Common Vocabulary and Definitions for Systemic Support

The purpose of this resource is to provide definitions for vocabulary used within systemic change efforts to promote common language and understanding of concepts. Feedback from ISDs, districts, schools, and statewide groups indicated a need for common vocabulary for systems work to minimize confusion and increase coherence. Vocabulary from all the primary systems work in Michigan was considered, including Implementation Science, MI Systems Support, MTSS, MICIP, MDE Way of Work, and others used nationally. MDE, MiMTSS TA Center, Statewide Field Team from Calhoun ISD, and the State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices Center of the National Implementation Research Network (SISEP/NIRN) reached an agreement on the recommended common vocabulary for Michigan.

Common Vocabulary	Combined Definition using MICIP, MTSS Practice Profile & Other Sources
Capacity	Systems, activities, and resources that are necessary for schools/centers to successfully adopt and sustain effective practices, supports, and interventions. (MDE MTSS Practice Profile)
Coherent Instructional System (curriculum, instruction, and assessment referenced together)	Coherent instructional system is " a set of interrelated programs for students and staff that are guided by a common framework for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and learning climate and that are pursued over a sustained period." (Newmann, Smith, Allensworth, Bryk, 2001)
Communication	Frequent and accurate information regarding implementation planning and progress is exchanged between identified critical perspectives and acted upon by the identified persons. Some goals of communication include sharing information, gathering feedback and input, clarifying expectations, and celebrating successes. (NIRN, 2020)
Consulting	Providing professional or technical advice or opinions for the purpose of understanding a problem and presenting solutions. (MDE- Transformation Zone)
Data-Driven Decision-Making	The utilization of all relevant whole child and system data to analyze, evaluate, and plan strategies that support sustainable systemic improvement and whole child learner outcomes. Data-driven decision-making is inclusive of efficient data collection practices for multiple data sets and a formal continuous improvement process. Data used are timely, valid, reliable, accurate, and reviewed in ongoing cycles. The roles and responsibilities for data-driven decision-making within the system are clearly defined and executed. (adapted from MDE MTSS Practice Profile)

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Indicators considered in the Selection of Practices, Programs, Assessments or Strategies: • **Need** • **Fit** • **Evidence** • **Capacity** • **Supports** • **Usability**	**Implementing Site Indicators** • **Need**: The extent to which the strategy has demonstrated meeting the identified need of the target population through research and/or evaluation with a comparable population • **Fit**: The extent to which the strategy aligns with the district's current priorities, existing initiatives, and values • **Capacity**: The strength of the district's qualified workforce, financial supports, technology supports, and administrative supports needed to implement and sustain the strategy with fidelity **Program Indicators** • **Evidence**: The strength of the strategy's evidence in achieving intended outcomes when implemented well through research and/or evaluation work • **Supports**: The strength of the supports available from an expert to support implementation, including resources for building the competency of staff (staff selection, training, coaching, fidelity) and organizational practice (data system and use support, policies and procedures, engaging critical perspectives) • **Usability**: The extent to which the strategy's principles, values, and core components are measurable and observable. It also helps determine if the strategy has a validated fidelity assessment and identified modifiable components to support its use with new settings or populations (MICIP adapted from NIRN)
Engaging critical perspectives	Engaging critical perspectives is the process by which an organization involves people who may be affected by the decisions it makes or can influence the implementation of its decisions. They may support or oppose the decisions, be influential in the organization or within the community in which it operates, hold relevant positions, or be affected in the long term.
Fidelity	The degree to which a strategy is implemented as intended according to research or evidence (often measured by a fidelity assessment or strategy implementation guide). (MICIP) Measures of fidelity include dosage (frequency and duration), quality of delivery, adherence to the key features, and responsiveness of participants receiving the strategy. Integrity is another term often used within systems change efforts which also refers to the degree to which a strategy is implemented as intended.
Framework	An essential supporting structure underlying a system designed to provide the organization of multiple practices/initiatives/strategies that a district would support. (Adapted from MDE MTSS Practice Profile)

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Implementation Stages	Implementation Stages outline the sequence of activities needed for sustained use of an evidence-based practice or program. There are four stages: Exploration, Installation, Initial Implementation, and Full Implementation. • **Exploration**: To examine the degree to which a particular program or innovation meets the district's needs and whether implementation is feasible • **Installation**: To ensure that resources for implementation are in place and to develop practitioner competency • **Initial Implementation**: To first put the strategy into place and identify solutions to barriers for implementation; initial implementation could also involve implementation on a limited scale • **Full Implementation**: To skillfully put the strategy into place and achieve intended outcomes. Full implementation could also mean moving from implementation on a limited scale to full scale (MICIP adapted from NIRN)
Improvement Cycles	An Improvement cycle is a planned sequence of systematic and documented activities to learn and improve practices and systems by answering the following questions: • What are we trying to accomplish? • How will we know that a change is an improvement? • What change can we make that will result in improvement? (NIRN IS-IS Infographic)
Initiative Inventory	A process of identifying current and previously implemented initiatives that relate to a focus area for improvement. Used to guide a team's review of past and current programs to get a clear picture of successful strategies and challenges, along with existing mandates and resource commitments. The inventory also includes assessments used to evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives or strategies. (MDE MTSS Practice Profile)
Instructional Coaching	Partnering with teachers to analyze current reality, set goals, identify and explain teaching strategies to hit goals, and provide support until goals are met. (Knight, 2016)
Leadership	Leadership is foundational to the work of implementation through the use of adaptive and technical strategies to address challenges as well as focus efforts on empowering staff and implementation teams.
Problem Solving	Problem-solving is the act of defining a problem; determining the cause of the problem; identifying, prioritizing, and selecting alternatives for a solution; implementing, monitoring, and adjusting a solution to achieve better outcomes.
Professional Learning	Activities that are data-driven, content-focused, and aligned to the instructional and growth needs of students and staff. Professional learning activities should be collaborative, purposeful, planned, sustained over time, job-embedded, classroom-focused, and aligned with the MDE's Professional Learning Policy. (MDE MTSS Practice Profile)
Resource Equity	The allocation and use of resources – people, time, and money – to create student experiences that enable all children to reach empowering, rigorous learning outcomes, no matter their race or income. Provid[ing] all students with the resources required to create the kind of experiences they need to meet rigorous academic expectations and succeed in our fast-changing information- and technology-based society, so that race, income, and zip code no longer predict success in school and beyond. (Travers, 2018)

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Staff Selection	Selection refers to the purposeful process of recruiting, interviewing, and hiring 'with the end in mind'. Selection through an active implementation lens includes identifying skills and abilities that are prerequisites and/or specific to the innovation or program, as well as attributes that are difficult to train and coach. (NIRN, 2021)
System	A series of interdependent and aligned processes and people working together toward a common goal to bring desired results. (MDE MICIP Process Guide, 2021)
Systems Coaching	The application of a set of skills that provides dynamic support and facilitation to develop the capacity of school or district teams to implement [practices, programs, or strategies] aligned with the school or district improvement plans in order to enhance student outcomes. (March & Gaunt, 2013)
Team Structures	A structure of linked teams at the district, school, and educator level that hold the function of leadership, improvement, and implementation of practices, programs, strategies, or interventions. The functions of these teams are implementation and improvement. The form of the team depends on the function.
Technical Assistance (TA)	The process of providing support to an organization with a developmental need or problem to collaborate on work products and/or build internal capacity. Technical assistance is delivered over a specified period of time at different levels of intensity: • Universal – Broadly disseminated and widely accessible information available to all independent users. • Targeted – Supports developed based on needs common to multiple recipients and not extensively individualized. • Intensive – Extensive, individualized support requiring an ongoing relationship between provider and recipient to ensure effective adaptation for the local context.
Tiered Delivery System	A responsive framework that provides research-based instruction, interventions, and supports intended to meet the needs and assets of the whole child. Based on an aligned curriculum, the instructional practices, interventions, and supports are organized along a continuum to meet the needs of each and every learner. Tiers are intended to be layered with the intensification of supports matched to learner needs. (MDE MTSS Practice Profile)
Whole Child	The "whole child" is a unique learner comprised of interacting dimensions such as cognitive, physical, behavioral, social, and emotional. (MDE Definition, MICIP, MDE MTSS Practice Profile)

References

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