

Accelerating Learning at the Core: Strengthening Tier 1 Instruction

October 22, 2024 Board Meeting

Learning and Leading



Fort Worth
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS): Why Tier 1 Instruction Matters

Tier 1 – Universal Instruction: The Foundation for All Students

At Tier 1, all students in each grade receive instruction based on the grade-level standards through high-quality, differentiated teaching. This tier focuses on ensuring that at least 80% of students can succeed with this instruction without needing additional interventions. This universal approach includes best practices and differentiated instruction tailored to diverse learning needs. All students benefit from a range of resources, such as assessments, curriculum materials, and instructional strategies targeting both academic and social-emotional development.

Tier 2 – Targeted Group Interventions: Focused Support for Emerging Needs

Tier 2 interventions are designed for students who demonstrate challenges or do not adequately respond to Tier 1 instruction. These supports are typically delivered in small groups, allowing educators to address specific areas where students require additional help. By using evidence-based strategies, Tier 2 aims to assist approximately 5-15% of students who need more targeted support to succeed.

Tier 3 – Intensive, Individualized Interventions: Tailored Strategies for High-Need Students

Tier 3 is reserved for students with the most significant needs, often those who do not respond to Tier 2 interventions. This tier involves frequent and highly individualized support tailored to the unique challenges faced by each student. The interventions are intensive, focusing on providing comprehensive assistance to the 1-5% of students requiring the highest level of support.

What Defines High-Quality Tier 1 Instruction (1/2): Key Features

High-Quality, Standards-Aligned Materials

- Aligns with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) to ensure rigorous, relevant content.
- Includes built-in supports and scaffolds to differentiate instruction for diverse learners.
- Reflects diverse perspectives and promotes inclusivity, ensuring all students feel represented and engaged.

Systematic and Explicit Grade-Level Instruction

- Follows a sequential plan to introduce new topics and skills, building on previous knowledge logically.
- Directly explains strategies and skills with clear directions and examples.
- Provides ample opportunities for practice, review, and assessment to reinforce learning.

Rigorous, Relevant, and Engaging Lessons

- Clear, measurable learning objectives aligned with standards.
- Ensures lessons are relevant, connecting learning to real-world applications.
- Promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration in a dynamic learning environment.

What Defines High-Quality Tier 1 Instruction (2/2): Key Features

Data-Driven Instruction

- Utilizes real-time student data and formative assessments throughout lessons to guide instruction.
- Regularly analyzes academic and behavioral data to inform teaching strategies.
- Provides "just-in-time" instructional adjustments and differentiation to meet students' needs.

Safe and Supportive Classrooms

- Fosters physical, emotional, psychological, and identity safety for all students.
- Establishes routines and builds relationships to create an inclusive environment where every student feels valued.

Commitment to Equity

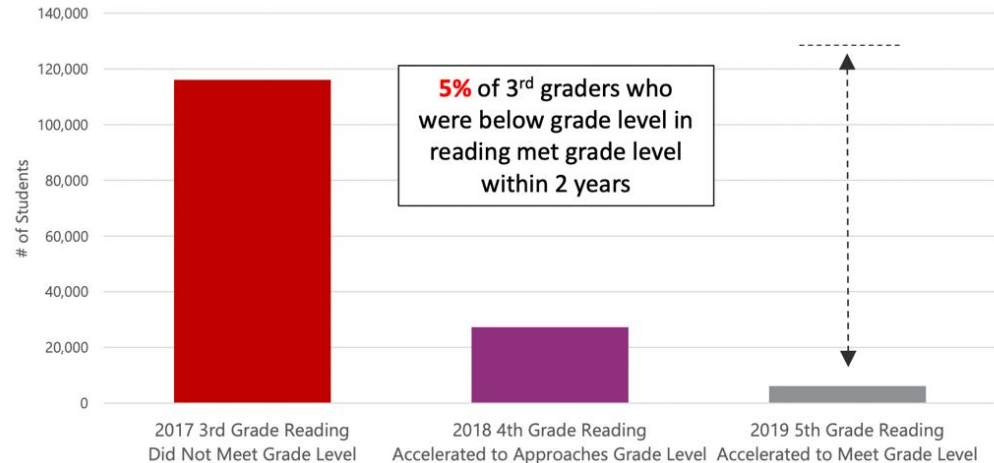
- Provides targeted support for multilingual learners and students with learning differences.
- Implements evidence-based strategies and tailored accommodations to support diverse learners.
- Ensures all students have opportunities to excel and thrive in an equitable educational environment.

Tier 1 Focus Area - Learning Acceleration and Just-in-Time Supports

"Just-in-Time Support" emphasizes providing timely, grade-level-specific assistance to address students' learning needs as they emerge (**the right type or amount of support at the right time – to fill in gaps in learning**). This approach involves carefully planned interventions tailored to the developmental stage and curriculum requirements of each grade.

By delivering targeted support when students need it most, teachers help bridge gaps in understanding, reinforce retention of new concepts, and keep students engaged. The method aims to enhance educational outcomes by ensuring support aligns with the immediate learning processes and challenges that are unique to each grade level.

Historically in Texas, **acceleration** from being **below grade-level** to being **on grade-level** occurs for only **4%** of students across all grades/subjects



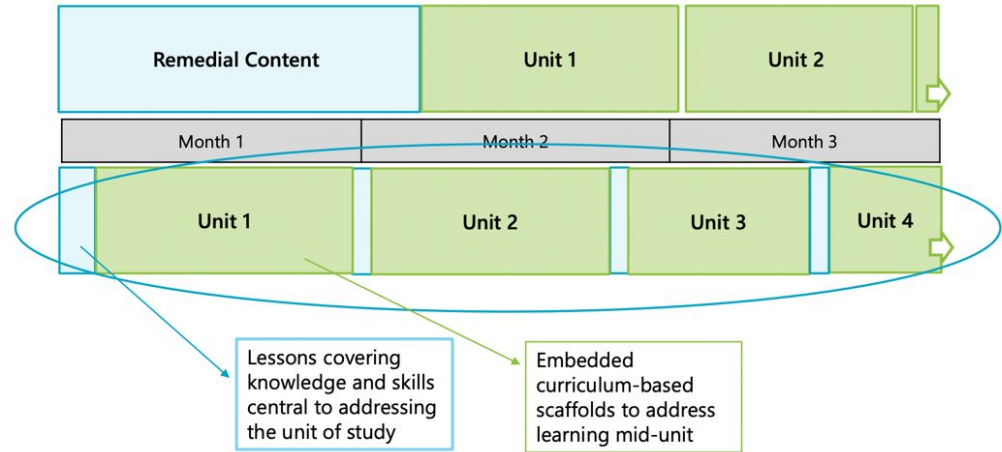
Accelerated Learning versus Remediation

Remediation: Often focuses on drilling students on isolated skills that bear little resemblance to current curriculum. Activities connect to standards from years ago and aim to have students master content from years past.

Accelerated Learning: Strategically prepares students for success in current grade-level content. Acceleration readies students for new learning. Past concepts and skills are addressed, but always in the purposeful context of current learning.

Acceleration with Just-In-Time Intervention

Just-in-time intervention strategically prepares students for success in current grade-level content by providing targeted support for the most **critical, prerequisite content for upcoming units** of study. Previous grade-level concepts and skills are addressed, but always in the context of current learning.



Accelerating Learning through Just-in-time Supports: Key Elements

- Focus on **essential prerequisite skills and knowledge necessary for students to access grade-level content** in upcoming units.
- **Identify gaps** in students' understanding of prerequisite content using curriculum-based, pre-unit assessments.
- Implement **just-in-time lessons and supports within the curriculum** to address identified learning gaps.
- Adjust schedules to allocate sufficient time for Tier 1 instruction and create dedicated blocks for Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.
- **Equip teachers and leaders with strategies to effectively deliver just-in-time supports** for critical content areas.
- Regularly **monitor and assess student progress** to ensure effective learning and timely interventions.

"For example, instead of spending weeks covering an entire missed unit in math, teachers can look ahead at the grade-level standards to determine what are the most important skills students need to have and cover that material in a class or two. Or a language arts teacher might see an upcoming text that she thinks might be too challenging for students. Rather than removing it for easier work, the teacher can design scaffolds – specific supports – to help students with understanding key literary concepts and filling in missed background knowledge."

"Students in accelerated classrooms thrived, completing 27% more grade-level lessons than their remediated peers, and mostly regained their pre-pandemic success on grade-level math. Meanwhile, remediated students not only continue to struggle, but fall even further behind in their learning, getting caught in a cycle of missing more and more grade-appropriate content."

Tier 1 Focus Area - Ensuring Curriculum-Based Professional Learning (1/2)

Curriculum-based professional learning emphasizes the need for teachers to **actively internalize lessons and engage deeply with the instructional materials they use**. Research indicates that many teachers lack sufficient professional learning opportunities tailored to their curriculum, with most receiving only minimal training.

Curriculum-based professional learning immerses teachers in instructional materials through a series of focused, small-group sessions that emphasize rehearsing lessons, refining teaching strategies, and deepening content knowledge, moving away from brief, one-time workshops to foster continuous improvement and address common challenges.

This method helps teachers become more fluent in implementing rigorous curricula, ultimately enhancing student outcomes.

Ensuring Curriculum-Based Professional Learning (2/2)

Fort Worth ISD is advancing through the phases of curriculum-based professional learning to enhance teaching quality and student achievement, moving from initial implementation to consistent, skillful use of instructional materials. This includes maintaining lesson integrity, using supports for diverse learners, internalizing lessons through shared protocols, and engaging in ongoing professional learning and feedback cycles for equitable, grade-level instruction.

- *Initial Implementation:* Teachers begin using instructional materials with established systems for consistent access to grade-level content.
- **Consistent Implementation:** Materials are fully integrated into teaching practices, supported by aligned policies.
- **Sustainability and Innovation:** A state where teachers confidently take ownership of collaborative planning and feedback processes, skillfully leveraging instructional materials and embedded supports to ensure all students meet grade-level expectations.

Tier 1 Focus Area - Enhancing the We Way Coach (1/2): Increasing the Quality and Frequency of “Just-in-Time,” Real-Time Coaching

Real-time coaching is an instructional strategy that delivers immediate, targeted feedback to teachers during active teaching, allowing for quick adjustments and improvements.

Traditional coaching methods are often too broadly focused and time-intensive to drive immediate change at scale, whereas real-time coaching fosters a culture of constant feedback. In this environment, educators receive specific, actionable advice directly in the classroom, promoting continuous professional growth.

This approach encourages teachers to adapt instantly, refine their techniques, and embrace risk-taking, fostering a dynamic learning environment where improvement is ongoing and responsive to real-time needs.

Enhancing the Way We Coach (2/2) : A Vignette on Coaching Better, Smarter, and for Maximum Impact

Most school leaders coach the wrong people. What does that mean?

Consider an 8-week initiative to provide feedback on student work in a small school with three leaders and 23 teachers. After the first day, the leaders observe that three teachers are close to meeting the vision, five teachers are struggling, and fifteen are in the middle.

What do most leaders do? They focus their intensive coaching on the struggling teachers. However, eight weeks later, the strugglers have improved slightly but are still not meeting the standards, the three teachers close to the vision never fully reach it, and the rest show minimal change.

The alternative approach?

- Week 1: Conduct regular weekly coaching meetings with all teachers. Each of the three school leaders selects one of the strongest teachers to prep and practice with for one hour a day. These teachers quickly excel and become models of excellence. The leaders share videos from these classrooms during weekly professional development sessions, celebrate them in school communications, and encourage others to visit their classes.
- Weeks 2-6: Continue regular weekly coaching meetings with all teachers. Each leader focuses on moving one teacher per week to proficiency through more intensive coaching. More videos are shared, and more teachers are celebrated.
- Weeks 7-8: Maintain regular weekly coaching meetings with all teachers and invest heavily in the most struggling teachers.

Outcomes:

- Version 1: Only 13% of your teachers become proficient in the priority area.
- Version 2: 87% of your teachers become proficient in the priority area.

The lesson:

- As a leader, the goal is to get as many teachers as possible to meet standards. Align coaching efforts to achieve this goal effectively.

Tier 1 Focus Area - Comprehensive Assessment System: Driving K-3 Reading and Writing Instruction

By integrating these assessments, K-3 teachers receive comprehensive, actionable data throughout the year, allowing them to modify instruction, target student needs, and deliver more effective reading instruction. This system supports the goal of ensuring all students achieve reading proficiency by the end of third grade.

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NWEA MAP

Administered BOY, MOY, EOY

MAP Fluency: Aligned to the science of reading, measures oral reading fluency, comprehension, and foundational skills.

MAP Growth: Measures academic achievement and potential growth across the year.

Function: Provides teachers with a deeper understanding of student progress and guides differentiated instruction and interventions.

9-week Interim

Administered every 9 weeks

Purpose: Evaluates students' mastery of specific content and skills taught during the nine week period.

Function: Summarizes student achievement, informs grading, readiness for advancement, and evaluates instructional effectiveness.

Daily Formative Assessments

Administered daily, a critical component of the Instructional Planning Calendars (IPC)

Purpose: Provides ongoing data to monitor mastery of daily objectives.

Function: Allows teachers to adjust instruction in real-time to address gaps and ensure mastery of skills aligned to the TEKS. (e.g. exit tickets, reading response student summary)

Kindergarten: Purpose & Function of Each

Assessment



TX-KEA

Administration: Aug. 26-Sept. 13

Purpose: BOY Screener: screen children's school readiness upon their entry into kindergarten

- A combination of teacher- administered direct assessments, child-paced direct assessments, and teacher completed checklists

Function: (State-Required) It helps teachers understand the **general strengths and weaknesses of individual students or the class as a whole**. It informs instructional planning by identifying areas where students may need additional support or challenge.

NWEA-MAP Fluency & Growth

Administration: Aug. 26-Sept. 6 (MAP Growth); Sept. 3-20 (MAP Fluency)

Purpose:

- MAP Fluency-aligned to the science of reading; measures and monitors oral reading fluency, literal comprehension, and foundational reading skills
- MAP Growth-measures a student's academic achievement and potential growth, not grade specific

Function: (MTSS Universal Screener-BOY, MOY, and EOY) It helps teachers get a **general sense for students' academic strengths and weaknesses** and informs how they should best modify instruction throughout the year to better match student needs.

9-Week Summative

Administration: Week of Oct. 7-11

Purpose: Administered at the end of a learning period to evaluate students' overall learning and mastery of **specific content or skills**.

Function: It provides a summary of **what students have learned and measures their achievement against predefined standards or learning objectives**. They are often used for grading, determining student readiness for advancement, or evaluating the effectiveness of instructional planning and delivery.

When used together, these assessments offer a comprehensive view of student progress:

- General Overview and Early Identification: TX-KEA helps teachers understand overall classroom readiness and identify areas where students might need additional support or challenge.
- Ongoing Progress Monitoring: NWEA MAP Fluency & Growth assessments allow for continuous progress monitoring and instructional adjustment, ensuring that each student's learning path is supported throughout the year.
- Detailed Mastery Check: The 9-Week Summative provides specific insights into student mastery of the skills taught during each period, helping teachers measure the effectiveness of their instruction and make necessary adjustments.
- Daily Formative Assessments: These daily demonstrations of learning (DOL) (e.g. exit tickets, student summary of learning, targeted comprehension question, reading response) provides teachers with ongoing data to monitor mastery of skills taught. These data points also allow teachers to adjust instruction in real-time to address gaps in learning.

This data-driven approach enables teachers to not only monitor student progress effectively but also to modify their instructional planning and delivery. We are mindful of the time spent on assessments and strive to keep it as minimal and non-intrusive as possible. The information gained from these assessments is directly used to support and enhance instruction.

2nd Grade ELAR Teacher: Using Assessments to Drive Instruction (1/2)

Starting the third week of school, a 2nd-grade teacher gives the **MAP Growth and Fluency** screeners to all students. These assessments help the teacher understand each student's reading skills, such as how well they read aloud and comprehend what they're reading. After reviewing the results, the teacher might notice that some students need extra help with phonics or decoding words, while others are reading fluently but need more work on comprehension.

This data drives their Tier 1 instruction (whole group), where the teacher delivers lessons using the district's high-quality curriculum, Amplify, to ensure all students are working towards mastering grade-level standards also known as the TEKS. In addition to whole group instruction, the teacher sets up Tier 2 small group interventions for students needing more support. For example, during a small group session, students struggling with fluency might practice sounding out words and reading aloud in short bursts, while the rest of the class works independently or in pairs on literacy-based learning stations.

2nd Grade ELAR Teacher: Using Assessments to Drive Instruction (2/2)

On a daily basis, the teacher uses **formative assessments** built into *Amplify*, such as exit tickets and short writing prompts, to check for understanding. These quick checks might include students summarizing what they read that day or writing a few sentences about the main idea of a story. The teacher reviews these **daily demonstration of learnings** to see which students understood the lesson and which students may need reteaching. If needed, the teacher can quickly adjust the next day's lesson to provide extra support for students who struggled.

By the time the teacher reaches the first **9-week interim assessment** in early October, they have a clear picture of how students are progressing. This assessment gives them deeper insight into each student's mastery of skills like reading comprehension and vocabulary. Using this data, the teacher can refine both whole group and small group instruction, ensuring that students are getting the support they need in the months leading up to the **STAAR test**.

This **ongoing cycle of assessments allows the teacher to stay on top of each student's progress**, making sure that instruction is personalized to help every student succeed in reading by the end of the school year.

QUESTIONS