



# **MTSS OVERVIEW:**

**What is the Multi-Tiered  
System of Supports?**

# Learning Objectives:

**Become more familiar with the overall concept of MTSS and its essential components.**

**Learn about the roles and responsibilities of MTSS team members.**

**Understand how MTSS is a viable, balanced model for equitable school improvement, particularly for rural schools.**



# What is MTSS?

- MTSS is a tiered framework of prevention and intervention that is designed to meet the needs of all learners
- Academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports
- Evidenced-based practices used to make decisions and solve problems
- Team-driven shared leadership

(Hoover & Soltero-González, 2018; [www.cde.state.co.us/mtss](http://www.cde.state.co.us/mtss))



# Quick Background of MTSS

- ❑ Decades of research on linking intervention to assessment lead to the early MTSS models of RTI (Response to Intervention) and PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Support).
- ❑ Federal law (IDEIA, 2004) allows school districts to shift toward a Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) identification process that focuses on how students respond to intervention.
- ❑ The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) makes it possible for districts to apply for funding to train and on-board tiered MTSS models in their schools.
- ❑ The MTSS model integrates elements of RTI and PBIS, which improves effectiveness.

Castillo et al., 2022

# What can MTSS do for a school?

Increase number of students meeting academic benchmarks

Improve school climate

Define clear behavior expectations

Provide more supports for students

Create collaborative problem solving processes

Gather and use data in a meaningful way



# Essential Components of MTSS

While these components may differ from state to state, this fundamental foundation facilitates the creation of sustainable systems-level supports for all students.

## Multiple Tiers of Instruction, Intervention, and Support

Teams provide equitable and culturally sensitive supports within a layered structure that increases in intensity. Universal supports up through intensive supports.

## Data-Based Problem-Solving Process

The team uses relevant and reliable data to make consistent decisions to support students and improve outcomes.

## Communication and Collaboration: Family, School, and Community

By working together, families, schools, and community stakeholders can become active partners in the MTSS process.

## Evidence-Based Practices

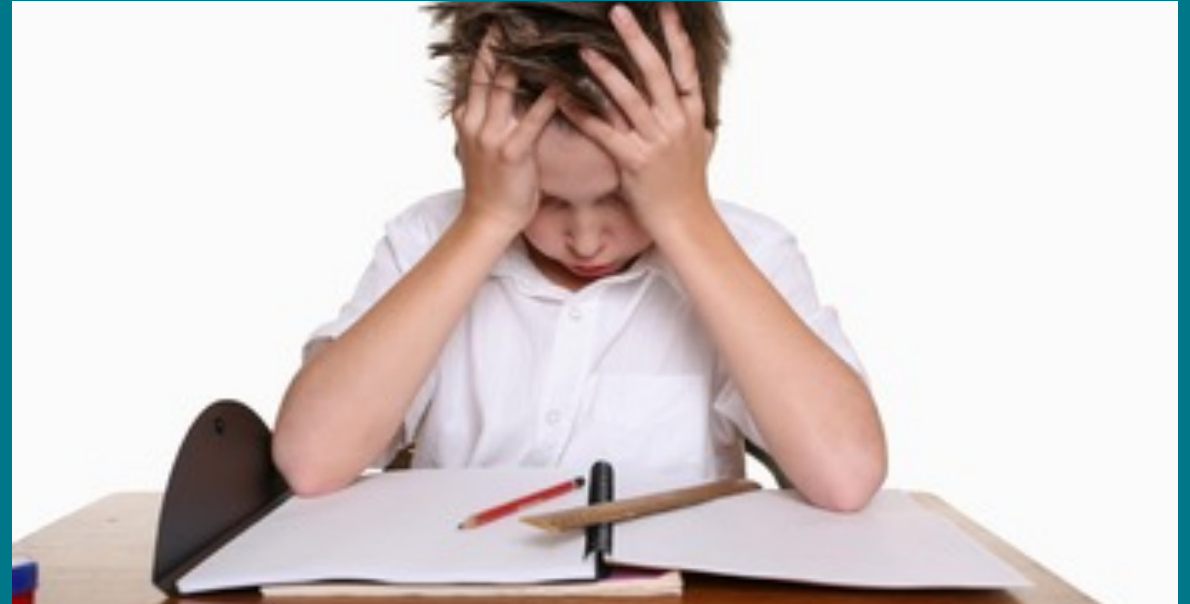
MTSS decision-making and assessment relies on research.

## Shared Team-Based Leadership

The team (e.g., educators, specialists, administrators, students, families) share the responsibility for making decisions and implementing plans.

# What MTSS is NOT

- ❑ Focused on at-risk students only
- ❑ A one-time intervention or response
- ❑ A specific person, place, or intervention
- ❑ The responsibility of one educator
- ❑ Based upon one piece of data



### **Tier III**

Individualized intensive interventions

### **Tier II**

Targeted small group interventions for at-risk students

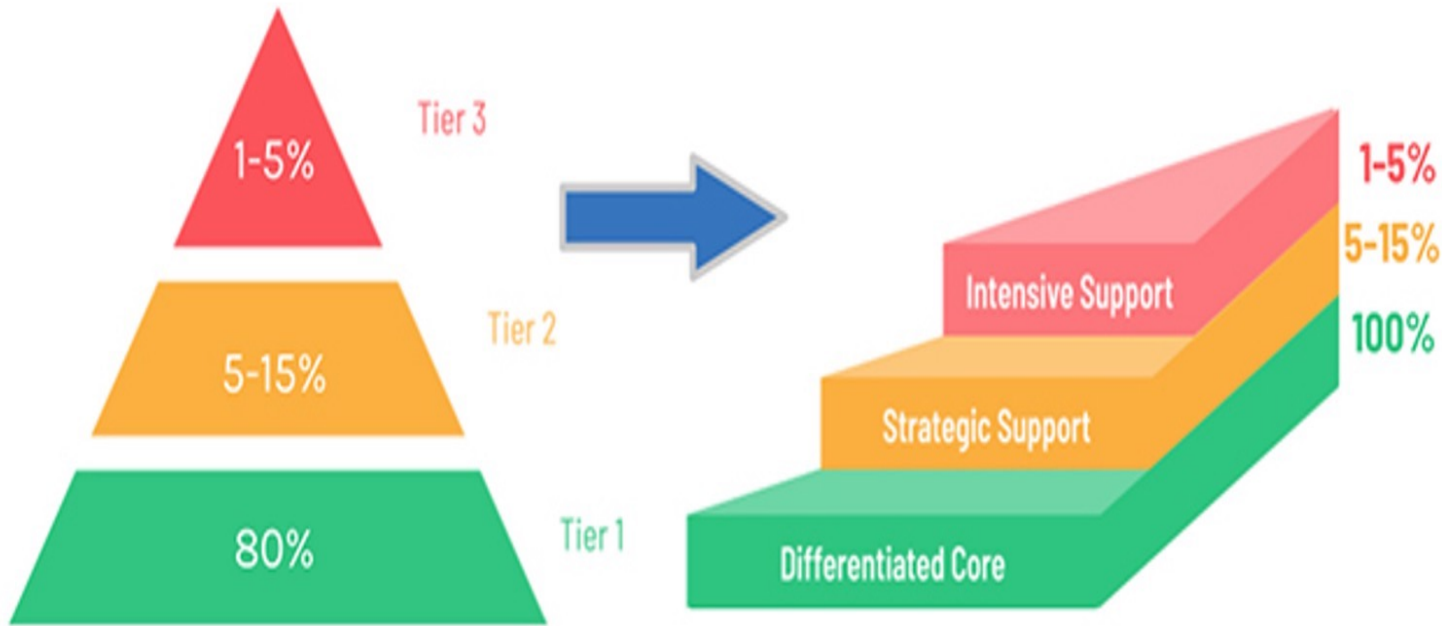
### **Tier I**

Whole class research-based core instruction





# Layering Support in MTSS: Rethinking the Pyramid





# TIER 1: Differentiated Core

**Who:** All Students

**What:** Everyone receives standards-aligned core curriculum with academic and behavioral supports.

**How:** Universal Screening; Differentiation of instruction; Data teaming; Cultural and Linguistic responsiveness; Whole Child

Adapted from Hyson, Kovaleski, Silberglitt, Pedersen, 2020



## TIER 2: Supplemental Support

**WHO:** Students who need supplemental support, in addition to their core instruction. Approximately 20% of students.

**WHAT:** Evidence-based practices and programming designed to improve performance in the Foundational Core.

**HOW:** Targeted support in smaller groups with frequent progress monitoring.



# TIER 3: Intensive Support

**WHO:** Students who need intensive support, approximately 5% of students.

**WHAT:** Evidence-based curriculum and intensive, strategic interventions, in addition to core instruction. Specific foundational skills are the focus.

**HOW:** Whole class instruction + additional targeted instruction (small groups)+intensive support through low ratio groups (2-3 or 1-1) with learning specialists.

# Elementary School Example: MTSS in Action



# Continuous Improvement

The Plan-Do-Study-Act model for improvement fits nicely with the MTSS model.

It illustrates the interactive cycles completed for each student within the 3-tiered MTSS model.

This process helps teams make data-driven decisions about the effectiveness of intervention.





# MTSS Team: Who is Included?

- The MTSS Team serves as the leadership and infrastructure of MTSS**
- Multidisciplinary – representative of all key stakeholders**
  - Administration
  - Regular Education
  - Special Education
  - Academic Support (i.e., literacy specialists, interventionists)
  - Behavioral/Mental Health (i.e., school social worker, school counselor, school psychologist, BCBA)
  - Related Services (i.e., speech language pathologist, occupational therapist)



# MTSS Team

MTSS teams can look different across various schools and school districts.

- ❑ District-wide MTSS Team
- ❑ School-wide MTSS Team
- ❑ Grade-, tier-, or content-specific MTSS Teams

(Center for Multi-Tiered System of Supports, 2022)







# What is Equity-Based MTSS?

What Is An  
**Equity-Based  
MTSS?**

PANORAMA Q&A

# Behavioral & Mental Health Supports in Rural Schools

**O'Malley et al. (2018) surveyed superintendents of rural school districts to understand the unique challenges that rural school districts face in supporting the mental health needs of students**

Most commonly cited barriers include:

- Budget constraints
- Lack of qualified mental health professionals
- Limited professional development/training opportunities
- Limited access to external community providers
- Variable community support

***How can rural school districts utilize MTSS to address these unique barriers?***



# A-B-C's for MTSS Implementation in Rural Schools

Pierce and Mueller (2018) conceptualized the following “A-B-C’s” to help rural schools implement MTSS:

**A**

**Approach academic and behavioral instruction simultaneously**

**B**

**Be creative with data opportunities**

**C**

**Collaborate with purpose**

# Closing Thoughts

- Educators need to be innovative and committed to the process of MTSS.
- All students deserve effective and equitable core instruction.
- We need to remember to focus on the whole child.
- Qualitative and quantitative data can help school teams better support their students.
- Remember that MTSS is not just about tiered interventions, but rather about systems and people in a school coming together to help students learn and succeed.

# Resources

Branching Minds. (2022). *What is MTSS? The multi-tiered system of supports ultimate guide: Everything you need to know about the Multi-Tiered System of Supports and how to implement it successfully.*

<https://www.branchingminds.com/mtss-guide>.

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Center for Multi-Tiered System of Supports. (2022, January). *MTSS infrastructure and support mechanisms series: MTSS school teams.* <https://mtss4success.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/MTSS-Teams.pdf>

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EduTopia. (September 11, 2014). *Academic success for all students: A multi-tiered approach.* EduTopia.org.

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# Resources (cont.)

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Thank you!