

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS (MTSS)

MSBSD GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accommodations: Accommodations are changes to instruction or assessment administration that are designed to increase students' access to materials or enable them to demonstrate what they know by mitigating the impact of their disability. They are designed to provide equity, not advantage, for children with disabilities. Accommodations might include assistive technology as well as alterations to presentation, response, timing, scheduling, or setting. When used appropriately, they sometimes reduce or even eliminate the effects of a child's disability, but they should not reduce or lower the standards or expectations for content. Accommodations that are appropriate for students' assessments do not invalidate assessment results.

Aim line: The aim line, which is sometimes referred to as the goal line, represents the target rate of student progress over time. The aim line is constructed by connecting the data point representing the student's initial performance level and the data point corresponding to the student's year-end goal. The aim line should be compared to the trend line to help inform responsiveness to intervention and to tailor a student's instructional program.

aimswebPlus: aimswebPlus is an online, benchmark and progress monitoring system based on direct, frequent, and continuous student assessment. The results are reported to students, parents, teachers and administrators via a web-based data management and reporting system to determine response to intervention.

Benchmark: A benchmark can refer to district or state targets, a benchmark assessment such as a universal screener (see definition of universal screener) or assessments which are given periodically (e.g., at the end of every quarter or as frequently as once per month) throughout a school year to establish baseline achievement data and measure progress toward a standard or set of academic standards and goals over time. Typically, these assessments are formal, and may be computer-scored and administered. They provide teachers with information about which content standards have been mastered and which require additional instruction, identifying students' strengths and needs.

Core Curriculum: The core curriculum includes the materials and instructional standards required of all students in the general education setting. According to the National Reading Panel, (2000), there are five components of reading that should be including in an elementary core reading curriculum: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Core curricula often are instituted at the elementary and secondary levels by local school boards, departments of education, or other administrative agencies charged with overseeing education. Core curricula for MSBSD are approved by the school board.

Criterion-Referenced Assessment: A criterion-referenced assessment measures student performance in relation to a specific standard. It typically is used to identify a student's strengths and weaknesses in relation to an age-group or grade-level standard; however, it does not compare students to other students.

Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBA): CBA refers to an assessment that has three components: (1) measurement materials that are aligned with the annual curriculum, (2) measurement that occurs frequently, and (3) assessment data that are used to formulate instructional decisions. CBA is an umbrella term that includes curriculum-based measurement.

Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM): CBM, a type of curriculum-based assessment, is a measurement approach used to screen students or to monitor student progress in mathematics, reading, writing, spelling, and other content areas. With CBMs, teachers and schools can assess individual responsiveness to instruction. When a student proves unresponsive to the instructional program, CBM signals the team to revise the program. CBM is a distinctive form of curriculum-based assessment because of three additional properties: (1) Each CBM test is an alternate form of equivalent difficulty; (2) CBM measures are overall indicators of competence in the target curriculum; and (3) CBM is standardized, with its reliability and validity well documented. These properties allow teachers and schools to look at student growth over time.

Data Based (Driven) Decision Making: Data-based decision-making is the ongoing process of analyzing and evaluating student data to inform educational decisions, including but not limited to approaches to instruction, intervention, allocation of resources, development of policy, movement within a multi-level system, and disability identification.

Data-Based Individualization (DBI): Data-based individualization (DBI) is a systematic approach to intensive intervention. It is a multi-step process that involves: (1) collecting frequent (usually weekly) progress monitoring data; (2) analyzing the data according to standard decision rules to determine when an increase to the student's goal is needed (in the case of strong progress) or a revision to the intervention program is needed (in the case of inadequate progress; (3) introducing a change to the intervention program when progress is inadequate, which is designed to improve the rate of learning; and (4) continuing to use Steps 1–3 on an ongoing basis to develop an individualized program that meets the student's needs.

Data Cycle: A data cycle or progress monitoring cycle is the amount of time that data is collected and reviewed depending on the individual students' progress monitoring plan. For example, a plan may call for progress monitoring with 3 data points taking a minimum of three to six weeks for each cycle.

Data Point: A data point is one score on a graph or chart. The data point represents a student's performance at one point in time.

Differentiated Instruction: Differentiated instruction refers to an educator's strategies for purposely adjusting curriculum, teaching environments, and instructional practices to align instruction with the goal of meeting the needs of individual students. Four elements of the curriculum may be differentiated: content, process, products, and learning environment.

English Learners (EL): EL refers to an individual who is in the process of acquiring English as a second language. EL students are identified by the initial W-APT (Wida Access Placement Test) screener and then monitored annually using the Wida Access Assessment. EL's are tested for qualification according to the HLQ (Home Language Questionnaire). They may experience challenges with reading, comprehension, speaking, listening and writing. Other terms commonly used to refer to EL students are English as a Second Language (ESL) students and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students.

Explicit Instruction: Explicit instruction demonstrates ALL the necessary steps in a task simply, clearly, and thoroughly with all steps modeled by the teacher so that nothing has to be inferred by the students.

Evidence-Based Intervention: An evidence-based intervention is an intervention for which data from scientific, rigorous research studies have demonstrated (or empirically validated) the effectiveness of the intervention. An evidence-based intervention improves student learning beyond what is expected without that intervention.

Fidelity of Implementation: Fidelity of implementation refers to the accurate and consistent delivery of instruction or assessment in the manner in which it was designed or prescribed, according to research findings and/or developers' specifications. Five common aspects of fidelity are adherence, exposure, program differentiation, student responsiveness, and quality of delivery.

Formative Assessment: Formative assessment is a form of evaluation used to plan instruction in a systematic way. With formative assessment, student progress is regularly assessed to provide ongoing feedback to the student and the teacher concerning learning successes and failures. With formative assessment, teachers diagnose (identify and analyze the skill, ability, and knowledge gaps), measure progress, and evaluate instruction. Formative assessments can be formal or informal and are not necessarily used for grading purposes. Examples of formative assessment include (but are not limited to) curriculum-based measurement, curriculum-based assessment, pretests and posttests, portfolios, benchmark assessments, quizzes, teacher observations, and teacher/student conferencing.

FFT (Framework for Teaching): The Framework for Teaching was designed to help districts promote a common definition and understanding of best teaching practices. The Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument was designed by Charlotte Danielson and is often referred to as the Danielson Model.

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA): In the school setting, functional behavior assessments (FBA) are conducted when a student exhibits serious and/or chronic challenging behavior. A basic assumption of FBA is that the student's behavior serves a purpose (i.e., it is performed to obtain a desired outcome or goal). The hallmark of an FBA is that the process involves the identification of the environmental events that predict and maintain the student's problem behavior in order to alter those variables (i.e., change or eliminate events that trigger or follow problem behavior) and promote more adaptive and acceptable skills that allow the student to appropriately access desired outcomes.

General Education: General education is the program of education that typically developing children should receive. It is the preferred way of describing "regular education" and is often referred to as Tier 1.

Goal: The goal or target skill is based on research and usually compared to a norm group. It is the result or achievement toward which effort is directed.

Goal Line: The goal line, also known as the aim line, represents the expected rate of student progress over time. A goal line is constructed by connecting the data point representing the student's initial performance level and the data point corresponding to the student's year-end goal. The goal line should be compared to the trend line to help inform responsiveness to intervention and to tailor a student's instructional program. It represents the expected rate of student progress over time.

Inclusion: Inclusion is a service delivery model in which students with identified disabilities are educated in the general education setting with their age-group or grade-level peers. Although often used interchangeably, inclusion is not synonymous with the term least restrictive environment. It also is not synonymous with access to the general education curriculum.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was originally passed in 1975 as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, with the latest reauthorization in 2004. It is the federal special education law that guarantees a free, appropriate, public education in the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities from birth through age 21. IDEA 2004 allows Response to Intervention (RTI) to be used as a basis for decision making when determining whether a student is eligible for special education services as a student with a learning disability.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): An individualized education program (IEP) is a legal document that describes the plan for delivering specially designed instruction, related services, and accommodations to meet the educational needs of a student with a disability.

Informal Diagnostic Assessment: Informal diagnostic assessment refers to data that may be used to identify a student's specific skill deficits and strengths. The data may be derived from standardized measures, error analysis of progress monitoring data, student work samples, and behavior rating forms, among other tools. Use of informal diagnostic assessment should allow teachers to identify a student's specific area(s) of difficulty when lack of progress is evident. This assessment also can inform decisions about how to adapt and individualize interventions for students.

Instructional strategy: An instructional strategy is a teaching technique which is used in instruction to improve student learning outcomes. Research on teacher effectiveness has provided educators with a relatively clear understanding of the fundamental principles for effective instructional practices.

Intensity of instruction: Instructional intensity can be increased to meet student needs through additional time, length, increased frequency, and/or longer duration of implementation. Instruction can be intensified by increasing the number of consecutive, required responses and corrections, per student, in a short period of instruction on appropriate, previously un-mastered tasks. The level of intensity is determined by the number of correct responses per minute. Instructional intensity leads to permanent storage and automaticity of skills. (Frequency is the number of times per week and duration is the length of time per intervention session.)

Intensive Intervention: Intensive intervention or Tier 3 support is designed to address severe and persistent learning or behavior difficulties. It is also used for students who have proven nonresponsive to Tier 2 intervention. Intensive interventions are characterized by increased intensity (see intensity of instruction) and individualized academic or behavioral intervention.

Intervention Adaptation: Intervention adaptation happens when data (including progress monitoring and diagnostic data) is used to revise, intensify, or individualize an intervention to target a student's specific needs. Strategies for intensifying an intervention may occur along several dimensions—including but not limited to changes to group size, frequency, or duration; or changes to the instructional principles of the intervention or in providing feedback.

Least Restrictive Environment: The least restrictive environment, as defined in IDEA 2004, indicates that, to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities, (including students in public or private institutions or other care facilities) are educated with students who are not disabled. Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of students with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. [34 CFR 612(a)(5)]

Math Reasoning: Mathematical knowledge and reasoning includes problem solving, analysis, reasoning and math vocabulary.

Measures of Academic Performance (MAP): MAP is a state-aligned computerized adaptive assessment program that students complete to show their knowledge, skills, and mastery of learning goals. Educators use the growth and achievement data from MAP to develop targeted instructional strategies and to plan school improvement. With the ability to test students up to four times a year, MAP test results help educators make student-focused, data-driven decisions.

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS): Multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) is a prevention framework that organizes building-level resources to address each individual student's academic and/or behavioral needs within intervention tiers that vary in intensity. MTSS allows for the early identification of learning and behavioral challenges and timely intervention for students who are at risk for poor learning outcomes. It also may be called a multi-level prevention system. The increasingly intense tiers (e.g., Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3), sometimes referred to as levels of prevention (i.e., primary, secondary, intensive prevention levels), represent a continuum of supports. Response to intervention (RTI) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) are examples of MTSS. (See entry for RTI).

Norm-Referenced Assessment: Norm-referenced assessment compares a student's performance to that of an appropriate peer group or normative sample. The SAT Reasoning Test is an example of a normative assessment because it compares an individual student's performance to the performance of a normative sample of test takers.

Objective: An objective is a target or benchmark based on a numeric standard which increases progression toward a learning goal as defined by individual student needs.

Parallel Core: For a small percentage of students, usually scoring in the 10th percentile and below, the general education core programs may not be appropriate. These students show severe and intensive student needs based on multiple data points and data cycles. If intensive intervention is not working, the MTSS building team may recommend the student be placed in a replacement core program (e.g. Corrective Reading). This decision should not be taken lightly because all children have the right to be in the general education core curriculum. Any replacement core must teach all the same learning standards as the general core.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS): Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) is a tiered behavior support framework for enhancing the adoption and implementation of a continuum of evidence-based interventions to achieve behaviorally important outcomes for all students. PBIS provides a decision-making framework that guides the selection, integration, and implementation of preventive and instructive behavioral practices.

Problem-Solving Approach: Within an MTSS or PBIS model, a problem-solving approach is used to tailor an intervention for an individual student. A problem-solving approach typically has four stages: problem identification, problem analysis, plan implementation, and plan evaluation.

Program Assessments: Program assessments are recommended by the core instruction program and are usually included as part of a program. These include baseline assessments, weekly selections tests, benchmark assessments, unit tests and end of year assessments as well as teacher observation. These assessment results should be used to drive daily instruction.

Progress Monitoring: Progress monitoring is used to assess a student's performance, to quantify his or her rate of improvement or responsiveness to intervention, to adjust the student's instructional program to make it more effective and suited to the student's needs, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention. Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or with an entire class and is done consistently for a specific period of time such as weekly or monthly.

Response to Instruction (RTI): Response to Instruction (RTI) integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and reduce behavior problems. With RTI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a

student's responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities. (See entry for MTSS.) The MSBSD and its schools provide different levels of support for RTI.

Standardization: District establishes the RTI framework for all schools

Customization: School buildings use the framework to design RTI that works for the school setting using resources to provide tiered instruction and progress monitoring.

Scaffolding: Scaffolding is an instructional technique in which the teacher breaks a complex task into smaller tasks, models the desired learning strategy or task, provides support as students learn the task, and then gradually shifts responsibility to the students. In this manner, a teacher gradually enables students to accomplish as much of a task as possible without assistance.

Scientifically Based Research (SBR): SBR means research which involves the applications of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs. In practical terms, there are six concepts:

1. Employ systematic methods
2. Rigorously analyze data
3. Rely on measurements that provide valid and reliable data
4. Use strong research designs
5. Provide detailed results that can be replicated
6. Show that results are peer reviewed with scrutiny

Screening: Screening assessments are conducted to identify students who may be at risk for poor learning outcomes so that early intervention can occur. Screenings typically are brief and usually are administered with all students at a grade level. Universal screening may be followed by additional testing or short-term progress monitoring to confirm a student's risk status before intervention occurs.

Skills Block: Skills Block is a grade level or school wide system of grouping students according to intervention needs. It is a means to differentiate for all levels of student achievement. Skills block usually lasts approximately 30 minutes with all available staff teaching groups to allow for the most intensive students to have a small group of 3-5 students.

Smart Goal: Smart Goals is an acronym that lists components needed in individual student goals.

Specific

Measurable

Attainable

Realistic

Timely

Specific Learning Disability: Specific learning disability (SLD) refers to a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written. It may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations and may result from conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of intellectual disability; of

emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. Specific learning disability is one of the disability categories defined in IDEA 2004. [34 CFR 300.8(c)(10)].

Standard Intervention Protocol: A standard intervention protocol is a well-specified, and often scripted, empirically validated instructional program intended for students who have academic or behavioral needs.

Tiers of Instruction:

Tier 1+: Tier 1+ is also called a core curriculum, universal or primary prevention level for all students to receive. Students at **Benchmark** receive core instruction only with differentiation in the core program as needed.

Tier 1: Tier 1 is a core curriculum, universal or primary prevention level for all students to receive. Students at **Benchmark** receive core instruction only with differentiation in the core program as needed.

Tier 2: Tier 2 is strategic, secondary prevention level or targeted intervention support. It is the second level of intensity in a multi-level prevention or RTI system. Interventions occurring at the secondary level are evidence based and address the learning or behavioral challenges of students identified as at risk for poor learning or behavioral outcomes and are in addition to core (tier 1) instruction. Tier 2 interventions are often short term, implemented in small group settings, and may be individualized. Students are often routinely progress monitored to determine the effectiveness of the intervention and continued needs.

Tier 3: Tier 3 support is intensive intervention or tertiary prevention level. This level is typically the most intense level of a multi-level prevention or RTI system. Students are significantly below grade level. Tier 3 consists of individualized, intensive intervention(s) for students who have severe and persistent learning or behavioral needs. Intensity can be increased by increasing length, frequency, and duration of intervention implementation. Data-based individualization is an approach that may be used within the Tier 3 level. Intensive academic and/or behavioral interventions are characterized by their increased focus for students who fail to respond to less intensive forms of instruction. Programs are developed formatively using systematic progress monitoring; and student progress data are used to determine when a student may return to secondary or primary intervention. Tertiary level of intervention is usually implemented in very small groups of 3-5.

Trend Line: A trend line is a line on a graph that is drawn through a series of data points. The trend line can be compared against the aim line or goal line to help inform responsiveness to intervention and to tailor a student's instructional program.

Universal Screening: Universal screenings are typically conducted three times per school year, in the fall, winter, and spring for all students and consist of brief assessments focused on target skills (e.g., phonological awareness) that are highly predictive of future outcomes (Jenkins, 2003) In the context of an RTI prevention model, universal screening is the first step in identifying the students who are at risk for learning difficulties

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