



Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Standing Committee Meeting Notes

December 3, 2025

Time: 4- 5:30 p.m.

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

Presenters: Mike Copland, deputy superintendent; Arionda Feeney, assistant superintendent; Analisa Ficklin, director, special education; Jessica Wallace, teacher on special assignment

Agenda

- Welcome + Purpose
- Committee Work
- Building Teaming Structures
- Next Meeting + Closing

Mike welcomed the new and returning members and noted that there will be three more meetings this year. Our goal is to continue supporting the development of teaming structures with resources for attendance, discipline, and intervention; to strengthen those teams; and to build out content-based resources; for example, the great work accomplished with attendance last year. A growing collection of resources is available in the Staff Hub.

Mike reminded everyone of the District Firm Goals and the 2025-2026 focus: Students are 'Cared for and Respected'. The primary goal of this committee is to ensure all students have access to grade-level standards through a strong MTSS framework.

MTSS Framework

MTSS provides a prevention-based framework for systematically integrating academic and non-academic equitable support. This framework ensures culturally and linguistically responsive, universally designed and differentiated support for all students.

Jessica shared some examples from schools' School Intervention Teams (SIT) plan goals for June. These goals are accomplished through MTSS which aims to systematize support, strengthen teams, and increase Tier 1 instruction to reduce need for Tier 3 intensive support.

Legal Changes in Special Education Related to MTSS

Analisa shared that in Washington, there are 13 disability categories for special education. One of them, Specific Learning Disability (SLD), has already had the eligibility criteria changed, but goes fully into effect fall 2028. This new law requires use of MTSS /Response to Intervention framework to determine SLD eligibility. One of the four criteria for determining SLD, 'insufficient

progress,' requires data showing lack of expected achievement and non-response to intervention. Exclusionary factors (e.g., vision, hearing, mental health, cultural, limited English proficiency, high quality core curriculum) must be ruled out. To meet this new law, we must have MTSS processes in place to determine appropriately and ethically whether a student has a specific learning disability.

Committee Charter, Data Beliefs, and Review of Last Year's Work

Ari reviewed the committee charter's four main goals: (1) systematic data-driven approach; (2) address 2028 state-mandated special education changes; (3) disseminate instructional strategies across 22 buildings via the Staff Hub; (4) support great teaching with strong MTSS framework.

Jessica reviewed the four accomplishments of the 2024–2025 MTSS Committee: (1) essential elements of a strong MTSS; (2) shared learning about data-based decision making; (3) applied practices at the building level through individualized Problems or Possibilities of Practice (PPOP); (4) created district data beliefs.

The district data beliefs state that data guides evidence-based decision making which leads to purposeful growth.

1. We center students, families, and their culture.
2. We collaborate to collect data and analyze with curiosity.
3. We use multiple data sources to make informed decisions.
4. We value shared responsibility and actionable dialogue.

2025-2026 Focus

Ari outlined the group's two main goals for the year: 1) create a systematic, data-driven approach to support all students; 2) gather and disseminate instructional practices. We will focus on three key committees in each building (attendance, academics, and social-emotional/behavior) and use existing teaming structures and data-driven decision-making to ensure no students are missed in academics, SEL, and attendance. Starting next meeting, we will focus on building out the Staff Hub resources and identifying gaps in tiered supports.

The group broke into small table groups with representatives from more than one school, and shared about their teaming structures for attendance, SEL/behavior, and academics. They highlighted who is on the team, what is the structure of the team, and what would you adjust.

Action Items

Prior to the next meeting, committee members were asked to share a meeting recap and collaborate with their building principal and/or staff, asking: how do (might) the data beliefs support our school's team?

Next meeting: 4-5:30 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2026, Bellingham Public Schools District Office.