FAQs About MTSS

Frequently Asked Questions about Multi-Tiered System of Support

WHAT EXACTLY IS A MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (MTSS)?

MTSS is a term used to describe an evidence based model of educating students that uses data-based problem-solving to integrate academic and behavioral instruction and intervention. The integrated instruction and interventions are delivered to students at varying levels of intensity (multiple tiers) based on student need. It is a system where resources and services are organized efficiently on a continuum of intensity based on students' academic and behavioral needs, whatever those may be.

IS MTSS A CURRICULUM?

MTSS is not a curriculum, nor is it an intervention. It is simply a **framework** of how to identify and address school-wide needs in a way that is proactive and data-driven. For example, a school may be interested in a program or curriculum to support social-emotional learning, such as Responsive Classrooms or Leader in Me. Because MTSS provides a structure for implementing practices and ensuring systematic use of data, other programs can easily be integrated within the tiered framework, either at Tier 1 or across all three tiers. When mindfully integrated, these programs enhance, rather than replace, MTSS.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MTSS AND PBIS AND RTI?

Both Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Response to Intervention (RTI) are in fact examples of a multi-tiered system of supports. Both of these systems provide a tiered framework for supporting student success with a focus on prevention. Hallmarks of these systems include a team approach, universal screening, using data to make decisions, implementing evidence-based practices, and progress monitoring.

WITHIN A PBIS FRAMEWORK, WHAT DO THE THREE TIERS ENTAIL?

Tier 1 is supported by a problem-solving leadership team with established administration. Tier 1 teams undergo ongoing data-collection, analysis and action planning, and prevention through established schoolwide (SW) and classroom systems. At the Tier 1 level, schools also have positively defined social expectations that are actively taught and recognized, and they focus on relationship building with students, staff, and families.

The Tier 2 problem-solving team includes someone with behavioral expertise and is established to monitor system and student progress. Tier 2 data is used to identify students in need of supports, in addition to monitoring progress and intervention fidelity. These Tier 2 interventions are for students who need a little more support in order to follow the school's day-to-day expectations, and they should be implemented in addition to what is being done at Tier 1.

The Tier 3 problem-solving team involves behavioral expertise established to monitor systems and student progress. Tier 3 interventions are designed for students who need individualized support to be successful in school, which is typically around 5% of the school population. They usually include a functional behavior assessment and a behavior support plan. Tier 3 interventions are in addition to Tiers 1 and 2.

ARE THE DIFFERENT TIERS JUST A WAY TO LABEL STUDENTS?

Within a MTSS, the tiers, or levels of student supports, represent a way to organize resources to provide instruction/intervention based on student need. They do not represent an identity or a location for supporting the child. For example, a student with substantial academic or behavioral needs would not be labeled as a "Tier 3 student." Rather, he is a student in need of Tier 3 support. In the past, special education and general education were very separate. Now, the goal is that necessary supports and resources are integrated into one system for all students, regardless of labels. Additional resources or tiered supports are in addition to what all students receive (general academic and behavioral instruction) and can be provided in a variety of ways and locations. In most cases, it is ideal that these supports be provided in a general education setting, since a student's success in general education is the common goal of all the educators and parents involved.

WHAT DATA SOURCES ARE USED AT EACH TIER?

Tier 1 Examples	Tier 2 Examples	Tier 3 Examples
School Climate Survey Office of Discipline Referrals Needs Assessment Attendance Health/Wellness Fidelity: Key Feature Evaluation	Office of Discipline Referrals Point Card Systems fidelity Attendance Health/Wellness TFI: Tiered Fidelity of Implementation	Fidelity Checklists Individualized Behavior Rating Scale Tool (IBRST) TFI: Tiered Fidelity of Implementation

Resources: References:

National Center on Intensive Intervention   http://www.florida-rti.org/floridaMTSS/mtf.htm

RTI Action Network Positive Behavioral   http://kansasmtss.org/faq.html
Interventions and Supports