



District Implementation Team Communication Plan & Process for Addressing Barriers

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DIT Communication Plan & Process for Addressing Barriers

Approved by: (insert name, date)

Overview

The District Implementation Team (DIT) assists in the selection and successful use of effective innovations. To ensure effective innovations are used with fidelity, scaled-up across the district and sustained, communication to and from the DIT must occur on a regular basis.

Supporting the use of effective innovations also means the DIT needs to know about the barriers schools and staff face when working to use the effective innovation components. For this reason, embedded within the communication plan is the district's process for addressing barriers. The purpose of this document is to provide a template and when necessary, worked examples, of communication plan components and a process for addressing barriers.

This document is not inclusive of all methods that might be used by the district to ensure timely and effective communication. For example, the use of the website, social media, and other communication methods are ways the district uses to connect with a variety of stakeholders about a variety of topics. It has been recommended the district first learn how to apply best practices for communication and barrier removal to the specific Effective Innovation the DIT is working to develop an implementation infrastructure to support (e.g., MTSS). Following the initial learning, the plan should expand to include other communication topics and methods to support sustainability of high-quality communication and barrier removal methods.

Section 1: Communication Plan

A communication plan is a written document which outlines the protocols for communicating with internal/external stakeholder groups. Once developed, the plan should be shared with and accessible to all staff (in a shared location for groups/teams, and other individuals who are identified in this document to easily access, read, and ask questions for clarification).

There are four parts to a communication plan. Each part is described in further detail below.

Part 1: Groups/Teams

Groups and teams identified in the communication plan are internal and external groups whose work would be impacted by implementation of MTSS.

Part 2: Designees

Designees identified for each team are responsible for supporting communication between identified groups. They should have easy access to the groups they are responsible for communicating with and have the ability to follow through with communication within identified timelines.

Part 3: Protocols

For each stakeholder group, mutually agreed upon protocols identify the designees responsible for communication, frequency and methods for communication and the type of information that needs to be shared with, and gathered from, each group. All linking communication protocols should be included or linked to this document.

There will be some stakeholder groups for which only some components of the communication plan apply, and a full protocol may not be necessary. It is possible that some communication may be disseminated to a large group (e.g. families) through the use of social media or email. In these instances, include all relevant components of the plan for those groups to ensure communication occurs as intended.

Part 4: Communication Effectiveness Survey

The use of an annual or bi-annual communication survey provides districts with a way of measuring the effectiveness of communication to adjust the communication plan over time. Specific strategies such as the use of electronic surveys and existing meeting times for survey completion should be considered to increase survey response rate and ensure data is reflective of the staff surveyed. **Effective communication is defined as at least 80% or more staff surveyed from the identified groups/teams rate, “agree” for each item in the survey.**

Table 1. Complete the communication plan below to identify who will be responsible for communication between groups, if protocols will be developed, and timelines for surveys.

Groups/Teams Internal and external	Designees	Linking Communication Protocol? (Y/N)	Date to Survey
Central Office	DIT: Executive Leader:		
Administrative Team	DIT: Administrative Team:		
School coaches	DIT: School coach or coach coordinator:		
School Leadership Teams	DIT: School names and designees:		
ISD	DIT: ISD:		
Add others as needed	DIT: (other group designee)		

Guidelines for Use

Established guidelines need to be developed for how the communication plan will be consistently used. Consider if communication will be included as a standing agenda item and linked to the DIT meeting agenda. The identification of a team member to fulfill the role of Communication Liaison and prompt communication to necessary groups is another option to consider. Also consider where key communication will be documented to ensure it will occur (e.g., minutes, action plan)

Example Linking Communication Protocols

The purpose of a communication plan is to communicate information that is critical to staff’s ability to successfully use the components of an MTSS framework. Linking communication protocols identify designees responsible for communication between groups, frequency and methods for communication and the type of information that needs to be shared with, and gathered from, each group.

District-wide Communication Norms

Communication norms are agreed upon guidelines and expectations for how communication will occur across all groups within the district. Acceptable district timelines for responding to communication is 48-72 hours. Acceptable methods for communication include meetings, email, phone, and newsletter updates. Specifics about the frequency and method can be added to the corresponding column in the protocol.

Table 2. Communication protocol contents adapted from Hastings Area Schools communication plan (2019)

Groups/ Teams	Need to Know: From DIT	Need to Know: To DIT	Designees (Name & Role)	Frequency/ Method
Central Office	DIT Membership & Meeting Schedule Accomplishments District Plans for Barrier Removal Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upcoming Professional Learning • District Data • Implementation Plan Progress • Summary of Alignment, Review, and Selection/De-Selection 	Board Communication Feedback, Questions, Concerns Barriers/Needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of barriers difficult to remove • Suggestions for addressing barriers District Resource Allocation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Personnel/Hiring Process Updates • Budget Information • Requests for Effective Innovation Review • Time 	DIT: Assistant Superintendent Executive Leadership: Superintendent	Monthly, MTSS Update (email using template) after each DIT meeting Weekly Meeting between DIT and Central Office designees

Groups/ Teams	Need to Know: From DIT	Need to Know: To DIT	Designees (Name & Role)	Frequency/ Method
<p>Principals</p>	<p>DIT Membership & Meeting Schedule</p> <p>Accomplishments</p> <p>District Plans for Barrier Removal Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upcoming Professional Learning • District Data • Implementation Plan Progress • Summary of Alignment, Review, and Selection/De-Selection 	<p>School Staffing Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLT Members • School Coaches • School Data Coordinators <p>Accomplishments</p> <p>Barriers/Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of barriers difficult to remove • Suggestions for addressing barriers <p>Feedback, Questions, Concerns</p> <p>District Resource Allocation Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Personnel • Requests for Effective Innovation Review 	<p>DIT:</p> <p>Assistant Superintendent, Coordinator</p> <p>Principals:</p> <p>Elementary and Secondary Principals</p>	<p>Monthly, MTSS Update (email using template) after each DIT meeting</p> <p>Monthly, SLT Updates after building meetings</p> <p>Administrative Team Meetings</p>

Groups/ Teams	Need to Know: From DIT	Need to Know: To DIT	Designees (Name & Role)	Frequency/ Method
School Coaches	<p>DIT Membership & Meeting Schedule</p> <p>Coach Meeting Schedule</p> <p>Accomplishments</p> <p>District Plans for Barrier Removal</p> <p>Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upcoming Professional Learning • Individualized Professional Learning Plans • Summary of EI Alignment, Review, and Selection/De-Selection • District Coaching System Updates • Coaching Effectiveness Data 	<p>SLT Membership & Meeting Schedule</p> <p>Accomplishments</p> <p>Barriers/Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of barriers to providing coaching • Suggestions for addressing barriers <p>Requests for Professional Learning</p> <p>Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching Service Delivery Plan • Implementation Plan • Installation Checklist • Coaching Effectiveness Data 	<p>DIT: Coordinator</p> <p>Coaches: School-level Coaches</p>	<p>Monthly, MTSS Update (email using template) after each DIT meeting</p> <p>Monthly Coaches meetings</p>

Groups/ Teams	Need to Know: From DIT	Need to Know: To DIT	Designees (Name & Role)	Frequency/ Method
School Leadership Teams (SLTs)	DIT Membership & Meeting Schedule Accomplishments District Plans for Barrier Removal Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upcoming Professional Learning • Summary of EI Alignment, Review, and Selection/De-Selection • Data Coordination Activities • District Data 	SLT Membership & Meeting Schedule Accomplishments Barriers/Needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of Barriers • Suggestions for addressing barriers Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dates for School Events • Implementation Plan Updates District Resource Allocation Needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Personnel • Requests for Effective Innovation Review 	DIT: Coordinator Coaches: School-level Coaches	Monthly, MTSS Update (email using template) after each DIT meeting Monthly, SLT Updates (email using template) after each team meeting

Groups/ Teams	Need to Know: From DIT	Need to Know: To DIT	Designees (Name & Role)	Frequency/ Method
ISD	<p>DIT Membership & Meeting Schedule</p> <p>Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTSS Update (work, accomplishments) • Upcoming Professional Learning • Strengths of the state system <p>Barriers requiring ISD/state support</p> <p>Training Requests</p> <p>Instructional Coaching Supports</p>	<p>ISD Staffing Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISD Staff Supporting District • Instructional Coaching Supports <p>Financial Commitments from ISD/State</p> <p>Updates in Legislation</p> <p>ISD Plans for Barrier Removal</p> <p>Newly Selected Effective Innovations</p>	<p>DIT: Assistant Superintendent</p> <p>ISD: ISD Superintendent</p>	<p>Monthly, MTSS Update (email using template) after each DIT meeting</p> <p>Monthly meeting between DIT and ISD designees</p>

Example Communication Effectiveness Survey

The communication effectiveness survey is sent out to groups/teams during the designated timelines listed on the Communication Plan (page 4).

Introduction statement: The District Implementation Team continues to be focused on effective communication in order to help support your school's use of MTSS. We would like to hear from you about how effective communication has been to and from our team.

Directions: Please complete this brief survey. The data will be used by the District Implementation Team to refine and improve how effectively we communicate to you!

Select your primary role:

- MiMTSS TAC
 - Central office administrator
 - Administrator
 - School leadership team member
 - Coach
 - ISD
 - (Add any other group/team roles that are included in your communication plan)
1. I am kept informed about critical aspects of the MTSS work.
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
 2. I feel the level of communication with my District Implementation Team designee is adequate.
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
 3. What other feedback about communication with the District Implementation Team would you like to share?

Section 2: Process for Addressing Implementation Barriers

Implementation barriers are challenges that schools are unable to remove themselves and are preventing them from moving forward with implementation of MTSS. Implementation barriers are listed as a “need to know” within each linking communication protocol outlined in the District Implementation Team (DIT) communication plan.

While the linking communication protocol provides a regular opportunity for implementation barriers to be shared with DIT designees, it does not outline the steps that will be taken from the point the barrier is communicated to the DIT to the point in which it has been confirmed that the barrier has been removed.

(Insert District name) will take the steps listed below to address implementation barriers. In the subsequent section, you will find a table which lists the individuals with the level of decision-making authority required to remove barriers. When identified barriers require communication with individuals outside the DIT to be removed, a DIT designee will be assigned to communicate the barrier with the identified individual. This information is critical for initiating specific steps within this process.

Steps to Address Implementation Barriers

Step 1: Implementation barrier is identified and communicated to the DIT. It is added to the Barrier Log (**insert link to barrier log**) under step 1, along with the name of the individual or team who raised the barrier. The barrier log is located in the second tab of the DIT Pre-Meeting Google Sheet and will also be linked to all team agendas to prompt its use.

Step 2: The barrier log is reviewed and updated at monthly DIT meetings. When a new barrier is identified, the DIT uses the table in the following section to identify the type of barrier and the individual or group with the appropriate level of decision-making authority to remove the barrier. This information is documented under step 2 in the barrier log. If the DIT is able to address the barrier, advance to step 4.

Step 3: If someone outside the DIT is identified to remove the barrier, a DIT designee is assigned and documented under step 3 in the barrier log. The DIT designee schedules a meeting to accurately describe the barrier and surrounding context if necessary.

If the DIT designee does not have direct access to the person with the appropriate level of decision-making authority, then the designee is assigned to speak with an alternate person recommended by (insert DIT Executive Leader name).

Step 4: Once the person or group with the appropriate level of decision-making authority understands the barrier, they will outline the subsequent steps that need to be taken to remove the barrier and the anticipated timeline for the steps to be completed.

Below is an example of what this could look like:

“It (should **or** should not) take long to remove this barrier. The steps that will need to be taken to address it include:”

1. Insert first step
2. Insert second step
3. Insert third step (etc.)

Understanding the incremental steps along the way will allow the DIT to plan their status updates in accordance with anticipated timelines for barriers to be addressed. It is possible it may take several months to remove a barrier. The specific steps identified and anticipated timelines will be communicated back to the DIT and documented under step 4 of the barrier log.

Step 5: The DIT allocates time at the beginning of every meeting to provide a status update for any barriers (listed on the Barrier Log). The update includes a brief reminder of the barrier; identification of which steps (2, 3, 5, or 6) of the process the barrier is in given the process outlined by the district to remove a barrier. If the barrier has not been removed, there is an opportunity to determine if additional steps need to be taken.

Step 6: The barrier has been addressed. This information is provided to the DIT designee that initiated the communication of the barrier and is subsequently recorded under step 6 of the barrier log. Communication occurs back to the group/team or individual that originally raised the barrier to the DIT using the linking communication protocol.

Step 7: One month following the removal of the barrier, the group/team or individual that originally raised the barrier to the DIT will be asked if the way in which the barrier was addressed has been sufficient. This means, whatever the barrier was that was preventing the group / team or individual from being able to do, the person has now been able to resume doing with success. Results are documented under step 7 of the barrier log.

Step 8: Once a barrier has been removed, it will be indicated as “busted” in column B of the barrier log and color-coded green to indicate it has been removed.

District Personnel to Address Implementation Barriers

(In the tables below select options that are applicable to your district and fill in appropriate names in the fields. Given your district’s configuration and size, it is likely you might collapse decision types. It is important to remember to maintain enough clarity when describing the decision type so DIT members can accurately identify who is best equipped to address the barrier. Identify individuals with the highest level of decision-making authority, as well as others who may need to be involved in the decision.)

Funding

Decision Types	Person with Decision Making Authority	Involvement of Additional Individuals/Teams
Title I questions related to appropriate use of funds		N/A
Approval for use of any type of funds (excluding IDEA)		
Requests for flexible use of state or federal funds (requiring MDE approval)	MDE (OEII or OSE) Staff (add person name) would be the designee from district to initiate a request Determine if the request goes to the appropriate ISD leadership (e.g., superintendent or assistant superintendent) who in turn, makes the request on the district's behalf	

Special Education

Decision Types	Person with Decision Making Authority	Involvement of Additional Individuals/Teams
Learning Support Services (LSS)		

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Decision Types	Person with Decision Making Authority	Involvement of Additional Individuals/Teams
Secondary curriculum and instruction		
Science and Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction (PreK-12 th Grade)		
Literacy and Math Curriculum (PreK-4 th Grade)		
PK-12 Assessment		

Student Behavior

Decision Types	Person with Decision Making Authority	Involvement of Additional Individuals/Teams
Behavior Interventions and Code for Student Conduct		

Human Resources

Decision Types	Person with Decision Making Authority	Involvement of Additional Individuals/Teams
Personnel issues concerning general education staff		
Personnel issues concerning special education staff		

Technology

Decision Types	Person with Decision Making Authority	Involvement of Additional Individuals/Teams
Access to supports for district approved technology		

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