

The Tier 1 Assessment

Twenty questions, four domains, one honest look at whether your Tier 1 system is holding. Built for the building leader who's done the first round of MTSS diagnostics and is ready to ask: "where is this actually leaking?"

QUESTIONS

20 across 4 domains

SCALE

1–4 per question

Not Yet → Distinguished

SOLO TIME

30–45 minutes

TEAM TIME

75–90 minutes

including discussion

PATH A · SOLO

Fill it out alone

Use it as a personal diagnostic. Be honest, especially where you know you're being generous. Come back to it in three months and rate again.

PATH B · TEAM

Fill it out together

Each team member rates independently first. Then gather, compare, and discuss every item where the team disagrees. The disagreement is the diagnostic — not the average.

How to read your scores. Each domain scores 5–20. Per-domain interpretation is more useful than a total score — a school strong in Core Instruction but weak in Team Systems is a different building than the reverse. Look for the *pattern across domains*, not the grand total.

Core Instruction

The quality, consistency, and reach of classroom teaching itself.

STATEMENT	NOT YET	EMERGING	ESTABLISHED	DISTINGUISHED
1.1 Core instruction in reading and math is delivered daily with a consistent scope and sequence, such that any three staff members could describe the current unit and pacing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.2 Teachers have protected, uninterrupted time for core instruction — pull-outs, intercom announcements, and schedule disruptions are rare during core blocks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.3 Differentiation happens routinely within Tier 1 — small groups, flexible pacing, adjusted materials — and is visible in lesson plans, not just improvised in the moment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.4 New teachers receive structured onboarding in the core curriculum and Tier 1 expectations before their first teaching day, not through osmosis across their first semester.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1.5 Instructional coaching or peer observation happens regularly (at least monthly per teacher) and focuses on Tier 1 practice, not just on teachers flagged as struggling.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

DOMAIN 1 SCORE _____ / 20

NEEDS WORK

Score 5–10

A score in this range usually means Tier 1 instruction is *happening* but not *systematized*. Good teachers are doing good work in their rooms, but the practice isn't shared, protected, or consistent across the building. The most common pattern: strong teachers thriving despite the system, struggling teachers absorbing what they can by osmosis. The fastest lift is almost never "buy new curriculum" — it's protecting instructional time and making sure new teachers walk in on day one knowing what Tier 1 looks like here.

DEVELOPING

Score 11–15

A score in this range usually means you have the bones of a Tier 1 system — consistent curriculum, some protected time, something resembling a scope and sequence — but the practices are uneven across classrooms, grade levels, or new hires. The question to ask: where is the variation coming from? If it's individual teacher preference, you have a supervision issue. If it's schedule-driven (specialists pulling kids, assemblies, meetings), you have a structural issue. These are fixed differently.

STRONG

Score 16–20

A score in this range is rare and real. It means Tier 1 instruction is named, protected, and reinforced — new teachers absorb it quickly, veteran teachers refine it, and disruptions are the exception. The risk at this level is complacency: the exact thing that made your Tier 1 strong is the thing that will stop working if you stop actively maintaining it. Keep the coaching cadence. Keep protecting the time. Drift is invisible until it isn't.

Behavior & Culture

Schoolwide expectations and the systems that reinforce them.

STATEMENT	NOT YET	EMERGING	ESTABLISHED	DISTINGUISHED
2.1 Schoolwide behavior expectations are explicitly taught in the first two weeks of school across all common areas (hallways, cafeteria, restrooms) — not just posted on the wall.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.2 Those expectations are re-taught at predictable intervals throughout the year (after major breaks, mid-year, before state testing), not just in September.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3 Staff respond to minor behavior incidents using consistent, shared language — the way a referral is handled in one classroom matches how it's handled in the next.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.4 There is a clear, predictable system for recognizing students who are meeting expectations (not just for correcting those who aren't), and it's used regularly across the building.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.5 Staff have a shared definition of which behaviors are office-managed versus classroom-managed, and referrals follow that definition rather than each teacher's individual threshold.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

DOMAIN 2 SCORE _____ / 20

NEEDS WORK

Score 5–10

A score in this range usually means behavior expectations exist on paper but aren't a lived system. Posters are up; teaching is uneven. The pattern shows up in the referral data: office referrals cluster around a handful of teachers, not because their students are different, but because the threshold for what counts as a referral varies across the building. The fix isn't harsher consequences — it's consistency. Pick three expectations, teach them schoolwide the same week, and re-teach them before every major transition (breaks, testing, end of quarter). Culture is a maintenance habit, not an event.

DEVELOPING

Score 11–15

A score in this range usually means you have a behavior framework that works for staff who were here when it was built, but it hasn't been re-installed for the people who've arrived since. The tell: veteran teachers describe the system fluently; newer teachers approximate it. This is the stage where most buildings plateau for years without realizing it. The question isn't "do we have a system?" — it's "could a teacher hired this August articulate it by Halloween?" If no, the system is aging out even if nothing has changed on paper.

STRONG

Score 16–20

A score in this range is a genuine accomplishment — and the one you're most likely to lose to staff turnover. When behavior systems are strong, it's because somebody (or some small team) is actively maintaining them: onboarding new staff, calibrating responses, re-teaching at intervals. If that person leaves or gets reassigned, the system can erode in a single year while nobody notices. The move at this level is to document the maintenance work itself, so the institutional knowledge doesn't live in one person's head.

Data & Screening

Universal data collection and how it drives Tier 1 decisions.

STATEMENT	NOT YET	EMERGING	ESTABLISHED	DISTINGUISHED
3.1 All students are screened in reading and math at least three times per year using the same tool, and the schedule is protected on the calendar before the year begins.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.2 Screening data is reviewed by grade-level teams within two weeks of administration — not sitting in someone’s inbox or still being processed when the next window opens.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.3 Teachers can name, without looking it up, which students in their class scored below benchmark on the most recent universal screener.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.4 Attendance data is reviewed at the building level at least monthly, with a clear threshold (e.g., 90%) that triggers specific follow-up — not just noted in passing at staff meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.5 Data conversations focus on instructional decisions (“what do we change in Tier 1?”), not just on identification (“who needs Tier 2?”).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

DOMAIN 3 SCORE _____ / 20

NEEDS WORK Score 5–10

A score in this range usually means screening is happening as a compliance task, not as a decision-making tool. The data gets collected, entered, and filed. It rarely drives a change in what happens in classrooms. The most common pattern: fall screening data arrives in October and becomes the topic of one meeting, after which teachers return to teaching more or less what they were going to teach anyway. The fastest lift here isn’t buying better tools — it’s building a two-week window between administration and grade-level review, and protecting that window on the calendar before the year starts.

DEVELOPING Score 11–15

A score in this range usually means the data infrastructure is working — screeners run on schedule, results reach teachers, teams discuss them — but the conversations stay at the identification layer. You can name which kids are below benchmark; you’re less clear on what’s *changing in Tier 1* as a result. The diagnostic question: in the last screening cycle, what instructional practice changed building-wide because of what the data showed? If the honest answer is “nothing, really,” the system is functioning but not yet driving decisions. That’s the next move.

STRONG Score 16–20

A score in this range means data is actually driving Tier 1 — not just Tier 2 placement. Teachers know their numbers. Grade-level teams change practice based on patterns. Attendance concerns trigger action before they become chronic absenteeism. The risk at this level is the data getting ahead of the instruction: running dashboards that nobody is teaching to. The move is to keep the data-to-decision cycle short (two weeks or less) and make sure every new screener tool earns its place by answering a question you actually have.

Team Systems

Structured time, roles, and processes that sustain Tier 1 work.

STATEMENT	NOT YET	EMERGING	ESTABLISHED	DISTINGUISHED
4.1 Grade-level or content teams have protected, recurring meeting time each week that is not regularly consumed by announcements, logistics, or admin tasks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.2 That team time has a published agenda and a designated facilitator — not a rotating “whoever shows up first starts us off” arrangement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.3 There is a building-level leadership team that meets at least monthly and includes representation from across grade levels and roles, not just administrators.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.4 When a Tier 1 practice is changed (new curriculum, new behavior system, new schedule), the decision is documented somewhere a new staff member could find it a year from now.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.5 The school can name the 2–3 Tier 1 priorities for this year, and any three staff members asked separately would name the same priorities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

DOMAIN 4 SCORE _____ / 20

NEEDS WORK Score 5–10

A score in this range usually means teams *meet*, but the meetings are substitutes for the real work instead of infrastructure for it. Weekly PLC time gets consumed by announcements, logistics, and the crisis of the week. The agenda, if one exists, drifts. Decisions made in one meeting don’t survive to the next. The fix isn’t adding more meetings — it’s protecting the ones you have. A standing agenda, a facilitator who isn’t always the principal, and a norm that logistics get handled in the first five minutes so the remaining fifty can do the actual work.

DEVELOPING Score 11–15

A score in this range usually means the meeting structure holds, but the connective tissue between meetings is thin. Teams meet, decisions get made, and then the decisions quietly don’t happen — not because anyone disagrees, but because no one was accountable for the follow-through. The tell: the same Tier 1 issue surfaces in three consecutive team meetings without resolution. The question is rarely “*are we meeting?*” — it’s “*what is our team responsible for producing by next meeting, and who owns it?*” Without that, team time becomes discussion time.

STRONG Score 16–20

A score in this range means teams are working as a system, not a schedule. Decisions made in leadership team show up in grade-level teams within a week. Teachers across grade levels can name this year’s priorities without consulting a document. When something changes, there’s a record of *why* — and the record is findable. The risk at this level is the work becoming invisible to the people who arrived most recently. The move: every year, actively re-onboard the system for new staff. The team culture you built is worth exactly as much as the next person hired understands about it.

Your Pattern Across Domains

Record your four domain scores below. The *pattern* across them is more useful than the total — look for which is highest, which is lowest, and which surprised you.

DOMAIN 1 Core Instruction _____ / 20	DOMAIN 2 Behavior & Culture _____ / 20	DOMAIN 3 Data & Screening _____ / 20	DOMAIN 4 Team Systems _____ / 20
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Three questions to sit with

1. Which domain scored lowest, and was it the one you expected?

2. If you took this with your team, where was the biggest disagreement between raters? That disagreement is almost always the most useful signal in the assessment.

3. Of everything you saw, what is the one thing you could begin working on this month — without buying anything, hiring anyone, or waiting for a strategic planning cycle?

ABOUT THIS TOOL

This is the starter version of ScholarPath's full Tier 1 Assessment. If you want the version your team can re-take quarterly — with multi-role scoring, longitudinal tracking across school years, and assessment results that link directly to intervention planning — that lives inside **ScholarPath Intervention Management**.

But use *this* one first. You'll get most of the value from the first pass, and you'll know a lot more about what your system actually needs before you talk to any vendor, including me. [Learn more at scholarpathsystems.org](https://scholarpathsystems.org)

If you take this seriously, it will be uncomfortable.

That's the point. A Tier 1 system you can't honestly rate is a Tier 1 system that isn't holding yet.