Special Ed Director	Shared district MTSS vision document. Baseline rubric scores established. Leadership teams formed.
Phase 2 Tier 1 Launch (Year 1– 2)	Months 6– 24	Implement universal screening 3x/year district-wide. Analyze and use screening data at team meetings. Deliver and strengthen Tier 1 core instruction with fidelity monitoring. Establish grade-level team meeting protocols. Begin Tier 2 identification. Pilot 2–3 evidence-based Tier 2 interventions. Conduct Tier 1 fidelity review.	Building Principals, Instructional Coaches, MTSS Coordinators	80%+ students meeting Tier 1 benchmarks in pilot buildings. Tier 2 groups operating. Data review protocols established.

Phase	Timeline	Key Activities	Lead Responsibility	Outcome Indicators
Phase 3 Tier 2 Expansion (Year 2–3)	Months 18–36	Expand Tier 2 district-wide. Train all interventionists in CBM administration and progress monitoring (note: do not use adaptive tools for PM (Rasplica, 2025 and Lembke et. al., 2023). Establish problem-solving team meetings. Use PM data to drive decisions. Begin Tier 3 protocols. Conduct equity audit. Provide differentiated coaching based on fidelity data.	School Psychologists, Interventionists, Building MTSS Teams	Tier 2 implemented with fidelity. PM data driving team decisions. Equity audit completed.
Phase 4 Tier 3 & Integration (Year 3–4)	Months 30–48	Implement individualized Tier 3 plans using function-based problem-solving. Ensure MTSS and special education integration. Conduct district-wide TFI and RTI/SLD Rubric reviews. Analyze multi-year outcome data. Embed MTSS in district strategic plan. Document RTI-based SLD eligibility procedures per WAC 392-172A-03060 (Rasplica, 2025).	District Leadership Team, Special Ed Director, School Psychologists	All three tiers implemented with fidelity district-wide. RTI/SLD procedures documented. MTSS in strategic plan.
Phase 5 Continuous Improvement (Year 4+)	Ongoing	Annual data review and MTSS refinement. Quarterly RTI/SLD Rubric review (Rasplica, 2025). Ongoing coaching and professional learning. New staff MTSS induction. Innovation cycles: piloting new evidence-based practices. Regional/state MTSS network participation. Sustained equity monitoring.	All District and Building Leadership	Sustainable, self-renewing MTSS system. Demonstrated multi-year student outcome gains.

4.1 Year 1–2 Operational Quick-Start: Six-Domain Action Plan

The 4-year roadmap above describes the full arc of MTSS implementation. This section translates that arc into a concrete 12–24 month operational plan organized around six implementation domains. Each domain identifies the key actions, expected deliverables, and responsible parties for the first two years. District teams should treat this as a working planning scaffold, not a rigid checklist—sequence and timeline will depend on your starting point as established by your baseline fidelity rubric scores (see Section 5).

Domain 1: Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Months 1–2: Develop district MTSS definition and non-negotiables. Deliverable: Board-approved MTSS framework document. Lead: Superintendent & Cabinet. • Months 2–3: Align MTSS to district strategic plan and School Improvement Plans. Deliverable: Strategic alignment crosswalk. Lead: Teaching & Learning. • Month 3: Publish 2-year MTSS implementation timeline. Deliverable: Published implementation roadmap. Lead: MTSS Director.
Domain 2: Effective Teaming Structures

- Month 2: Audit existing teams for redundancy and alignment. Deliverable: Team alignment map. Lead: MTSS Leadership Team.
- Month 3: Establish district MTSS Steering Team with charter and calendar. Deliverable: Team charter. Lead: Superintendent.
- Month 4: Create quarterly implementation review cycle. Deliverable: Implementation review protocol. Lead: District Leadership.

Domain 3: Comprehensive Assessment & Data System

- Month 2: Inventory all district assessments. Deliverable: Assessment inventory matrix mapping each tool to its purpose (screening, PM, diagnostic, or outcome). Lead: Assessment Department.
- Month 3: Establish district data review calendar with scheduled team meeting dates for all three tiers. Deliverable: Data review calendar. Lead: Teaching & Learning.
- Months 4–5: Develop fidelity monitoring protocol including walkthrough rubric and fidelity tool. Deliverable: Walkthrough rubric & fidelity tool. Lead: Curriculum Department.

Domain 4: Problem-Solving for Continuous Improvement

- Month 3: Adopt standardized district problem-solving cycle. Deliverable: Inquiry protocol guide. Lead: MTSS Director.
- Months 4–6: Train all school data teams on problem-solving cycle and data analysis protocols. Deliverable: Professional learning tracker. Lead: Professional Learning.
- Month 6: Implement tier decision-rule guide for student movement between tiers. Deliverable: Tier decision-rule handbook. Lead: School Leaders.

Domain 5: Evidence-Based Instructional Practices

- Month 2: Define district EBP criteria for intervention selection. Deliverable: EBP criteria guide. Lead: Curriculum Department.
- Month 4: Audit curriculum and intervention alignment to EBP criteria. Deliverable: EBP alignment report. Lead: Instructional Services.
- Months 5–8: Launch fidelity coaching cycle with walkthrough and coaching system. Deliverable: Walkthrough & coaching system. Lead: Principals.

Domain 6: Tiered Delivery System

- Month 3: Establish district-wide tier decision rules and develop tiered support handbook. Deliverable: Tiered support handbook. Lead: MTSS Team.
- Month 4: Map validated interventions across all tiers by domain. Deliverable: Tiered resource matrix (reading, math, behavior, SEL). Lead: School Leadership.
- Months 4–5: Develop written entry and exit criteria for each tier. Deliverable: Student support flowchart. Lead: Student Services.

Section 5: Measuring Implementation Fidelity

Fidelity measurement is not punitive; it is diagnostic. The National Center on MTSS (2023) developed the MTSS Fidelity of Implementation Rubric, a validated national tool aligned with the essential components and infrastructure shown through over a decade of research, national policy, and local implementation. The Rubric supports teams in self-evaluating MTSS implementation, developing action

plans, planning professional learning, and engaging in continuous improvement. Algozzine et al. (2014) also developed the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI), a widely used companion measure of MTSS implementation quality. For Washington districts, The Last Mile Project (Rasplica, 2025) developed an additional tool specifically aligned to WAC 392-172A-03060: the RTI for SLD Implementation Rubric. Districts are encouraged to use the MTSS Fidelity Rubric as the primary national alignment tool alongside these Washington State-specific instruments.

5.1 The WAC 392-172A-03060 RTI for SLD Implementation Rubric

The Last Mile RTI for SLD Implementation Rubric (Rasplica, 2025) is a 4-level, 9-criterion tool developed by the Last Mile Project in collaboration with OSPI and the University of Washington Bothell. It is designed to evaluate the implementation of RTI for SLD identification and eligibility, ensure compliance with WAC 392-172A-03060, and provide a structure for continuous improvement.

The Four Implementation Levels (Rasplica, 2025)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Level 1 — Exploring Implementation: Practices are absent, inconsistent, or not evidence-based. No formal procedures in place.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Level 2 — Installation: Practices exist but are not yet consistently implemented, aligned to district goals, or monitored for fidelity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Level 3 — Initial Implementation: Practices are consistently implemented with some fidelity monitoring. District procedures are in place but may not yet be fully operational.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Level 4 — Proficient Implementation: Systematic, high-fidelity implementation with robust data systems, written decision rules, ongoing coaching, and continuous improvement cycles.

The nine rubric criteria, all sourced from WAC 392-172A-03060, are:

1. Scientifically-Based Interventions (WAC 392-172A-01165)
2. High-Quality Core Instructional Curriculum and Materials
3. Multi-Tiered Model for Delivering Core, Strategic, and Intensive Instruction
4. Universal Screening Utilizing a Valid and Reliable Tool at Fixed Intervals (at least 3x per year)
5. Frequent Progress Monitoring Utilizing a Valid and Reliable Tool Consistent with the Intervention and Tier
6. Fidelity of Implementation: Two or More Intensive Scientifically Research-Based Interventions
7. Duration and Data-Based Decision Making (CBM, Trend Line Analysis, Intra-Individual Framework)
8. Documentation of Decisions and Collaboration and Teaming
9. Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness and District Policy (Policies 2161, 2163, 2161P)

How to Use the RTI/SLD Implementation Rubric (Rasplica, 2025; National Center on MTSS, 2025)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Step 1 — Convene a representative team: Include both implementers (teachers, interventionists) and those with decision-making authority (administrators). The Last Mile Project found that teams missing either group cannot accurately assess or improve implementation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Step 2 — Rate individually first: Each team member rates all 9 criteria independently before group discussion. This surfaces genuine divergence in perceptions.

- Step 3 — Build consensus, don't average: Discuss outliers. A gap between a principal's rating of 4 and an interventionist's rating of 2 is the conversation. The National Center on MTSS (2025) explicitly warns against averaging scores.
- Step 4 — Summarize and prioritize: Produce a prioritized list of improvement areas integrated into the district's MTSS implementation plan.
- Step 5 — Repeat quarterly: The Last Mile Project guidelines specify quarterly review to track progress and guide adjustments (Rasplica, 2025).

5.2 Fidelity Benchmarks: The MTSS Fidelity of Implementation Rubric

The primary fidelity tool recommended for Washington district MTSS implementation is the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Fidelity of Implementation Rubric, developed by the National Center on MTSS at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and updated in 2023. The Rubric traces its lineage to the original National Center on Response to Intervention (2007–2012) and has been refined through over a decade of field use. It is designed for self-evaluation, action planning, and professional learning prioritization—not for compliance monitoring or external accountability purposes (National Center on MTSS, 2023).

Four Essential Components of the MTSS Rubric

The MTSS Rubric is organized around the four essential components of a multi-tiered system of supports (National Center on MTSS, 2023). These components are not discrete checklists; they are interdependent elements of a unified prevention system. District teams should rate each component to identify patterns of strength and priority across the system.

- **Screening.** A systematic process for identifying students who may be at risk for poor learning outcomes, including academic, behavioral, social, emotional, and school completion outcomes. The Rubric assesses whether the district uses valid and reliable screening tools, administers screening at least three times per year, applies consistent decision rules, and uses screening data to drive instructional adjustments at Tier 1 and referrals to Tier 2 (National Center on MTSS, 2023).
- **Progress Monitoring.** Frequent, valid, and reliable measurement of student response to instruction and intervention. The Rubric examines whether progress monitoring tools are technically adequate, administered frequently enough to inform decisions (typically weekly or biweekly for Tier 2/3), aligned to the target skill of the intervention, and used to generate decision rules that trigger plan adjustments. This component is directly connected to Washington State's RTI for SLD eligibility requirements under WAC 392-172A-03060 (National Center on MTSS, 2023; Rasplica, 2025).
- **Multi-Level Prevention System.** The organization of instruction and intervention across three tiers of intensity. The Rubric evaluates the quality and coherence of instruction and intervention at each tier: Tier 1 (high-quality, schoolwide academic, social, emotional, and behavioral supports for all students); Tier 2 (small-group, standardized interventions using validated programs targeting students identified through screening); and Tier 3 (intensive, individualized intervention for students not responding to Tier 2, including students with disabilities). Fidelity of implementation is assessed within each tier (National Center on MTSS, 2023).
- **Data-Based Decision Making.** The use of data to inform instructional decisions at every level of the system—from individual students to the district as a whole. The Rubric examines whether teams use established decision rules to determine tier placement and movement, review data on a defined schedule, engage in problem-solving rather than compliance review, and connect individual student data to program-level decisions. This component intersects directly with OSPI's five-component MTSS model and with WAC 392-172A-03060 requirements for RTI-based SLD identification (National Center on MTSS, 2023).

School Infrastructure and Support Mechanisms

In addition to the four essential components, the Rubric includes a cross-cutting domain: School Infrastructure and Support Mechanisms. This domain addresses the knowledge, resources, and organizational structures necessary to operationalize all components of MTSS in a unified system. Infrastructure indicators include leadership commitment, professional learning systems, scheduling that enables tiered support, collaborative teaming structures, and the availability of coaching. The Last Mile Project (Rasplica, 2025) found that infrastructure gaps—particularly insufficient coaching and the absence of written decision rules—were the most significant barriers to sustainable implementation in Washington pilot districts.

Rating Scale and Scoring Guidance

Each indicator in the MTSS Rubric is rated on a scale that reflects developmental progression from absent or inconsistent practice to fully integrated, sustainable implementation. The Rubric is not a compliance checklist; it is a continuous improvement tool. The National Center on MTSS (2023) recommends that teams use the Rubric at least annually, that all raters complete individual ratings before group discussion, and—critically—that teams discuss discrepant ratings rather than average them. Wide variation in ratings across roles (e.g., principal vs. interventionist) is itself a diagnostic signal about system coherence. The four-level implementation rating used in the Last Mile Project RTI/SLD Implementation Rubric (see Section 5.1) aligns with and extends this framework for Washington State compliance contexts (Rasplica, 2025).

TFI Benchmarks as a Companion Tool

Districts using the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) as a PBIS-aligned fidelity tool may use TFI scores as a supplementary data source alongside the MTSS Rubric. Established TFI benchmarks are: 70% or above for Tier 1 (adequate universal implementation), 70% or above for Tier 2 systems, and 70% or above for Tier 3 individualized systems (Algozzine et al., 2014). Buildings below benchmark should receive targeted coaching and technical assistance, not punitive consequences. Annual TFI data should be aggregated at the district level to inform resource allocation decisions (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016). When both tools are used, the MTSS Rubric should serve as the primary framework for district-level implementation review, with TFI data informing building-level PBIS fidelity within the broader MTSS picture.

5.3 Coaching as a Fidelity Driver

Knight (2011) and subsequent MTSS-specific coaching research identify instructional coaching as the single most powerful mechanism for improving implementation fidelity. Districts should plan to provide coaching support (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016). The Last Mile Project (Rasplica, 2025) identified limited coaching availability as a key gap, recommending that OSPI provide districts with structured coaching access as a core component of statewide RTI support infrastructure.

Section 6: The Last Mile Project — Washington State RTI/SLD Implementation

Section Note. This section summarizes The Last Mile Project Final Report (Rasplica, 2025) and is intended to provide Washington State districts with practical, field-tested guidance grounded in local implementation experience. All content is attributed to Rasplica (2025) unless otherwise noted.

6.1 Project Overview

The Last Mile Project (December 2024 – September 2025) was a collaboration among OSPI, William Rasplica (Project Director/Coach), Fran McCarthy/Coach, Chloe Melton/Coach, and the ECSEL Project

at the University of Washington Bothell's Goodlad Institute. The project provided structured support to three volunteer Washington school districts (Pasco, Mount Vernon, and North Thurston) as they transitioned from ability/achievement discrepancy to RTI-based SLD identification.

The project supplemented the Washington AIMS Project and six SLD Technical Assistance Papers (TAPs) covering: Determining Inadequate Achievement, Determining Insufficient Progress, Ruling Out Alternative Primary Factors, Ruling Out Inadequate Instruction, Observation, and Conducting Comprehensive Evaluations.

Tools Provided to Each Last Mile District (Rasplica, 2025)
• RTI for SLD Implementation Rubric (WAC 392-172A-03060)
• RTI for SLD Checklist
• Final Implementation Plan Template
• Examples of RTI for SLD Procedures Manuals
• MTSS District Snapshot Template
• Example of District Policies and Procedures (Policies 2161, 2163, 2161P)

6.2 Key Findings

Finding 1: Tier 1 Must Be Strengthened — Without Delaying Tier 2/3 Development

All three districts acknowledged that Tier 1 universal instruction needs strengthening, particularly in equipping general education teachers to deliver explicit instruction to diverse classrooms. However, Rasplica (2025) cautioned against a common error: believing Tiers 2 and 3 should not be developed until Tier 1 is sufficiently strong.

Rasplica (2025) applied Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety (Ashby, 1956/2015) to this problem: 'For a system such as a school district to successfully address the range of challenges students present, it must have a repertoire of responses as varied as the problems themselves. In other words, only variety can absorb variety' (p. 4). Screening results in every Washington district will reveal students who struggle with Tier 1 instruction. Tiers 2 and 3 must be available when those students are identified.

Finding 2: Screening and Progress Monitoring Are the Most Technically Demanding Components

None of the three districts had fully established consistent K–12 screening procedures or Tier 2/3 progress monitoring systems. Rasplica (2025) identified two specific technical gaps requiring more intensive coaching than the project was able to provide:

- Computer-adaptive assessments (such as STAR, MAP, and iReady) were being used for progress monitoring. These tools are designed for screening and are not valid for tracking individual student response to intervention. CBM probes are required for Tier 2/3 PM.
- District evaluation teams lacked guidance on trend-line analysis and data-based decision rules for adjusting instructional intensity, both required for RTI-based SLD eligibility under WAC 392-172A-03060.

Finding 3: The RTI/SLD Implementation Rubric Is the Central Planning Tool

Across all three cross-district meetings (March 7, April 30, and September 19, 2025), participants consistently identified the RTI for SLD Implementation Rubric as the most helpful project element. The rubric served to clarify expectations, structure planning, and build shared language. However,

participants noted that more structured facilitation time with the rubric, and less time reading it independently, would be more productive.

Finding 4: Cross-District Collaboration Accelerates Implementation

Peer learning among districts was highly valued. Participants repeatedly asked for more structured cross-district exchange time. The session with Dr. Rachel Brown-Chidsey (on screening, progress monitoring, data review, and procedural manuals) was cited as the most impactful single session of the project. Expert facilitation, combined with peer district sharing, accelerated understanding and planning.

6.3 The Last Mile Recommendations for Washington Districts

Rasplica (2025) provides ten recommendations for districts transitioning to RTI-based SLD identification. These are presented here in full, with annotations connecting each step to the MTSS implementation framework:

#	Step	Description and Connection to MTSS Framework
1	Form District Leadership Team	Include Special Education, Teaching and Learning, Title I/LAP, Multilingual Services, and a superintendent's cabinet member. Aligns with McIntosh and Goodman (2016) on distributed leadership.
2	Identify a Team Lead	Designate a communication link who coordinates between project support and the RTI/MTSS leadership team.
3	Use the RTI for SLD Implementation Rubric	Establish a baseline score across all 9 WAC-aligned criteria. Identify priority areas and work required. Use as a quarterly feedback loop (Rasplica, 2025).
4	Build Your Implementation Plan	Map who is responsible for each criterion, required resources, and timeline. Use the Last Mile Implementation Plan template.
5	Establish a Feedback Loop	Use the rubric quarterly to track progress and guide necessary adjustments across all 9 criteria.
6	Study the SLD Technical Assistance Papers	The 6 SLD TAPs cover the most technically demanding aspects of RTI/SLD implementation. Read with coaching support during initial engagement (Rasplica, 2025).
7	Engage an Expert Consultant	Strengthen the leadership team's technical capabilities around Data-Based Individualization (DBI), CBM, and trend-line analysis.
8	Access the SLD Guidance Document	OSPI's comprehensive SLD guidance document (produced by the Washington AIMS Project) is an essential reference. Rasplica (2025) reported districts found having this document critical to their work.
9	Request OSPI Coaching Support	OSPI should provide structured coaching access for screening, PM, and RTI documentation systems. Rasplica (2025) identifies coaching as the most critical gap in the current support landscape.
10	Build Leadership Team Capacity	Ensure team members understand all essential MTSS/RTI components. Professional learning may be required before implementation planning begins (Rasplica, 2025).

Section 7: References

The following peer-reviewed sources and project reports form the research foundation of this roadmap:

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Document Information

- This roadmap is designed to be reviewed and updated annually by the District MTSS Leadership Team.
- All implementation decisions should be informed by district-specific data collected at each phase.
- The MTSS Fidelity of Implementation Rubric (National Center on MTSS, 2023) should be reviewed annually for national alignment; the RTI for SLD Implementation Rubric (Rasplica, 2025) should be administered at least quarterly by the district RTI/SLD leadership team.
- For technical assistance on WAC 392-172A-03060 implementation, contact OSPI's Special Education department or request coaching support through the Last Mile/AIMS project infrastructure.
- This document should be paired with district-level MTSS handbooks, the Last Mile Implementation Plan template, and individualized professional learning plans.
- Document formatting provided in part by ClaudeAI (Anthropic).

Appendix A: RTI-Based SLD Identification — Quick Reference for District Leaders

Aligned with IDEA 2004 §300.307 and WAC 392-172A-03060. For the full three-tier structure, screening, and progress monitoring guidance, see Sections 2 and 5 of this Roadmap.

RTI Evidence Requirements and Additional Evaluation Components

Required RTI Evidence for SLD Eligibility	Additional Evaluation Components
Documentation of inadequate response: level and rate of growth	Observation in educational setting (required by IDEA)
Fidelity of implementation records (intervention logs, CBM graphs)	Review of existing data, work samples, attendance records
Data showing peer comparison (local normative or benchmark)	Parent/guardian input and interview
Minimum 8–10 weeks Tier 2 data; extended Tier 3 if needed	Norm-referenced academic achievement assessment
Team determination per IDEA 2004 §300.307 RTI pathway	WA: written report documenting RTI data and team findings (WAC 392-172A-03060)

Eight SLD Areas (IDEA 2004) and Leader Quality Assurance Role

Eight SLD Areas (IDEA 2004)	Leader Quality Assurance Role
Basic reading skill	Ensure Tier 1 fidelity is verified before initiating Tier 2 referrals
Reading fluency skill	Monitor disproportionality in RTI referrals by race/ethnicity and EL status
Reading comprehension	Confirm that intervention fidelity data are collected and reviewed at each tier
Mathematics calculation	Support teams in data-based decision-making protocols at every tier
Mathematics problem solving	Align district RTI process with the MTSS framework and WAC 392-172A-03060 requirements
Written expression	Ensure the IEP team is appropriately composed for eligibility determination meetings
Oral expression	
Listening comprehension	

Exclusionary Factors

SLD may not be primarily due to:

Visual, hearing, or motor disability · Intellectual disability · Emotional disturbance · Cultural factors · Environmental or economic disadvantage · Limited English proficiency · Lack of appropriate instruction in reading or mathematics

See Section 3.4 (Equity Considerations) and the RTI/SLD Implementation Rubric (Section 5) for guidance on ruling out cultural and linguistic factors in Washington State.