



## What Tools Have States Developed or Adapted to Assess Schools' Implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports/Response to Intervention Framework?

Educators in Tennessee use Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI<sup>2</sup>), a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), to address problems early for students at risk for poor learning outcomes. Tennessee Department of Education officials sought to support schools and districts implementing RTI<sup>2</sup> with a tool that educators can use to align their RTI<sup>2</sup> implementation with the state's expected practices and determine next steps for improving implementation. To support development of a research-informed tool, the Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia examined how other states have adapted or developed similar tools and how states support districts and schools in using those tools to assess and improve MTSS/response to intervention (RTI) implementation.

The study team reviewed websites and relevant documents of all 50 states and the District of Columbia (as of May 2018) and interviewed state education officials in eight states. The study focused on 21 states that developed or adapted at least one tool to assess implementation of an MTSS/RTI framework. Methods included assessing tools for key MTSS/RTI practices that are informed by the research literature, computing descriptive statistics, and coding qualitative data to identify themes. The study implications describe existing tools that cover many of the key MTSS/RTI practices yet vary in time and resources needed to adapt or utilize the tool. This information can help readers decide whether to use existing tools or develop their own to align with specific needs.

### Key findings

- *Twenty-one state education agencies developed or adapted 31 publicly available tools to assess implementation of an MTSS/RTI framework to support schools in strengthening instruction for all students.* Another 10 states used existing tools without modification, 7 states had tools that were in development or under revision, and 6 states were not using a tool to assess implementation.<sup>1</sup>
- *Of the 31 developed or adapted tools, 13 (42 percent) were rubrics describing practices along a continuum (for example, from "not started" to "optimizing").* Surveys, rating scales, and checklists were also used.
- *Tools varied in the specificity of their items.* A majority of tools assessed implementation of broad MTSS/RTI practices; fewer tools assessed implementation of specific practices.<sup>2</sup> For example, 81 percent of tools included items that assess whether schools administer assessments to identify students in need of intervention. Fewer tools included items that assess more specific practices, such as whether schools are expected to screen all students (65 percent of the tools) or to screen at least twice a year (48 percent).
- *Of the 21 states that developed or adapted a tool, 15 provided resources to support its use.* Among the eight state officials interviewed, five reported that they trained regional or district staff to help school teams use the tools and the resulting data.

1. Of the seven remaining states, five were excluded from the study because state personnel chose not to participate or did not verify data the study team collected and summarized, one developed a tool that was not publicly available, and one was using a broad tool that did not meet study inclusion criteria (see appendix B of the full report).

2. For this study, broad MTSS/RTI practices are general activities lacking explicit detail that educators can interpret and implement in various ways. Specific practices describe precise actions that all educators can interpret the same way and that support implementing a practice as expected by a state.