The focus of the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) is to provide an integrated systemic approach that supports students in their ability to achieve high academic and behavioral standards, in a manner that is intentional, responsive, and preventative. The ongoing work of an MTSS is sustained through effective leadership, the creation and nurturing of an empowering culture, and the targeted ongoing professional development of every stakeholder involved. At the center of this framework is a set of evidence-based practices and procedures in the areas of curriculum, instruction and assessment. These practices are supported by research and promote the ability of the system to gather, analyze, and use data for the purpose of instructional decision making across all levels, including the classroom, school building, and district. As straight forward as this description of MTSS may be, it is important not to become side-tracked allowing practices that support critical features of MTSS as described in the *Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports: Innovation Configuration Matrix (ICM)* and/or replacing component parts of the model with other information or strategies that may contradict the research behind MTSS practices.

A critical feature of the MTSS is adherence to a set of scientifically researched and evidence-based practices. Through ongoing examination and study, researchers have found each of these practices to be effective within a specific context, and when carried out in a specific manner. Conversely, when adapted or varied it is not possible to know if the practice will be effective (Baer, Wolf, & Risley, 1987). Thus to achieve the desired effect of an MTSS (e.g. improved student outcomes, functional systems, etc.), it is imperative that the system components, practices and procedures are implemented with fidelity and monitored for effectiveness.

In order to help teams navigate these waters, some common implementation errors and examples are presented below. Because these same errors have been observed repeatedly to produce detrimental effects on successful implementation, teams need to take heed and avoid the following pitfalls.

Inappropriate Intervention Protocols (aka Using the Old System as the Model):
− Tier 3 DOES NOT EQUAL Special Education (although some students receiving special education services may receive Tier 3 supports)
− Students should NOT only be supported by a "Specialist" (e.g. SPED students with SPED teacher, Title students with Title teacher, etc.)
− SIT team does not replace the building-wide system for moving students into and out of intervention (See Brief titled "Student Improvement Teams and the Multi-Tier System of Supports, April 2011)

Using the Wrong Tool or Misusing Universal Screening Information:
− Determining student intervention groups and planning intervention instruction based on state assessment indicators does not address the underlying academic deficits or needs for enrichment and therefore is unlikely to impact long term student outcomes
− Not using office discipline data (ODR) to inform school-wide behavior systems at the Tier 1 level does not allow for analysis of the core behavioral curriculum, and therefore will result in overwhelm of resources at Tiers 2 and 3.

Lack of Systemic Intervention System:
− Providing intervention time during core instruction is NOT an MTSS practice. When student data indicate that support beyond the core is necessary, this intervention time should be provided IN ADDITION TO the core instruction time as recommended in MTSS Structuring.
− Differentiation is a key component of effective core instruction and does not constitute "intervention." (See Brief titled "Differentiated Instruction Within MTSS", January 2011).

MTSS is not a "buffet style" initiative where individual teachers choose what pieces they would like to implement and IF they would like to implement. Benefits for students will be most robust when all adults in the building participate in a collaborative manner, from delivering instruction and intervention to reviewing data and making instructional decisions and modifications based on those data.

- Efforts must be across the whole system, with a district leadership team and building leadership teams taking responsibility for creating the comprehensive structures for implementation.
- MTSS must not be viewed primarily as a special education or general education responsibility; rather it must be embraced as an instructional responsibility of all adults in a building.

Inadequate or Incomplete Data Systems:

- Departure from the principles and practices identified in the Kansas MTSS ICM will result in data that are less rigorous for decision making, and potentially incompatible with the MTSS decision making process for student instruction. (see the Kansas MTSS: ICM & briefs titled, "*Required Practices for Implementation of MTSS Addressing Reading, Math, or Behavior*")
- Data review must allow for fluid grouping of students based on screening and student progress monitoring data during intervention. Entry and exit criteria for interventions must be established and followed so that students can receive intervention as rapidly as they are identified as needing support, and can be released from intervention when the data indicate that intervention is no longer needed.

Curricular Misconceptions:

- Effective instructional strategies are PART of a comprehensive curriculum, but do not replace the systemic curricular protocol.
- MTSS implementation, through the use of universal screening, creates a system in which all students are participants. MTSS is not something that is DONE to students, nor is it the process for the determination of eligibility for entitlement programs (e.g., Special Education, ESOL, etc.). Rather it is a process by which students are identified as needing support and matched with appropriate supports and thus provides data to inform entitlement evaluation processes.
- Meeting the needs of ALL students is the primary focus of an MTSS. MOST students should meet basic proficiency with core instruction. When this is not the case, the core curriculum and fidelity to that curriculum in its implementation should be examined rather than attempting to "fix" all of the learning deficits in Tiers 2 and 3.

While the Kansas MTSS can and should be used as a broad framework for improving outcomes for students, the Kansas Department of Education (KSDE) does not mandate its use. Schools are free to choose whether or not they undertake the MTSS; however, if the choice is made to structure and implement this systems-level change effort, fidelity to the framework and protocols will result in much more robust outcomes for students. Districts that choose to prepare for implementation of an MTSS are encouraged to access support from Kansas MTSS State Trainers and the TASN website, who will offer webinars and regional training opportunities to assist your team in structuring, implementing, and refining their Kansas MTSS framework. Keep in mind that this is a multi-year process, requiring that ddistricts and buildings engage in both structuring AND implementation in order to properly build the system and keep it running effectively and efficiently.

**All briefs referenced herein can be accessed at www.kansasmtss.org, then click on the "Resources" tab at the top of the page.*

References
Baer, D. M., Wolf, M. M., & Risley, T. R. (1987). Some still-current dimensions of applied behavior analysis, *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 20*, 313-327.