Will County School District 92
Multi-Tiered System of Supports
MTSS

Inspire   **Engage**   **Innovate**

WILL COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT 92 MTSS COMMITTEE

Will County School District 92 formed a district Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Committee through the Fall and Spring of 2023-2024 to support Strategic Plan Goals 1 and 2. This committee was responsible for collaboratively accomplishing the following:

- Identify best MTSS implementation practices.
- Participate in a comprehensive self-assessment at each school to identify strengths and areas for improvement for the current MTSS programming.
- Establish aligned processes and procedures for MTSS within the district.
- Create an MTSS Handbook to serve as the district's vision and guide for delivering a multi-tiered system of supports to our students.

This committee was comprised of representatives from each school and the district office. A representative from the Illinois MTSS Network through Northern Illinois University facilitated the committee's work.

Thank you to the following committee members for your dedication to the students of Will County School District 92 through this project:

Walsh School
Teresa Martin, Principal
Claire Ruff, Psychologist
Stacy Price-Senders, Reading Interventionist
Sarah Siwinski, Kindergarten Teacher

Reed School
Breanna Goldern, Principal
Mina Flannery, Psychologist
Kayla Katarzynski, Social Worker
Amy Wicek, Reading Interventionist
Andrya Kubilius, Math Interventionist
Jen Amsden, 2nd Grade Teacher
Taylor Slattery, Special Ed. Teacher

Ludwig School
Jeff Kulik, Principal
Kristin Grahovec, Social Worker
Renee VanderMeer, Reading Interventionist
Ashley Perusich, 4th Grade Teacher
Linda Oberhaus, Special Ed. Teacher

Oak Prairie Jr. High
Scott Nyssen, Assistant Principal
Erica Barrett, Psychologist
Mary Mendez, Social Worker
Susan Arient, Math Interventionist

District Office
Lisa Lyke, Director of Curriculum
Nora Skentzos, Director of Student Services

OUR MISSION

OUR MOTTO

Inspire Engage Innovate

WHY WE EXIST

Empowering each student to develop a love of learning in an evolving global society.

OUR CORE VALUES

WHAT WE STAND FOR

In order to "live" our Mission and Vision, we commit to consistently demonstrating the following behaviors that represent our Core Values in action:

➢ Collaboration
➢ Critical Thinking
➢ Effective Communications
➢ Growth Mindset
➢ Perseverance
➢ Respect
➢ Responsibility

OUR VISION

WHERE WE ARE HEADED

As a District, for every student in every school we commit to   providing:

♦ a culture encouraging student *perseverance and resiliency*;
♦ a *growth mindset* for students and adults;
♦ a commitment to the whole child and each student's *social-emotional well-being;*
♦ a *collaborative, team-oriented* learning culture*;*
♦ a curriculum connected to students' *interests, experiences, talents and the real world*
♦ an environment where *creativity, curiosity and responsible risk-taking* are encouraged

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Will County School District Handbook Purpose:

The purpose of this handbook is to provide an overview of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) practices in Will County School District 92 and explain its essential components. The MTSS document is intended to assist and guide administrators, teachers, support service personnel, paraprofessionals, and parents in understanding MTSS, its origins in education practice and research, its usefulness and value, and how it will be implemented. It is intended to enhance understanding of the various aspects of MTSS.

Critical Components of MTSS

1. **Leadership**

    Leadership is key to successfully implementing any large-scale innovation such as MTSS. MTSS leadership teams at the district and school levels are critical to implementing MTSS at the district and school levels, respectively. MTSS leadership engages staff in ongoing professional learning for implementing MTSS, plan strategically for MTSS implementation, and model a data-based problem-solving process for school improvement. The district and building MTSS leadership also support the implementation of MTSS by communicating a vision and mission to district and school staff, providing resources for planning and implementing instruction and intervention, and ensuring that staff have the data needed for data-based problem-solving.

2. **Capacity-Building/Infrastructure for Implementation**

    District- and school-wide capacity and infrastructure are required to implement and sustain MTSS. These typically include ongoing professional learning and coaching emphasizing data-based problem-solving and multi-tiered instruction and intervention, scheduling that allows staff to plan and implement instruction and intervention, and processes and procedures for engaging in data-based problem-solving.

3. **Communication and Collaboration**

    Ongoing communication and collaboration are essential for the successful implementation of MTSS. Implementing an MTSS framework can be thwarted by a lack of consensus, a lack of feedback to implementers to support continuous improvement, and not involving stakeholders in planning. In addition to including stakeholders in planning and providing continuous feedback, it is also important to build the infrastructure to communicate and work with families and other community partners. These practices increase the likelihood of implementing and sustaining the MTSS framework.

4. **Data-Based Problem-Solving**

Using data-based problem-solving to make educational decisions is critical to MTSS implementation. This includes using data-based problem-solving for student outcomes across content areas (e.g., academics, behavior, attendance), grade levels, and tiers, as well as problem-solving to address barriers to school-wide implementation of MTSS. The four-step problem-solving process includes: 1) Problem identification: defining the goals and objectives to be attained and the current level of performance; 2) Problem analysis: identifying possible reasons why the desired goals are not being attained; 3) Intervention planning & implementation: developing a plan for and implementing evidence-based strategies to attain the goals, and progress monitoring, and 4) Determining effectiveness: evaluating the effectiveness of the plan and determine next steps.

5. **Three-Tiered Instructional/Intervention Model**

The three-tiered instructional/intervention model is another critical element of MTSS implementation. In a typical system, Tier 1 includes the universal instruction, supports, and practices provided to all students; Tier 2 includes additional targeted instruction or intervention provided to students not meeting benchmarks; and Tier 3 includes intensive, small-group, or individualized interventions for students facing significant barriers to regular school attendance and learning the skills required for school success. When utilizing a three-tiered framework, it is important to consider attendance, academic, behavioral, and social-emotional instruction and interventions.

6. **Data-Evaluation**

Given the importance of data-based problem-solving within an MTSS model, the need for a data and evaluation system is clear. To do data-based problem-solving effectively, district and school staff need to understand and have access to multiple data sources that align with the purposes of assessment. Procedures and protocols for administering assessments and using relevant data allow district and school staff to use student data to make appropriate educational decisions. In addition to student data, data on the fidelity of MTSS implementation allows district and school leadership to examine current practices and make changes to strengthen the implementation of their MTSS framework and increase student success.

Research to support MTSS

A broad body of research over the past 50 years has proven that a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) effectively addresses challenges students may encounter through a tiered system of support and diagnostics. MTSS has been found to be an effective system in elementary schools internationally, especially for behavioral changes (Nitz et al., 2023). See Appendices.

WHY MTSS?

MTSS, formerly Response to Intervention (RtI), is a mandate built on the idea of intervening early to prevent failure and maximize the effectiveness of grade-level curriculum and instruction while supporting students' behavioral and social-emotional needs. It is not an initiative or program but rather a framework for providing high-quality curriculum and instruction to all students and intervention to support some students. In addition, it strives to support students' behavioral and social-emotional development.

MTSS allows our instructional and support staff to focus on supporting each student using a systematic approach. It enables school-level teams to improve students' academic and social-emotional behavior outcomes, address students' unmet needs, align systems and processes among schools, support the "whole child," and meet students where they are to support meeting grade-level expectations.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015), the December 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 2001), and the reauthorized "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act" (IDEA) of 2003 share a common goal for improved student outcomes, which measure school accountability. Furthermore, ESSA calls for the responsibility to ensure that every child has educational opportunity, preparation for college and career, high expectations, access to the arts and humanities, support for building social and emotional skills, fair access to resources, and access to high-quality curriculum and instruction, to name a few. According to the legislation, "opportunity is not optional," we believe that implementing MTSS and all included components with fidelity will foster adherence to this bill.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) require evidence-based practices to ensure that all students receive appropriate instruction, which is a requirement for determining eligibility for special education. Therefore, applying the principles of MTSS and problem-solving to all school-wide academic, behavioral, and social-emotional efforts is necessary and worthwhile. This manual provides schools with the critical components, definitions, and applications of MTSS.

(Illinois MTSS Network)

WHAT IS MTSS?

The Illinois definition for MTSS is "*A Multi-Tiered System of Supports is a framework for continuous improvement that is systemic, prevention-focused, and data-informed, providing a coherent continuum of supports responsive to meet the needs of ALL learners.*"

MTSS provides support to each student to ensure mastery of grade-level content standards. It includes universal screening of all students, multiple tiers of instruction and intervention, ongoing assessment and progress monitoring, and systematic collaboration and problem-solving to make data-based decisions for effective instruction.

MTSS promotes a well-integrated system, connecting general, gifted, and special education with intervention and enrichment services. MTSS provides high-quality, standards-based instruction and intervention that is matched to students' academic, social, and behavioral needs.

MTSS is a continuum of levels with evidence-based practices meant to support students at various levels, from classroom to one-on-one interventions if necessary.

Students who need additional support for enrichment or remediation are identified by data and provided instruction with the right focus and intensity.

What is Continuous Improvement?

"In successful districts and schools, there is a **collective commitment** to collaboratively identify, plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and communicate the **changes** necessary to **continuously improve** student learning." (ISBE - 2016)
MTSS is the framework for ensuring that continuous improvement can occur for all students equitably and efficiently for both students and educators.

MTSS Tiered Instruction

Tier 1 Instruction, also known as core instruction, is grade-level instruction each student receives on a daily basis. For approximately 80% of students, Tier 1 instruction will meet their academic and/or behavioral needs. Core instruction is aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards and is the foundation of three-tiered instruction and intervention. It is provided to all students with fidelity and is accessible and differentiated to support the full continuum of student needs. High-quality instruction and supports are provided in Tier 1 for academics, behavior, and social-emotional learning in all subjects at all grade levels. This instruction is implemented through evidence-based programs and best practices.

Tier 2 Supplemental instruction for students needing additional support in learning grade-level material or extension, specifically identified by skill weaknesses or strengths. Instruction is intended to be timely and coordinated with Tier 1 instruction. Approximately 5-15% of students would need targeted instruction in the ideal MTSS framework. Needs and interventions are identified during team collaboration utilizing data-informed decision-making practices. Students receiving Tier 2 interventions typically receive support in small groups as determined by the MTSS Team to meet students' individual needs. Students working in this tier are progress monitored to ensure the intervention meets the student's identified needs.

Tier 3 Intensive support is provided to students struggling or excelling with academic and/or behavioral support or extension. Approximately 5% or less of students need intensive support to gain skills to be successful in their core instruction. Other students may need opportunities to extend their learning to continue to make academic progress. Tier 3 provides an additional level of intervention to help students develop foundational skills. Some students receiving Tier 3 instruction also receive Tier 2 instruction. Students are entered into Tier 3 interventions based on the Student Support Team (SST) referral. Students receiving these services are typically pulled out of the classroom during their elective, intervention time, or other time determined by the SST in grades PreK-8. The students working in this tier are progress monitored accordingly to a student's plan, and progress is regularly reviewed with the Student Support Team.

The diagram on the next page illustrates the three tiers.
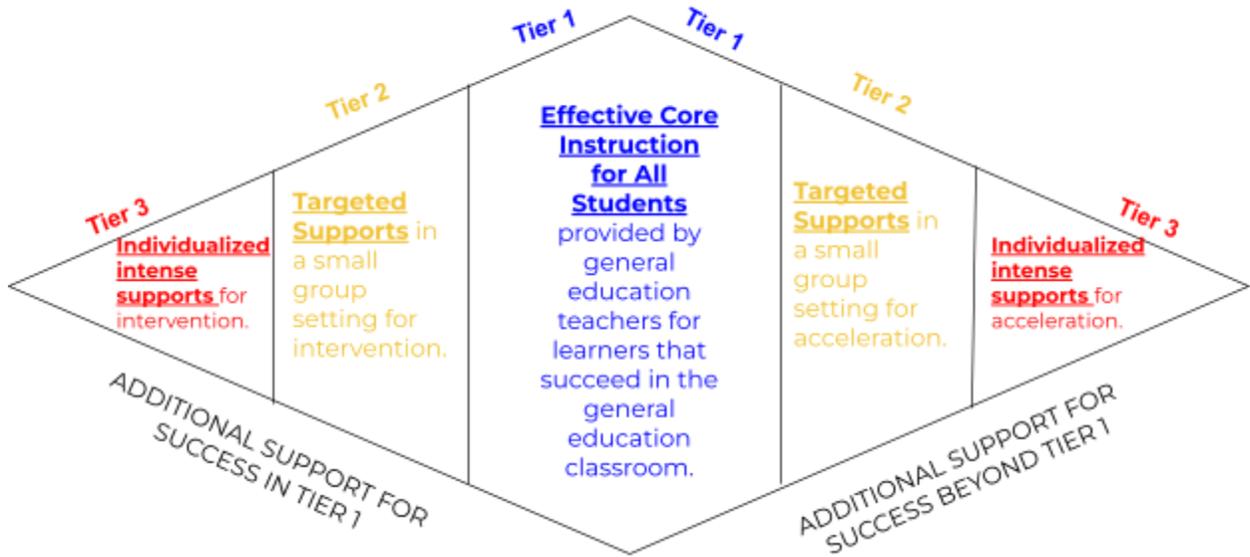
Assessment Systems

Screening assessments
- Administered during the Tier 1 phase
- Given 3 times per year to all students (September, January, May)
- Brief assessments, adaptive and curriculum-based measures
- Provide an early indication of which students may be at risk
- May also identify students exceeding expectations
- FASTBridge used K-8, Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS) used in Kindergarten
- Teachers administer

Diagnostic assessments
- Administered to individual students
- Help determine specific skill deficits or enrichment
- Aide in choosing specific problem-focused interventions
- Administered during the Tier 3 phase
- Support staff or teachers administer
- Examples: TORC (Test of Reading Comprehension), WIST (Word Identification and Spelling Test), Bridges Intervention Placement Assessments, WADE (Wilson Assessment of Decoding and Encoding), Comprehensive Growth Assessment

Progress monitoring
- Scientifically-based practice of assessing student performance on a frequent, regular basis
- Indicates whether a student is benefiting from the intervention or instructional approach
- Indicates the need for change in an intervention or instructional approach for those not benefiting
- Estimates rate of improvement
- Sensitive to small increments of growth / change over time
- Quick to administer
- Can be administered as often as once per week
- Data can be graphed for ease of understanding
- FASTBridge aReading, aMath, Reading CBM
    - Students in Tier 2 should be assessed every other week (i.e., bi-weekly)
    - Students in Tier 3 should be assessed once a week
- Administered by interventionists, support staff, or teachers as indicated in Individual Intervention Plans

Summative evaluations
- Measures program outcomes
- Summarize overall learning
- Compares student performance to a global standard or benchmark
- Takes place after the learning process is complete
- Once a year or one-time assessments, Ex. IAR, ISA

District 92 MTSS Teams

	Roles & Responsibilities	Team Members	Frequency of Meetings
District MTSS Team	Establish and sustain an effective MTSS system	District Administrators Principals Staff from each school Board Members (1-2)	Monthly or as needed
School SLT/MTSS Team	Implementation of MTSS Analyze Tier 1 Data School-based decision making Coordination of the delivery of services to all students Evaluate student outcomes	Principal Grade Level Teachers SPED Teacher School Psychologist Social Worker Interventionists ELL Enrichment Teacher	Monthly
Grade Level MTSS Teams	Determine what students need to know. Provide Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction. Assess student learning and effectiveness of instruction. Analyze data to identify students in need of additional support.	Grade level teams School Psychologist (when needed) Social Worker (when needed) Interventionists (when needed)	Weekly 6-8 weeks Monthly
Building Student Support Teams (SST) **Individual Problem-Solving**	The goal is to analyze various forms of data to determine how best to meet the needs of students who require interventions. Determine student academic/behavioral needs. Diagnose the causes of	Principal and/or Director of Student Services School Psychologist Social Worker General education teacher Reading Interventionist	Weekly or As Needed

|			
	struggles. Determine the appropriate intervention Monitor student progress Revise the intervention, as needed Determine appropriate next steps for students.	Math Interventionist Special education teacher Speech Therapist School nurse ELL teacher (as needed) Parent/Guardian	

DATA-BASED PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS

The Data-Based Problem-Solving Process is a 4-step process to maximize student academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes. The process uses data to effectively identify the difference between expected and current student performance in all content areas, grade levels, and tiers. The process ensures that as much information as possible is gathered from available data to improve learning and ensure student success. The problem-solving process consists of these four steps.
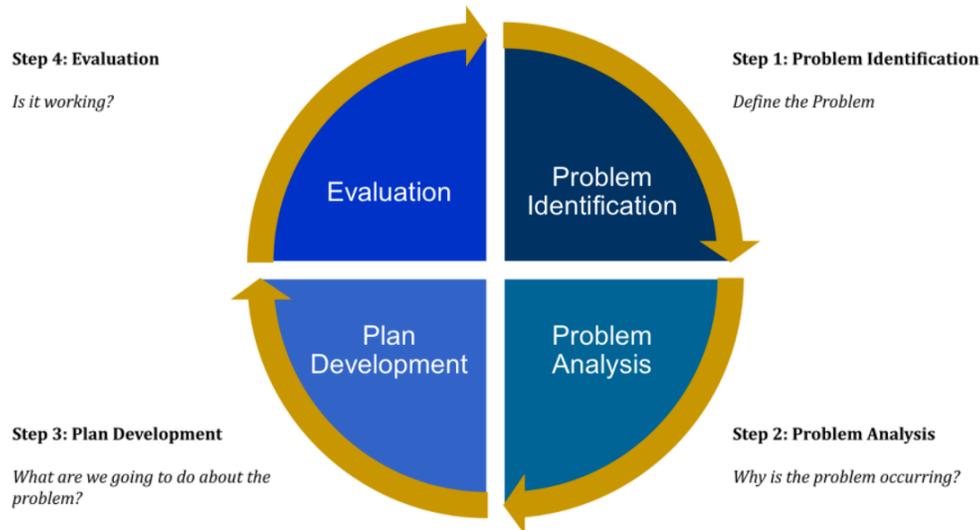
District 92 has established a process to ensure proper documentation of the Data-Based Problem-Solving Process. The MTSS Referral Form (please see links at the end of this section) for your school should be completed using the Google Form before a meeting about students receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 services.

At Tier 2, the MTSS Team should work with the school interventionists (academics) and/or social workers (behavioral) to complete the MTSS Google Form.

At the Tier 3 level, the Student Support Teams should work with the teachers to complete the MTSS Referral Form. This form includes information on attendance, vision, and hearing screening.

The selected intervention should be documented in the MTSS Individual SST Form at the Grade Level Meeting Team (Tier 2) or the Individual Problem Solving Team Meeting (Tier 3). The documented data should include the intervention start date, frequency (days/minutes per week), grouping, progress monitoring tool, and progress monitoring frequency.

This step-by-step process is described below.

STEP 1: PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

The first step is to identify the concern by answering the following questions:

- What is the concern?
- How does current performance compare to the expected level of performance?

To answer these questions, the MTSS Team (Tier 2) or the Individual Student Support Team (Tier 3) will collect data regarding the present level of performance (PLOP) and the expected level(s) of performance. These data can be gathered from various sources, including universal screeners, assessment outcomes, assessment norms, and Illinois Learning Standards.

The MTSS Team (Tier 2) or at the Individual Student Support Team Meeting (Tier 3) will need to be able to review the data and disaggregate it in a variety of ways, such as by district, building, grade level/content area, classroom, and subgroup.

Once these data are reviewed, a gap analysis can be conducted to determine the difference between the current and expected level of performance. This analysis will be documented in the MTSS Plan.

This is an important step in the process, as this information will be used to create a plan, write goals, and evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention(s).

STEP 2: PROBLEM ANALYSIS

PLEASE NOTE: The MTSS Team (Tier 2) or the Student Support Team (Tier 3) will meet to review data. The school psychologist will guide the team through this Tier 2 or 3 Problem Analysis process.

The second step in the data-based problem-solving process is to identify why the concern(s) may be happening and ask what would happen if certain steps were taken. This can be accomplished by asking the following questions:

- What is the team's hypothesis about why the discrepancy is occurring?
- What is the root cause?
- What would happen if _____ would occur?
- Can the team validate these ideas with data?

To answer these questions, the MTSS Team (Tier 2) or the Student Support Team (Tier 3) will generate hypotheses, identify the root cause, and gather information to confirm or refute generated hypotheses. Problem analysis is crucial as the time spent analyzing a problem through gathering known and unknown information will help teams make sound, defensible decisions, leading to the implementation of a well-designed plan that will have a greater likelihood of success.

The MTSS Team (Tier 2) or the Student Support Team (Tier 3) can use the ICEL/RIOT template to gather proper data to generate hypotheses. This template ensures that demographic,

perception, process, and student outcome data is gathered through the use of Reviews, Interviews, Observations, and Tests (RIOT). Once the Grade Level Meeting Team (Tier 2) or the Student Support Team (Tier 3) has enough information, hypotheses about why the problem occurs are generated. Hypotheses are generated in the Instruction, Curriculum, Environment, and/or Learner (ICEL) domains.

Hypotheses should:

- Be based on data relevant to outcomes, targeted skills, and behaviors
- Focus on alterable variables (variables that the school and staff can positively impact)
- Lead to improvement and intervention
- Consider both skill and performance deficits of adults and students

Once hypotheses are generated, the MTSS Team (Tier 2) or the Student Support Team (Tier 3) utilizes the information gathered to validate or rule out each hypothesis until one is selected and agreed upon. This is crucial because if the hypothesis is inaccurate and the wrong solution/strategy/intervention is implemented, valuable time could be wasted on actions that were not appropriate. In some cases, the problem-solving process may pause at this point before the MTSS Team (Tier 2) or the Student Support Team(Tier 3) agrees on a final hypothesis. This pause allows more information to be gathered through the ICEL/RIOT process.

The agreed-upon hypothesis, which describes why the concern occurs, should be developed and documented in MTSS Plans.

STEP 3: PLAN DEVELOPMENT

PLEASE NOTE: The school psychologist will again guide the Tier 2 or Tier 3 process with the Student Support Team using the Problem-Solving Form, Interventions, and the Intervention Log on the MTSS Individual SST Document.

The third step is to identify what the MTSS Team (Tier 2) or the Student Support Team (Tier 3) can do to intervene and help close the performance gap that has been identified. This can be accomplished by asking the following questions:

- How can the educator close this identified gap?
- What will the educator(s) do/teach?
- Is this solution/strategy/intervention aligned with the identified concern?
- How will this plan be implemented?

It is important to put together and document this plan in Unified Insights to ensure successful mitigation of the concern. The plan should contain the following:

- Goal Statement

- Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, rigorous, and timebound
- Taking into consideration current and desired performance
- Plan
  - Person(s) responsible for implementation
  - State the strategies, activities, and skills aligned to the core curriculum
  - State what materials, resources, or programs will be used
  - Implementation logistics, such as the number of days and times
- Progress Monitoring Plan
  - Person(s) responsible for conducting the progress monitoring
  - Name of progress monitoring tool
  - Frequency of administration
  - Schedule of data review and evaluation by the team
- Fidelity
  - Person(s) responsible for documenting fidelity
  - Type of fidelity data to be collected
  - How often this fidelity data are collected
  - Schedule of fidelity review and evaluation by the team

These components are essential in ensuring that an intervention is implemented as intended. This information will also be important in the next and final step of this process.

STEP 4: EVALUATION OF INTERVENTIONS

The fourth and final step in this process is to determine the effectiveness or impact of the plan based on the collected data. The MTSS Team (Tier 2) or the Student Support Team (Tier 3) can accomplish this by reviewing the data in the MTSS Plan and asking the following questions:

- Was the intervention delivered with fidelity?

- Did the plan work?

- What evidence supports the effectiveness of the plan?

- Have the outcomes improved for the student(s)?

- What are the next steps? Intensify, alter, or fade interventions?

The MTSS Team (Tier 2) or the Student Support Team (Tier 3) will determine if the implemented intervention is closing the gap and improving outcomes. If the intervention plan is successful, activities can be faded or discontinued. If the intervention plan isn't producing the desired outcomes, the plan needs to be re-evaluated. When re-evaluating the plan, it is important to review the fidelity and implementation documentation, attendance records, and repeat the problem-solving process, if necessary. Document this process on the appropriate form in the MTSS Plan.

Role of Parents in the MTSS Process

Parents play a crucial role in every aspect of their child's education. In D92, we engage parents right from the start. If a student faces academic, behavioral, or social challenges, the classroom teacher is usually the first to inform parents and explain how instruction will be adjusted at Tier 1 to meet the child's needs.

At Tier 2, the teacher collaborates with a Data Review Team to discuss the student's performance and any concerns. The Data Review Team, composed of school staff, gathers and reviews information to better understand the students' needs and creates a tailored learning plan. Parents will receive regular updates and progress reports from both the Interventionist and the teacher.

If a student requires more individualized support at Tier 3, parents become active participants on the Problem-Solving Team, working together to develop and implement a personalized intervention plan. At this level, parents will also receive progress monitoring reports from the Interventionist and the teacher.

If your child is identified as being at risk for learning, behavioral, or social difficulties, here are some ways you can be involved:

- Stay in regular communication with your child's teacher.
- Ask about the specific interventions being used to address your child's needs.
- When possible, implement similar strategies or interventions at home.
- Inquire about the school's progress monitoring guidelines.
- Request regular progress monitoring reports from the school.
- If your child receives Tier 3 interventions, attend Problem-Solving Team meetings—your input is invaluable!
- Celebrate your child's progress or improvements in any areas of concern.
- Suggest strategies or interventions that you've found effective at home.
- Don't hesitate to ask questions if anything is unclear!

Appendices

Research on MTSS

https://nemtss.unl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/20-A-Brief-Review-of-MTSS-Evaluation-Measures-and-Empirical-Support-for-MTSS-Implementation.pdf

https://mtss4success.org/resource/mtss-research-based-system-ensure-equity-and-access-learning

https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1080527.pdf

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10319208/

https://nemtss.unl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/20-A-Brief-Review-of-MTSS-Evaluation-Measures-and-Empirical-Support-for-MTSS-Implementation.pdf