



***Successfully
Instructing and
Assessing Students
who Take the
Alternate Assessment
(and Those Who Used
to Take the Alternate)***

**2020 Inclusive Education
Leadership Institute**



Presenters

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National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO)

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www.nceo.info

Session Organization

- Overview and background information
- ***Making assessment participation decisions***
 - Breakout room discussions – 20 minutes
 - Report out to large group – 15 minutes
- ***MTSS for all students, including students who participate in the alternate assessment (and those who once participated in the alternate)***
 - Breakout room discussions – 20 minutes
 - Report out to large group – 15 minutes

Session Objectives

Participants will:

- be able to see the linkage between assessment participation decisions and instruction.
- have an awareness of how to use an MTSS approach to organize and provide a tiered instruction continuum for all students including students with significant cognitive disabilities and those who have recently shifted from the alternate assessment to general assessment.
- be able to take the resources and tools shared and use them to have meaningful conversations in their districts and regions.

The Ohio Improvement Process

- You may wish to keep the OIP in mind as we present information and ideas today. It makes sense to use this model to successfully implement best practices for assessment participation decisions, instruction, and MTSS.



Overview

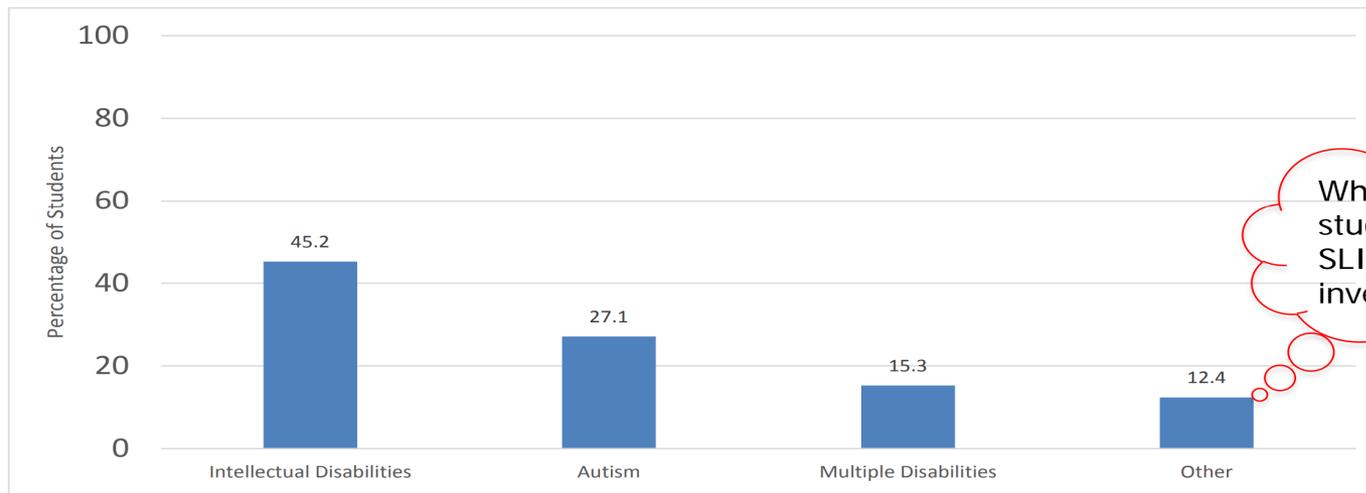
- **IEP teams find it challenging to make appropriate assessment participation decisions for students on the cusp between taking the general assessment and the Alternate Assessment aligned to Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS), or alternate assessment, and the potential negative consequences of incorrect decisions are significant.**
- **Simultaneously with making assessment decisions, IEP team also sometimes grapple with how to ensure that students receive an appropriate education designed to meet their educational needs in the least restrictive environment appropriate regardless of which assessment the student takes.**

In Ohio the alternate assessment is named the Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (AASCD).

National Data

National Data on Disability Categories

Categories of Disabilities of Students Participating in the Alternate Assessment



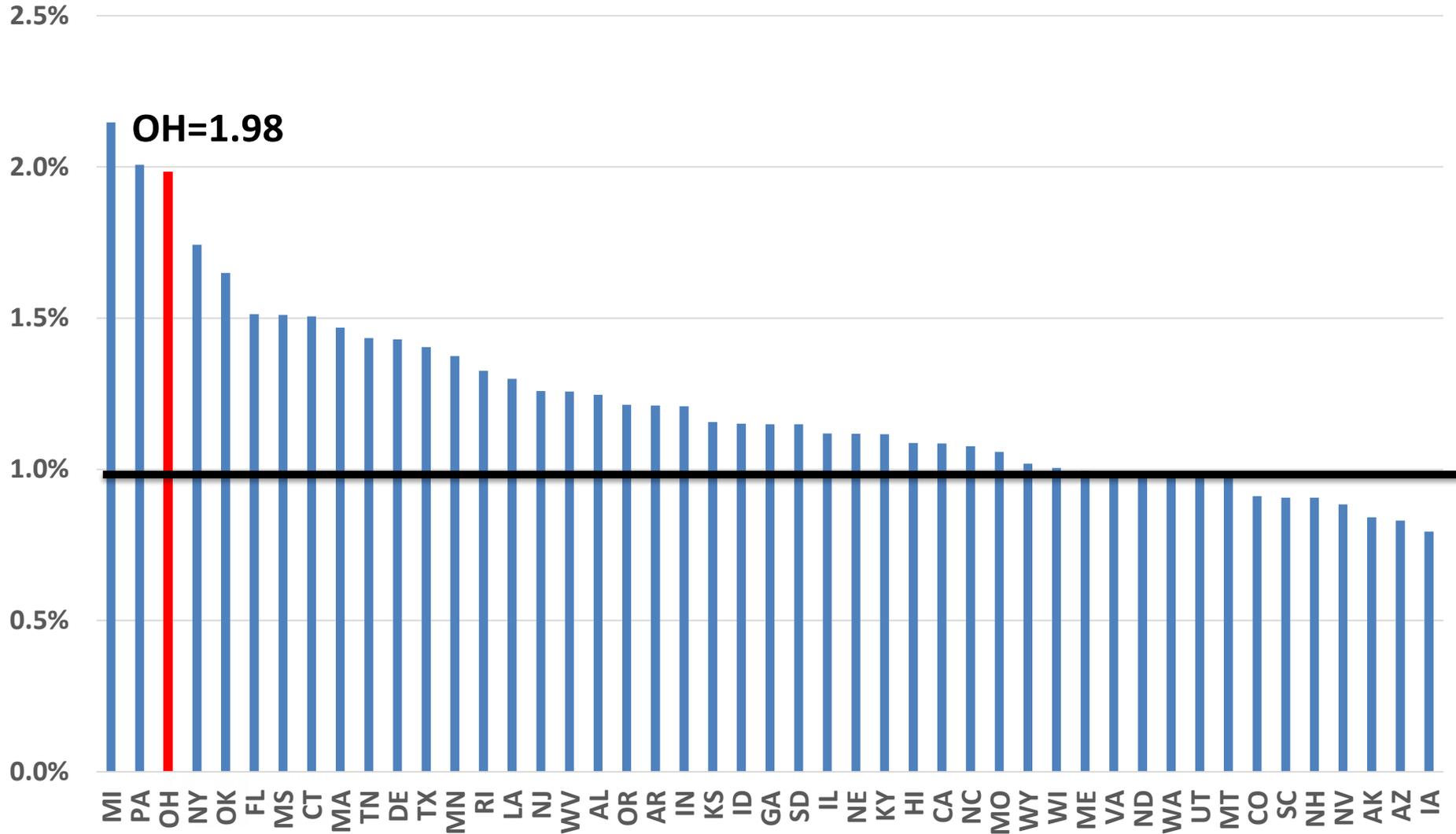
Who are these students? – if LD, SLI, may need to investigate

Figure includes data from 15 states (see Thurlow et al., 2016)

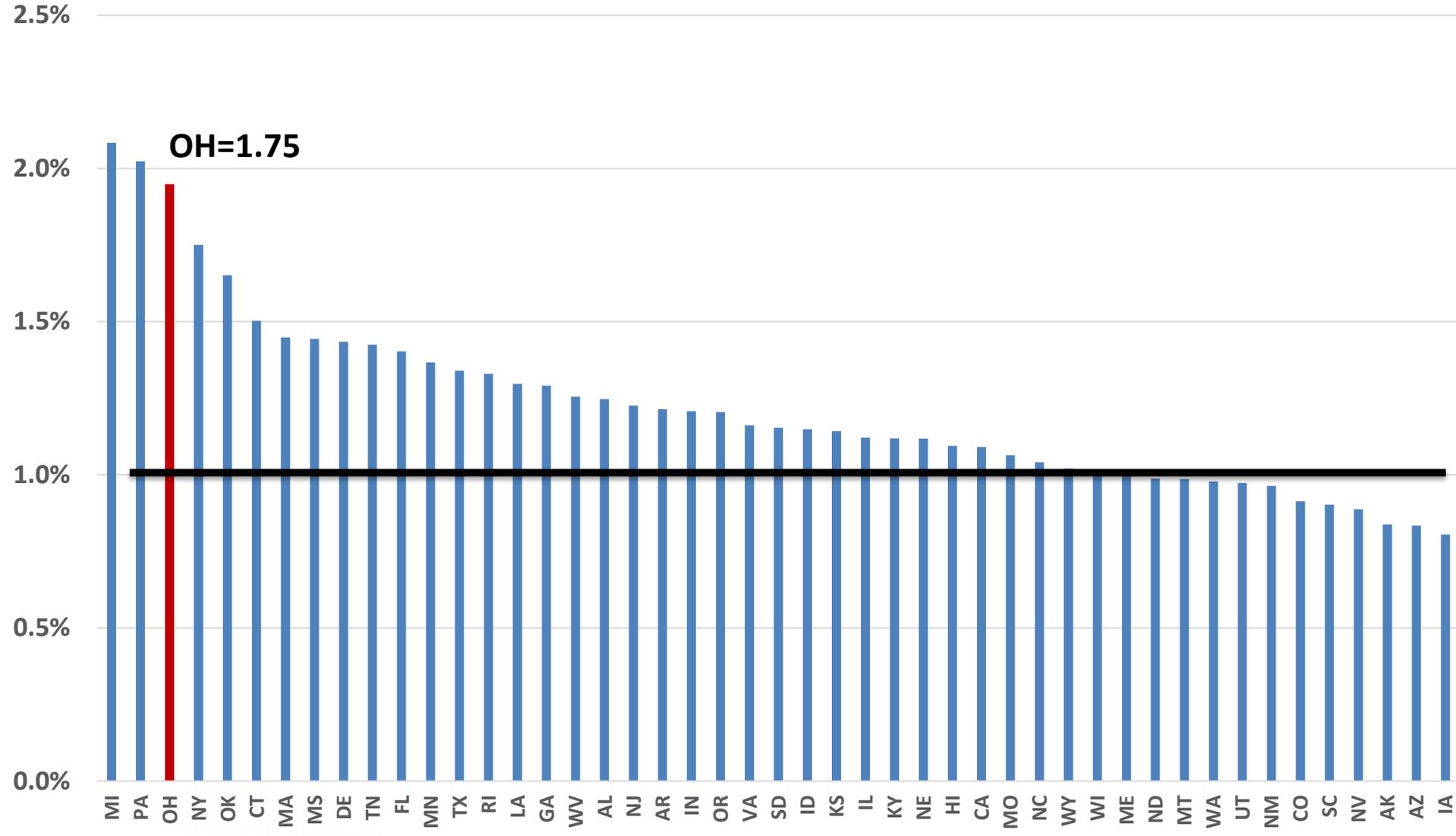
Slide from Thurlow & Lazarus (2017):

<http://nceo.umn.edu/docs/Presentations/1percentCap042717.pdf>

1% CAP AA-AAAS Math in 2017-18 (All States – OH in Red)



1% CAP AA-AAAS Reading in 2017-18 (All States – OH in Red)



First, Let's Celebrate the Successes

- Historically participation decisions were often based on subjectivity and non-instructional factors
- States participating in the 1% Convening (2018) reported that some students in the AA-AAAS almost certainly should not be in that assessment (e.g., students with speech-language impairments or specific learning disabilities, students with chronic absenteeism, low socio-economic status, English learner status, etc.).

IEP teams have made great progress in identifying the right students for the right assessments but there continue to be issues.

But, Let's Not Lose Sight of Remaining Challenges

- **Participation rates in the alternate assessment are still very high in Ohio.**
- **There are still questions about how to make participation decisions.**
- **Educators are sometime uncertain how to successfully instruct students who move from the alternate assessment to the general assessment.**
- **Students with disabilities, both those who participate in the alternate and those who once participated in it, too often spend most of their time in separate settings.**

■

Let's step back and review the basics. . .

Alternate Assessment Purpose

- The state alternate assessment is one part of the state's assessment system for school-age children
- The alternate assessment is designed specifically for those students with "the most significant cognitive disabilities." It is based on **alternate achievement** standards, which means the performance expected is different.

Federal Law Requirements

- The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides funds for our state's elementary and secondary education system. We must adhere to ESSA requirements, including those about state and district assessments
- ESSA placed a **1.0% state-level cap** on participation in the alternate assessment, by subject area, across all grades.

Which Students Should Participate?

- Only those students with the "**most significant cognitive disabilities**"
 - Most of these students (**but not all**) have intellectual disabilities, autism, and multiple disabilities
 - Many of these students (**but not all**) were identified for special education services prior to entering kindergarten
- The decision about which students should participate in the alternate assessment is often very difficult.

How Participation in the AASCD May Affect the Future Trajectory

- **Short-term:** Student's instruction is in less depth, breadth, and complexity than the instruction of other students
- **Long-term:** Student may not meet the requirements for some states' graduation diploma, though in Ohio, all students who get a diploma, even those who take the AASCD, receive the same diploma.
- **Longer-term:** Student may not pursue or be prepared for some post-secondary opportunities. Ohio's longitudinal study data shows students taking the AASCD may drop out of school or lose their jobs.

What we know...

- **Inappropriate participation decisions in alternate assessments are likely to affect student access to instruction (Streagle & Scott, 2015).**
- **Alternate assessment participation may begin a trajectory that will have long-term negative implications. (Cho & Kingston, 2011, 2015; Jaquith & McIntyre, 2018).**

Implications for Districts

- **ESSA requires districts with more than 1.0% participation in the state alternate assessment in a subject area to provide to the state:**
 - **Assurance that IEP teams are adhering to the state's participation guidelines**
 - **Justification for the participation rate over 1.0%**
 - **Assurance that parents are informed about implications for their child of participation in the alternate assessment**

Participation Decision-Making Process

- **Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams make the decision about which assessment a student takes**
 - **Parents and guardians are key to the decision**
 - **School professionals should not make decision without parent or guardian input**
- **IEP teams need training and resources to help with making the participation decision**

Ohio's AASCD Participation Decision-Making Tool

- Students must meet each criteria in the framework.
- Moving forward, IEP teams must use the tool each time the team is considering participation in the alternate assessment.

http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Testing/Ohios-Alternate-Assessment-for-Students-with-Sign/AASCDDecisionmakingTool_Final_Accessible.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US.

#EachChildOurFuture

Ohio's Alternate Assessment Participation Decision-Making Tool

Background
To guide and support individualized education program (IEP) teams in determining whether a student is most appropriately assessed with an alternate assessment, the Ohio Department of Education, in consultation with parents, teachers, administrators and other stakeholders, has developed this Alternate Assessment Participation Decision-Making Tool.

In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law and replaced and updated the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).¹ The purpose of ESSA "...is to provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps."² As part of the assessment provisions of the ESSA, the law requires the vast majority of students take a state's general assessment at various grade levels, as this helps to measure educational progress.³ To help maintain a critical focus on educational equity and excellence for all students, only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities can take an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards.¹ ESSA limits the number of students who may take such assessments to 1% of all tested students in a given subject.¹

While many states have been able to meet the 1% limit, Ohio has far exceeded the 1% cap and consistently has one of the highest rates of students taking the alternate assessment in the country.⁴ Eventually, if Ohio cannot lower the rate of students taking the alternate assessment, the U.S. Department of Education could withhold Title I Part A State administrative funds.⁵

Instructions
Any year a student could participate in the state's general assessment and prior to a student participating in Ohio's Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (AASCD), the IEP team must complete this tool.

This tool is divided into four parts, A through D. IEP teams must work through the document, starting with Part A. At the end of each part, the team should review if the student meets the criteria. If, after reviewing the information, a student does not meet the eligibility criteria in all parts, the student may not participate in Ohio's alternate assessment. All members of the IEP team must sign the decision-making tool. Please attach this completed form to the student's IEP.

Throughout the tool, IEP teams must review multiple sources of information, including the student's IEP, [Evaluation Team Report](#) (ETR) and other data, such as results from formative assessments, evidence-based interventions, assistive technology assessment and the student's cumulative folder documenting supports and services.

¹ U.S. Department of Education. Every Student Succeeds Act. <https://www.ed.gov/essa2015>
² Every Student Succeeds Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1001 (2015). <https://www.congress.gov/114/plaws/pub/95/PLAW-114-pub95.pdf>
³ Every Student Succeeds Act: Assessments under Title 1, Part A & Title 1, Part B. Summary of Final Regulations (2017). <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/col/essa/essaassessmentfinalreg1207.pdf>
⁴ NCSO Data Analytics: AA-AAS Participation Rate from 2007-08 to 2016-2017 (#12) (2020). https://tableau.ahc.unm.edu/#!/viz/view/AA-AAS-trend0708-1617/Story1?iframeSizeToWindow=true&embed=y&showAppBanner=false&display_count=no&showVizHome=eng
⁵ Rooney, P. & Ryder, R. (2019, March 28). Information regarding consequences for states not meeting the requirement to assess not more than 1.0 percent of students on the alternate assessment [Memorandum]. United States Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. <https://www2.ed.gov/admiral/essl/accoun/ssa/state1capconsequences19final.pdf>

Ohio Department of Education

States and Districts Working Together

- **It is valuable for states and districts to work together to improve decision making about assessment participation**
 - **Clear guidelines**
 - **Strong professional development**
 - **Frequent communication across all levels**
 - **Frequent sharing, discussion, and use of data**

States and Districts Working Together, (continued)

- **Involve and align curriculum, instruction, and assessment**
- **Address accessibility and accommodations to show how using these for the regular assessment can reduce decisions to place students in the alternate assessment**

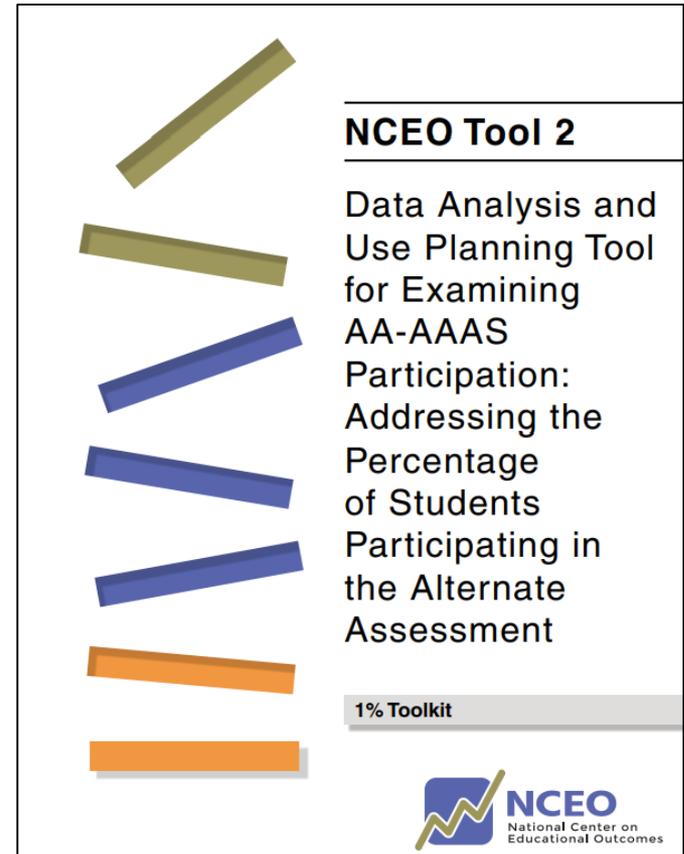
Communicating with Parents and Guardians

- Listen to them and respect their views!
- Treat them as equal partners in the education of their child
- Show up where they are (e.g., community events), partner with community organizations, and engage community liaisons
- Use interpreters to bridge potential cultural and linguistic barriers

What NCEO Tools can States and Districts Use to Support Alternate Assessment Decision Making?

- Help states and districts develop a plan for analyzing and using their alternate assessment data
- Four-step data analysis framework

<https://nceo.info/Resources/tools>

The graphic for NCEO Tool 2 features a vertical stack of seven horizontal bars on the left side, each with a different color and a slight 3D effect. From top to bottom, the colors are olive green, a darker olive green, blue, a darker blue, a lighter blue, orange, and a darker orange. To the right of these bars, the text is organized into sections. At the top, 'NCEO Tool 2' is underlined. Below that, the text reads: 'Data Analysis and Use Planning Tool for Examining AA-AAAS Participation: Addressing the Percentage of Students Participating in the Alternate Assessment'. A grey horizontal bar with the text '1% Toolkit' is positioned below the main text. At the bottom right, the NCEO logo is displayed, consisting of a blue square with a white line graph and the text 'NCEO National Center on Educational Outcomes' to its right.

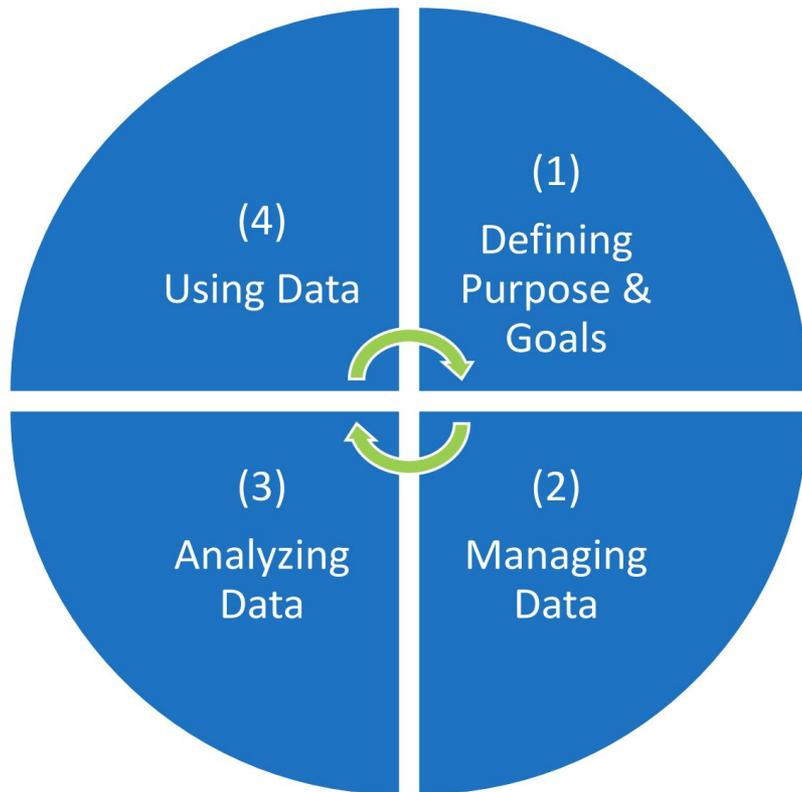
NCEO Tool 2

Data Analysis and Use Planning Tool for Examining AA-AAAS Participation: Addressing the Percentage of Students Participating in the Alternate Assessment

1% Toolkit

 **NCEO**
National Center on Educational Outcomes

NCEO Data Analysis Framework Supports Ohio's Improvement Process (OIP)



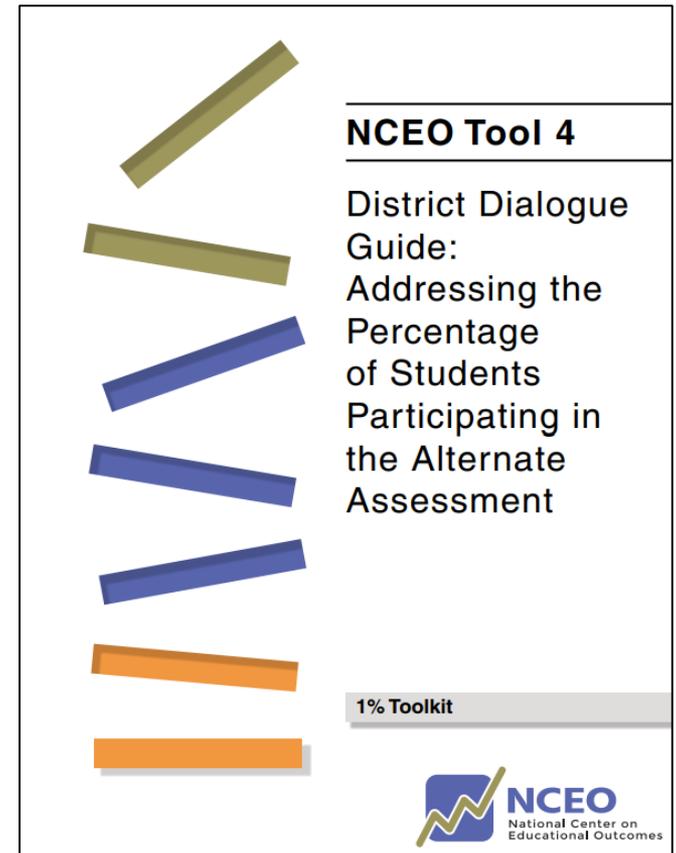
NCEO Data Analysis Resource Examples

- NCEO's data analysis framework aligns with the OIP emphasis on collaboration, research, and implementation of improved practices
- NCEO data resource examples for examining alternate assessment data:
 - Are students being identified appropriately?
 - What is the data analysis plan?
 - Descriptive, quantitative, etc.
 - How does the analysis help us reduce our AA-AAAS rate?

What NCEO Tools can States and Districts Use to Support Alternate Assessment Decision Making?

- Help district, school staff, and stakeholders engage in thoughtful conversations
- Guide to examine a variety of data sources, analysis methods, and other information
- Questions may be customized

<https://nceo.info/Resources/tools>



District Dialogue Examples Align with the OIP You are Using

NCEO's resource emphasizes the "Examine, Reflect, and Adjust" practices in the OIP. Here are examples:

- What do AA-AAAS rates look like over time?
- What do rates look like disaggregated by
 - age, grade, and school level?
 - student demographics?
 - disability category?
- Could some students scoring proficient or advanced on the AA-AAAS take the general assessment with accommodations?

NCEO 1% Toolkit –

<https://nceo.info/Resources/tools>

1% Toolkit

A set of tools designed by NCEO and states to address the 1.0% participation threshold for the alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS).

- [Developing a 1% Cap Waiver or Waiver Extension Request](#)  (NCEO Tool #1)
- [Data Analysis and Use Planning Tool for Examining AA-AAAS Participation: Addressing the Percentage of Students Participating in the Alternate Assessment](#)  (NCEO Tool #2)
- [State-District Data Display Templates: Addressing the Percentage of Students Participating in the Alternate Assessment](#)  (NCEO Tool #3)
- [District Dialogue Guide: Addressing the Percentage of Students Participating in the Alternate Assessment](#)  (NCEO Tool #4)
- [Frequently Asked Questions on AA-AAAS](#)  (NCEO Tool #5)
- [Who Should Participate in Your State's Alternate Assessment? A Slide Presentation Tool for Administrators](#)  (NCEO Tool #6)
- [Start with the End in Mind: An Infographic to Guide Decisions about Student Participation in the Alternate Assessment](#)  (NCEO Tool #7)
- [A Five-Step Process for Developing and Reviewing District Justifications for Exceeding 1.0% AA-AAAS Participation](#)  (NCEO Tool #8)

Guidance for Examining Disproportionality in Alternate Assessments

[Guidance for Examining District Alternate Assessment Participation Rates](#) 

[Guidance for Examining Disproportionality of Student Group Participation in Alternate Assessments](#) 

[Guidance for Participation and Disproportionality Video Training Module](#)

Breakout Room Discussion

(20 minutes)

- What are the remaining challenges in making assessment participation decisions?
- What has worked well in supporting IEP teams as they assessment participation decisions?
- What are the characteristics of students who have transitioned from the alternate assessment to the general assessment?
- How are educators addressing the instructional needs of:
 - students who participate in the AA-AAAS?
 - students who have transitioned from the AA-AAAS to the general assessment?

Report Out Session

15 minutes

- Come back to the large group.
- Each breakout room group shares one big idea from their discussion.
- NCEO summarizes what was shared.



MTSS for All: Including Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Gail Ghere, Ph.D.



National Technical Assistance Center on Inclusive Practices and Policies for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

TIES Center is supported through a Cooperative Agreement (#H326Y170004) with the Research to Practice Division, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. Project Officer: Susan Weigert. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education.

TIES Stands for:

Increasing
Time

Instructional
Effectiveness

Engagement

State
Support
For Inclusive
Practices

These four elements represents the complexity of systemic change to support increased student engagement and improved learning outcomes for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

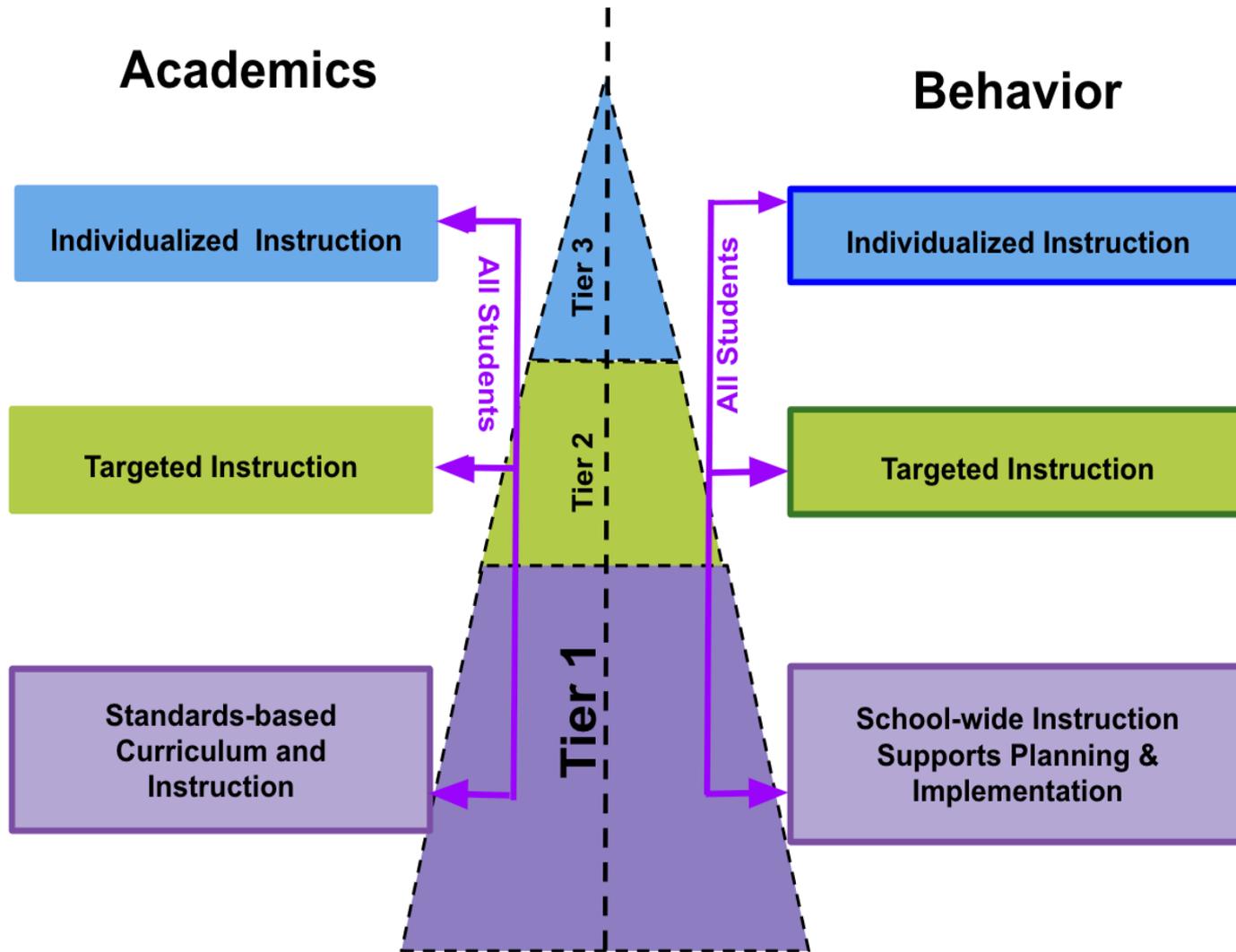
Today's Objectives:

- Provide background on Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and its additive nature
- Understand how MTSS relates to inclusion for all students with disabilities, including students with significant cognitive disabilities, the school-wide framework
- Consider the role of leadership and collaboration in developing MTSS

MTSS for All = Inclusion for All

- *“**Achieving access** to high-intensity supports in inclusive settings is **more likely if** those schools... establish the basic support systems (curricula, instructional procedures, universal screening, progress monitoring, team based decision making) that **benefit all**” (Horner & Dunlap, 2012)*
- *“The MTSS framework supports inclusion, but only with **tailored support** at a level of intensity needed for student, family, and staff success. This logic applies **equally** to the academically high functioning student with behavioral challenges, the student with moderate reading difficulty, **and the student with severe developmental disabilities.**” (Horner & Halle, 2020)*

Multi-Tiered System of Supports



MISPERCEPTION

MTSS does not include students with disabilities because students with disabilities already receive extra support.

MISPERCEPTION

MTSS does not include students with disabilities because students with disabilities already receive extra support.

FACT

MTSS should be inclusive of all students in a school.

MISPERCEPTION

MTSS is a process for
qualifying students for
special education
services.

MISPERCEPTION

MTSS is a process for qualifying students for special education services.

FACT

MTSS is an instruction and intervention framework for all students. It is a preventative model. (It can be used in some states to qualify a student for special education, but that is not its primary purpose.)

MISPERCEPTION

Special education is
Tier 3 in MTSS.

MISPERCEPTION

Special education is Tier 3 in MTSS.

FACT

Tier 3 is individual supports for any student who needs this level of support. Special education can provide supplementary support at each tier.

MISPERCEPTION

If a student qualifies for special education then they receive special education services separate from the the rest of the school-wide MTSS.

MISPERCEPTION

If a student qualifies for special education then they receive special education services separate from the rest of the school-wide MTSS.

FACT

A student with special needs receives their services within the school-wide MTSS framework. (MTSS is an inclusive framework.)

MTSS is an additive framework for all students



Are all students with disabilities in your school receiving three tiers (“three scoops”) of instruction and intervention, if needed?

And most importantly, are they all receiving the first scoop?

The Foundation

- Students receiving special education services are general education students first and that special education services are supplementary services.
- When a group of students with disabilities is not included in an MTSS framework, the foundational concept of all students being general education students first, with special education services supplementary, is eroded.

MTSS for All: Including Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

January 2020
Jointly published by the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) and the TIES Center



**MTSS for All:
Including Students
with the Most
Significant
Cognitive
Disabilities**

Multi-Tiered System of Supports
(MTSS) is a framework for organizing and providing a tiered instructional continuum to support learning for all students. MTSS has the potential to meet the academic and behavioral needs of all students. Unfortunately, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities often are not included in this framework even though they should be. When a group of students with disabilities is not included in an MTSS framework, the foundational concept of all students being general education students first, with special education services supplementary, is eroded.

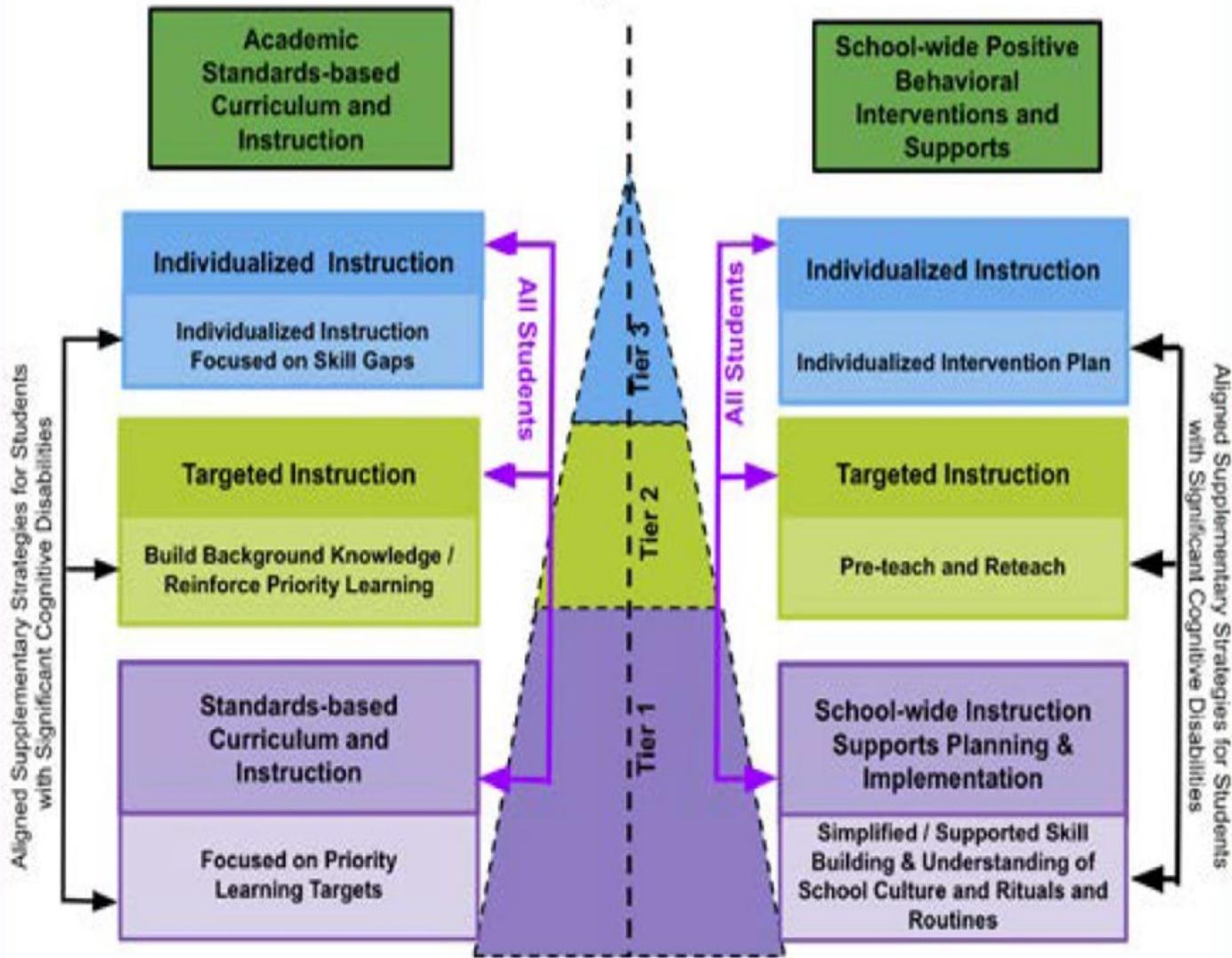
 **NCEO**
National Center on
Educational Outcomes

 **TIES**
Center

- A framework for organizing and providing a tiered instructional continuum to support learning for all students
- A whole school approach
- <http://bit.ly/MTSSbrief>



Multi-Tiered System of Supports Inclusive of All Students

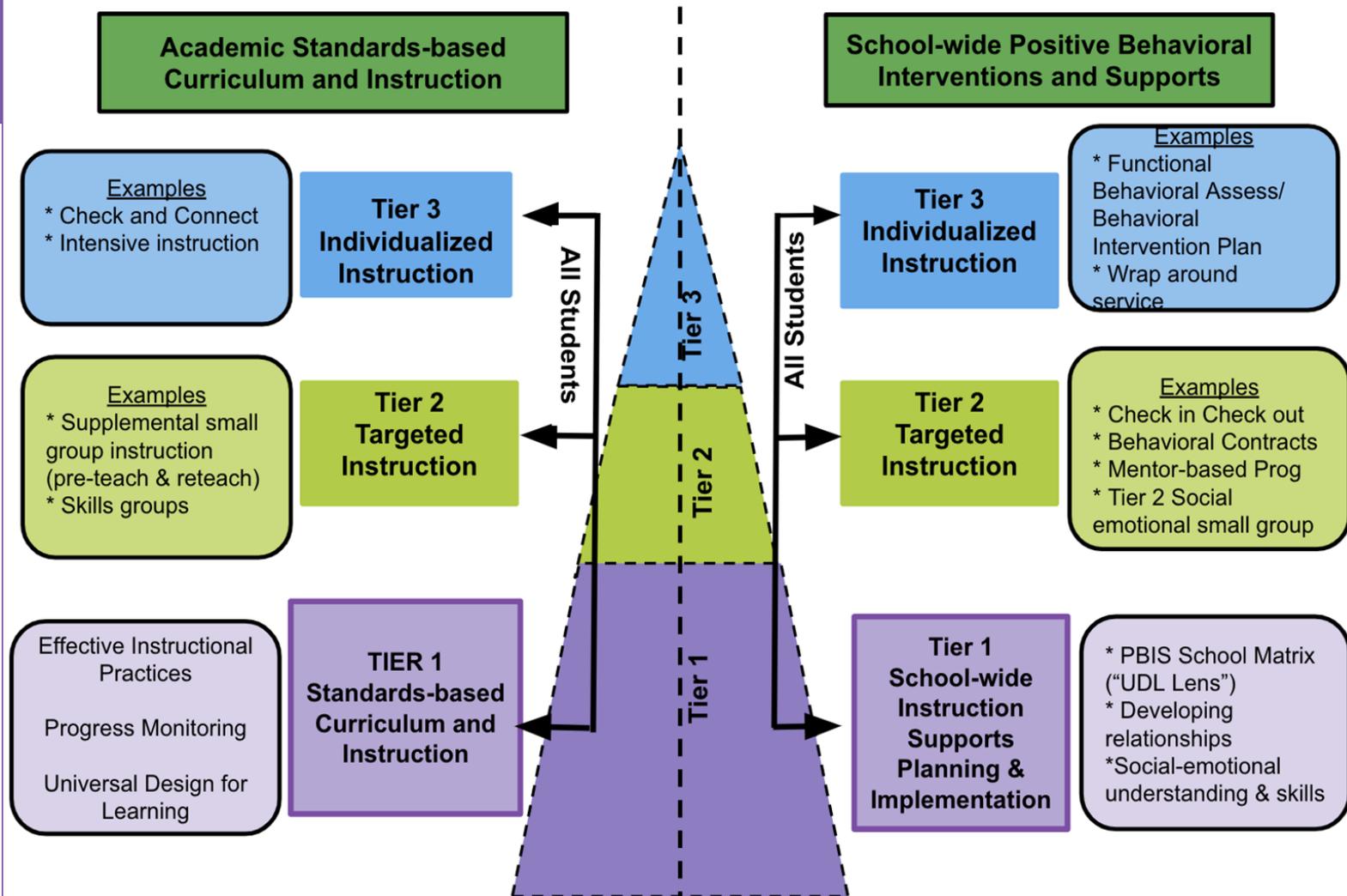


Foundational Assumptions

- Districts provide a continuum of services rather than a continuum of placements.
- MTSS framework not only focuses on general education supports, but also incorporates how special education services are well integrated at each tier.
- Implementation of MTSS can prevent referrals to more restrictive educational placements
- It is important to focus on core instruction for all students, not just interventions.
- It is important to promote collaboration of general and special educators.

School-wide Example of an Integrated System

Multi-Tiered System of Supports Inclusive of All Students: School-wide Resources



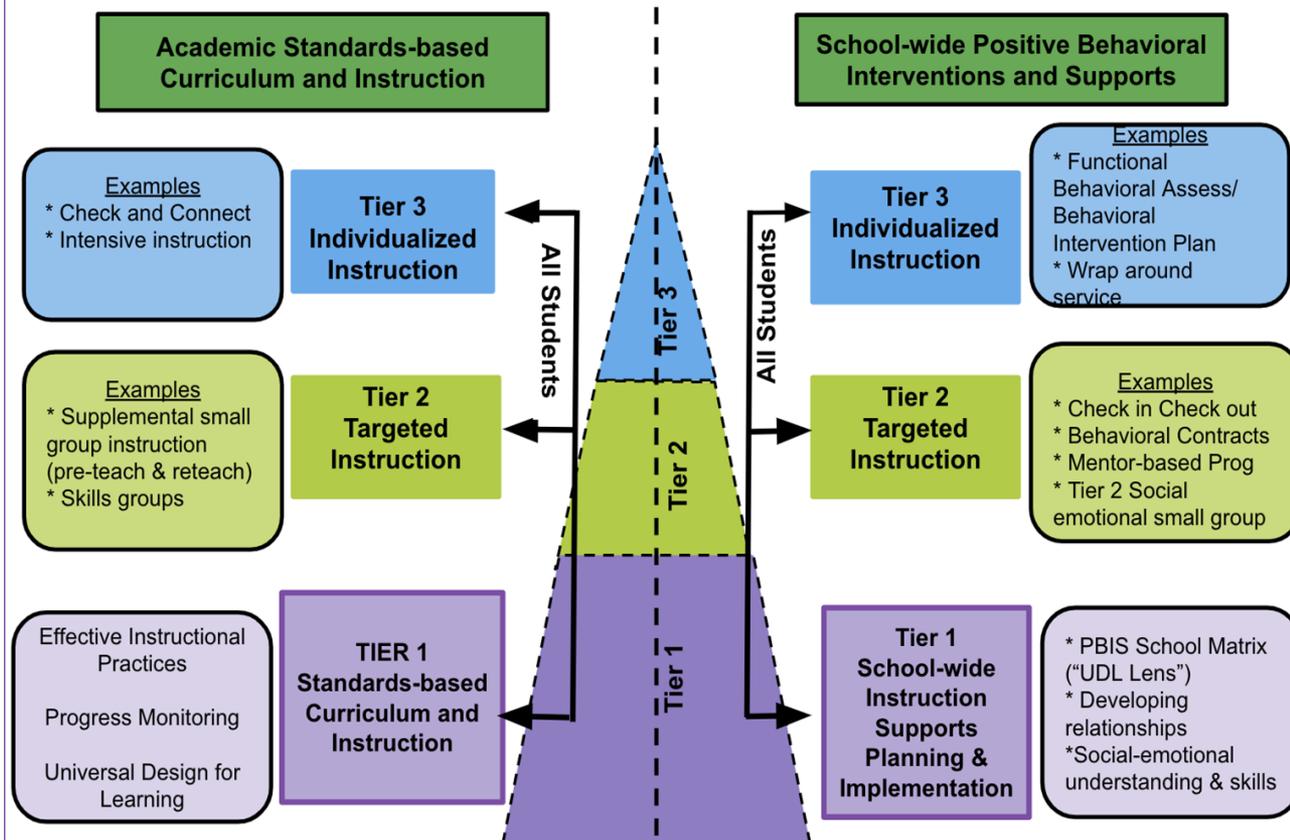
“If the adults are separate, then the kids are separate.”

Vandercook, T., and York-Barr, J. (2003). Lessons learned on the way to inclusion. *Impact: Feature Issue on Revisiting Inclusive K-12 Education*. University of Minnesota: Institute on Community Integration. Available from <http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/161>.

Special education - general education collaboration for academics and behavior:

- instructional planning
- interventions
- teaming to look and consider data decision making

**Multi-Tiered System of Supports Inclusive of All Students:
School-wide Resources**

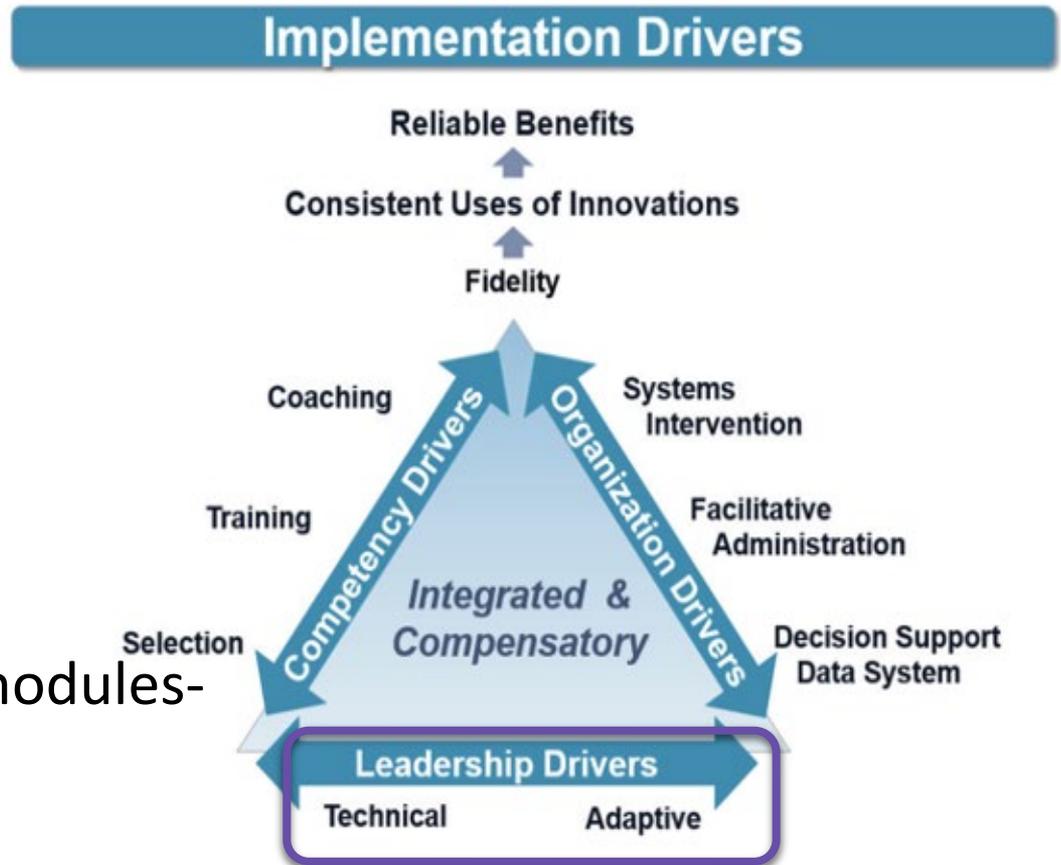


Moving Forward with MTSS - Leadership drivers

Leadership drivers

- **Communication** (not just to special education)
- **Clear guidance**
- **Conflict resolution**
- **Aligning with vision/mission**

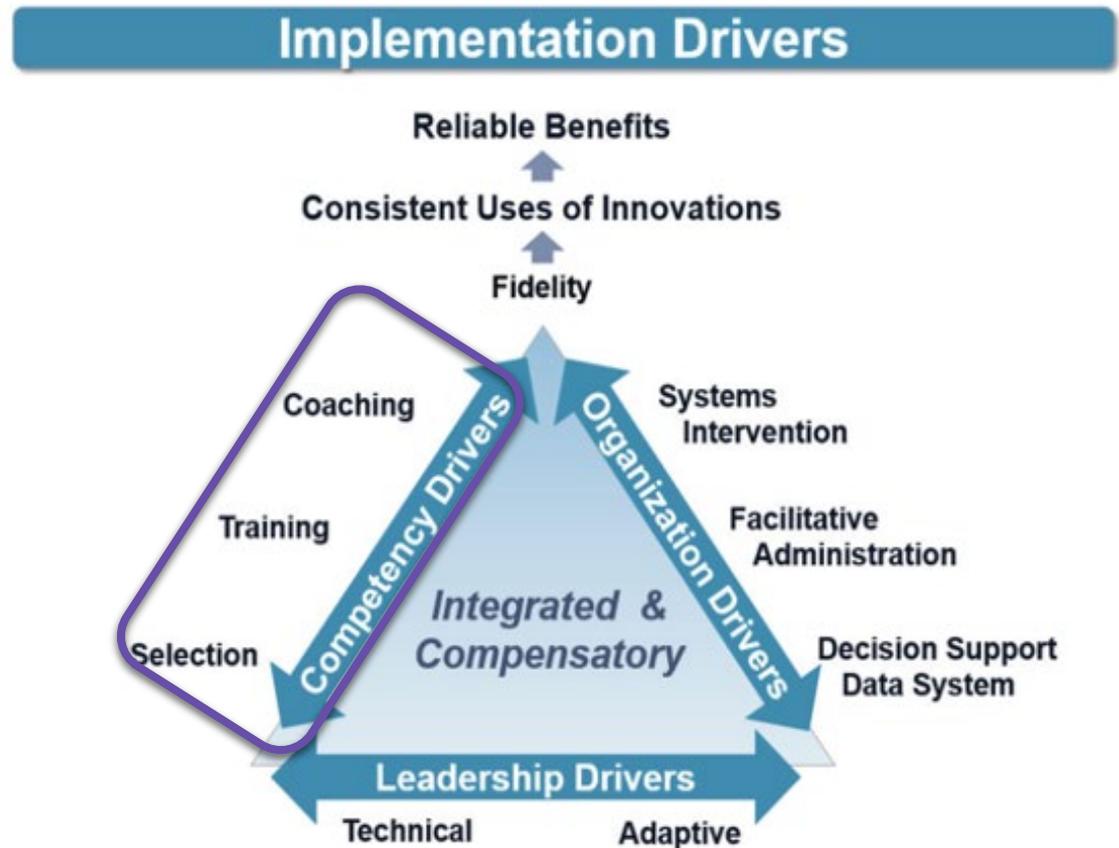
<https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/modules-and-lessons>



Moving forward with MTSS - Competency drivers

Competency drivers

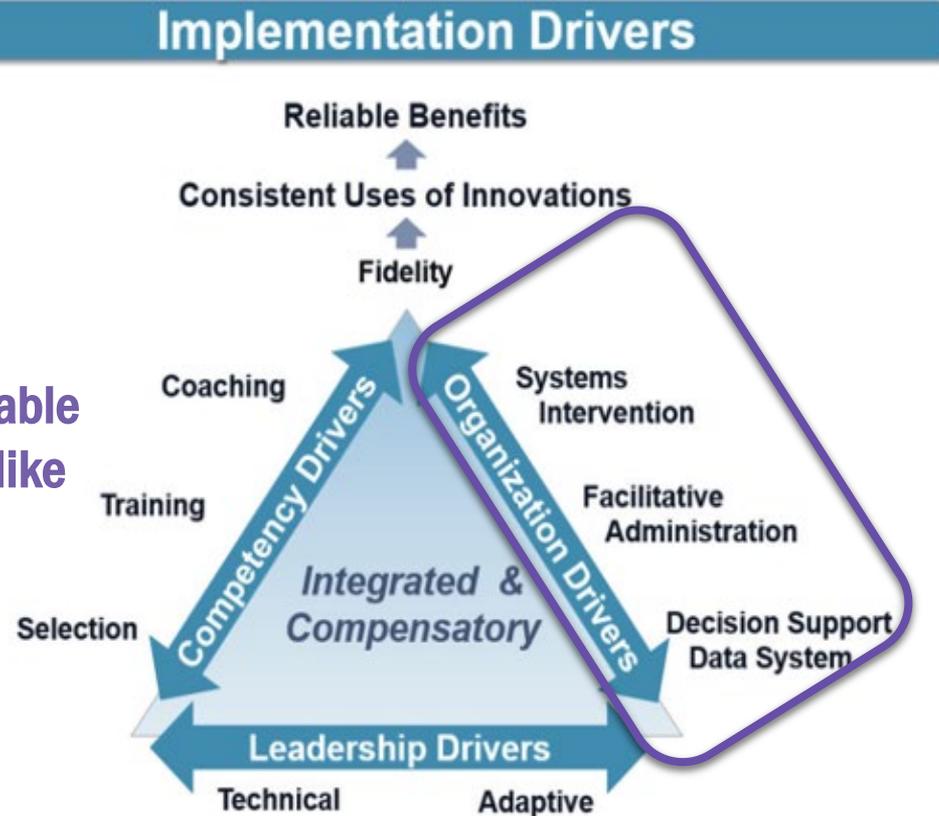
- Professional development
- Training plan
- Staff selection
- Teacher evaluation
- Coaching systems



Moving Forward with MTSS- Organization drivers

Organization drivers

- Policies/procedures
- Culture/climate
- Financial/human resources are available
- Data on what student programs look like
- Plan for using data
- Diploma requirements
- Course codes



Breakout Room Discussion (20 minutes)

- **What do you want to explore more about MTSS for all students, especially the students with significant cognitive disabilities?**
- **How does the additive nature of MTSS provide both access to the general education curriculum as well as sufficient support for learning?**
- **What do you see as a starting place for collaborating with general education to build an integrated MTSS system?**

Report Out Session

15 minutes

- **Come back to the large group.**
- **Each breakout room group shares one big idea from their discussion.**
- **NCEO summarizes what was shared.**

Contacts

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Ohio Closing Remarks