

Timberlane Regional School District

MTSS Handbook

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Section 1: Facilitation and Leadership of MTSS

TRSD MTSS Vision

Engage every student in learning through a comprehensive system of academic, social, emotional, and behavior support, designed through the Universal Design for Learning Framework.

TRSD Mission

The Mission of the Timberlane Regional School District is to engage all students in challenging and relevant learning opportunities, emphasizing high aspirations and personal growth. The Timberlane Regional School District will create and strengthen a systematic process that ensures every child receives the additional time and support needed to learn to their utmost potential.

TRSD MTSS Core Beliefs

- **Challenge is a good thing**
 - Grade level instruction should be provided to all students, with the understanding that it will be a challenge for some. Challenge sustains engagement and shows progress moving toward proficiency.
- **Students deserve respect for their abilities**
 - A grade 4 student who is reading at a grade 2 level is still a grade 4 thinker and deserves to do that thinking during Tier 1 instruction.
- **Tier 1 is the foundation to MTSS**
 - There is time to provide Tier 2 and 3 instruction for some students, but it can't come at the expense or loss of Tier 1 instruction. Otherwise, those students will never get to experience, be challenged by, and work toward being proficient with grade level content.
- **Prioritize essential learning to strategically accelerate students**
 - Trying to teach students everything they've missed or haven't yet mastered is not the answer. There's not enough time in one academic year to teach multiple grade levels worth of standards. Denying students access to their current grade-level instruction to teach what was missed creates a never-ending cycle of below-grade level instruction.

TRSD MTSS Guiding Principles

There are seven guiding principles around which our Multi-Tiered System of Supports is built.

Principle 1: MTSS is for all students to ensure their growth, regardless of placement, demographics, exceptionalities, etc.

Principle 2: Leadership is essential to guide best practices in instruction and intervention.

Principle 3: MTSS is anchored in the problem-solving model to provide evidence-based decision-making for each tier through data-driven interventions.

Principle 4: Meaningful and actionable progress monitoring is a critical component of MTSS.

Principle 5: Common language is a priority for success & transparency.

Principle 6: Professional development is essential for teachers and leadership teams.

Principle 7: Families should be informed, clear about their role, and committed to their child's learning outcomes.

Leadership/School Improvement and MTSS in our School District

School Improvement and Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) are interwoven elements crucial for fostering positive educational outcomes. The collaboration between school improvement initiatives and MTSS, with instruction designed to remove barriers for all students, ensures a comprehensive approach to addressing diverse student needs and enhancing overall academic success. School improvement strategies, encompassing curriculum enhancements, professional development, and data-driven decision-making, align seamlessly with the tiered interventions of MTSS. By integrating these frameworks, schools can proactively identify areas for growth, implement evidence-based interventions, and continuously assess their impact on student learning. This holistic approach to school improvement elevates academic achievement and fosters a supportive and inclusive learning environment where each student's unique needs are met, ultimately contributing to the overall enhancement of the educational experience.

School improvement data provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of educational practices and guide decision-making for ongoing enhancements through a Multi-tiered System of Supports. The table below outlines key elements of school improvement data used in the TRSD:

Data Category	Key Data Points
Student Achievement & Assessment	- Standardized test scores - Formative and summative assessments - Data from diagnostic assessments - Classroom or grade-level assessments - Benchmark assessments - Competency scores - Grades
Attendance and Truancy	- Student attendance rates - Patterns of truancy or chronic absenteeism
Discipline and Behavior	- Disciplinary incidents - Types of disciplinary actions taken - Trends in behavior referrals
Teacher and Staff	- Professional development participation - Staff turnover rates
Family and Community Engagement	- Parent involvement in school activities - Community partnerships and collaborations - Feedback from parent surveys or meetings
Special Education	- Identification and support for students with special needs - Progress of students in special education programs
Financial	Resource allocation for instructional materials and technology and staffing
School Climate and Culture	- Surveys and data on school climate - Perceptions of safety and inclusion - Open and honest communication and feedback. - Self-reflection

Section 2: Multi-level Prevention System Beginning with Core (Tier 1, Universal) Instruction

MTSS - as the name suggests - involves multiple tiers of instruction and assessments.

Timberlane Regional School District's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a whole-school, proactive and preventative framework that integrates data and instruction to maximize student achievement from a strengths-based perspective.

MTSS, as a foundation, provides academic, behavioral, and social-emotional interventions organized into three tiers of support. The three tiers are also known as levels of support or instruction and intervention that educators provide to students. There are various resources, strategies, and tools within each of the three levels that support our students' various needs.

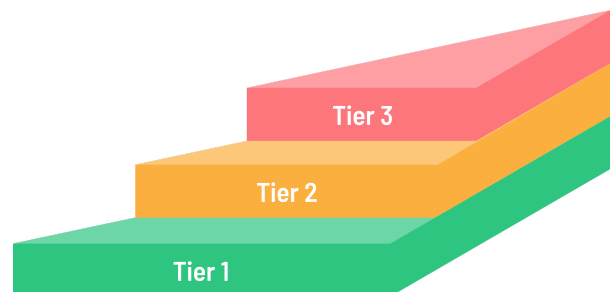
Individuals, students and teachers, do not live in tiers; instruction lives in the tiers and students move in and out of tiers as their data suggests is necessary.



Tier 1 - All students receive strong core instruction, designed to remove barriers to student's learning through differentiated, high-quality instructional practices and methodologies.

Tier 2 - Targeted instruction with regular progress monitoring; can be in the classroom or in another setting.

Tier 3 - Intensive instruction with frequent progress monitoring; typically occurs outside of the classroom.



Tier 1 Instruction	Tier 2 Instruction and Intervention	Tier 3 Intensive Intervention
- Standards and competency-driven, grade level expectations - Designed for ALL students - Accessible for ALL students - Use universal screening data to promote differentiation - High-quality instruction - Monitoring progress with screeners and curriculum-embedded assessments - Provided by the general education teacher - Linked to best practices for designing differentiated lessons	Tier 1 plus: → Targeted skills-driven → Designed for a group of students with the same skill deficit → Evidence-based explicit instruction and feedback → Occur in addition to a strong Tier 1 → Delivered to students with an identified need through universal screeners, diagnostics, and progress monitoring → Progress monitoring assessment and tools matched to skill needs → Provided by the general education teacher or by another trained instructor, within or outside the general education classroom. → Linked to Tier 2 Support Plans which include SMART goals, progress monitoring tools, and intervention selection and dosage	Tier 1 plus: → Targeted skills-driven based on whole-child data; validated with additional diagnostics/protocols → Smaller group/more intensive → Systematic, evidence-based, explicit instruction (often has a multi-sensory approach) → Occur in addition to a strong Tier 1 → Delivered to students with an identified need through universal screeners, diagnostics, and progress monitoring → Includes wrap-around supports → Progress monitoring occurs weekly (high frequency) → Can be provided by general education teacher or specialist but typically occurs during an intervention period outside of general education time → Linked to Tier 3 intensive intervention plans

Tier 1 Core/Universal Instruction

At Tier 1, all students receive instruction implemented with integrity. Core instruction emphasizes grade-level standards and competencies, social-emotional learning and/or social/civic work study practices, and school-wide behavioral expectations. Instruction at Tier 1 should be explicit and differentiated and include flexible grouping and active student engagement for all students.

Features of high-quality Tier 1 instruction:

- Standards and competency-driven, grade-level expectations
- Designed for ALL students
- Accessible for ALL students
- Use universal screener data to promote differentiation
- High-quality instruction
- Monitoring progress with screeners and curriculum-embedded assessments
- Provided by the general education teacher
- Linked to best practices for designing differentiated lessons

At TRSD, teachers use our Stage One [articulated K-12 aligned curriculum documents](#) to design instruction through the Universal Design for Learning framework. We have many instructional resources, though only some of them are designed to be used for universal instruction with all learners.

Tier 2 Targeted Intervention

Tier 2 involves more focused, targeted instruction/intervention and supplemental support in addition to, and aligned with, Tier 1 (core) academic and behavior curriculum and instruction.

At Tier 2, students identified as at-risk in academics, social-emotional learning, or behavior through universal screeners are provided scientific, research-based, targeted small-group instruction aligned with Tier 1 content and performance expectations.

Tier 2 support is implemented most often with groups of students demonstrating common skill deficits or social/emotional/behavioral risk characteristics and may also be implemented with individual students. Tier 2 Targeted Intervention should be included in a student's plan with intensity and duration noted.

Key Components of Tier 2 Instruction at TRSD:

Tier 1 Instruction	Tier 2 Instruction and Intervention
● Standards and competency-driven, grade level expectations ● Designed for ALL students ● Accessible for ALL students ● Use universal screener data to promote differentiation ● High-quality instruction ● Monitoring progress with screeners and curriculum-embedded assessments ● Provided by the general education teacher ● Linked to best practices for designing differentiated lessons	● Targeted skills-driven ● Designed for a group of students with the same skill deficit ● Evidence-based explicit instruction and feedback ● Occur in addition to a strong Tier 1 ● Delivered to students with an identified need through universal screeners, diagnostics, and progress monitoring ● Progress monitoring assessment and tools matched to skill needs ● Provided by the general education teacher or by another trained instructor, within or outside the general education classroom. ● Linked to Tier 2 Support Plans which include SMART goals, progress monitoring tools, and intervention selection and dosage

Tier 3 Intensive Intervention

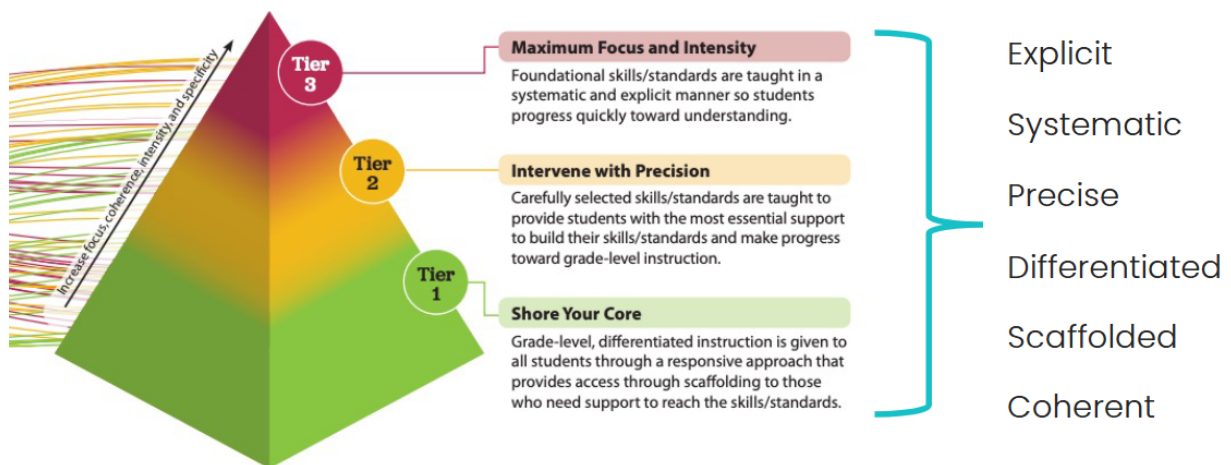
Tier 3 refers to academic, social-emotional, and behavioral instruction/interventions provided to students at high risk for failure and needing our most intensive and individualized support.

Students who demonstrate a need for Tier 3 support, based on universal screening tools, or have not demonstrated progress with targeted group instruction at Tier 2, require more time in more intensive interventions. Tier 3 interventions are distinguished from Tier 2 interventions because they are individualized based on data collected in individual problem solving, and occur with increased frequency and possibly duration. Tier 3 instruction groups are smaller and sometimes delivered 1:1 when needed.

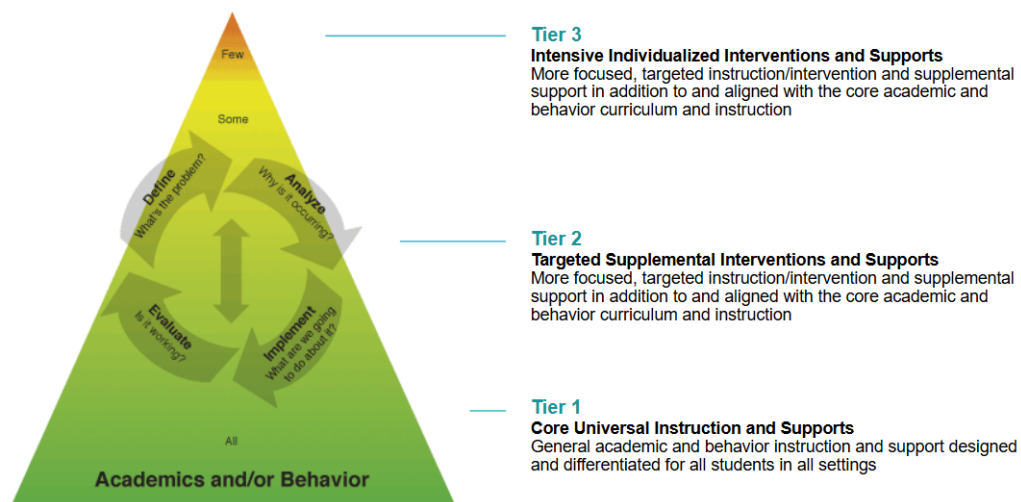
Tier 3 support plans include more than what occurs during intervention time. The multidisciplinary team identifies strategies for maximizing student outcomes during core instruction (Tier 1), and supports those that are to be used at home or in the community.

Key Components of Tier 3 Intensive Intervention at TRSD:

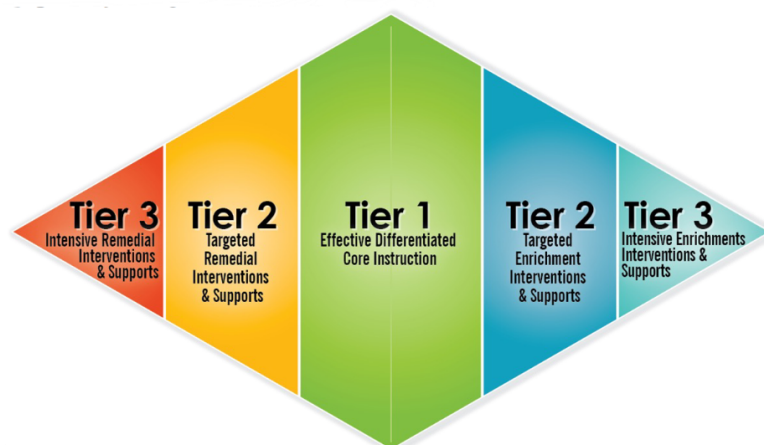
Tier 2 Instruction and Intervention	Tier 3 Instruction and Intervention
● Targeted skills-driven ● Designed for a group of students with the same skill deficit ● Evidence-based explicit instruction and feedback ● Occur in addition to a strong Tier 1 ● Delivered to students with an identified need through universal screeners, diagnostics, and progress monitoring ● Progress monitoring assessment and tools matched to skill needs ● Provided by the general education teacher or by another trained instructor, within or outside the general education classroom. ● Linked to Tier 2 Support Plans which include SMART goals, progress monitoring tools, and intervention selection and dosage	● Targeted skills-driven based on whole-child data; validated with additional diagnostics/protocols ● Smaller group/more intensive ● Systematic, explicit, instruction (often has a multi-sensory approach) ● Occurs in addition to a strong Tier 1 ● Delivered to students with an identified need through universal screeners, diagnostics, and progress monitoring ● Includes wrap-around supports ● Progress monitoring occurs weekly (high frequency) ● Can be provided by general education teacher or specialist but typically occurs during an intervention period outside of general education time ● Linked to Tier 3 intensive intervention plans



Three tiers describe the level and intensity of the instruction/interventions provided across the continuum.



The three tiers are not used to describe categories of students, timelines, procedures, or specific programs.



Section 3: Assessment Framework to Identify Student Needs

Within a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), a variety of assessments and monitoring tools are employed to identify student needs proactively and responsively, guide interventions, and measure progress.

When reviewing data within our assessment framework, we ask questions:

- Is our core instruction inclusive of UDL practices that proactively strive to meet the needs of all students?
 - Academics
 - Social Emotional Learning
 - Student Wellness (Warning Indicators)
- Are our students responding to interventions?
- Are interventions happening with fidelity?

A comprehensive assessment protocol helps teams make decisions about students' learning progress and overall wellness. They are instructionally relevant, valid, and reliable assessments critical for providing proactive support. There are 5 types of assessments, which vary in administration and use.

Assessment/Data Tool	Purpose
Universal Screening	Periodic skill-based and normed assessment that provides the school with insight into students' needs. At this time, the district uses i-Ready across grades K-9 as the Universal Screener.
Warning Indicators	Periodic assessment data used to provide the school with insight into the overall wellness of their core, including both school-based and community-based data that come from screeners, surveys, and professional providers.
Diagnostic Assessments	Skill-based assessments provide deeper insight into a student's particular skill deficits.
Progress Monitoring Assessments	Skill-based assessments are used to determine growth when a student is receiving an intervention.
Benchmark Assessments	Standards or competency-driven assessment that measures student performance periodically throughout the year.
Curriculum Embedded Assessments	Encompass both formative and summative standards-driven assessments that occur ongoing throughout the learning experience and provide teachers with data on student performance related to a particular learning outcome.

These assessments are used at different stages of the MTSS process, from identifying students who may need support (universal screening) to monitoring progress during interventions (progress monitoring). The data collected informs decision-making, allowing educators to tailor interventions to individual student needs and adjust strategies as necessary.

As assessments and monitoring tools are employed, students will move fluidly through tiered levels of support in response to that data. These tiers blend together, as in the visual on the left, and do not sit in silos, as in the visual on the right. Our focus on tiers remains with the level of instructional support and not to label a student and/or teacher, and the time with more targeted or intensive support is not the same for each student.



Generally, 80-85% of student's needs are met through Tier 1 Core/Universal instruction, which includes differentiated and/or scaffolded support. When more than 20% of students require support, it indicates a problem with Tier 1 instruction. In this case, schools and/or teams will evaluate the effectiveness of the core curriculum and universal instruction before placing too many students in targeted intervention groups. The 20% guideline acts as a diagnostic tool, signaling when adjustments are needed at the universal level to ensure that high-quality, evidence-based practices are benefiting the majority of students. An intervention system attempting to meet the needs of more than 20% of students is unsustainable and not found to be effective in its goals.

Section 4: Support Plan Cycle

Support Plans must be developed for students when they are receiving, or in need of, Tier 2 or Tier 3 support in a topic area. A support plan differs from Tier 1 support in that it is targeted toward a specific skill deficit. For both Tier 2 and Tier 3 support, each plan must include a defined goal, progress monitoring assessment, and intervention details like duration, frequency, and setting. The design of these plans should also engage students in goal-setting and self-reflection. A support plan helps teachers to articulate and students to understand:

- The specific skill or ability the student needs to master (the goal).
- The method used to know the student has achieved mastery (the progress monitoring assessment).
- The program, activity, or strategy needed to achieve the goal (the intervention).
- The support plan does not include core instruction review.

The MTSS problem-solving process consists of four essential steps:

- Define the problem and/or goal
- Analyze the problem and relevant student data
- Design and Implement an intervention plan
- Evaluate the intervention for effectiveness

Step 1

Define the problem and/or goal.

*The first step in the decision-making process determines the goal and direction of the intervention. A team must ask, “**what is the problem?**” to identify what problem needs to be solved—related to academic performance, social emotional needs, unexpected behaviors or attendance trends that could be impacting learning. Avoid choosing vague or broad definitions of problems. To select the appropriate problem to address, teams look at the difference between the desired outcome in an area and the actual performance of a student or the group of students in need of support.*

Educator Actions: Establishing Baseline Behavior and Academic Performance

Identify specific behaviors and academic skills of concern, establishing baselines by documenting the frequency, duration, and intensity of behaviors and academic performance before interventions are implemented.

Step 2

Analyze the problem and relevant student data.

MTSS is a system driven by data. After a problem has been defined, it is necessary to review the data to determine the cause. The cause could be a lack of instruction or sufficient practice in a particular skill, or alternatively, it could be based on a non-academic factor, such as the learning environment. In the second step of the problem-solving process, team members brainstorm potential barriers that may be preventing achievement of the goal, then gather relevant data to validate whether those ideas are in fact true. During problem analysis, the team seeks to answer: “**Why is the problem occurring?**”

Teams develop hypotheses to explain why the problem is occurring and predict what might prevent the problem from occurring in the future. These hypothesis statements are considered within the domains of instruction, curriculum, environment and learner, and are framed as “The problem is occurring because _____.”

Subsequently, prediction statements are written as “If _____ would occur, then the problem would be reduced.” Data is collected to confirm or reject the hypotheses that were developed. During this phase, it is important to determine if the problem reflects a skill deficit (i.e., “can’t do”) or performance deficit (i.e., “won’t do”).

Consider Instruction, Curriculum, Environment, and Learner (ICEL) in order to identify the root cause of the student’s challenges:

- **Instruction** is how the curriculum is taught and can vary in many different ways, including level of instruction, rate of instruction, and presentation of instruction.
- **Curriculum** refers to what is taught and includes scope, sequencing, pacing, materials, rigor, format, and relevance.
- The **Environment** is where the instruction takes place. Variables in the environment include classroom expectations, beliefs and attitudes, peers, school culture, facilities, class size, attendance and tardies, and classroom management.
- The **Learner** is who is being taught. This should only be considered and addressed when the Instruction, Curriculum, and Environment are found to be appropriate and accommodating. Variables include motivation, prerequisite skills, organization and study habits, abilities, impairments, and history of instruction.

Educator Actions: Setting Behavioral and Academic Goals

Collaboratively set specific and measurable behavioral and academic goals that are realistic and attainable within a specified timeframe. Goals should align with the broader objectives of the MTSS plan.

Step 3

Design and implement an intervention plan.

After a thorough student data analysis and the development of a hypothesis about why a group of students or an individual is not achieving at expected levels, your team is ready to design and implement an intervention plan. Intervention plans should address predictions and hypotheses derived during Step 2 of the problem-solving cycle. Implementing an intervention plan can occur at any tier within MTSS.

During intervention planning and implementation, the team focuses on “**What are we going to do about it?**” Teams will document who is responsible for intervention plan implementation, what will be done, when it will occur, and where. Components of a comprehensive intervention plan also include training and support needed for the person implementing the intervention. Remember that parents/guardians must be involved in this important step in the process.

This particular step requires many smaller steps, which are outlined in the table that follows the four-step Support Plan Identification section.

Educator Actions: Selecting Measurement Tools for Behavior and Academics

Choose appropriate tools to measure both behavior and academic progress. This can include behavior rating scales, checklists, academic assessments, and progress monitoring tools designed for tracking academic skills.

Educator Actions: Selecting an Intervention for Behavior and Academics

Choose appropriate instruction that explicitly supports the learner in their academic or behavioral need domain. Deliver instruction as prescribed to the student.

Step 4

Evaluate the intervention for effectiveness.

After spending time creating and implementing an intervention, it is essential that your team spend time evaluating the student's progress. In this step, the problem-solving team is trying to answer, “**Was this intervention successful?**” The team answers this question by evaluating the student's progress against the original goal to determine if the intervention was appropriately matched to the student's need and whether it was implemented with fidelity.

Educator Actions: Adjusting Interventions for Behavior and Academics

Based on the data analysis, make informed decisions about the need for behavior and academic intervention plans adjustments. This may involve modifying strategies, intensifying or reducing support, or introducing new approaches tailored to the student's needs.

Educator Actions: Communication and Collaboration on Behavior and Academics

Maintain open communication among educators, parents, and other relevant stakeholders regarding both behavioral and academic progress. Collaborate to ensure consistency in the implementation of interventions and to share insights into the student's holistic development.

Educator Actions: Documentation and Reporting for Behavior and Academics

Keep detailed records of progress monitoring data for both behavior and academics, adjustments made to the intervention plans, and any noteworthy observations. This documentation is essential for maintaining a comprehensive record of the student's overall development.

Acknowledge and celebrate positive progress in both behavioral and academic domains. Reinforce the student's efforts and achievements, fostering a positive and supportive learning environment that addresses both aspects of their development.

Building and Monitoring Support Plans in TRSD

TRSD will utilize a district-wide platform (Branching Minds) to develop, implement, and monitor student support plans for academics, social-emotional development, and behavior.

Teams should consider:

- **HOW** much time is needed each day to accelerate knowledge and skills?
- **WHAT** instruction/intervention will be provided during that time?
- **WHO** will provide the instruction/intervention?
- **WHERE** the instruction occurs to ensure students receive additional support?

We intend to use the Branching Minds data platform to document individual student goals/plans for academics, attendance, and behavior.

The platform will keep detailed records of progress monitoring data for both behavior and academics, adjustments made to the intervention plans, and any noteworthy observations. This documentation is essential for maintaining a comprehensive record of the student's overall development.

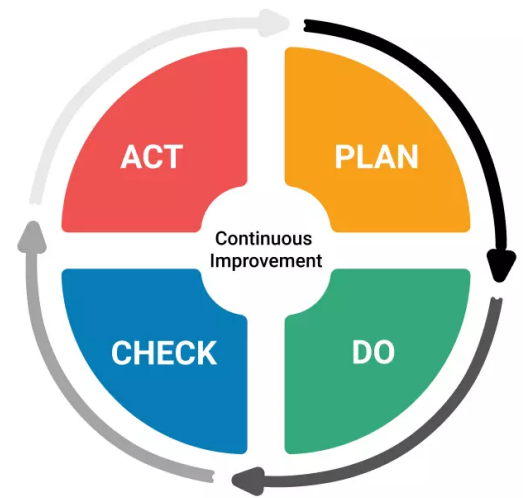
Acknowledging and celebrating positive progress in both behavioral and academic domains is important to the MTSS process. We will reinforce students' efforts and achievements, fostering a positive and supportive learning environment that addresses both aspects of their development.

The platform integrates all components related to the development, implementation, and monitoring of support plans. It will provide quick access for educators to academic and behavioral data to better identify and respond to student needs. The platform will also serve as a means to track student performance across grade levels and schools.

Section 5: Data-driven Continuous Improvement Model for Problem-solving

Continuous Improvement Process

MTSS strives to quickly identify students in need, analyze the data to best understand their needs, and implement the support needed using research-backed interventions matched to their challenges. MTSS teams meet to monitor the progress of overall student's growth and track implementation fidelity. Students are more likely to achieve success when the system is regularly assessed to ensure an equitable and successful education for all students.



Data-Driven Decisions for Evaluating Tier 1

Our school and district-level teams will consider several factors when addressing Tier 1 instruction. Some of our students may require more time or different instructional materials and/or approaches than others for Tier 1 services. Differentiated instruction, to the degree appropriate for the size and diverse learning abilities of students, the focus and pace of instruction, and how responsibility for the learning activity is released to students are common considerations. These differentiated plans include academic and behavioral standards.

TRSD uses guiding questions when analyzing Tier 1 data in order to make consistent and informed data-driven decisions:

- What percentage of our students are meeting or not meeting grade-level academic expectations?
- Is Tier 1 instruction effective for each grade-level content/subject area?
- Has Tier 1 instruction been designed in a manner to remove barriers for most students?
- Is the Tier 1 academic instruction supporting our students equitably?
- What percentage of students are meeting or not meeting social-emotional learning skill expectations?
- Is the Tier 1 positive behavior system, mental health support, and/or school climate supporting our students equitably?
- What percentage of students are meeting or not meeting school-wide behavioral expectations?
- Is Tier 1 instruction effective for school-wide behavioral expectations?

TRSD utilizes the Branching Minds Tier Level Report, Behavior Incident Report, and the Benchmark Growth Report to drive Tier 1 data-driven reflection and analysis.

Data-driven Decisions for Evaluating Effectiveness of Tier 2 and 3

Instructional-level and Individual student-level teams will utilize a consistent structure and framework for ensuring students are receiving the right support and are making progress. During established team meetings, the following guiding questions and considerations should be utilized.

Was the intervention delivered with fidelity?	
Review intervention delivery for sufficient dosage. <i>Sessions are recorded on the Branching Minds platform. The platform displays status indicating the number of minutes received out of the number of minutes planned. If less than 90% of planned minutes were delivered, this is considered insufficient dosage.</i>	Review intervention delivery for implementation integrity. <i>Leaders verify the integrity of intervention delivery through direct observation and teacher self-report. When the delivery of intervention has been verified to be consistent with the intended delivery (outlined on the support description of Branching Minds), it can be documented in the notes section of the intervention session on Branching Minds.</i>

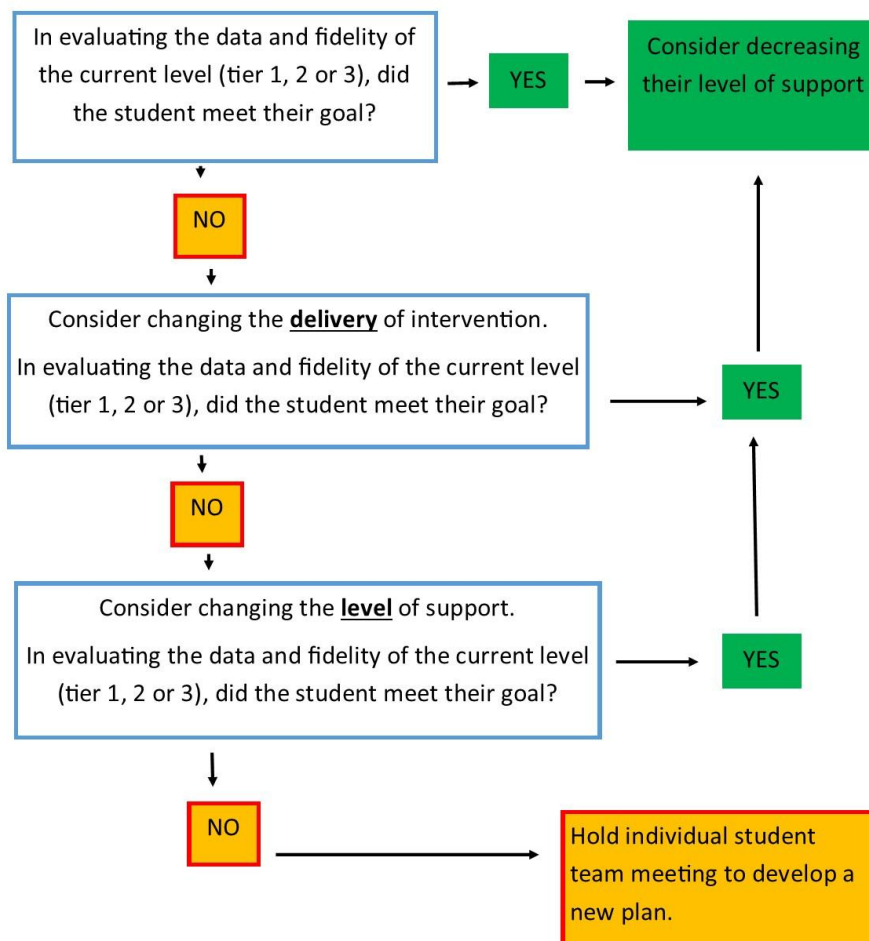
Are all students making sufficient progress?	
Ensure the validity of the progress monitoring data. <i>Progress monitoring data is considered valid and usable if:</i> • <i>a valid and reliable curriculum-based measure was used</i> • <i>there are 3 data points collected</i> • <i>only one progress monitoring point is collected in the same week</i> • <i>less than 3 weeks have elapsed between data points</i> • <i>administration directions were followed</i> • <i>student score is based on one administration with no extra practice time</i>	Review the student's growth using progress monitoring data. <i>Student growth is documented using progress monitoring graphs on Branching Minds and should be reviewed after at least 3 data points have been collected and recorded.</i> <i>When examining a student's trend line relative to the goal line, ask:</i> <i>"Is the trend line (blue dash) (i.e.-student's performance) above, near, or below the goal line (solid green)?"</i>

Minimum Requirements to Consider before Changing Tiers

TRSD understands the importance of utilizing clear decision-making protocols when considering changing students' level of support. Prior to discussing a tier level of support change, Instructional or Individual student level teams consider the following specific requirements, based on the existing student plan:

Did the provided intervention include:

- Daily, quality Tier 1 (core) instruction utilizing UDL practices?
- Sufficient research-based intervention (delivered explicitly to the student and logged by the educator)?
- Consistent progress monitoring (review decision rules below for when and how to move tiers)?
- Fidelity checks (completed by data analysis and observation)?
- Family collaboration?



Section 6: System Level Infrastructure, Communication, Collaboration

MTSS Staff, Roles, and Responsibilities

Critical to the functioning of an effective MTSS team is communication and collaboration between all school personnel. It is important to remember as we identify roles within an MTSS system that, as educators first, we all own the success for all students.

Overview of Team Types

There are four types of teams that occur in relation to our MTSS:

Tier 1 focused team:

- Building Level MTSS Team

Tier 2 focused teams:

- Instructional Level Team
- Tier 2 Behavior or Social Emotional Intervention Team

Tier 3 focused team:

- Individual Student Support Team

Forming a Building Level MTSS Team

The following list describes roles and responsibilities that are assigned by building administrators (or their designees) to various members of the Building Level MTSS team, based on individual strengths and abilities. Please note that some responsibilities are shared among team members, and some team members may hold multiple roles. For example, the school counselor might also serve as the MTSS coordinator.

Role	Duties
Building Administrators	• Set expectations for core instruction, allocate resources and help eliminate barriers for problem-solving teams • Participate in MTSS meetings to reinforce accountability of key actions • Sets expectation that ALL students are included in problem-solving; those with and without IEPs • Ensures there is a system for progress monitoring for ALL students receiving Tier 2 and 3 interventions
MTSS Facilitator or Coordinator	• Provides leadership at MTSS team meetings • Coordinates and sets agenda for MTSS team meetings • Uses district problem-solving templates to guide and

Role	Duties
	document the team’s discussion and decision-making • Provides expertise to MTSS team regarding problem-solving protocol • Facilitate the team as they identify trends in student/staff need across school; asking questions to guide the discussion • Ensures next steps are documented and communicated with student and/or family
Grade Level or Content Area Representative	• Serves as liaison between PLC, grade levels, department, and MTSS team • Attends grade level MTSS meetings on a regular basis
Specialists¹	• Serves as liaison between PLC, grade levels, department, and MTSS team • Contributes area of expertise to the team • Attends grade level MTSS meetings, as needed • Provides background information and relevant student data in addition to classroom teacher • May implement interventions or progress monitoring as defined by the individual or group support plan
Classroom Teachers	• Provides experience with and knowledge of the instruction, curriculum and student • Provides background information and available classroom level student data • Communicates with the student and/or family (if not present at the meeting) • May implement interventions or progress monitoring as defined by the individual or group support plan
School Psychologist and/or Social Worker (MSW)	• Supports interpretation of data • Help guide intervention and support decisions among the team • Provides a “whole-child” lens to the team • Provides expertise in data analysis • Shares expertise in evidence-based practices to support learning

¹ May include teachers of English language learners, coaches, teachers of students receiving special education services, speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, interventionists, and/or counselors.

Key Duties of Each Building Level MTSS Team

- Review universal screening data to ensure core instruction is effectively and equitably supporting students.
- Identify grade levels or content areas that may need additional resources.
- Provide input to district and building leaders on professional development as it relates to the school's MTSS system, and needs for additional resources related to all tiers of instruction and intervention.
- Provide input regarding school site intervention/enrichment schedule, curriculum, and/or course offerings

Overview of Meeting Types for Problem-Solving and Collaboration

There are four types of problem-solving and collaboration meetings that occur in relation to our MTSS:

- Building Level Team Meetings
- Instructional Level Team Meetings
- Tier 2 Behavior or Social Emotional Intervention Meetings
- Individual Student Support Team Meetings

Each meeting type, including its goals, duration and frequency, participants, and standard agenda are provided in the tables below.

Building Level Meeting	
Goal of the Meeting	Evaluate school-wide health and wellness of MTSS practice: Analysis of school-wide academic, social emotional and behavioral data.
Duration + Frequency	After each Universal Screening Window.
Participants	● Building Administrator(s) ● Student service representative ● Instructional service representative ● Special Ed representative/teacher ● Grade-level representative (large schools) OR General Education teacher representative(s) (small schools)
Agenda	● Examine percent of students adequately served by the core ● Examine equity of core instruction (across demographics, grades, and classrooms) ● Evaluate student body growth and tier movement ● Evaluate equity of student growth and tier movement ● Evaluate quality of intervention delivery ● Plan for improved support

Instructional Level Team Meeting	
Goal of the Meeting	Monitor progress of students receiving Tier 2 academic, classroom based support, look for trends in support needs at the system, teacher, or student level.
Duration + Frequency	After Universal Screening and throughout the benchmark window for progress monitoring.
Participants	● Building Administrator ● All teachers and specialists who are working with students receiving Tier 2 support in that grade or content area. ● Content area coach or other instructional leader
Agenda	First meeting after screener ● Tier and/or review tier placement of students ● Create Tier 2 groups and plans ● Schedule students receiving Tier 3 support problem-solving meetings Follow-up meetings ● Review progress of Tier 2 groups ● Look for trends in student growth ● Make course corrections to promote growth (e.g., provide support to teachers, change strategy, regroup) ● Schedule individual problem-solving for students, if necessary

Tier 2 Behavior or Social Emotional Intervention Meeting	
Goal of the Meeting	Monitor progress of students receiving Tier 2 behavior/social emotional support, look for trends in support needs at the system, teacher, or student level.
Duration + Frequency	After Universal Screening and throughout the benchmark window for progress monitoring.
Participants	● Building Administrator ● All teachers and specialists who are working with students receiving Tier 2 support in that grade or content area. ● Individuals with applied behavioral expertise (e.g., counselor, social worker, behavior specialist, or school psychologist)

Tier 2 Behavior or Social Emotional Intervention Meeting	
Agenda	First meeting after screener • Tier and/or review tier placement of students • Create Tier 2 groups and plans • Schedule students receiving Tier 3 support problem-solving meetings Follow-up meetings • Share insight into which students are also receiving Tier 2 academic support implemented by the grade level/content team. Layer supports as necessary • Review progress of Tier 2 groups and look for trends in student growth • Adjust Intervention placement/intensity when needed • Schedule individual problem-solving for students if necessary

Individual Student Support Team Meeting	
Goal of the Meeting	Provide deeper problem-solving for students not making sufficient progress, and to create/revise individual Intervention Plans to initiate additional layers of support with academic, behavior, and/or social emotional interventions.
Duration + Frequency	As needed, in response to the data and intervention planning.
Participants	• Building Administrator • General education teacher of student being discussed • Any specialist working with the student being discussed • Content area coach or other instructional leader
Agenda	• Teacher presents data • Team evaluates student progress • Team analyzes and identifies problems • Team creates intervention plan to support student

Scheduling for MTSS

To build a strong multi-tiered system of supports, it is necessary for schools and districts to prioritize and allocate time matched to student needs. Effective tiered schedules include adequate time for core instruction, assessments, intervention time, team meetings, and planning.

Section 7: Applying MTSS to our Unique Populations

Research has shown that schools that implement a Multi-tiered System of Support (which includes specially designed instruction) have positive outcomes for students and have improved academic and behavior performance, according to scores on standardized state assessments and school discipline data. Additionally, the utilization of MTSS has been shown to significantly reduce the number of students referred for and placed in special education, and improved school retention rates.

Determining if a Special Education Referral is Needed and Justifiable

It is critical that our MTSS teams have a shared consensus that the primary purpose of problem-solving and MTSS is NOT to move a student towards Special Education eligibility.

During the problem-solving process for individual students, data is collected that is necessary to determine eligibility and determine whether a student has a disability, and whether special education services would be needed for the student to meet learning standards. Importantly, special education services are embedded within a MTSS, not a separate system or location where students with disabilities are instructed. When ongoing problem-solving results in data-based decisions that indicate a student requires special education services to be successful, then special education services become a part of the plan for educating the student. In fact, the use of an MTSS and the problem-solving process in decisions regarding eligibility for special education has been codified under IDEA.

Critical Team Questions to Ask Before an Evaluation for Special Education Services ²	
• Did the student have access to grade-level curriculum at Tier 1? • Did the student receive effective support, accommodation or differentiation at Tier 1? • Is there evidence the school's core instructional practices are working for a large majority of students, including similar students? • Is the student's attendance at school considered to be regular? (ex. 94% attendance rate)	• What quality problem-solving process did the school use to better identify the student's specific learning needs and cause of the student's struggles? • What evidence-based interventions did the school use to address specific learning needs? • Did highly trained professionals in the student's area of need provide those interventions?

² Adapted from Buttum, Mattos, and Malone's *Taking Action: A Handbook for RtI at Work*.

Critical Team Questions to Ask Before an Evaluation for Special Education Services ²	
• If the student is an ELL, has second language proficiency been thoroughly examined by the team, including the EL teacher/expert? • If the student meets the criteria as low socioeconomic status (SES), has this been ruled out as a significant barrier to learning? • Did the school identify and implement supplemental/Tier 2 supports in a timely manner? • Is there evidence that Tier 2 interventions were effective for similar students? • Did the schools identify the student for Tier 3 interventions in a proactive manner?	• Is there evidence that Tier 3 interventions worked for similar students? • How often did the team monitor the progress for each intervention? What modifications did the school make based on this information? • Are there any other interventions or supports the school team should try before considering a referral? • Does the school team unanimously feel that special education services may be necessary and appropriate for the student? • What benefits will the student receive due to this referral that could not be provided without Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)?

If a team cannot successfully or affirmatively answer these questions, then a recommendation for evaluation for special education services should not be made. Evaluation and qualifying a child for special education is not in itself the solution to a student's learning needs, but it should create opportunities to provide the student with more specially designed instruction.

Do students identified under IDEA for Special Education receive Interventions?

As Special Education students are general education students first, they are, in fact, entitled under federal law to receive support through a Multi-Tiered System of Supports in the same manner as their general education peers.

ALL students have access to differentiated, Tier 1 instruction based on the standards, including students with disabilities, who need various levels of support, scaffolds, and/or adaptations to master grade-level standards. Students with disabilities are legally entitled to specially designed instruction within their least restrictive environment, including intensive interventions, when the intensity of their needs warrants this level of support.

The Multi-Tiered System of Supports framework is designed to meet the needs of all students in a school, including those with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

As special education students' needs and goals change and evolve within various topic areas, MTSS teams must utilize the MTSS framework to identify the best approach to providing services, supports, and accommodations to students.

Enrichment and Gifted Supports within an MTSS Framework

MTSS is a framework for ALL students and that certainly includes our exceptional students. It is important to consider students who have already demonstrated mastery of the standards as students needing differentiated and supplemental interventions for their learning. Teachers can make content more rigorous, culminating projects more rigorous or allow students to move horizontally through curriculum content, so they are challenged to view content through a unique perspective. Extension or enrichment should include activities that are meaningful and allow our students the opportunity to pursue interests and broaden their experiences while learning in our schools. By offering enrichment to our students who are highest achieving, we are ensuring their motivation to learn and that their educational journey is optimized.

English Language Learners

An English Language Learner is a student:

- who is aged 3 through 21
- who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school
- who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English
- whose difficulty speaking, reading, writing and understanding English may impact their ability to meet challenging academic standards, participate in English speaking classrooms, or participate fully in society.

English Learners (ELs) refers to students whose first language is one other than English and are acquiring English as a second language. This includes students who are just beginning to learn English and fall within a continuum of language proficiency and second language (English) literacy. In addition to meeting the same academic standards that their monolingual peers face, our EL students are mastering another language. It is helpful to take into account the following for ELs:

- Teaching should be culturally responsive: The student's prior experiences should be considered, including home language background and socio-cultural background.
- Interplay of English Language Learning & Reading Instruction: Teachers should consider the relationship between a student's language proficiency and his/her literacy skills. Reading fluency and comprehension may be strongly determined by vocabulary and linguistic proficiency of both the first and second language.

- Interplay of English Language Learning & Math Instruction: Linguistic proficiency and vocabulary comprehension are important when understanding math concepts. Several concepts of math are not necessarily universal.
- Additional Variables:
 - Consideration of the student's culture, and educational history and level of literacy and oracy (ability to express oneself) in their native and new languages are variables to be considered when assessing and planning instruction for ELs.
- English Language Learning: Core instruction for all ELs must always include specific English language instruction at the Tier 1 level. This includes implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to meet diverse language needs, incorporating explicit vocabulary instruction across content areas, and differentiating instruction using scaffolds such as visuals, sentence frames, native language supports, and partner work.
- Matching Instruction to Student Need: Differentiated instruction should be used for ALL students; however, differentiated instruction for ELs should consider the student's level of English proficiency and prior educational experiences in addressing cultural and linguistic differences. When determining appropriate instruction/intervention, the following should be considered for all levels of EL students:
 - Refer to student WIDA Screener results or ACCESS scores for ELs. These tests give you a proficiency placement in listening, speaking, reading, and writing as well as literacy score. A member of the team who is well-versed in interpreting proficiency scores (ELL teacher or School Psychologist) should be consulted.
 - Consider the amount and type of EL instruction the student received in the past and in the present.
 - Ensure it is sufficient for the student to be successful in the school setting.
 - Consider the impact of the student's home language and culture on instruction and learning in the classroom.
 - Contact the family for guidance and feedback.
 - Ensure that certified EL teachers serve on the instructional decision-making team.

Tools for Supporting English Language Learners

- Evidence-based Instructional Strategies for Elementary-Aged English Language Learners
- The WIDA Differentiation resource guide is helpful to teams planning for instruction for ELs
- The WIDA "CAN-DO" Descriptors are helpful to problem-solving teams making instructional decisions for ELs: Early Years & K-12

The high rate of reading failure among ELs warrants careful attention to their progress so that instruction can be altered if students do not reach expected rates of

progress. Curriculum-based measurements can be utilized to develop skill development or growth rates for ELs. If an EL student is not making expected academic growth, instruction should be intensified for that student. Likewise, if an entire group of students with similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds struggles to make progress, adjustments to core instruction should be made (or changes to the EL services they receive should be considered) to ensure they meet learning expectations.

The following are recommendations for using progress monitoring tools for ELs: (from the National Center on Response to Intervention):

- Monitor student progress in all languages of instruction.
- Set rigorous goals for ALL students that support meeting grade-level standards.
- Evaluate growth frequently, increasing intensity of instruction when growth is less than expected.
- Evaluate growth as compared to that of EL peers.

Students with 504 Plans

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is legislation that guarantees certain rights to people with disabilities. A 504 Plan is developed to ensure that a child who has a disability under the law and is attending school receives accommodations that will ensure their academic success and access in the learning environment. Interventions within the MTSS Framework must be implemented to identify appropriate supports and accommodations.

Students who already have a Section 504 plan are continually monitored throughout the school year and included in all tiers under the MTSS framework. If a student is not making the anticipated learning gains, they may be considered for support through MTSS; additional interventions, accommodations and/or assessments to determine appropriate future actions.

Section 8: Evaluating the Multi-tiered System of Support

TRSD uses a variety of data to identify the strength of our MTSS implementation across the district. Some of the types of data that are commonly used to measure infrastructural strength include process, outcome, and fidelity data. This data is identified both by the District Level MTSS and Building Level MTSS teams.

Process Data

This type of data includes information about the implementation process, such as the activities and strategies used to implement an intervention, the resources and supports provided, and the barriers and facilitators to implementation.

Outcome Data

Outcome data measures the impact of the intervention on various outcomes, such as academic success and positive changes in behavior. This data is used to determine whether our MTSS process is effective in achieving its intended goals.

Fidelity Data

Fidelity data measures the extent to which an intervention is implemented as intended. This data is used to ensure that the intervention is being implemented correctly and to identify areas where improvements can be made.

By using multiple types of data, educators can gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence the successful implementation of evidence-based interventions, and can use this knowledge to develop effective implementation strategies.