

MTSS: Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Tier 1

Implementing Tier 1 Interventions in Rural Schools

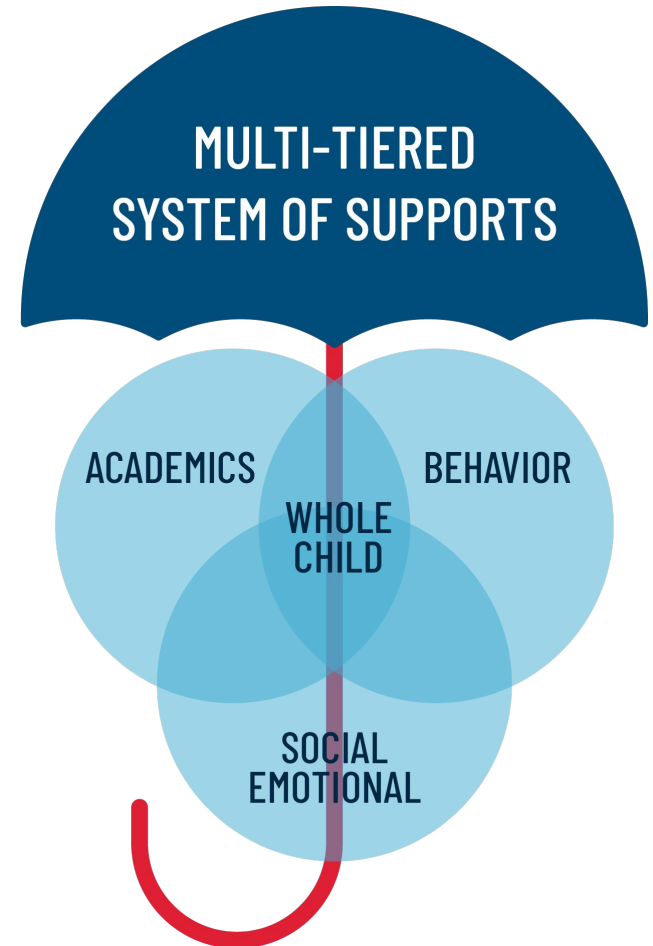
Learning Objectives

- Explain MTSS Tier 1
- Understand the purpose and impact of implementing Tier 1 interventions
- Obtain practical ideas for leveraging MTSS Tier 1 supports to meet the unique challenges of rural education



Quick Review

- MTSS = Multi-Tiered System of Supports
- Tiered framework of prevention and intervention designed to meet the needs of all learners
- Includes academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports
- MTSS supports expand beyond the student



Why is Tier 1 Important?

- Sets the tone for school culture
- Provides all students with supports across disciplines
- Academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports *within the school building*
- Aims to reduce special education referrals and referrals to external providers





Why is MTSS important
for rural schools?

What are the challenges
of implementing an MTSS
model in rural schools?



[NEWSNATION]

Challenges of Implementing MTSS in Rural Schools

- Lack of MTSS infrastructure
- Limited access to high-quality, evidenced-based interventions
- Shortage of teachers, specialists, and interventionists
- Few professional development opportunities
- Minimal planning time/implementation time
- Requires system-level change

These challenges can result in no (or inconsistent) implementation of MTSS in rural schools

(Pierce & Mueller, 2018; Werch & Runyons-Hiers, 2020)



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

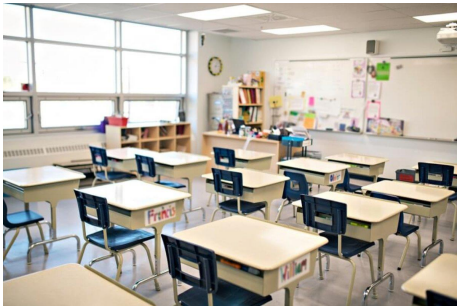
B Be creative with data opportunities

C Collaborate with purpose



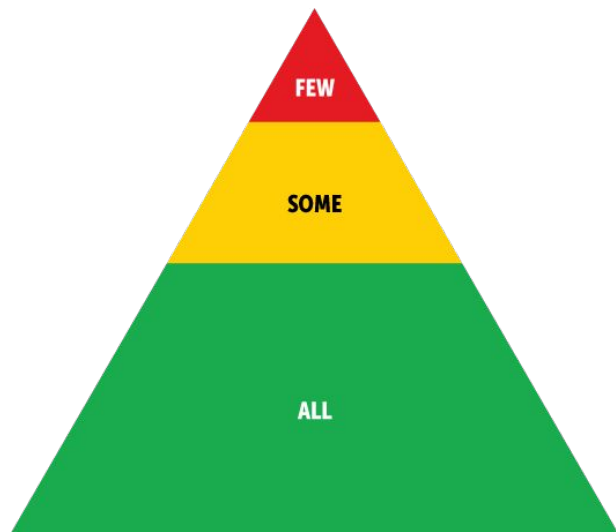
Meeting the Needs of Rural Schools

- This module incorporates the A-B-C's and also provides ideas for no to low cost MTSS interventions in schools
- Focus is on:
 - Efficiency
 - High quality supports
 - Creative strategies



Tier 1 =

Whole-School



Tier 3: 1-5%

High-Intensity Support for individual students

Tier 2: 5-15%

Early Intervention - High-Efficiency Strategic Support using small group interventions

Tier 1: 100%

Differentiated Instruction for all students
—using best evidence-based supports.
Students receive additional support at Tier 2 and Tier 3.





Tier 1 is the foundation of MTSS



Tier 1: Academic

Tier 1: Academic

- Tier 1 = Core instruction
- All students receive curriculum aligned to academic standards/common core
- *High quality curriculum is key*
- Differentiated instruction is included in Tier 1
 - Small group instruction within the classroom
 - Scaffolding
 - Using multiple modalities
 - Manipulatives
- District-wide academic programs (i.e., Lexia)
- Online programs for all students




Free Online Programs

- **Khan Academy**
 - Grades PreK-College
 - Reading, Language Arts, Math, Science, and more!
- **Prodigy**
 - Grades 1-8
 - English & Math
- **Epic!**
 - Grades K-6
 - Reading
- **Newsela**
 - Grades 3-12
 - Current events across disciplines



Tier 1: Behavior

Tier 1: Behavior

- **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**
 - Schools need to establish behavior expectations for all students
 - Behavior expectations and consequences should be clear to students, teachers, and parents
 - Teacher-managed behavior versus office-managed behavior
 - It is also important to teach behavior expectations to students
 - Common language
 - Can incorporate into school's mission statement
 - Make expectations visible (posters, artwork)
 - Need to have a continuum of set procedures for discipline
 - *Positive reinforcement is key*
- 



Close Reading Treaties

READ

READ

READ

READ

READ

What is the main idea of the text?

What is the main idea of the text?

Costa's Levels and Q

Level 1: Gathering
The answer can be found directly in the text.

What is the main idea of the text?

What is the main idea of the text?

Slow Down and Search!

Level 2: Analyzing
The answer can be in more than one place or implied in the text.

What is the main idea of the text?

What is the main idea of the text?

What is the main idea of the text?

Stop and Think!

Level 3: Applying
The answer cannot be found only in the text. Use your knowledge and text clues to deduce.

What is the main idea of the text?

PBIS Activities

- Positive Office Referrals
- Students of the Month
- Attendance Challenges
- School Assemblies
- Fun Fridays

Positive Office Referral

Referring Teacher: _____
Student: _____

Positive Behavior

— Self-Control — Hand Work — Positive Attitude
— Responsibility — Teamwork — Honestly

Additional Comments: _____

Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Administrator Comments: _____

Administrator Signature _____ Date: _____



Student of the Month

Presented to _____
for _____

Principal _____ Teacher _____



Tier 1: Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

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What is SEL?

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines SEL as the process of acquiring and applying the “knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions”



**Educating Hearts.
Inspiring Minds.**



Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

- Purpose of CASEL is to help make evidenced-based SEL an integral part of education
 - About ½ of states in the USA have adopted SEL standards
- **CASEL's 5 Core Competencies**
- Research shows that SEL interventions targeting the 5 Core Competencies lead to improved academic and behavioral outcomes (Durlak et al., 2011)





SEL & Mental Health

- SEL promotes responsive relationships, emotionally safe environments, and skill development (CASEL)
- SEL provides students with protective factors against mental health concerns



Youth Mental Health

- Research suggests that over 20% of children and adolescents experience mental health issues, but up to 70% do not have access to treatment
 - Barriers to mental health services for all children include cost of treatment, stigma, lack of infrastructure, & lack of awareness surrounding mental health issues
 - These disparities are only exacerbated in rural areas
 - Suicide rates are significantly higher in most rural areas than in urban areas

(Blackstock et al., 2018; Hedegaard et al., 2018; Van Vulpen et al., 2018)




Supporting Mental Health Needs of Youth in Rural Areas

Stigma and **access** are the most commonly cited barriers for mental health services in rural communities

- Incorporating SEL into the culture of the school can help to raise awareness for mental health concerns and provide students with coping skills
- Continuum of supports aims to meet the needs of students while they are in school
- Research has shown that parents in rural areas are in favor of schools helping to address mental health needs of children

(Blackstock et al., 2018; Hedegaard et al., 2018; Van Vulpen et al., 2018)



Incorporating SEL into the Classroom

- Consistent language (i.e., PBIS initiatives, school motto/mission statement)
- Morning Meetings (Responsive Classroom approach)
- Lesson plan with SEL in mind to find ways to bring SEL into what is already being taught in the classroom
 - Turn & Talk
 - Perspective Taking
 - Identifying Feelings
- Co-taught lessons with school counselors, social workers, and psychologists
 - Establish partnerships with local colleges and universities



Example: Literacy and SEL Lesson
(Smith & Gill Lopez, 2016)

Tier 1: SEL Supports

- Gratitude Interventions
 - Journaling – ask students to share or write one thing they are grateful for each day
 - Gratitude interventions have been shown to promote life satisfaction, motivation, and a sense of belonging in youth (Armenta et al., 2022; Diebel et al., 2016)
- Mindfulness
 - *Headspace* (Healthy habits for grades K-12)
 - *Calm* (Mindfulness activities for all grades)
 - Guided meditations
 - Starting/ending school day with deep breaths
- Emotional ABCs
 - Full social-emotional curriculum for grades K-3
 - <https://www.emotionalabcs.com/>



School Climate & MTSS

School Climate



NSCC
National School Climate Center
at Ramapo for Children

The National School Climate Center (NSCC) defines school climate as
“the quality and character of school life”

- Positive school climate is essential for the implementation of MTSS
- Reciprocal relationship
- The entire school community should feel safe and respected at school
- Implications for learning, mental health, and school connectedness

Elements of School Climate



NSCC
National School Climate Center
at Ramapo for Children

- Safety
- Teaching and Learning
- Interpersonal Relationships
- Institutional Environment
- Social Media
- Teachers/Staff:
 - Leadership
 - Professional Relationships



School Connectedness

- School connectedness is closely related to school climate
- Goal of **school connectedness** is for every student to be able to identify at least one adult within the school building that they feel they can trust
 - School connectedness has been linked to decreased mental health issues in adolescents (Shochet et al., 2006)



Cultivating School Connectedness

- Include **all faculty and staff** in the implementation of Tier 1 interventions
 - Bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, paraprofessionals, etc.
- Seek support from community volunteers
- Opportunities for connected collaborations:
 - Leading morning meeting, guest read-aloud on book about SEL, participating in school assemblies, helping out with “Fun Friday” options



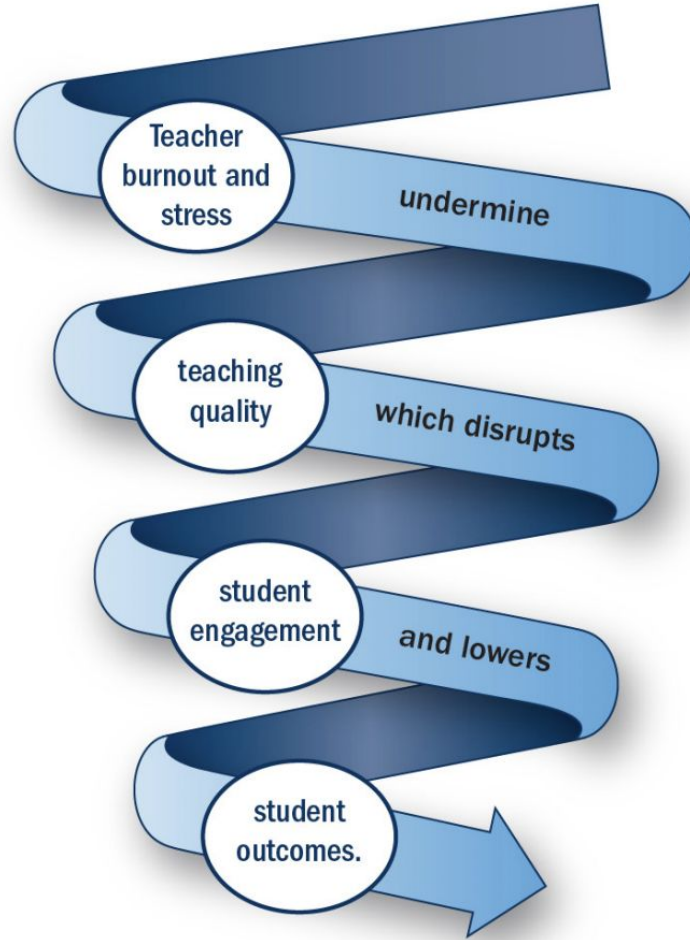


Teacher Supports

Stress & Burnout

- According to the **National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments**, stressors commonly reported by teachers in the USA include:
 - Lack of support
 - Exclusion from decision-making processes
 - High-stakes testing
 - Behavioral concerns
 - Few resources
 - Inadequate SEL
- Recognize signs of burnout
 - Emotional exhaustion
 - Depersonalization
 - Reduced sense of personal accomplishment
- Check in on teachers
- Promote a culture of self-care





Professional Development

- It is important to provide teachers with the training they need to implement MTSS for academics, behavioral, and social-emotional supports
 - Most teachers are not trained in behavior or mental health interventions
 - Interprofessional collaboration
 - “Train the Trainer” model
- Free professional development opportunities for teachers:
 - IRIS Center*
 - edWeb.net
 - PBS TeacherLine
- Provide adequate planning time for teachers



IRIS Center

- Professional development opportunities for:
 - K-12 general and special education teachers
 - Principals
 - Paraprofessionals
 - Substitute teachers
 - Other school support staff (i.e., cafeteria workers, bus drivers)
- Free PD Certificates through December 2023




Supporting Teachers



- Many of the ideas presented in this module do not require specialists or interventionists because they rely on teachers
- Schools must find a way to not overburden teachers in implementing MTSS
- In addition to providing teachers with professional development and support, show teachers how much they are appreciated and valued
 - Teacher of the Month
 - Team building activities
 - Messages of gratitude and encouragement
 - FYI: Teacher Appreciation Week is the first full week of May!

Conclusion

- Tier 1 is the foundation of MTSS
 - Rural schools face unique challenges to implementing MTSS
 - Schools can get creative with Tier 1 interventions
 - Rural schools can leverage Social Emotional Learning (SEL) to address mental health needs of students
 - The entire school community can benefit from a strong Tier 1 and a positive school climate
 - It is important to have a clear understanding of what Tier 1 supports are in place and how they will be implemented in order to carry them out with consistency
- 

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Thank you!