BRANCHING MINDS | WEBINAR TAKEAWAY

MTSS & SPECIAL EDUCATION ALIGNMENT AUDIT

Your Next 30 Days:

Week 1: Run the self-audit below on five recent referral files, including one DNQ.	**Week 2:** Invite the school psychologist to your next Tier 2 or Tier 3 data meeting.	**Week 3:** Check percent below benchmark by grade. Where is Tier 1 under 80%?	**Week 4:** Hold your first 30-day DNQ review with your principal and psychologist.

Audit Domain	Failing Criteria	Passing Criteria	Scores (F/P)	Notes
Fidelity documentation	"Interventions were provided all semester." No timestamps, no specific dates, no attendance records.	A digital log shows the student received the prescribed minutes (for example, 30 minutes, 4 days a week) across two 6–8 week cycles at about a 90% fidelity rate.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	
Progress monitoring data	A single snapshot test, or isolated work samples offered as proof of failure, with no continuous baseline comparison.	At least 10–12 progress monitoring data points from short PM assessments, establishing a trend line.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	
Instructional variable control	The student was absent for 35% of the intervention window, or the group was repeatedly canceled for campus activities and assemblies.	Documentation shows the student was present for at least 85% of intervention sessions, confirming true exposure to the strategy.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	
Exclusionary variable check	No evidence of communication or alignment with other experts, such as the Multilingual Department or Student Support Services.	Explicit notes from experts confirm that language acquisition and sensory access were ruled out as the primary source of the deficit.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	

What is your DNQ rate telling you?

Every 30 days, the principal, school psychologist, MTSS coordinator, and instructional leaders review DNQ cases together.

Analyze referral patterns	Identify data disconnects	Evaluate resource allocation
Which classrooms or departments generate the most DNQs? Look at instruction, intervention, and referral decisions there.	**What did the evaluation find that tiered supports missed?** *For example, a vocabulary gap from limited exposure is not a disability.*	**How many hours go to non-qualifying referrals?** **Could some time move to Tier 1 and intervention planning?**

Questions to take back to your team

- Do we have a clear process for responding to parent requests for evaluation?
- Are general education and Special Education teams meeting regularly, and has leadership given them time and a place?
- Can we identify students who have had repeated interventions without adequate progress?
- Is this concern isolated to one student, or does it point to a broader instructional need?
- Are our practices consistent across schools without becoming so rigid that we miss individual circumstances?
- Do our psychologists and specialists see students before the referral, or only after?