Integrated Universal Data-based Decision Making: Examining and Improving Tier 1 Instruction

Advancing Evidence. Improving Lives.

Pennsylvania's Integrated Multi-Tiered System of Supports (PA I-MTSS; 2026)

PURPOSE

- This protocol is designed to help grade-level and middle school-high school (MS/HS) content area teams use reading, math, and social-emotional behavioral (SEB) data, as well as daily attendance, engagement, implementation, context, and access data to determine how well Tier 1 instruction is working for students within a grade level or within a content-area.
- Teams will identify data patterns and then develop an action plan to strengthen Tier 1 for all students.
- Decisions about supports for *individual* students should be made **after** using this protocol. Refer to the companion tool, *Integrated Universal Data-Based Decision Making Protocol: Identifying Students Who May Need Additional Support.*

Who Should Use this Protocol?

Grade-level or MS/HS content-area teams use this protocol after each universal screening or benchmark period. Teams should include educators with the expertise needed to interpret multiple data sets (e.g., academic, SEB, implementation data) and act on the results. This may include one or more of the following:

- Grade-level or content-area educators responsible for universal instruction and supports
- Educators with SEB, mental health, PBIS, and/or counseling expertise
- Specialists, such as interventionists, special educators, English learner specialists, school psychologists
- Administrators or other staff with decision-making authority, as needed

Team Roles

Before beginning, assign team members to the following roles. One person may serve in more than one role.

Role	Responsibility
Facilitator	Keeps the team focused on integrated universal patterns, action planning, and follow-up
Data lead	Prepares or orients the team to the integrated data display
Recorder	Documents key decisions, action steps, owners, and timelines
Follow-up owner	Ensures action steps, communication, and next review steps are completed

Before the Meeting: Prepare Integrated Grade-Level Data Displays

The facilitator, data lead, or other assigned team member prepares grade-level data displays that allow the team to review multiple data sets during the same meeting. These data may come from the same system or from multiple systems, but they should be available together for decision making.

Data to Prepare	Examples	Ready?
Academic screening data	Reading and math composite scores, subskill data, benchmark/risk levels, classroom data	☐
SEB and/or behavior screening data	SEB screener data, behavior event patterns, office discipline referrals, minor behavior data, counselor referrals, teacher nominations	☐
Attendance data	Attendance rate, chronic absence indicators, tardies, early checkouts	☐
Engagement and participation data	Work completion, class participation, active engagement, nurse visits	☐
Implementation data	Fidelity checks, classroom walkthrough data, coaching notes, use of expected instructional or SEB practices	☐
Context and access data	Language proficiency status, cultural/contextual information, special education status, accessibility needs, relevant family/contextual information	☐
Prior Tier 1 action plan data	Previous Tier 1 instruction action plan, prior action steps, outcome review, follow-up notes, and unresolved implementation needs	☐

FACILITATION REMINDER

Analyze academic, SEB, and other data in the same meeting. It is acceptable to examine each area separately first, but the team then looks across areas to identify integrated Tier 1 instruction patterns.

Meeting Information

School:		Grade/Content:	
Date:		Screening Window:	
Facilitator:		Recorder:	
Participants:		Expertise Represented:	
Data Sources Used:			

Step 1. Review Grade-Level Tier 1 Instruction Outcomes Across Reading, Math, and SEB

Start by determining whether Tier 1 instruction are meeting the academic and SEB needs of most students. Record the percentage of students meeting expectations, at some risk, and at high risk for each area.

Area	Meeting Expectations / Low Risk	Some Risk	High Risk	Initial Tier 1 Instruction Interpretation
Reading	_____%	_____%	_____%	What does this suggest about Tier 1 instruction?
Math	_____%	_____%	_____%	What does this suggest about Tier 1 instruction?
SEB	_____%	_____%	_____%	What does this suggest about Tier 1 instruction?
Attendance	_____%	_____%	_____%	What does this suggest about Tier 1 instruction?
Engagement	_____%	_____%	_____%	What does this suggest about Tier 1 instruction?

Step 2. Identify Patterns Across Tier 1 Instruction

Use the prompts below to move from separate data points to integrated Tier 1 instruction patterns. Focus on patterns that can be addressed through Tier 1 improvements.

Pattern-Finding Question	Team Notes	Evidence / Data Source
What academic skills or standards are most commonly associated with risk across the grade level?		
What SEB skills, routines, expectations, or settings appear to be associated with risk?		
Where do academic and SEB concerns overlap? For example, are students with academic risk also showing attendance, engagement, or behavior concerns?		

Are concerns concentrated in a specific classroom, routine, time of day, content area, or instructional format?		
Are there patterns by student group, including language proficiency status, access concerns (e.g., braille text), special education status, cultural background, or other relevant contextual factors?		
What does the team need to learn more about before selecting a Tier 1 focus?		

KEEP THE CONVERSATION AT THE TIER 1 LEVEL

When many students show a similar concern, pause before assuming the issue is individual student performance. Ask: What can we strengthen in Tier 1 instruction to better meet students' comprehensive needs before moving to additional supports?

Step 3. Select an Integrated Tier 1 Focus

Select one Tier 1 instructional focus that can be improved before the next data review.
The improvement may focus on a change to academic and/or SEB instruction, may be attendance and/or engagement-related, or may be across these areas.

Integrated Tier 1 Instruction improvement	
Why was this improvement selected?	
What evidence supports this improvement?	
How does this improvement relate to improved comprehensive outcomes for all students in the grade?	

Step 4. Develop an Integrated Tier 1 Action Plan

Commit to a plan that strengthens integrated Tier 1 instruction. The plan should specify what adults will do differently, how implementation will be supported (e.g., training and coaching), and how the team will know whether the change is working.

Action Area	Selected Strategy or Action	Who / When	Support Needed
Academic instruction	Examples: increase modeling, guided practice, opportunities to respond, feedback, scaffolding, vocabulary instruction, fluency practice, problem-solving routines		
Curriculum and materials	Examples: align materials to focus skill, adapt texts/materials to be better aligned to students' needs		
SEB supports	Examples: teach or reteach expectations, strengthen transitions, increase active supervision, reinforce desired behavior, create predictable routines, increase relationship-building practices		
Attendance, engagement, and participation	Examples: increase student connection, monitor attendance patterns, build routines that increase participation, collaborate with caregivers		
Context and access	Examples: Collaborate with language specialist(s) and/or special education teacher(s) to improve access to instruction, coordinate with caregivers		

Step 5. Plan Fidelity Monitoring and Outcome Review

Complete the relevant rows to determine how the team will monitor whether the Tier 1 instruction action plan is implemented as intended and whether student outcomes improve before the next review.

What will be monitored?	Measure / Data Source	Who will collect or review?	When will the team review?
Implementation (e.g., collect walk-through data)			
Academic outcome			
SEB outcome			

Attendance and/or engagement outcome			
Context and access outcome			

Step 6. Summarize Patterns for School-Wide Continuous Improvement

Summarize what the school leadership/MTSS team (e.g., Demonstration Site Leadership Team) should know about Tier 1 implementation. This information is used with summaries from other grade levels/content areas to identify school-wide patterns and supports.

Summary Question	Grade-Level Summary
What is the most important integrated Tier 1 pattern identified by this grade-level/content area team?	
What schoolwide support (e.g., resource, professional learning, and/or scheduling adjustment) is needed?	
What barriers may affect implementation of the Tier 1 action plan?	
What should be elevated to the school-level MTSS/continuous improvement team?	

CONNECTION TO THE COMPANION PROTOCOL

After completing this protocol, teams use the companion Integrated ***Universal Data-based Decision Making: Identifying Students In Need of Support*** to identify students who may need additional review, Tier 2 or Tier 3 support, caregiver communication, or continued monitoring. The student identification conversation should be informed by the Tier 1 patterns identified here.