



Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Standing Committee
February 19, 2025

Location: Bellingham Public Schools District Office, 1985 Barkley Blvd.

Time: 4- 5:30 p.m.

Presenters: Jessica Wallace and Andrea Quigley, teachers on special assignment.

Members present: Mike Copland, deputy superintendent; Jessica Wallace, teacher on special assignment; Analisa Ficklin, director of special education; Arionda Feeney, assistant superintendent; Craig Baldwin, principal at Cordata elementary school; Kacey Emerson, teacher at Roosevelt elementary school; Rachel Frye, instructional coach at Carl Cozier and Lowell elementary schools; Jodi Haggan, special education teacher at Silver Beach elementary school; Alex Johnson, dean of students at Carl Cozier elementary school; Yana Mansfield, instructional coach and teacher on special assignment; Clare Martin, teacher at Birchwood elementary school; Matt Neisinger, school nurse; Pam Pottle, principal at Northern Heights elementary school, Shala Poulsen, speech language pathologist at Wade King elementary school; Andrea Quigley, teacher on special assignment; Doug Ray, school support team; Rebecca Sauter, school support team lead; Sam Slider, school psychologist at Kulshan middle school; Dana Smith, assistant director of communications; Lara Stark, literacy specialist at Parkview and Lowell elementary school; Donte Thomas, campus monitor at Squalicum high school; Luke Hostetler, teacher at Sunnyside elementary school; Stephanie Korn, principal at Lowell elementary school and Jermy Louzao, assistant principal at Squalicum high school.

Welcome: Mike welcomed the group and reviewed the MTSS Standing Committee goals. He welcomed Craig Baldwin and Lacey Geisen from Cordata Elementary School to share their “MTSS in action” story.

Reviewed MTSS Committee Goals

- Establish a vision for how to implement a strong, evidence-based MTSS for all students in Bellingham Public Schools
- Use collective expertise of the committee to develop a curated list of resources that demonstrate best practices.
- Investigate, review, and recommend professional learning experiences that can be accessed by district employees in support of growing our work in inclusive instructional strategies.
- Focus on growing inclusive strategies and increasing the scope of inclusion over time, beginning with the early grades.

Outcomes

- Strengthen our data-driven teams in every building to have the tools and understanding to implement a strong, evidence-based MTSS framework.
- Develop a system-wide culture of using data to drive our equitable decision-making.
- Provide a solid foundation to service all our goals.

Agenda

- January Review
- MTSS in Action: Cordata Elementary
- MTSS Team Driven Shared Leadership: Next Steps
 - Small Group Work
- February Task

January Meeting Review

- MTSS plan-do-study-act team possibility or problem of practice (PPOP) – Provided the department of teaching and learning (DTL) leadership team a PPOP and created an action plan. The PPOP was: What MTSS structures will be supported by DTL in the area of monitoring and increasing attendance and responding to school refusal, through an MTSS framework?
- Collaborating with expert teams and drafting attendance resources.
- Use the MTSS model to collaborate in your own building.

MTSS in Action: Cordata Elementary

Cordata team members Craig Baldwin, principal and Lacey Greisen, social emotional learning specialist presented regarding changing the narrative about Cordata.

In 2021-22, Craig and assistant principal Eva Chazo were in their first year coming out of Covid and heard a specific narrative about Cordata, including:

- Struggling kids and families
- Ten administrators in ten years
- No PTA/PTO
- Covid had eroded schoolwide systems.
- Master schedule and other systems tended to focus on adults rather than student.
- Students bused or driven to school because school is not in a neighborhood.

Cordata is the most diverse elementary school in Bellingham Public Schools.

Cordata wanted a sense of belonging and the staff discussed their core values, vision, and mission. They developed a mantra: you belong and you are loved. They worked towards developing an SEL system to align their actions/system.

Over the last three years Cordata focused and developed “all-oriented” inclusion, identity, shared leadership and belonging using these tools and systems:

- Child study systems
- Focus on identity
- Antiracist learning and culturally responsive teaching
- Evolving master schedule
- Schoolwide SEL alignment and tools
- Growing family leadership and engagement

When focusing on attendance, the initial step moving forward was forming an attendance team to develop systems and structures. This included:

- Attendance team with counselor and family liaison
- Meetings every Thursday
- Tracking data and actions in OneNote
- Share action items
- Follow protocol each meeting

Craig and Lacey shared the universal screener and progress monitoring map data for excused and unexcused absences. Using this data to determine lessons learned while being child focused.

What is the ultimate outcome?

Love children and hold expectations:

- Knowing as much as you can about each child and family.
- Look for trends over time.
- Try innovative ideas and solutions to assist in getting students(s) to school.

Andrea stated by using the MTSS model of systems and support, Cordata started by noticing a pattern and then building the child study system. They looked at why kids are not coming to school, used the attendance data, and developed an attendance team. They focused on chronic absences in tier 3 and interventions included phone calls, family engagement, progress monitoring and adjusting plans using interventions.

Craig shared Cordata's satellite data for annual attendance averages showing improvement since pre-Covid.

Cordata's current tier 1 schoolwide strategies:

- Soft start
- Morning announcements
- Birthday shout outs
- Verbal affirmations
- Class meetings/morning meetings
- Wishing students well when they are absent

Some of Cordata's next steps:

- Build relationships with students across grades
- Family meetings
- Link Attendance team with other teams
- Support teachers with strategies and guidance
- Improve communication
- Teachers messaging families when students are absent

MTSS Team Driven Shared Leadership: Next Steps

Andrea asked members what they want to do next using the MTSS model. She asked the team to reflect and talk with their table group and think about Cordata's story. What is going on in your building and how does it connect with the MTSS model?

Share outs:

Develop systems to support behaviors and how it connects to attendance.

- Alignment of practice across the school and different environments
- Be intentional with staffing and support across building
- Master schedules
- SEL – break space for escalation, breaks are better, provide open hours, staffed by SEL team.
- Being proactive rather than reactive
- MTSS model is prevention work
- Work through hard problems while being thoughtful
- Use MTSS model structure to help support all kids.

Jessica mentioned the importance of sharing the team driven leadership connection along with Cordata's connection to the building leadership team. Alongside expert professionals, DTL MTSS team are currently working on attendance feedback and guidance in support of the work. Rather than every school creating their own work, use a school who has developed steps and share with others.

Jessica asked members to pick small groups and build teams or level teams.

1. Attendance tiered supports resource.
 - Read the heading of the resource.
 - Pick a tier and provide feedback.
 - Ideas, questions, comments
2. Review Cordata's presentation.
 - Review the slides.
 - How might this model support a team already happening in your building?
3. Discuss building MTSS cycle of inquiry/PPOP.
 - Review your PPOP.
 - What are your next steps as a building? What questions, concerns or ideas do you have?

February Task

- Take the attendance tiered support resource menu back to your building teams.
- Provide feedback with the Microsoft form in OneNote.

The facilitators requested feedback on sticky notes:

1. Please write one word protocol that you are leaving with today!

Thank you to the Cordata team for sharing their story.

Next meeting: March 19, 2025, 4-5:30 p.m., Bellingham Public Schools District Office