



**Alto ISD Multi Tiered System of Supports
MTSS Handbook: 2022-2023**

Introduction

Our Mission:

To provide all students with an educational program that will allow them to develop to their potential, to be well-adjusted, and able to make positive contributions to a free enterprise society

Our Vision:

To provide efficient and effective school processes which result in success for all students

MTSS Goals:

Alto ISD believes a Multi Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework will help achieve our school and community's commitment to this mission. MTSS is a **problem-solving** and **prevention** model with strong evidence of success. MTSS uses data-based decision making to inform academic and behavioral instruction and intervention based on individual student needs.

Our goal for our students: The MTSS framework of support allows them to be known, respected and supported across the diversity of their learning needs, so they may achieve success in their academics, personal relationships, and eventual careers.

Our goal for our educators: They see this MTSS framework as a way to support all students more effectively, more easily, and more efficiently. We aim to streamline the collection and documentation of observations and student data - as well as the planning and reporting process required for differentiation and intervention, so we can enable our teachers to spend more time building relationships with their students, delivering personalized support, and experiencing professional success.

An Overview of an MTSS Approach

A. Tiered System of Supports (MTSS): What & Why

Multi Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a collaborative, evidence-based, approach to differentiating and personalizing instruction and intervention, across academics and behavior for all students—so that every student can achieve academic and life success. MTSS is one of the most effective ways to provide an equitable educational experience, because it leverages collective knowledge and expertise to help teachers understand their learners' needs and make informed and strategic decisions that best support them.

MTSS begins with teachers assessing the skills of everyone in the class, to proactively identify who may need additional support in an area (e.g. reading, math, behavior). Students then receive support (research-based, targeted instruction or intervention) matched both to their skills and level of need. Those students' progress is monitored closely to ensure that the additional support is helping.

If the achievement gap has resolved, the additional support in that area is no longer required; if it does not improve, then the level of personalization increases, further problem solving to understand why each student struggles, and to design a customized plan to support their needs in a defined and systematic way.

MTSS is not new. There are many academic experts and learning scientists ready to share the do's and don'ts of supporting the diversity of student learning needs. There are thousands of research-backed interventions to choose from, tons of best practices to keep in mind, and so many data points to inform our data-driven decision making. There is tremendous evidence supporting the power of an effective MTSS system to improve student outcomes for struggling learners, but there is also solidly convincing research that it improves student outcomes for ALL learners. A rising tide raises all boats.

It is our hope that this handbook will enable us to support all of our students in Alto ISD, from those in general education and special education, to the gifted learners, as well as those who move fluidly across all, by making the work of MTSS easy, efficient, effective, and thereby, equitable.

B. The 7 Guiding Principles of MTSS:¹

1. MTSS is for ALL students.

- a. Educators must work **proactively** to support students' learning needs.
- b. **ALL** students can learn.
- c. **ALL** available resources are accessible to teach all students.

2. Leadership is vital.

- a. Strong administrative support ensures clarity around protocol and commitment to time and resources.
- b. Administration supports teachers by sharing the common goal of improving instruction (core, supplemental, and intervention).
- c. MTSS team builds internal capacity and sustainability over time.

3. Scientific, research-based core instruction and intervention is the foundation for success.

- a. **Core Curriculum:** To ensure students have the best chance at success, use strategies with a scientific, research-base.
 - i. Core curriculum and instructional approaches must have a high probability of success for most students (80%).
 - ii. Implementation of core curriculum must be verifiably implemented with fidelity.
- b. **Tiered Levels of Support:** Beyond the core curriculum, match students' instruction/support to the level and

intensity of their need. The levels of support provided to students are based on increasing level of student needs, which is organized through a tiered framework:

- i. Tier 1 is whole class core instruction
- ii. Tier 2 is whole class core instruction + additional targeted instruction (often small group)
- iii. Tier 3 is whole class core instruction + intensive intervention

4. Instructionally relevant, valid and reliable assessments are critical for providing proactive and reactive support.

a. There are 3 types of assessments, which vary in administration and use:

- i. Summative assessments are administered to all students (grades 3-11) annually to determine students' mastery of grade-level standards and provide educators with information about adequate yearly progress at site and district levels.
- ii. Universal screening assessments are administered to all students three times per year to proactively and objectively identify which students are potentially in need of educational supports / enhancements to supplement the core curriculum. Furthermore, evaluation of universal screening data is conducted to ensure the core curriculum is resulting in success for a sufficient percentage of students. These assessments should be nationally or state-normed and predictive of performance on summative assessments.
- iii. Progress monitoring assessments are given to students receiving intervention support and are administered weekly or every other week, depending on the intensity of need. These data should come from Curriculum-Based Measurements (CBMs), because they provide a reliable and valid measure of students' growth in a particular skill area.

5. A Response Protocol is used to make support decisions for students on a continuum of needs.

- a. A Response Protocol refers to the method and approach used when determining student needs and how to address them--it defines, "who gets what and when."
- b. The Response Protocol outlines a plan for using research-based, targeted interventions and enrichment services with increasing levels of cumulative support.
- c. The Response Protocol outlines the roles and responsibilities of staff and clarifies the procedures and processes within the model (e.g., requirements to move a student into Tier 3, procedures for notifying parents, etc.).
- d. There are three types of Response Protocols:
 - i. A Standard-Treatment Protocol (STP) is used when all students struggling with a similar area receive the same support plan.
 - ii. A Problem-Solving Protocol (PSP) is used when a student receives an individual plan designed for their specific needs.
 - iii. A combined approach (ST/PSP) uses elements from both protocols to design additional support.

6. Data guide instructional decisions.

- a. Data is used to align curriculum and instruction to assessment.
- b. Data is used to allocate resources.
- c. Data drives professional development decisions.

7. Educators are also respected as diverse learners.

- a. Educators require professional development to ensure effectiveness and integrity at all levels of instruction.
- b. Educators receive ongoing training and support to assimilate new knowledge and skills in a diversity of ways.
 - i. This support can be in the form of follow-up modeling and coaching.
 - ii. This support can be provided in person, via webinar, in groups, one-on-one, through tutorials, articles, etc.
- c. Educators anticipate and are willing to meet newly emerging needs based on student performance.

C. A Three-Tiered System of Service Delivery

A three-tiered system of service delivery is a necessary structure to efficiently and effectively support all children, not just those who struggle in school. The three-tiered system of service delivery is crucial in the attempt to ensure all students achieve at high levels and all students achieve college and career readiness.

The 1st step in building an MTSS system involves examining system effectiveness, which must occur prior to examining students individually. This section describes each tier in detail, and how to examine the effectiveness of a school's system of service delivery.

Tier 1 Core Instruction:

At Tier 1, **all** students receive scientific, research-based core instruction implemented with integrity and emphasizing grade-level standards and school-wide behavioral expectations. Instruction at Tier 1 should be explicit, differentiated and include flexible grouping and active student engagement. To ensure 80% of students' needs are met at Tier 1, high quality instruction is essential. Features of high quality, research-based instruction include (Chard et al., 2008):

- **Standards-Based Curriculum:** a curriculum based upon the TEKS
- **Systematic Explicit Instruction:** Skills are taught from less to more complex using direct, clear and concise instructional language.
- **Differentiated Instruction:** Students have different levels of background knowledge and school readiness; differentiated instruction engages each student in active learning according to his/her needs. The content of instruction, delivery of instruction, and targeted level of instruction can be differentiated.
- **Flexible Grouping:** A combination of whole group, small group, and individual instruction allows teachers to create fluid groups that meet the needs of all students.

- **Active Student Engagement:** Ensuring all students are actively involved during instruction and are not passive recipients; this can be accomplished with high rates of opportunities to respond, ample time to practice skills, and prompt corrective feedback.
- **Classroom Behavior Strategies:** Proactively and explicitly teaching the expected behaviors and routines, frequent use of reinforcement and praise (4:1 positive to negative feedback loop), quick and efficient transition times, and consistent instructional response to misbehavior.

A solid Tier 1 should be sufficient to help **80%** of students meet or exceed grade level expectations as measured by a standardized summative assessment. If Tier 1 instruction is not successful in meeting the needs of 80% of the school's population, the school team should evaluate the quality of the curriculum and its delivery and also consider possible solutions to create a better match between students' needs and the core curriculum and instruction (e.g., improving explicit instruction, differentiation strategies, use of flexible grouping, and maximizing active student engagement).

Universal Screening

Universal screening is the process of assessing all students to identify individuals who are at risk or in need of more individualized support (Hughes & Dexter, 2008). It is similar to screening potential health problems by taking a child's temperature or monitoring their height and weight.

Universal screening data are used in two ways. First, they are used to determine if core instruction is sufficient for at least 80% of students. A sufficient core is fundamental to the success of MTSS and cannot be overlooked. Second, they are used to identify students who need additional support. Universal screening procedures generate objective information for parents and educators to proactively determine students whose needs are not being adequately addressed and increase efficiency of resource allocation.

Universal screeners often over-identify individuals as at-risk. Teams then compare universal screening results with multiple sources of data (e.g., benchmark data, class performance, etc.) to confirm or disconfirm at-risk status. The over-identification of students using universal screening is planned and desired to prevent missing students who are in need.

In secondary education, universal screening shifts to individual screening to identify basic skill deficits in students who are struggling in content area classes. In this scenario, data are not used to preemptively identify students in need of support, but to identify underlying skill deficits in a subset of students who have already been identified by content area teachers as needing additional support.

Tier 1 Enrichment and Support

Students who are meeting or exceeding standards may require enrichment beyond the core to demonstrate academic growth. It is the school's responsibility to ensure that all students make academic progress regardless of their entry level.

Tier 2 Targeted Group Intervention

At Tier 2, students identified as being at-risk academically or behaviorally through universal screeners are provided scientific, research-based interventions in addition to the core. Approximately 10-15% of students will need supplemental instruction at Tier 2 to become proficient. Tier 2 interventions are implemented with groups of students demonstrating common skill deficits or social/emotional/behavioral risk characteristics. These students should be observed and a collaborative intervention plan is developed, monitored, and documented.

Targeted group interventions typically involve additional instruction (outside of core instruction) provided each week (e.g., two to three 30-minute intervention periods). Targeted group interventions must be more explicit: more intensive than core instruction; more supportive in the form of encouragement, feedback, and positive reinforcement; carefully scaffolded; and ideally occur in groups of approximately 3 to 5 students, for elementary, and 6 to 8 students or tier 2 support classes broken into a few groups of 6 to 8 students, for middle and high schools.

Tier 3 Intensive Individualized Intervention

Students who have not demonstrated progress with targeted group interventions at Tier 2 require more time in more intensive interventions. Tier 3 interventions are distinguished from Tier 2 interventions because they are individualized based on data collected in individual problem solving, occur with smaller student-teacher ratios (e.g., ideally 1-on-1, however, groups of 3 to 5 students or a larger group broken into a few groups of 3-5 students, is acceptable for middle and high schools), and possibly occur for a longer duration of time (e.g., more daily minutes or more weeks spent in intervention). About 5-10% of students will require this level of intensive support.

Tier 3 intervention plans include more than what occurs during intervention time. They also include strategies for maximizing student outcomes during core instruction or Tier 1, as well as supports to use at home or in the community.

Progress Monitoring

The purpose of monitoring progress is to determine the effectiveness of an intervention plan on student learning. When data show students are progressing, interventions are maintained until students meet identified goals. When data show students are not progressing, a change in intervention is necessary (Fuchs, Compton, Fuchs & Davis, 2008). When changes are made to intervention plans based on data, intervention or phase lines should be placed on student graphs to indicate the change. Students receiving Tier 2 support should be assessed every other week, while students receiving Tier 3 support should be assessed weekly.

Assessments used for progress monitoring should be valid and reliable measures of the specific skill being evaluated so that they can be used to compare students' rate of growth to expected rate of growth (based on local or national peer comparison).

D. Considerations MTSS Support of English Learners (ELs)

The term English Learners (ELs) refers to students whose first language is not English, and encompasses both students who are

just beginning to learn English (often referred to in federal legislation as "limited English proficient" or "LEP") **and** those who have already developed considerable proficiency. The term underscores the fact that, in addition to meeting all the academic challenges that face their monolingual peers, these students are mastering another language.

It is helpful to take into account the following considerations when supporting ELs through an MTSS model:

- **Teaching should be culturally responsive:** The student's prior experiences should be considered, including home language background and socio-cultural background.
- **Interplay of English Language Learning & Reading Instruction:** Teachers should consider the relationship between a student's language proficiency and his/her literacy skills. Reading fluency and comprehension may be strongly determined by vocabulary and linguistic proficiency of both the first and second language.
- **Interplay of English Language Learning & Math Instruction:** Linguistic proficiency and vocabulary comprehension are important when understanding math concepts. Several concepts of math are not necessarily universal.
- **Additional Variables:** Within MTSS problem-solving, **literacy and oracy (in both home and new languages), culture, and educational history** are variables to be considered when assessing and planning instruction for ELs. In all three tiers, these variables stay consistent.
- **English Language Learning:** core instruction for all LEP/EL students must always include English language learning as well.
- **Matching Instruction to Student Need:** Differentiated instruction should be used for ALL students; however, differentiated instruction for ELs should consider the student's level of English proficiency and prior educational experiences in addressing cultural and linguistic differences. When determining appropriate instruction/intervention, the following list applies to **all levels** of EL students:
 - Consider the amount and type of EL instruction the student received in the past and in the present
 - If applicable, consider the amount and type of home language instruction in the past and in the present
 - Ensure that the language(s) used for intervention matches the language(s) used for core instruction
 - Consider the impact of language and culture on instruction and learning
 - Contact the family for guidance and feedback
 - Ensure that certified EL teachers serve on the MTSS instructional decision-making team
- **Assessment:** In order to better understand the needs of LEP/EL students
 - **Home Language Questionnaire:** To identify if a language other than English is spoken at home
 - **Interview:** To assess the relationship between their 2+ languages and the extent of formal education the student received in any other language
 - **Initial EL Placement State Assessment:** Based on the original home language survey and preLAS or LAS Links assessment results. Students are identified on their level of proficiency.
 - **EL State Assessment:** TELPAS is administered during the spring semester of each school year to assess students' proficiency level. It assists in determining next year's placement.
 - **Monitor:** Students who score Advanced High in all domains on TELPAS and at least approaches on STAAR reading for grades 3+ are determined to be proficient in the English language. Students who meet this criteria will be

recommended to exit the ESL or Bilingual program to be monitored for 4 years.

An Overview of MTSS Guidelines: Alto ISD

A. Our workflow for MTSS for Elementary Schools:

Activity	Key Concepts or Issues (enter planning notes here)	Timeline	Person Responsible
Administer universal screeners (academics and behavior)	Assessments administered to all students, 3 times per year.	Fall, Winter, and Spring	Principal, Director of Elementary C&I
Tier students based on screener data	Tier 2 – students between 11 th and 24 th percentile on screener. Tier 3 – students between 1 st and 10 th percentile on screener	After screener administration	Director of Elementary C&I
Schedule initial Student Support Team (SST) Meetings	This may be a small set of students for initial roll out	As needed.	Intervention Specialists
Collect teacher observations	Surveys for all Tier 2 and Tier 3 students in the areas they are struggling	As students are first identified for Tier 2 or 3, then once or twice per year	Intervention Specialists
Develop collaborative Intervention Plans, or Student Support Plans (SSP)	Goals, progress monitors, and interventions will be added to each student in Tier 2 and 3 in the area they are struggling	During initial support meeting	MTSS team and teachers
Share updates with family and student	Letters can be generated on the DMAC platform using preloaded templates	Quarterly	Intervention Specialists
Implement intervention and monitor plan	Teachers and interventionists with assigned work will administer	Tier 2: 60 mins/week; 30 minutes per session, 2 sessions per week Tier 3: 30 minutes per session, 3 sessions per week +one hour of after school tutorials (spring semester only)	Intervention Specialists Teachers
Review impact of supports and	Review data on students' plan & progress page.	Tier 2: monthly in grade team meetings	MTSS team and

student progress	Ensure intervention(s) were delivered with intended fidelity and evaluate growth	Tier 3: after progress monitoring assessment by individual teacher, reviewed by team as needed for students not progressing	teachers
Adjust plan based on relevant data	If a student did not make sufficient progress, follow problem solving protocol and adjust plans	After collaborative review	MTSS team and teachers

Our workflow for MTSS for Grades 5 - 8:

Activity	Key Concepts or Issues (enter planning notes here)	Timeline	Person Responsible
Administer individual screeners (academics and behavior)	Basic skills screening assessments administered to all students	Fall, Winter, and Spring	Principal, Director of Secondary C&I
Tier students based on screener data (can use other points of data in addition to the screener)	Tier 2 – students above 10 th percentile and below 50 th percentile on basic skills screener Tier 3 – students below 10 th percentile on basic skills screener	After screener/benchmark assessments	Principal
Schedule initial Student Support Meetings	Parent, student, teacher, administrator conference.	As needed	Counselor
Develop collaborative Intervention Plans	Goals, progress monitors, and interventions will be added to each student in Tier 2 and 3 in the area they are struggling	During initial support meeting	MTSS team and teachers
Share updates with family and student	Letters can be generated using templates	After initial support meeting	Teachers
Implement intervention and monitor plan	Teachers with assigned work will administer	Tier 2: 30 minutes per session, 2 sessions per week Tier 3: 30 minutes per session, 3 sessions per week +one hour of after school tutorials (spring semester only)	Teachers
Review impact of supports and student progress	Review data on students' plan & progress page. Ensure intervention(s) were delivered with intended fidelity	Tier 2: monthly in grade team meetings	MTSS team and teachers

	and evaluate growth.	Tier 3: after progress monitoring assessment by individual teacher, reviewed by team as needed for students not progressing	
Adjust plan based on relevant data	If a student did not make sufficient progress, follow problem solving protocol and adjust plans.	After collaborative review	MTSS team and teachers

Our workflow for MTSS for Grades 9-12- Academics, Credits, Attendance, IBC, STAAR EOC, Graduation

Activity	Key Concepts or Issues (enter planning notes here)	Timeline	Person Responsible
Administer individual screeners (academics, IBC Complete)	Basic skills screening assessments administered to all students	Fall, Winter, and Spring	Principal, Director of Secondary C&I
Tier students based on screener data. ie PEIMS report and IBC tracker	Tier 2 - students who has not met Academic Requirements Tier 3 - students who has not met academic, CTE requirements, Graduations and Truancy	Fall, Winter and Spring	Campus Principal
Schedule initial Student Support Meetings	This may be a parent-student-teacher-administrator conference set of students for initial.	As needed	Campus Principal, Student Services Administrator, Attendance
Develop collaborative Intervention Plans	Goals, progress monitors, and interventions will be added to each student in Tier 2 and 3 in the area they are struggling	During initial support meeting	MTSS team and teachers
Share updates with family and student	Letters can be generated on BrM platform using preloaded templates	After initial support meeting	Student Service Administrator
Implement intervention and monitor plan	Teachers and interventions with assigned work will administer	Tier 2: -Report to their assigned teacher during enrichment daily to complete necessary requirements Tier 3: Report to their assigned teacher during enrichment and after school to complete necessary requirements	Teachers

Review impact of supports and student progress	Review data on graduation students' plan & data tracker spreadsheet. Ensure intervention(s) were delivered with intended fidelity and evaluate growth.	Tier 2: Weekly in PLC meetings and GBF meetings Tier 3: after progress monitoring assessment by individual teacher, reviewed by team as needed for students not progressing	MTSS team and teachers
Adjust plan based on relevant data	If a student did not make sufficient progress, follow problem solving protocol and adjust plans.	After collaborative review	MTSS team and teachers

B. Standard Treatment Protocol / Problem-Solving (STP-PS) in MTSS:

The combined Standard Treatment Protocol / Problem-Solving (STP-PS) Model drives the decisions made in the MTSS system, and includes 4 steps:

1. **Problem Identification** (“Who and what are we concerned about?”): the difference between what learning and/or behavior is expected and what actually occurs is clearly defined.
2. **Problem Analysis** (“Why do we think the problem is occurring?”): multiple sources of data are used (e.g. formative and summative assessments, attendance data, etc.,) to generate possible cause(s) of the problem.
3. **Plan Implementation** (“What can we do about it?”): an intervention plan is developed collaboratively and implemented. The plan contains learning goals, activities that maximize likelihood of success, and a plan for monitoring progress.
4. **Plan Evaluation** (“Was our support successful?”): Progress data are reviewed to determine if the plan was delivered with fidelity and the extent of impact in closing the gap toward expected performance. If positive impact is not evident, the problem-solving process begins again.

It is critical to understand that MTSS is based on this premise: the earlier we can identify a problem, analyze it so we can best understand our learners’ needs, implement a plan providing each student the level of support they need using research-backed interventions matched to their specific challenges, and monitor frequently for fidelity and effectiveness, the higher the likelihood we can help our students achieve success more easily, more quickly, and more commonly within the general education setting. MTSS is how we provide an equitable and successful education for ALL students.

C. Three Types of MTSS Meetings:

An effective MTSS practice is comprised of three different types of meetings that have three different functions and agendas:

1. **The School Level MTSS Meeting:** This meeting is conducted three times a year following the administration of universal screening assessments. The goal of this meeting is to understand the health of school-level MTSS practices by looking at the percent of students who are adequately being served by the core, the equity of instruction across demographics, grades, and classrooms, and improvement in student outcome measures since the last meeting. These metrics are used to evaluate the quality of practice across tier 1, 2, and 3 levels of support and guide school-level improvement plans.
2. **The Grade/Content Team Community Meeting:** This meeting is conducted by each grade or content team on a monthly basis to discuss all tier 2 and 3 students. The goal of this meeting is to ensure at-risk students are receiving support and making progress, that patterns/trends in student growth are identified, and that plans are adjusted or support is provided to teachers based on observed trends in student need.
3. **The Individual Problem-solving Meeting:** This meeting provides the time and space for individualized deep dive problem-solving for students not making sufficient progress when supported by the Grade/Content Team Community Meeting, e.g. stagnating tier 3 students. (High School)

Meeting Type	School Level MTSS Meeting	Grade/Content Team MTSS Meeting	Individual Problem-Solving MTSS Meeting
Goal	Evaluate school-wide health and wellness of MTSS practice	Monitor progress of tier 2 students, look for trends in support needs at the system, teacher, or student level	Deeper dive problem-solving for students not making sufficient progress, and to create/revise intervention plans for tier 3 students
Duration/ Frequency	3x per year (post-universal screeners)	Once per month	Quarterly (depending on the size of Tier 3 population)
Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Principal ● Dean of students ● Counselor ● Special Ed representative/teacher ● Grade-level rep (large schools) OR Gen Ed teacher rep (small schools) 	All teachers and specialists who are working with Tier 2 students in that grade or content area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Principal ● MTSS Coordinator (if applicable) ● Intervention specialist(s) ● Rotating gen ed teacher of student being discussed ● Counselor ● Student Service Administrator

Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examine percent of students adequately served by the core ● Examine equity of core instruction (across demographics, grades, and classrooms) ● Evaluate student body growth and tier movement ● Evaluate equity of student growth and tier movement ● Evaluate quality of intervention delivery ● Plan for improved support 	<p>First meeting after screener</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tier and/or review tier placement of students ● Create tier 2 groups and plans ● Schedule tier 3 student problem solving meetings <p>Follow-up meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review progress of tier 2 groups ● Look for trends in student growth ● Make course corrections to promote growth (e.g., provide support to teachers, change strategy) ● Schedule individual problem-solving for students if necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher presents data ● Team evaluates student progress ● Team analyzes and identifies problems ● Team creates intervention plan to support student ● Team discusses/monitors progress <p>**Should avg 4-5 students in a ½ day, or 8-10 students in a full day</p>
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D. Forming a School Site MTSS Team

The MTSS team is a school-based, problem-solving team; it is the engine that drives the MTSS system. The MTSS team proactively addresses system needs by reviewing school-wide data (within grade levels and classrooms) and supports individual student growth by helping to monitor progress and make decisions for students at Tier 3. The principal designates the composition of the MTSS team. MTSS team membership is determined both by standing members who contribute expertise from their respective disciplines and those who may be invited to address a specific concern. Examples of standing members on the MTSS team include: administrator, school counselor/student service administrator, intervention specialist, dyslexia teacher, special education teacher, and grade-level or department representatives.

MTSS Team duties are as follows:

Meet regularly with a structured agenda that varies throughout the month to:

- Review universal screening data;
- Review school-wide data, consider feedback and concerns from PLCs, and make data-based decisions;
- Provide input on professional development as it relates to the school's MTSS system and Tier 1 needs;
- Provide input regarding school site intervention/enrichment schedule, curriculum, and/or course offerings;
- Support grade levels/departments in serving students during intervention blocks in collaboration with general education teachers;
- Discuss and communicate with the campus and district administrator on issues relevant to the MTSS process;
- Consult and collaborate with administrators, counselors, teachers and parents about the MTSS problem-solving

- process and procedural integrity;
- Hold problem-solving meetings for individual students;
- Refer students for comprehensive special education evaluations when data indicate this step is warranted.

The following list describes roles/responsibilities that are assigned by campus administrators (or their designees) to various members of the MTSS team, given individual strengths and abilities. Some responsibilities are shared among team members:

1) Administrative Representative (Principal)

- Facilitates monitoring of instructional integrity within grade levels/departments
- Provides leadership at MTSS team meetings
- Ensures progress monitoring for all students in Tiers 2 and 3 (both for students with IEPs and those without IEPs)

2) MTSS Team Coordinator(s) (MTSS Coordinator, Intervention Specialists, Counselor, Student Service, Dean of Students)

- Provides leadership at MTSS team meetings
- Coordinates and sets agenda for MTSS team meetings
- Provides expertise to MTSS team regarding problem-solving protocol
- Provides expertise in data analysis
- Identifies trends in student/staff need across school
- Ensures next steps are documented and communicated with student and/or family

3) Grade-level/Department Head

- Serves as a liaison between grade-level/department team and MTSS team
- Attends grade level PLC and MTSS meetings on a regular basis
- Identifies trends in student/staff need across grade-level or content area
- Presents data/background information on student being discussed (in absence of classroom teacher)

4) Specialists (e.g., intervention teacher, dyslexia teacher, behavior specialist)

- Provides expertise to MTSS team regarding interventions and skill remediation
- Supports MTSS team with data interpretation and ensures linkage of data to selected interventions
- Gathers progress monitoring data from PLCs and Tier 3 interventions for review during MTSS meetings
- Consults/collaborates with classroom teachers regarding differentiated instruction

5) Classroom teacher

- Provides experience with and knowledge of student being discussed

- Presents data/background information on student

E. MTSS Teams: Staff, Roles, and Responsibilities

Critical to the functioning of an effective MTSS team is communication and collaboration between all school personnel. It is important to remember as we identify roles within an MTSS system that, as educators first, we *all* own the success of *all* students.

Role	Duties	Staff Member Assigned
Administrative Representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilitates monitoring of instructional integrity within grade levels/departments ● Provides leadership at MTSS team meetings ● Ensures weekly progress monitoring for all students in Tiers 2 and 3 (both for students with IEPs and those without IEPs) 	Principal
MTSS Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides leadership at MTSS team meetings ● Coordinates and sets agenda for MTSS team meetings ● Provides expertise to MTSS team regarding problem-solving protocol ● Provides expertise in data analysis ● Identifies trends in student/staff need across school 	Varies by campus
Grade-Level/Content Area Representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Serves as liaison between PLC/grade-level/department MTSS team ● Attends grade level PLC/ MTSS meetings on a regular basis 	Varies by grade/department
Specialists (e.g., dyslexia teacher, speech/language pathologist, intervention teacher, counselor, behavior specialist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Serves as a liaison between PLC/grade-level/department /MTSS team ● Attends grade level PLC/ MTSS meetings on a regular basis ● Identifies trends in student/staff need across grade-level or content area ● Presents data/background information on student being discussed (<i>in absence of classroom teacher</i>) 	Varies by needs of student being discussed
Classroom Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides experience with and knowledge of student being discussed ● Presents data/background information on student ● Ensures next steps are documented and communicated with student and/or family 	Varies by student being discussed

F. Our Universal Screening Plan (Grades K-8):

The NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth assessment will serve as the district's initial screener for math. The CLI engage will serve as the district's initial screener for literacy in grades PK. The Star Renaissance Assessment will serve as the district's initial screener for literacy in grades K-8. Given the design, format, and content of these assessments, they will also serve as a means for us to benchmark performance at the student, classroom, school, and district levels and provide some early predictions as to student performance to the state standards and STAAR assessments. It allows us to set goals, communicate expectations (with students, staff, and families) and carefully monitor progress across key milestones throughout the school year, rather than only wait for results at the end of the year. These assessments will be administered to **all** students in grades K-8 three times during the year (fall, winter, and spring).

Our Individual Screening Plan (Grades 9-12)

Students who fail the end of year state test, or who are at-risk to fail a class, are referred for individual, basic skill screening to determine if students need support in foundational skills in addition to the content area. Students are tested on a fluid basis as they are referred to the MTSS team.

G. Our Evaluation of Screening Data:

Guiding questions:

1) Are we sufficiently delivering Tier 1 instruction?

- a) **With universal screening (K-8):** Are at least 80% of students reaching grade-level proficiency?
- b) **With individual screening (9-12):** Are less than 20% of students being referred for individual screening? (i.e., are at least 80% of students meeting course expectations?)

Core instructional practices should meet the needs of at least 80% of the students. If fewer than 80% of students do not have their needs met, teams review the MTSS Problem Solving Steps and determine how to improve the core instruction so it benefits more students

2) Is the Tier 1 instruction supporting our students equitably?

- a) **With universal screening:** Does the percent of students reaching grade-level proficiency significantly vary across demographic subgroups?
- b) **With individual screening:** Does the percent of students being referred for individual screening significantly vary across demographic subgroups?

The core instruction should be equitably supporting the diversity of our district. If a particular demographic of students is not sufficiently served by the core instruction, such that approximately 80% of students within that subgroup are not meeting expectations, we must evaluate the core as it relates to that demographic of students and problem solve for why it is not sufficiently meeting their needs before placing those students in Tier 2 or 3.

3) Who needs Tier 2 and 3 support?

- a) **With universal screening:** Students who fall below the tier 3 level set percentile should receive tier 3 level of support and students who fall between the tier 2 set level percentile should receive tier 2 level support.

Our screener data is automatically ingested in MAP and DMAC and school managers can tier students based on cut scores.

The performance of the student should be verified by comparing it to other sources of data (past tier performance, benchmark data, formative assessments, etc.). The universal screeners are intended to over-identify students needing support, so if other data suggest that the student is not at-risk, they do not need to receive Tier 2 or 3 level support.

H. Our Tier 2 and 3 Support Plan:

Alto ISD advocates the use of a combined Problem-Solving and Standard Treatment Protocol (PS + STP as described previously) for students requiring support at Tier 2 and Tier 3. The planned intervention engagement time, the selection of an evidenced-based intervention, and appropriate progress monitoring measure/schedule are systematized through STP. The decision around which evidenced-based interventions constitute a plan is based on PS. Below are the established STP parameters for group size, intervention engagement time, and progress monitoring frequency by tier:

Elementary

Tier Level	Duration of Plan	Intervention Frequency and Duration	Progress Monitoring	Group Size
2	6 weeks on specific area of instructional need, or until student meets goal	60 minutes/week (three 20-minute sessions OR two 30-minute sessions)	every other week	Small group 1:3 to 1:5

3	6 weeks on specific area of instructional need	60 minutes/week (three 20-minute sessions OR two 30-minute sessions)	weekly	Individual 1:1 to 1:3
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(Elementary)

For the creation of Tier 3 plans, the team should also consider home and community variables from the parents' perspective to complete problem analysis to pinpoint the specific nature of the student's needs. Data collected during Problem Analysis is used to develop targeted individualized plans. School personnel, parents, and (when applicable) outside agencies determine who is responsible for addressing components of the intervention plan and is documented in DMAC. The Tier 3 plan is more than what occurs during the additional intervention time. Any instructional plan incorporates the student's entire day and extra care must be taken to ensure coordination and collaboration between school personnel and families.

Families are sent Tier 3 notification letters including the plan details at the start of the intervention (print letter from DMAC).

Secondary

Tier Level	Duration of Plan	Intervention Frequency and Duration	Progress Monitoring	Group Size
2	6 weeks on specific area of instructional need, or until student meets goal	60 minutes/week (two 30-minute sessions)	every other week	Small Group 1:4 to 1:6
3	6 weeks on specific area of instructional need	90-150 minutes/week (three 30-minute sessions + one hour of after school tutorials in the spring)	weekly	Individual 1:1 to 1:3

(All campuses)

All intervention session details and progress monitoring documentation is entered and maintained in DMAC.

If a student withdraws or transfers to another school within our district, all MTSS information is updated in DMAC and accessible to that school using DMAC.

I. Our Progress Monitoring Plan:

Schedule: As the severity of the student’s problem, and the intensity of school resources provided to address that problem increases, so should the frequency of progress monitoring.

Person Responsible: Ideally, the individual implementing the intervention plan should administer the progress monitoring assessments, or record behavior data in accordance with best practice. There are documented gains in student outcome data when the person implementing the intervention administers frequent progress monitoring assessments (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1986; Ikeda, Rahn-Blakeslee, Niebling, Allison & Stumme, 2006). This information should be considered when establishing roles and responsibilities related to progress monitoring.

Schedules of progress monitoring for academic

Academics	Suggested Timeline	Instrument / Assessment Used	Person Responsible
Tier 1	Universal Screening: 3 times per year (beginning, middle, end) for all students K-12	NWEA - MAP ISIP HMH Growth Progress Measure DESSA Mini	Classroom Teacher or Campus Administration
	Individual Screening: As high school students are referred for tier 2 or 3 support	STAAR EOC/ IBC/Graduation Plan	Campus Admin
Tier 2	Monitor Progress: Twice monthly (more often as concern increases, may need multiple assessments for reliability)	NWEA - MAP Skills assessments ISIP Common content areas assessments	Classroom Teacher
Tier 3	Monitor Progress: Weekly	NWEA - MAP Skills assessments ISIP Common content areas assessments	Interventionist

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J. Evaluating Effectiveness of Tier 2 and 3 Plans:

The district recommends that grade teams take responsibility for evaluating progress of students requiring support at Tier 2, and MTSS teams work collaboratively with teachers and parents to evaluate students requiring more intensive support at Tier 3. However, if a student is stagnant at tier 2, or grade teams have additional concerns, they should schedule an individual problem-solving meeting with the MTSS team.

Guiding Questions:

1) Was the intervention delivered with fidelity?

a) Review intervention delivery for sufficient dosage:

Before determining if the intervention was effective, it's important to first check that it was delivered for the intended amount of time. At AISD, we verify the delivery of interventions by recording the sessions on DMAC. Any plans that were delivered below 90% of their intended dosage are considered not sufficiently administered.

b) Review intervention delivery for implementation integrity:

Implementation integrity is defined as the extent to which the intervention was delivered as intended. Schools must ensure that the instructional plan was implemented with integrity before determining a student requires more intensive support. At AISD, the school principals verify the integrity of intervention delivery through direct observation and teacher self-report. When the delivery of intervention has been verified to be consistent, it can be documented in the notes section in DMAC.

Monitoring implementation integrity is not intended to be an evaluative process. Using data about integrity to evaluate a teacher's ability to do his or her job is a misuse of data. Instead, monitoring integrity is intended to be an evaluation of adherence to the instructional plan, and implementation data should be used to judge the extent to which the actual instruction matched the intended instruction.

If the intervention is not delivered with sufficiency and/or integrity, then all other evaluation of Tier 2 stops and the school team works to improve integrity. It is neither ethical nor acceptable practice to judge a student's growth when the fidelity of the intervention is not adequate.

2) Is the student making sufficient progress?

a) Ensure the validity of the progress monitoring data

Academic progress monitoring data is considered *invalid and unusable* if:

- a valid and reliable curriculum-based measure was not used
- there are less than 8 data points collected (4 data points sufficient to evaluate minor plan adjustments)
- more than one progress monitoring point is collected in the same week
- more than 3 weeks has elapsed between data points
- administration directions were not followed
- student was given multiple attempts/probes
- student was given extra practice time

b) Review the growth of the student reflected by progress monitoring data

Before discussing this question, it is important to understand the components of a student's progress monitoring. Student progress will be monitored on a monthly basis. Students who are not making adequate progress will receive additional supports and more intense instruction based on their Tier.

K. Referring for a Comprehensive Evaluation to Determine Special Education Eligibility:

The MTSS team continuously evaluates the growth of students who are receiving Tier 3 interventions by reviewing progress monitoring data and the intervention plan. A student who fails to demonstrate growth over time may ultimately be referred for a full and individual evaluation because the team suspects the student may have a disability. Before the MTSS team refers a student for a full and individual evaluation, the team should be confident that instructional, curricular, and environmental variables that may contribute to or influence individual student learning have been considered and adjusted as needed. This requirement, outlined in the previous section, ensures that school personnel have responsibly and comprehensively taken steps to address variables that can be controlled within a school setting (e.g., instruction, curriculum, environment) to rule out the possibility that these are not the primary causes of a student's lack of growth or failure to respond to instruction and intervention.

***A referral to special education for a full and individual evaluation must not be delayed or denied due to MTSS. Interventions can be initiated to continue throughout the evaluation process. If there is a basis for suspecting the student has a disability and needs special education, the student should be referred for an evaluation regardless of whether he or she has participated in MTSS.

Referral for a full and individual evaluation reflects the suspicion of a disability and indicates the MTSS team's belief that a student's lack of growth is due to learner variables that require specially designed instruction. A full and individual evaluation is pursued under federal guidelines (IDEA, 2004). This evaluation may or may not include formal, individualized "testing" depending upon the scope of the evaluation as determined by the evaluation team, including the parent.

Under current federal guidelines, parents may request a full and individual evaluation to determine special education eligibility at any time. Typically, a school-based team would respond to this request by inviting parents to a meeting to discuss their concerns and determine a plan to move forward positively on behalf of the student. Teachers should use the SPED referral form provided by the district. After the meeting, the team should provide the family with documentation on the agreed upon next steps for the student (e.g., pursuing a full and individual evaluation, revising a Tier 3 intervention plan, etc.).

If a parent requests a Full and Individual Evaluation in writing to an administrator, the district must respond within 15 school days. The special education department should be contacted immediately if a written request is received by an administrator. The district must provide the parent with either prior written notice to conduct an evaluation, a copy of the Procedural Safeguards and an opportunity to provide written consent for initial evaluation or a prior written notice of refusal to conduct the evaluation.

Students receiving special education services may participate across tiers depending on need. For example, a student eligible under the category of Specific Learning Disability in the area of math may be receiving support at Tier 1 for reading, Tier 2 for behavior, and Tier 3 for math. The goal for all students receiving support at Tier 3, including those who are special education eligible, is to close the achievement gap and transition back to less restrictive support.

L. Our Referral Process for Special Education:

A referral for special education will be determined when the data (i.e. progress monitoring, fidelity checks, intervention logs, parent letters, rate of growth, gap analysis) indicate that a student may have a learning disability). Any information obtained during the MTSS data collection and intervention period may be used as part of the eligibility determination following informed written parental consent. *Consent for an evaluation may be requested or received during Tier 3 interventions, but evidence from Tier 3 must be a part of the determination, and a lack of response to Tier 3 interventions may not be predetermined. An evaluation for SLD may be performed in conjunction with the second half of Tier 3, but may not be concluded before Tier 3 interventions are proven ineffective.*

If, within the problem solving process, the team suspects that a student may be evidencing a disability other than a Specific Learning Disability, then the referral process for that disability must be followed. It is important to note that MTSS practice is not required or appropriate for all areas of suspected disability.

Prior to referral for a special education evaluation due to a suspected SLD.

Team members involved in making a decision to refer for special education may include:

- Principal or other designee

- Classroom teacher
- Intervention/support team members