

HSCSED Guidelines for MTSS Implementation

for

Social/Emotional and Behavioral Concerns

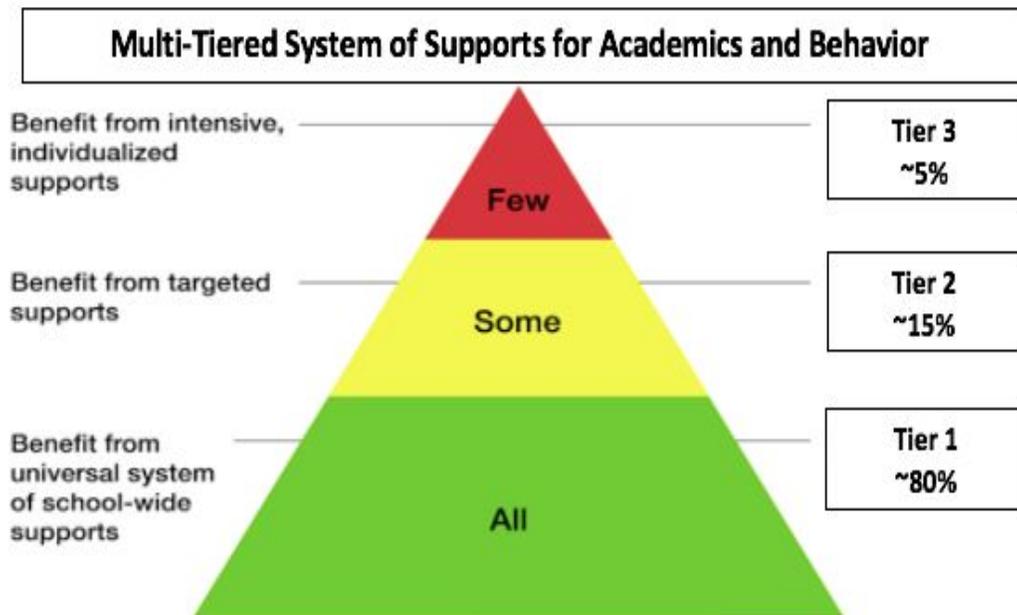


2018

What is Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)?

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), also known as Response to Intervention, is a whole school, data driven, prevention based, framework for improving academic and behavioral outcomes for every student through a layered continuum of evidence-based practices and systems. The MTSS process provides children early access to academic and behavioral interventions at increasing levels of intensity based on need. Research on social emotional functioning suggests that providing positive behavioral supports increases academic engagement, reduces problem behaviors and improves academic outcomes. Therefore, identifying and intervening to improve social and emotional functioning should be a critical part of the problem-solving process.

The big idea is that high-quality interventions (Appendices A & B) are provided and matched to the needs of students. Data and the problem-solving process are utilized to identify needs, provide evidence-based instruction, and evaluate progress at all levels of instruction/intervention. Strong leadership and collaboration among educators is essential to achieve positive outcomes. It is recommended that the problem-solving team consist of the building principal, classroom teachers, school psychologist, social worker, guidance counselor, and/or appropriate interventionists. Parents should also be part of the team, informed of the process, and involved especially at the Tier 3 level.



Problem-Solving in MTSS

The problem-solving process is a critical and essential component to MTSS at all of the tiers and is completed and documented by problem-solving teams within the buildings. Data is collected and utilized to make decisions at every level of the problem-solving process. It is essential that each team documents various components of the process at each tier, including Problem Identification, Problem Analysis, Plan Development/Implementation, and Plan Evaluation. It is recommended that the problem-solving teams meet regularly to review data to make decisions at the Tier 2 and Tier 3 levels.

Problem Identification involves the use of data to identify a discrepancy in student performance compared to peer performance or grade level standards. In Problem Analysis, the problem-solving team uses data and other resources to determine *why* the identified problem is occurring. Plan Development/Implementation occurs when the problem-solving team determines which evidence-based intervention will be provided based upon the problem that was identified. During the Implementation phase, a student is provided with interventions as documented in the student's plan. During Plan Evaluation, the problem-solving team reviews progress monitoring data to determine if the intervention was implemented with integrity and if it was successful in closing or reducing the discrepancy between the student's performance and peer performance/grade level standards.



Essential Components of MTSS (Behavior)

Within the schools in HSCSED, behavioral systems tend to not be as developed as the academic systems. However, the critical components to address behavior are the exact same as those for academic MTSS:

- Expectations for high quality, research-based instruction in general education classrooms
- Universal, classroom-based screening to identify need for additional support
- Collaborative, team-based approach to development, implementation, and evaluation of alternative interventions
- Increasingly intense, multi-tiered application of an array of high-quality, evidence-based instruction matched to individual needs
- Continuous monitoring of progress to determine impact of interventions
- Expectations for parent involvement throughout the process (www.pbis.org)

Data Sources

There are multiple sources of data that can be utilized to provide information about a student's behavior. The following list provides several examples:

- Attendance data
- Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs)
- In-School Suspensions (ISS)
- Out-of-School Suspensions (OSS)
- Amount of instructional time lost due to classroom removal
- Data from daily behavior tracking forms
- Data gathered through a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)

Documentation is essential! Each time a student's behavior necessitates that he/she is sent to the principal's office, an office discipline referral must be documented. If the outcome of the office visit involves further disciplinary actions (e.g. ISS, OSS), this must also be documented. This is a simple way for the problem-solving team to understand the frequency and severity of a student's behavior.

Tier 1

All students should receive instruction from a core social/emotional curriculum. Best practices indicate that the core curriculum should be supported by research that has demonstrated its effectiveness. Tier 1 utilizes school-wide positive behavior supports and effective classroom management procedures for all students. This includes those who require additional behavioral supports at the Tier 2 and Tier 3 levels. Tier 1 instruction should meet the needs of at least 80% of the student population.

Universal Screener

Best practice recommends the use of a universal screener in order to identify students at-risk for social/emotional and/or behavioral concerns. Several behavior screeners and tools have been developed for use in schools. This screening, or benchmark, could take place periodically throughout the school year (e.g. fall, winter, spring). These screeners will allow the students to be compared to their classmates, as well as to a national sample of grade-level peers. Results from this assessment should be used to determine which students require intervention in order to be successful. In addition, the data can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the core curriculum.

If universal screening and decision rules identify more than 20% of students as at-risk, schools should focus attention on determining if the core curriculum is evidence-based, current, and rigorous enough to meet the needs of the general student population.

The following universal screening instruments are examples of various research-validated screeners:

- Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders (SSBD)
- Student Risk Screening Scale (SRSS)
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)
- Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS)

Districts could also develop an early warning system using the following information sources:

- Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs)
- Attendance Data
- Grades
- In-School Suspensions (ISS)
- Out-of-School Suspensions (OSS)

Tier 2

Tier 2 involves targeted groups of students in need of focused, small group social/emotional and/or behavioral instruction and interventions. This tier should include no more than 5-15% of the student population. Tier 2 students could be identified through universal screening and in some cases teacher referral.

Students who are identified to receive Tier 2 services often demonstrate:

- Behavioral and/or emotional concerns of a moderate frequency, intensity, and/or duration that result in lost instructional time
- Classroom removals due to behavior
- Tardies and/or attendance issues
- A moderate number of office discipline referrals (for example, 2 to 5 ODRs within a specified timeframe)
- In-school and/or out-of-school suspensions

Best Practice Regarding Interventions:

- High-quality, evidence-based interventions should be provided individually or in small groups (1:1-1:4 specialist to student ratio) if students present with similar behavior deficits that warrant direct instruction.
- Intervention (informal behavior plan, small group social skills instruction, Check-In/Check-Out, etc.) could be provided by the teacher or another staff member in or out of the classroom.
- Intervention sessions vary based upon the students' needs and the intervention selected.
- Ample opportunities to practice newly acquired behavior skills should be presented.
- Students should be provided with frequent, positive and constructive feedback.
- Data collection could occur daily and should be recorded through appropriate means as determined by the problem-solving team.
- An intervention should be attempted for a minimum of 8-10 weeks.
- There should be a minimum of two interventions attempted if the student is not making progress based on agreed upon decision rules.
- The problem-solving team should document changes that are made to the student's intervention plan based upon his/her data and progress toward a specific goal.

Tier 3

Tier 3 interventions are typically provided in addition to Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports/interventions. Therefore, a student who receives Tier 3 interventions will continue to receive Tier 1 support, and may also receive Tier 2 intervention services. Tier 3 should be comprised of no more than approximately 5% of the students in a school.

Students who are identified to receive Tier 3 services often demonstrate:

- Behavioral and/or emotional concerns of a strong frequency, intensity, and/or duration that result in a significant amount of lost instructional time and/or safety concerns
- Frequent classroom removals due to behavior
- Frequent tardies and/or attendance issues
- A high number of office discipline referrals (for example, 6 or more ODRs within a specified timeframe)
- A significant history of in-school and/or out-of-school suspensions

Best Practice Regarding Interventions:

- A functional behavior assessment (FBA) should be conducted by qualified staff in order to determine the function of maladaptive behavior. Parent consent must be obtained prior to conducting the FBA.
- Information obtained from the FBA should be used to create an individualized behavior intervention plan (BIP) that outlines the student's supports as well as procedures for all staff members who interact with the student.
- High-quality, evidence-based interventions should be provided individually or in small groups (1:1-1:4 specialist to student ratio) if students present with similar behavior deficits that warrant direct instruction.

- Intervention sessions vary based upon the students' needs and the intervention selected.
- Ample opportunities to practice newly acquired behavior skills should be presented.
- Students should be provided with frequent, positive and constructive feedback.
- Data collection should occur daily and be recorded through appropriate means as determined by the problem-solving team.
- An intervention should be attempted for a minimum of 4 weeks.
- There should be a minimum of two interventions attempted if the student is not making progress based on agreed upon decision rules.
- The problem-solving team should document changes that are made to the student's intervention plan based upon his/her data and progress toward a specific goal.

Minimum Requirements for Behavior-Based Special Education Referral (every box must be checked):

- The student has been discussed with the school psychologist and school social worker through the problem-solving team.
- The student has received intensive, individualized, evidence-based interventions.
- Evidence of intervention integrity and fidelity must be provided through intervention logs (i.e., name of interventionist, intervention names, dates of intervention sessions, dates of intervention cycles, group size).
- The student has received a minimum of 8 weeks of individual problem-solving and Tier 3 interventions with a minimum of one revised intervention. (Team discretion may be used if significant safety issues arise.)
- Data from behavioral interventions have been collected and provided that indicate the student has made minimal or no progress toward the individualized goal.
- The student's behavior(s) adversely affects his/her education and/or the education of others.

Appendix A

What's the Difference? Accommodations vs. Modifications vs. Interventions

Accommodations

A technique that eliminates obstacles that would interfere with a student's ability to perform or produce at the same standard of performance expected of all students.

Some examples include:

- Providing extra time for a student to complete the same test/assignment as peer
- Providing preferential seating
- Designated area for de-escalation

Modifications

Modifications lower or change the standard of performance.

Some examples include:

- Reducing the number of problems that a student must complete
- Lowered classroom participation expectations for students with anxiety
- Changing teacher's reaction to the child's behavior (ignore negative behavior, praise positive behavior)

Interventions

Direct and systematic instruction that increases a particular skill level that goes beyond the instruction provided to all students at Tier 1

Some examples include:

- Individual counseling provided by a trained related service professional
- Implementing a social skills intervention with a small group of students
- Individualized behavior intervention plan (BIP)

Appendix B

What is an Intervention?

An intervention is a specific academic and/or behavioral research-based plan or program that is different from the *regularly* occurring activities in the general education classroom – with evidence of implementation. Interventions are designed to provide skills for at-risk students that need to *accelerate* academic learning and/or improve behavior traits to achieve grade-level expectations.

An intervention is **not**:

1. An assessment, such as a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), classroom observation, or psycho-educational evaluation
2. A preferential or change of seating
3. Parent/guardian contact
4. Collection of data for progress monitoring
5. Additional homework, homework assistance, or peer buddies
6. Retention
7. Suspension (in or out of school)
8. Detention