



**Milan Area Schools**

**MTSS**

**Handbook**

---



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                         |           |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>INTRODUCTION</b>                                     | <b>3</b>  |
| Purpose                                                 | 3         |
| Relationship to Building-Level Handbooks                | 3         |
| How to Use This Handbook                                | 3         |
| Definition of MTSS                                      | 4         |
| MTSS Key Features                                       | 4         |
| Guiding Principles                                      | 5         |
| Essential Components                                    | 5         |
| <b>HOW WE SUPPORT STUDENTS</b>                          | <b>6</b>  |
| Tiered Delivery System                                  | 6         |
| Tier 1: Core Instruction and Universal Supports         | 7         |
| Tier 2: Targeted Supports                               | 8         |
| Tier 3: Intensive Supports                              | 9         |
| Special Education Within the Tiered System of Supports  | 9         |
| Team-Based Leadership and Shared Responsibility         | 10        |
| <b>HOW WE IDENTIFY STUDENT NEEDS</b>                    | <b>11</b> |
| Screening and Assessment System                         | 11        |
| <b>HOW WE RESPOND TO STUDENT NEEDS</b>                  | <b>13</b> |
| Continuous Data-Based Decision Making                   | 13        |
| Problem-Solving Cycle                                   | 14        |
| Progress Monitoring                                     | 15        |
| Connection to Special Education Evaluation              | 15        |
| <b>PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT</b> | <b>16</b> |

# INTRODUCTION

---

## Purpose

The purpose of this District MTSS Handbook is to establish a shared framework for how Milan Area Schools supports the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional success of all students.

This handbook:

- Defines what MTSS means in our district
- Articulates shared beliefs, principles, and expectations
- Establishes consistent processes and decision-making structures

## Relationship to Building-Level Handbooks

This District MTSS Handbook establishes the framework, expectations, and guiding principles for MTSS implementation across Milan Area Schools.

Each building maintains a building-level MTSS handbook that:

- Mirrors the structure of this document
- Defines building-specific procedures, schedules, and roles
- Aligns to district expectations while reflecting the building context

Together, these documents ensure consistency, clarity, and coherence across the district.

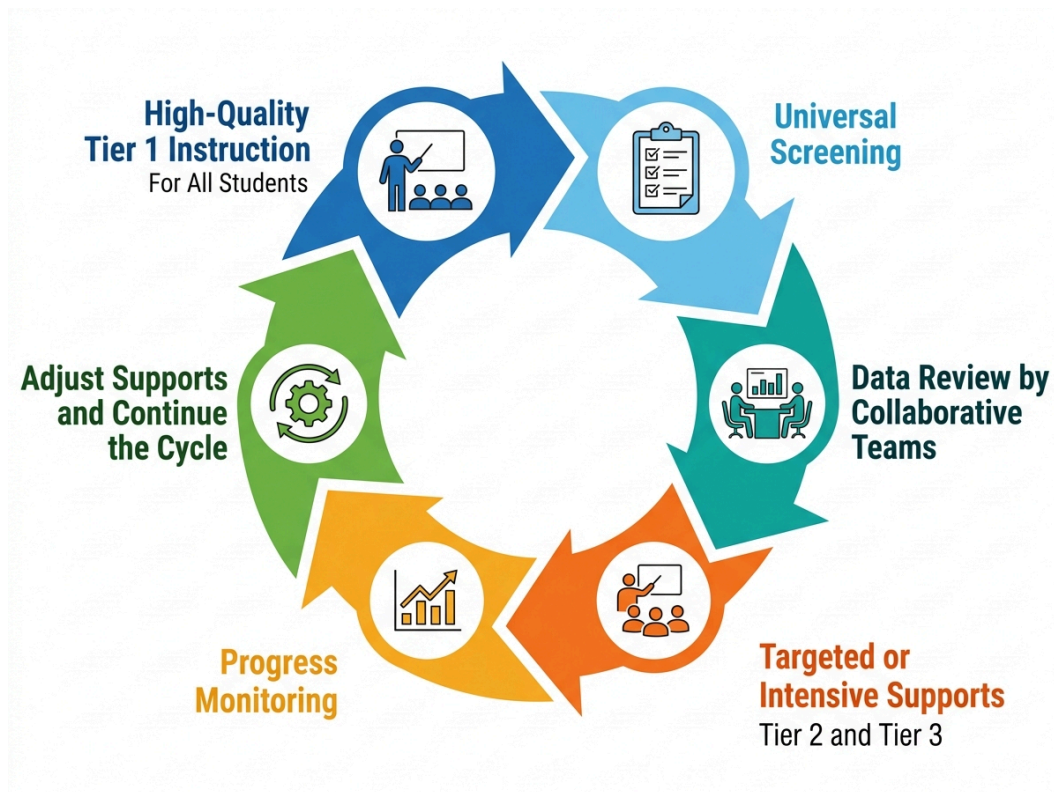
## How to Use This Handbook

The following sections of this handbook describe each component of the MTSS system in greater detail, including the tiered delivery system, assessment practices, data-based decision making, and professional learning structures that support effective implementation.

## Definition of MTSS

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a comprehensive, data-informed framework designed to support the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional success of all students through high-quality instruction, targeted interventions, and continuous progress monitoring.

MTSS is not a program or initiative. It is the way we operate to ensure every student receives what they need to learn, grow, and thrive. While the MTSS framework includes multiple interconnected components, the following overview illustrates how these elements work together to support student success across Milan Area Schools.



## MTSS Key Features

- Strong Tier 1 instruction supports all students
- Student needs are identified through universal screening and assessment
- Educators collaborate to review data and plan supports
- Interventions are matched to student needs and monitored regularly
- Supports are adjusted based on student progress

## Guiding Principles

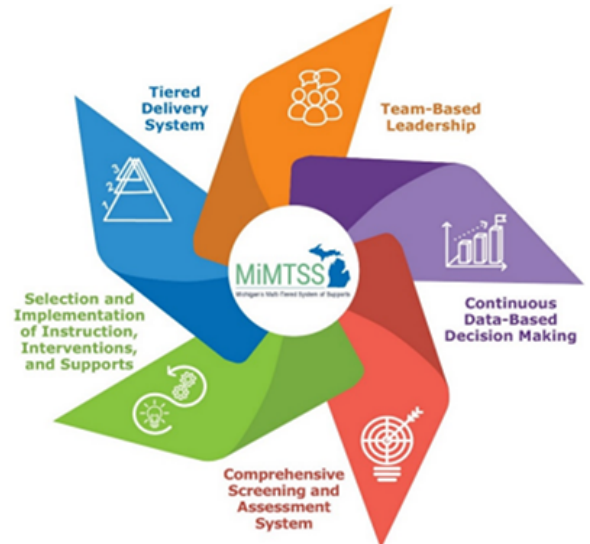
These guiding principles serve as the foundation for all MTSS practices across Milan Area Schools and are reflected in both district and building-level MTSS handbooks.

- We commit to strong Tier 1 instruction and universal supports as the foundation of our MTSS framework.
- We believe equity means providing each student with what they need to succeed.
- We share collective responsibility for all learners.
- We commit to early identification and proactive support.
- We use data to inform decisions while honoring professional judgment.
- We view MTSS as a continuous improvement process.
- We partner with families as essential contributors to student success.

## Essential Components

MTSS in Milan Area Schools is implemented through five essential components, aligned with Michigan Department of Education guidance:

1. Team-Based Leadership
2. Tiered Delivery System
3. High-Quality Instruction, Intervention, and Supports
4. Comprehensive Assessment and Progress Monitoring
5. Continuous Data-Based Decision Making

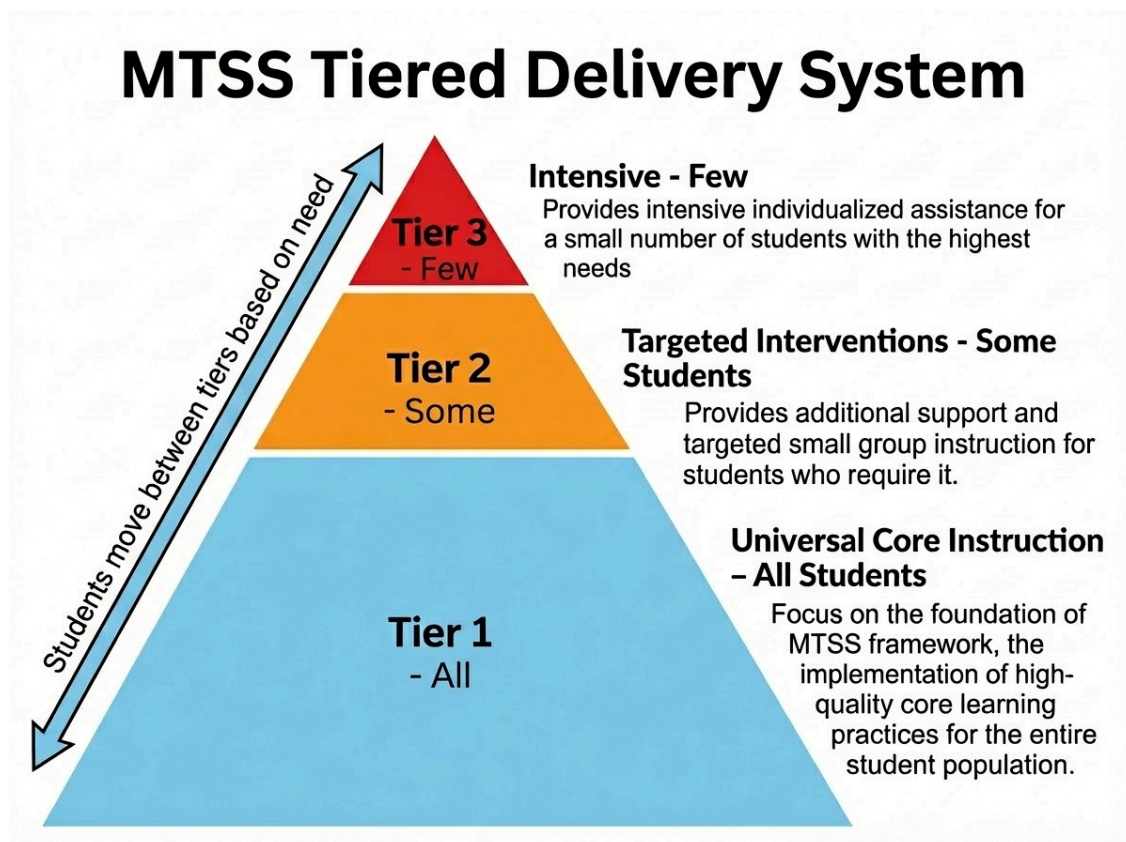


# HOW WE SUPPORT STUDENTS

## Tiered Delivery System

The Tiered Delivery System is the organizational structure used within MTSS to ensure that all students receive the level of instruction and support needed to be successful. Supports are delivered across multiple levels, or tiers, with increasing levels of intensity matched to student need. Instruction and support at each tier are aligned and build upon one another to ensure continuity of learning.

Tier 1 instruction provides the core learning experiences for all students, while Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports offer additional levels of assistance for students who require more targeted or intensive support. Movement between tiers is guided by data-based decision making and collaboration among educators, and supports are adjusted based on student progress and response to intervention. It is important to note that supports are tiered, not students. A student receives a particular level of support based on their current needs, but they are not defined or labeled by the tier they receive.



## **Tier 1: Core Instruction and Universal Supports**

Tier 1 represents the core instruction and universal supports provided to all students. It includes the district's adopted curriculum, instructional practices, and behavioral and social-emotional expectations. High-quality Tier 1 instruction ensures that the majority of students can meet grade-level expectations without the need for additional intervention.

Tier 1 is the foundation of the MTSS framework and the primary means by which student success is achieved.

### **Tier 1 System Expectations**

Tier 1 instruction across Milan Area Schools is characterized by:

- High-quality, standards-aligned core instruction
- Access to grade-level curriculum for all students
- Differentiation within core instruction to address diverse learner needs
- Consistent behavioral and social-emotional expectations
- Participation in universal screening and assessment practices

District leaders and building administrators work collaboratively to ensure that Tier 1 practices are implemented consistently and effectively across classrooms and schools.

### **How Tier 1 Is Assessed**

The effectiveness of Tier 1 instruction is evaluated through multiple sources of data, including:

- Universal screening assessments
- Classroom-based formative and summative assessments
- Behavioral and social-emotional indicators
- School and district assessment data

These data sources help educators determine whether core instruction is meeting the needs of the majority of students and identify areas for instructional improvement.

### **How Tier 1 Supports Are Provided**

Tier 1 supports are delivered through high-quality classroom instruction and may include:

- Differentiated instructional strategies
- Flexible grouping within the classroom

- Instructional scaffolds and supports
- Universal behavioral and social-emotional practices

These supports are proactively embedded within daily instruction and are designed to meet the needs of a wide range of learners.

---

## **Tier 2: Targeted Supports**

Tier 2 provides targeted supplemental support for students who require additional instruction beyond what is provided through Tier 1. These supports are typically delivered in small-group settings and focus on specific skill areas identified through screening or assessment data.

Tier 2 supports are provided in addition to core instruction, ensuring that students continue to participate in Tier 1 learning opportunities.

### **How Tier 2 Is Assessed**

Students receiving Tier 2 support are monitored through:

- Screening and assessment data
- Diagnostic assessments when appropriate
- Progress monitoring measures that track student growth over time

These data help educators evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and determine whether adjustments are needed.

### **How Tier 2 Supports Are Provided**

Tier 2 supports may include:

- Small-group instruction targeting specific skill needs
- Supplemental interventions aligned with core instruction
- Scheduled intervention time during the school day
- Ongoing progress monitoring to evaluate student response

Building-level MTSS handbooks provide additional guidance on the scheduling, structure, and delivery of Tier 2 supports.

---

## **Tier 3: Intensive Supports**

Tier 3 provides intensive, individualized supports for students with significant or persistent needs that require more focused intervention. These supports are designed to address specific barriers to learning and are tailored to the individual needs of the student. Tier 3 interventions build upon the instruction and supports provided in Tiers 1 and 2.

### **How Tier 3 Is Assessed**

Students receiving Tier 3 support are monitored through:

- Multiple sources of assessment data
- Diagnostic assessments that identify specific learning needs
- Frequent progress monitoring to track response to intervention

This information helps teams determine whether support should continue, intensify, or be adjusted.

### **How Tier 3 Supports Are Provided**

Tier 3 supports may include:

- Individualized interventions targeting specific skill areas
- Increased intensity and frequency of instruction
- Collaboration among classroom teachers, interventionists, and specialists
- Ongoing monitoring and adjustment of interventions based on student progress

Specific procedures for delivering Tier 3 supports are outlined in building-level MTSS handbooks.

---

## **Special Education Within the Tiered System of Supports**

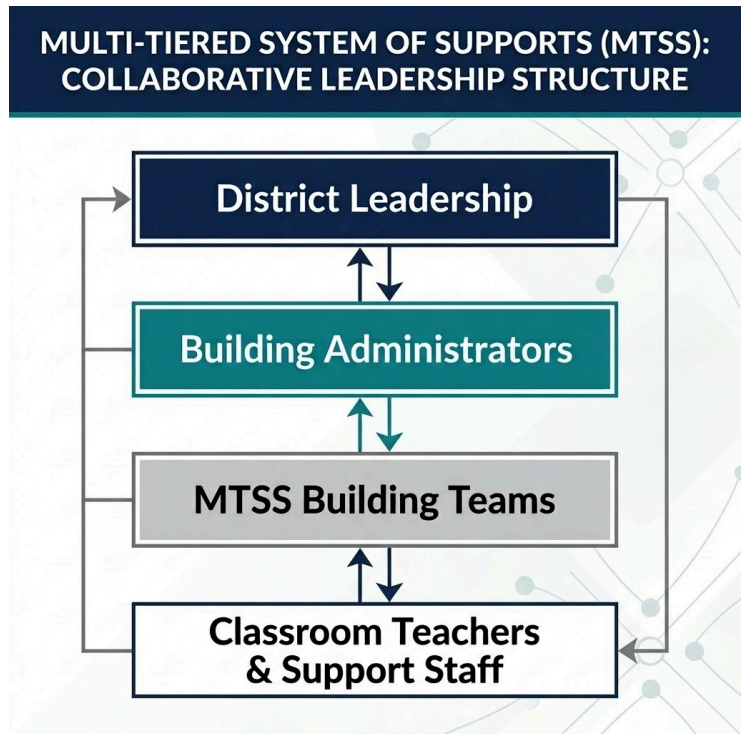
Special education services are part of the continuum of supports available to students within the MTSS framework. Students receiving special education services continue to participate in Tier 1 instruction and may also receive Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports based on their individual needs.

While intensive supports at Tier 3 may include special education services, Tier 3 is not synonymous with special education. Some students may receive Tier 3 supports within

general education, and some students receiving special education services may receive supports across multiple tiers.

## Team-Based Leadership and Shared Responsibility

MTSS is a systemwide effort that requires coordination among district leadership, building administrators, educators, support staff, and families. District leadership establishes vision, expectations, and alignment. Building administrators lead implementation within their schools, ensuring structures and practices reflect district guidance while responding to local context. Families are recognized as partners in supporting student success and may collaborate with school teams through communication, shared problem-solving, and participation in planning when appropriate. Specific team structures, roles, and meeting schedules are defined at the building level and documented in building MTSS handbooks.



# HOW WE IDENTIFY STUDENT NEEDS

---

## Screening and Assessment System

The Screening and Assessment System is the structured approach used by Milan Area Schools to gather information about student learning, behavior, and well-being. This system ensures that educators have timely and relevant data to support instructional planning and identify students who may need additional support. The assessment system includes multiple sources of information and is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of student performance. Data collected through screening and assessment supports the identification of student strengths and needs and helps guide instructional decisions across all tiers of support.

## Desired Outcomes

The screening and assessment system is designed to:

- Identify student strengths and areas of need as early as possible
- Provide data that informs instructional decision-making
- Support the identification of students who may benefit from additional support
- Monitor overall effectiveness of core instruction and supports

## Description of Practice

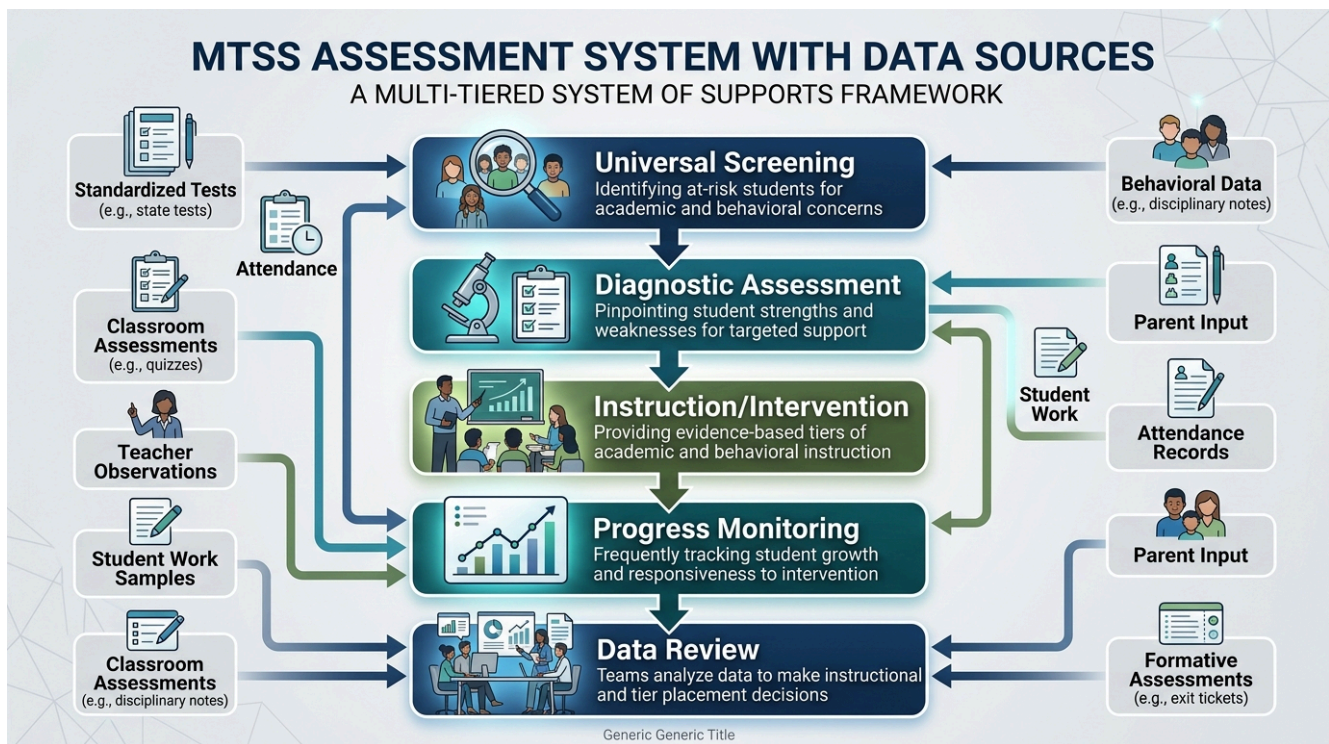
Milan Area Schools uses a balanced assessment system that includes universal screening, classroom-based assessments, and progress monitoring.

Screening occurs at scheduled intervals during the school year, varying by grade level. These screening processes provide information about student performance related to grade-level expectations and may include universal screening, dyslexia screening, interim assessments, and other structured data sources used to identify student strengths and needs. Screening results help educators determine whether Tier 1 instruction is meeting the needs of the majority of students and identify students who may benefit from additional support.

Additional assessment data may include formative assessments, summative assessments, diagnostic assessments, and behavioral or social-emotional indicators. Educators review these data sources collaboratively to develop a comprehensive understanding of student performance.

Assessment results are used to inform instruction, guide intervention decisions, and support ongoing improvement of teaching and learning practices.

Families are informed about screening and assessment practices and may be contacted to share observations or additional information that supports a comprehensive understanding of student needs.



# HOW WE RESPOND TO STUDENT NEEDS

---

## Continuous Data-Based Decision Making

Continuous Data-Based Decision Making is the process of using multiple sources of information to guide instructional planning, allocate supports, and monitor the effectiveness of interventions. Within the MTSS framework, educators regularly review student data to identify needs, evaluate progress, and adjust supports. This process ensures that instructional decisions are responsive, timely, and aligned with student needs.

### Desired Outcomes

Continuous data-based decision making is intended to:

- Support timely and informed instructional decisions
- Ensure appropriate supports are provided to students
- Evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and interventions
- Promote collaboration among educators when addressing student needs

### Description of Practice

Data review occurs regularly through collaborative team structures at the classroom, building, and district levels. Educators analyze multiple data sources, including screening results, classroom assessments, behavioral data, and progress monitoring information, to identify trends, determine appropriate supports, and monitor the effectiveness of instruction and interventions. Decisions about instructional adjustments or additional supports are made collaboratively and informed by both data and professional expertise. Families receive updates on student progress as part of ongoing communication and, when appropriate, may be invited to share input in the decision-making process.



## Problem-Solving Cycle

Within the MTSS framework, teams use a structured problem-solving cycle to guide decisions about student support.

### Step 1: Identify Student Need

Teams review screening and assessment data to identify areas where students may require additional support. Families may be contacted to share observations, provide additional context, and participate in discussions about student needs when appropriate.

### Step 2: Allocate Resources and Supports

Educators determine the most appropriate level of support and identify available resources to address student needs.

### Step 3: Develop an Intervention Plan

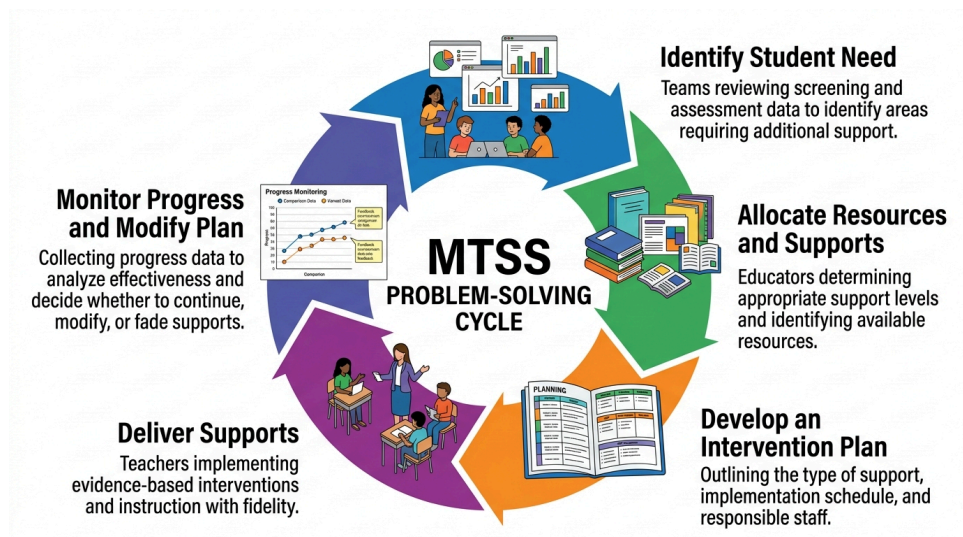
A plan is developed that outlines the type of support to be provided, the schedule for implementation, and the staff responsible for delivering the intervention. Families are informed of planned supports and may be invited to contribute to planning and goal-setting for their child.

### Step 4: Deliver Supports

Instructional strategies and interventions are implemented consistently and as designed.

### Step 5: Review Data and Adjust Supports

Teams review progress monitoring data to evaluate student response and determine whether supports should continue, intensify, or be adjusted.



## **Progress Monitoring**

Progress monitoring is used to track student response to targeted and intensive supports. Data collected through progress monitoring helps educators determine whether interventions are effective and whether adjustments are needed.

The frequency and methods of progress monitoring may vary based on the level of support being provided, with more frequent monitoring occurring for students receiving more intensive interventions. Families receive periodic updates on student progress, particularly when students are receiving targeted or intensive supports.

## **Connection to Special Education Evaluation**

Data collected through the MTSS process helps teams understand student needs and determine appropriate supports. This information may also inform decisions about referral for special education evaluation.

The MTSS process is designed to support students early and effectively and is not intended to serve as a prerequisite for special education evaluation. A referral for special education evaluation may be initiated at any time when a disability is suspected. Participation in the MTSS process does not delay or replace the right to request an evaluation.

Receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports does not mean that a student is on a path toward special education evaluation. Decisions about referral are based on individual student needs and data, not solely on the level of support a student receives.

# PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

---

Successful implementation of MTSS requires ongoing professional learning and shared commitment to continuous improvement. Professional learning supports educators in strengthening instructional practices, effectively using data, and implementing supports that address diverse student needs.

## **Desired Outcomes**

Professional learning related to MTSS is designed to:

- Strengthen Tier 1 instruction across all classrooms
- Build educator capacity to support diverse learners
- Promote consistent implementation of MTSS practices across buildings
- Support collaboration among educators when addressing student needs
- Foster a culture of continuous improvement

## **Description of Practice**

Milan Area Schools supports MTSS implementation through ongoing professional learning opportunities, coaching, and collaborative structures. These opportunities are designed to deepen understanding of instructional practices, assessment systems, and effective intervention strategies. Educators are encouraged to reflect on instructional practices, review student data, and collaborate with colleagues to continuously improve outcomes for students. MTSS implementation is supported through a culture of collaboration, reflection, and shared responsibility for student success. Through ongoing professional learning and reflection, Milan Area Schools continues to strengthen its ability to support the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional success of every student.