

MTSS

Multi Tiered System of Supports



MTSS is a framework designed to meet the needs of all students by ensuring that schools optimize data-driven decision making, progress monitoring, and evidence-based supports and strategies to sustain student growth.

Within this framework, there exists an MTSS Team for support for students who require more strategies to make effective progress.



MTSS is not just about tiered interventions, but rather how all the systems in a school or district fit together to ensure a high quality education for all students.

**Multi Tiered System of Supports
Framework**

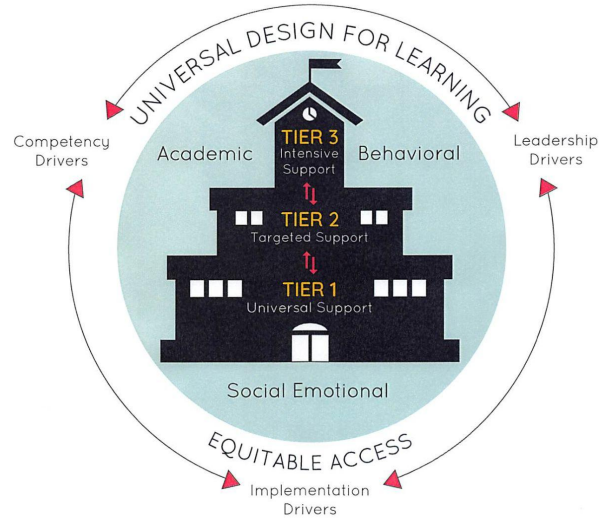


All students receive challenging, grade-appropriate tier I instruction and have equitable access to high quality, universally designed academic, behavioral, and social emotional curriculum and instruction that integrates culturally sustaining pedagogy and is linguistically responsive.

**Multi Tiered System of Supports
Framework**



MTSS VISUAL



5

MULTI-TIERED
SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

Any and all students should have access to supports when they need them. In addition, obtaining services at one point does not mean that students will always need that level of support. The MTSS process is not always linear, but rather oriented around problemsolving.

**Multi Tiered System of Supports
Team**



SECTION 2

FOUNDATIONAL FRAMEWORK & FOCUS

UDL (Universal Design for Learning)

Universal design for learning (UDL) is a framework that reduces barriers in instruction, proactively provides appropriate accommodations and supports, and allows for high-achievement expectations for all students, regardless of their unique strengths and challenges. This is done by providing options and choices for students to personalize their learning. UDL is an educational framework based on research in cognitive neuroscience that guides the development of flexible learning environments that can accommodate learner variability.

6

UDL
FRAMEWORK
COMPONENTS



Multiple Means of Engagement

The Why of Learning



Multiple Means of Representation

The What of Learning



Multiple Means of Action & Expression

The How of Learning

The UDL framework, first defined by David Rose, Ed.D. of the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) in the 1990's, calls for creating curriculum from the outset that provides:

- ★ Multiple means of engagement to tap into learners' interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to learn,
- ★ Multiple means of representation to give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge, and,
- ★ Multiple means of expression to provide learners with options for demonstrating knowledge and skills.

Instructional planning, as defined in the UDL literature, has four parts: goals, methods, materials, and assessments (Meyer, Rose & Gordon, 2014). UDL is intended to increase access and engagement in learning by reducing physical, cognitive, intellectual, and organizational barriers, as well as other obstacles. Instructional goals, through the UDL lens, focus on standards-based instruction and the design of instruction that allows all students to have equitable access to grade-level standards in learning experiences that are engaging and personalized to their needs. UDL principles also lend themselves to implementing inclusionary practices in the classroom, including behavioral and social emotional teaching and learning.

Equitable Access

All students receive challenging, grade-appropriate tier 1 instruction and have equitable access to high quality, universally designed academic, behavioral, and social emotional curriculum and instruction that integrates culturally sustaining pedagogy and is linguistically responsive. In our planning, it is important to ensure equitable access to highly qualified teachers along with comprehensive efforts to diversify our workforce.

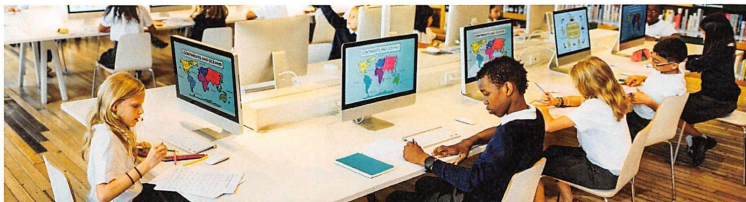
Piper et al. (2006) define access as the ability to obtain a seat in a classroom or to receive services, whereas equity is the ability to obtain that seat or service regardless of “ethnicity, language spoken at home, gender, rural or urban location, or regional differences” (p. 2). All students, regardless of disability, English language proficiency status, income, race, or academic performance can receive tier 1, 2, and 3 services.

Culturally sustaining pedagogy “describes teaching and learning that seeks to perpetuate and foster linguistic, literary, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling and as a needed response to demographic and social change” (Paris, 2017, p.2). To provide equitable access to tier 1, districts need to ensure that all teachers have access to high-quality curricular materials that support them in crafting learning experiences that are inclusive and socially just for all students. To do this, school systems have to implement asset and strength-based approaches to teaching and learning.

For example, we must ask ourselves how we can support the dynamic mix of abilities, races, ethnicities, classes, genders, neighborhoods/regions, religions, and interests of our students, staff, families, and communities. When planning instruction, we must consider critical questions like, “Do our schools represent the students and families as they believe themselves to be?” “What interests and engages our students, staff, families, and community?,” and “How do we leverage the skills, capacities, and strengths within our community as we design learning experiences that meet the needs of all students?”

To ensure equitable access, districts must recognize all students as general education students first, and recognize diversity and inclusion as a necessary good. As a result, the focus of MTSS should be creating strong tier 1 systems and supports that are supplemented, not replaced, by tier 2 and tier 3 supports.

7



SECTION 3

TIERED SUPPORT

The problem-solving process in MTSS is an ongoing methodology for effective decision making at all levels of the system and across all three tiers (Council of the Great City Schools, 2012). The tiers in this model represent instruction and supports.

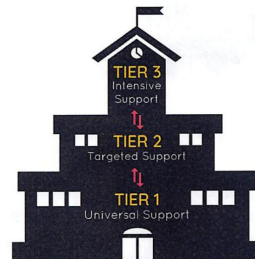
Within the MTSS model, universal supports such as high quality, universally designed, culturally sustaining, and evidence-based curriculum, instruction, and assessments are provided for all students.

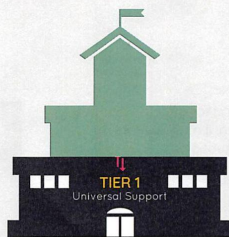
Movement amongst the three tiers is fluid and is not determined or defined by specific designations, such as diagnosed disabilities. Rather, movement is supported by data from universal screeners, diagnostic assessments, progress monitoring, and how a student responds to one level of intervention.

Any and all students should have access to supports when they need them. In addition, obtaining services at one point does not mean that students will always need that level of support. The MTSS process is not always linear, but rather oriented around problem-solving.

When data suggests that students require more or less intensive supports to aid either remediation or enrichment, they will move throughout the tiers based on that need.

No student should be labeled by an intervention tier. For example, a child is not a "tier 2 student" but rather a student requiring tier 2 supports in a specific skill/content area(s). In addition, when a student receives interventions in tier 2, it should not replace tier 1 supports. These supports build upon one another. Moreover, students can move fluidly through tier 1, 2, and 3 supports as needed. For example, if data suggests that students are not meeting the standards, what additional supports may they need? Similarly, if students significantly exceed the standards, what tier 2 supports may be necessary to optimize challenge and promote growth? It's also important to note that students may need tier 2 supports in one area (e.g., math standards) but may need only tier 1 supports in another area (e.g., relationship-building).





Tier 1

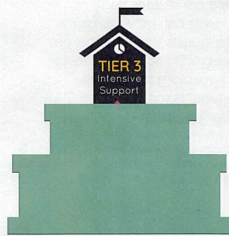
These are supports available to all students through a general education program. Inclusive practice, which is linguistically responsive and culturally sustaining, is a cornerstone of tier 1. Inclusive practice is defined as “instructional and behavioral strategies that improve academic and social emotional outcomes for all students, with and without disabilities, in general education settings” (Educator Effectiveness Guidebook for Inclusive Practice, 2017). For example, providing students with a high-quality, coherent curriculum that provides options and choices for how they learn (i.e. access to books, videos, or direct-teacher instruction), what materials, scaffolds and supports they need to learn (i.e., visuals, exemplars, graphic organizers, rubrics, etc.), and how they can express what they have learned will allow more students to access rigorous, standards-based instruction.

9



Tier 2

Tier 2 supports occur in addition to the supports that are provided in tier 1 settings. These supports are generally done in **small groups** and include additional opportunities to practice the skills necessary for core instruction or strategies for enrichment.



Tier 3

Tier 3 provides more intensive support. These are often explicit, focused interventions that occur **individually** or in **very small groups**. It is important to note that tier 3 is not synonymous with special education. Students with disabilities may not need tier 3 support and students not identified with a disability may in fact need tier 3 supports.