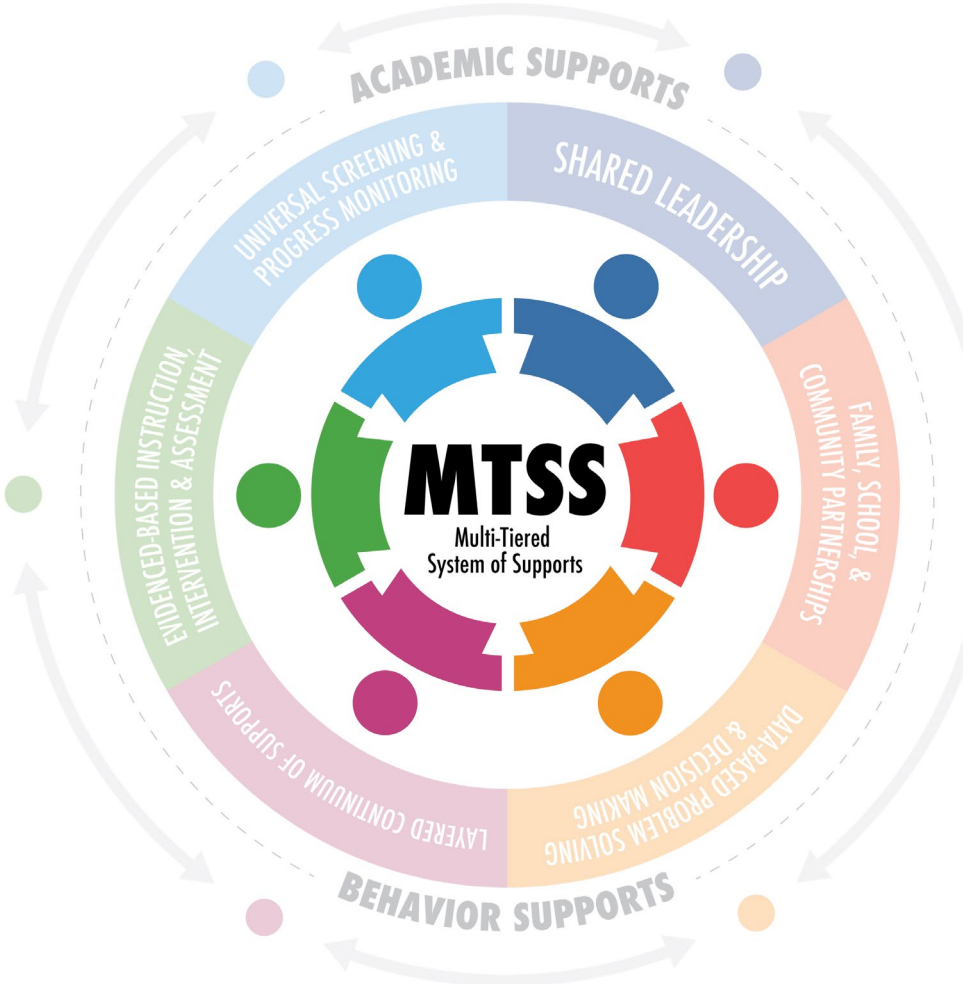
Multi-Tiered System of Supports

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Ensuring a bright future for every child

Office of Elementary Education and Reading
STUDENT INTERVENTION SERVICES
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MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

This Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) guidance document is designed to:

1. Assist stakeholders in understanding a Multi-Tiered System of Supports
2. Provide an in-depth look at the essential components of an effective MTSS Model
3. Clarify the usefulness and value of MTSS in regard to student outcomes
4. Explain best practices for the implementation of MTSS for ALL students.

The information in this guidance document is not intended to be a substitute for training; it is intended to increase understanding of the MTSS framework and the Three-Tiered Model. *For additional supports or training on MTSS and the Three-Tiered Model, please contact Intervention Services in The Office of Elementary Education and Reading or visit our Menu of Services*.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the MTSS Guidance Document is to aid in the effective implementation of a three-tiered instructional model in order to support and increase academic, behavioral, and social emotional outcomes for ALL students. This guide addresses the complexity of multi-tiered decision making and identifies critical decision points within Tier I (universal or core instruction for all students), Tier II (supplemental instruction), and Tier III (intensive supports).

In addition, this guidance document will provide best practice recommendations and requirements within a MTSS framework that includes the effective selection and implementation of decision making teams, gathering accurate and reliable data that can be used to make meaningful instructional changes for students, establishing and managing intensive tiers of support, and evaluations of the tiers to ensure the supports provided are effective.

SECTION 1
Three Tier Instructional Model

The Mississippi State Board of Education's Policy 41.1 requires that districts and schools follow a three-tiered instructional model consisting of:

- Tier 1: high-quality classroom instruction,
- Tier 2: focused supplemental instruction, and
- Tier 3: specifically designed intensive interventions as prescribed.

This systematic approach supports struggling learners, as well as advanced learners, through the selection of evidence-based instruction and intervention in response to both academic and behavioral needs. The system includes on-going progress monitoring of the effectiveness of instruction to ensure that all Mississippi students graduate from high school ready for college and career. Such model enables early identification of students in need of supports and allows for appropriate supports to be put in place as soon as a student starts to fall behind.

The policy, as approved by the Mississippi State Board of Education, may be viewed in its entirety in Appendix A of this document.

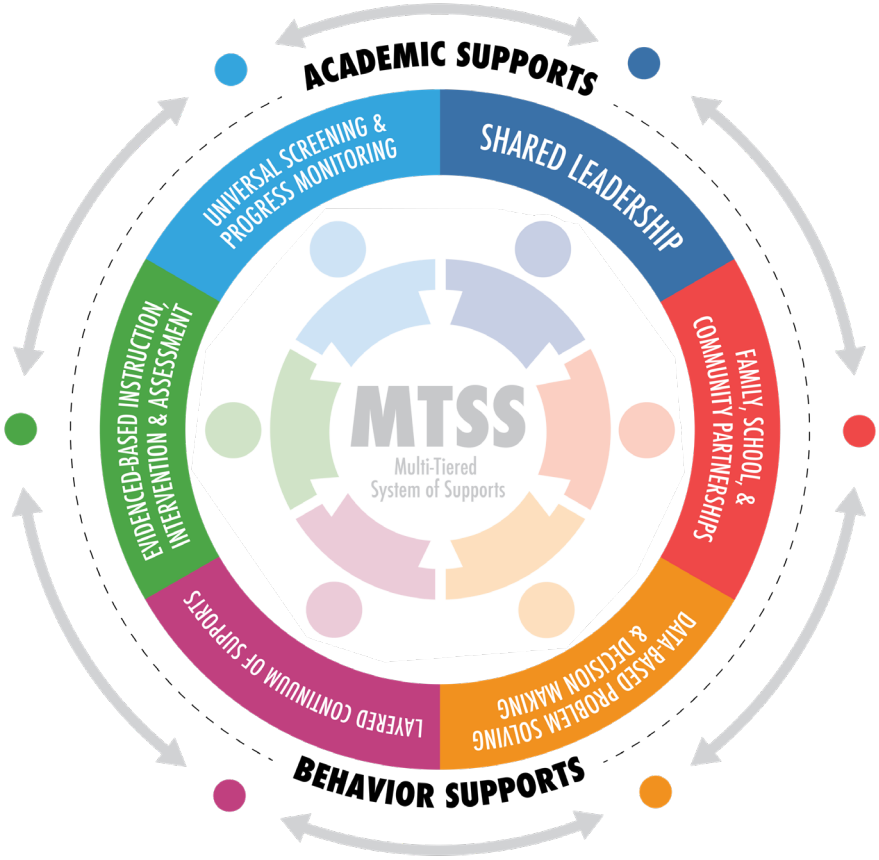
SECTION 2

Mississippi MTSS: Essential Components

In Mississippi, districts and schools are encouraged to utilize the cohesive framework, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), to align current resources and initiatives in order to meet the academic and behavioral needs of ALL students, such as those with an IDEA or gifted eligibility, English learners, juvenile justice involved youth, students with dyslexia, and students of poverty. MTSS is a method of organization of supports which ensures optimal educational outcomes for students, pre-K-12th grade. It aligns the entire system of supports, encompasses Response to Intervention (RtI) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and ensures effective team-based problem solving that is data informed and evidence-based. Mississippi's model for MTSS consists of six essential components:

- Shared Leadership
- Family, School, & Community Partnerships
- Data-Based Problem Solving and Decision Making
- Layered Continuum of Supports (Tier I, Tier II, Tier III)
- Evidence-Based Instruction, Intervention, & Assessment
- Universal Screening & Progress Monitoring

The essential components of a MTSS allow for a continuum of supports, **working together endlessly,** to improve student academic and behavioral outcomes by design, and redesign, of appropriate services through promotion of equitable practices.



SECTION 3
Essential Components Defined

COMPONENT 1 SHARED LEADERSHIP

Overview

Effective leadership is key in impacting student success. Within MTSS, shared leadership allows for distribution of responsibilities and promotes shared decision making among a diverse group of individuals with a common vision and common purpose in an effort to achieve desired outcomes. For successful implementation of MTSS it is critical to establish leadership teams at both district and school levels. The function of these teams is to ensure effective implementation throughout districts, schools, classrooms, and communities through a data-based problem solving and decision making process. Leadership teams should hold regularly scheduled meetings to engage in on-going study and analysis of data in order to improve instruction, intervention, and assessment. Other key leadership team responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Creating an engaging and safe learning environment
- Improving outcomes through collaboration and communication
- Allocating and distributing available resources
- Coordinating and providing professional development
- Supporting fidelity and sustainability

District Shared Leadership Team	School Shared Leadership Team
SAMPLE	**SAMPLE**
• Team Chairperson • English Learner (EL) Coordinator • Curriculum Specialist • Intervention Specialist • Community Member	• Administrator • Interventionist • Counselor • Teacher(s) • Special Education Representative • Parent (and student when appropriate)

Suggested Leadership Team Roles and Responsibilities

ADMINISTRATOR

- Supports the protocol for the problem-solving process
- Ensures the fidelity and integrity of the process remains intact
- Monitors staff and supports climate
- Identifies and locates resources
- Sets schedules for regular meetings
- Attends meetings regularly
- Coordinates training and coaching

COUNSELOR

- Coordinates and facilitates the school's behavior intervention program
- Uses Tier I behavior screeners to identify behaviors and designs behavior interventions
- Provides group and individual counseling
- Promotes equity for ALL students

For additional information on counselor's role see section 9.

INTERVENTIONIST

- Coordinates and facilitates the school's academic intervention program
- Collaborates with teachers to identify student needs
- Assists teachers with collection and analysis of student data
- Schedules "data days"

LEAD TEACHER/ INSTRUCTIONAL SPECIALIST

- Collaborates with teachers in the schoolwide implementation of MTSS
- Trains and provides on-going coaching to leadership teams and teachers on MTSS framework and procedures
- Supports teachers in identifying student needs and providing appropriate interventions

GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHER

- Provides high-quality instruction to ALL students
- Screens and provides progress monitoring to determine instructional needs and measure student progress
- Differentiates instruction to support students at ALL levels
- Combines classroom instruction with additional necessary supports

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER

- Serves as an advocate, connector, and collaborator
- Develops IEPs
- Provides instruction (co-teaching)
- Coordinates program implementation across many students

PARENT	STUDENT (ADJUST FOR AGE)
• Provides information to team and participates in problem solving • Assists in prioritizing concerns • Participates in intervention development and implementation and effectiveness of the intervention	• Participates in problem-solving and goal setting • Assists in prioritizing concerns • Self-monitors progress • Collaborates to identify therapeutic and special education interventions • Supports and addresses student needs and total school accountability • Offers expertise and specialized understanding • Analyzes current intervention and assessment approaches
PRESCHOOL COORDINATOR/DIRECTOR	**SPEECH LANGUAGE THERAPIST**
• Assists with fidelity of interventions through observations and assists with data collection • Establishes monthly scheduled meetings • Takes notes and reports out regarding student progress • Analyzes program data at least three (3) times per year • Consults with local school districts when necessary	• Attends team meetings and assists with the interpretation of screener and/or assessment results • Assists with the selection of evidence-based interventions • Collaborates with teachers to provide services and supports

Additional team members may include those who provide other related services such as: Gifted Teacher, Dyslexia Therapist, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Mental Health Professional, District Office Personnel, and English Learner Coordinator/Teacher.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Decisions regarding instruction and/or intervention should be made by a team of diverse individuals with a common goal.
- Team members can change based on the needs of the district, school, or individual student.
- The administrator is an essential member of the shared leadership team.
- Team members should make it a priority to ensure meetings are held regularly.
- It may be beneficial to establish a meeting calendar at the beginning of every school year.

RESOURCES

Sample Leadership Team Self-Assessments *from Colorado Department of Education*:

- Building Leadership Team Self-Assessment
- MTSS Leadership Team Self-Assessment

COMPONENT 2 DATA-BASED PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING

Overview

Data-based problem solving and decision making is a critical component of MTSS as it drives instruction and intervention. District and school staff should collaborate to create an integrated data collection system consisting of academic and behavioral data such as results of state assessments, universal screeners, diagnostic assessments, progress monitoring, formative and summative assessments, attendance, office discipline referrals, and observations provided by school personnel as well as parents/guardians. Data should be collected and analyzed on ALL students, of all subgroups, throughout the year.

The following four step problem-solving process allows teams to determine appropriate interventions within a three-tiered instructional model to provide for the academic and behavioral needs of all students. Each step of the process is necessary for ensuring that students are prescribed the right interventions at the right time, allowing for increased student outcomes.

Four Step Process
The four step data-based problem solving and decision making process:

STEP 01

DEFINE THE PROBLEM OR GOAL

Ask, "What specifically do we want the student(s) to know and be able to do?" In the area of academics, the "What we expect students to know and do," is driven by the *Mississippi College-and Career-Readiness Standards*, which guide instruction at each grade and relevant subject area. In the area of behavior, "What we expect students to know and do," is guided by district and school-wide expectations, age-appropriate student engagement behaviors, and the pro-social behaviors that support a positive school climate.

STEP 02
ANALYZE THE PROBLEM

This analysis phase, often referred to as problem analysis, gap analysis, or root cause analysis, is an essential phase. Effective analysis provides the foundation for the rest of the data-based decision making process. The goal of this analysis is to answer the questions:

- Why is the gap occurring?
- Why is the student not achieving the desired academic or behavioral outcomes?
- What are the possible barriers to the student doing and/or knowing what is expected? During this analysis, the team uses data to generate hypotheses, or possible root causes, that are grounded in evidence. Data are used to either confirm or disprove the hypotheses.

STEP 03
DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

Once the problem/deficit area is confirmed, the team selects an intervention that is best matched to the student's needs. During this step of the process, the team develops a plan to enable the individual student to reach the goal. Details are essential as the team must outline the specifics of the plan. Strategies and instruction included in the plan should be clearly stated (what, who, when, where, how long). The selected interventions must be evidence-based and carried out with integrity.

A GOOD PLAN:

- ☑ Explicitly states what will be taught (the focus of whole-class instruction or student-specific intervention)
- ☑ Focuses on measurable objectives
- ☑ Defines specifically who is responsible for each action and a timeline
- ☑ Describes a plan for measuring and monitoring the effects of the intervention; a quantifiable baseline and target goal is identified
- ☑ Describes a plan for monitoring/ensuring fidelity to the plan
- ☑ Identifies resources available for implementing the plan

Once the plan has been implemented, data collection (progress monitoring at agreed upon intervals) and fidelity checks begin. Progress monitoring data should directly reflect the target deficit area. See Component 6 for more information on progress monitoring.

STEP 04
EVALUATE THE PLAN

How has the student responded to our plan? This last step in the data-based decision making process requires the team to use data gathered from progress monitoring and other sources, as described above, to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan. Changes to the plan may occur as student outcomes are continually monitored.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Progress monitoring should align with deficit area(s) as indicated by data.
- Selection and implementation of supports should be based on multiple pieces of data.
- MTSS is not a "wait to fail" model or a pre-referral process.
- Instruction/intervention plans should be fluid and may be changed based on subsequent data reviews.

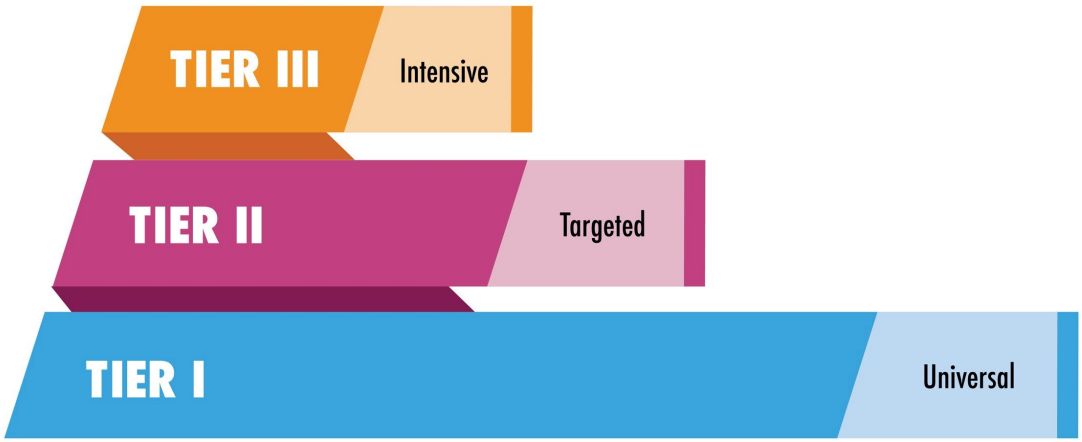
RESOURCES

- Center on Response to Intervention at American Institutes for Research: Data-Based Decision Making
- Johns Hopkins School of Education: Problem Solving
- Colorado Department of Education Data Based Problem Solving and Decision Making
- Four Step Problem Solving

COMPONENT 3 LAYERED CONTINUUM OF SUPPORTS (TIER I, TIER II, TIER III)

Overview

All students have access to a layered continuum of supports, regardless of achievement level. Effective instruction and meaningful interactions, such as positive student-teacher relationships are key elements across all the tiers. A layered continuum of supports ensures that ALL students receive equitable academic, behavioral, and social emotional supports that are culturally and linguistically responsive, matched to need, and developmentally appropriate. Each layer of support increases with intensity from universal (ALL students) to targeted (some students) to the most intensive supports (few students).



Tier I is the **UNIVERSAL** layer of support for ALL students and consists of high-quality classroom instruction provided by highly trained and qualified personnel. Tier I instruction occurs in whole group, small group, and in individual settings. Tier I should be considered the key component in successful tiered instruction.

Tier II is the **TARGETED** layer of support for SOME students that consists of supplemental academic and behavioral supports provided in addition to core high-quality instruction.

Tier III is the most **INTENSIVE** layer of support for FEW students and consists of the most intensive, targeted instruction and intervention specifically designed to meet the individual academic and behavioral needs of students.

Child Find is the district's responsibility to identify, locate, and evaluate all students suspected of having a disability. Students may be identified for a suspected disability regardless of tier or placement within the continuum of supports.

Additional information on Tiers I-III and Child Find may be located in sections 5-7 of this guidance document.

COMPONENT 4 FAMILY, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Overview

The goal of family, school and community relations is to create partnership practices to support all students. Evidence indicates that students are more successful when families and schools are connected, and students feel that adults are invested in their learning. When students feel connected, motivation and attendance improve, directly affecting academic and behavioral outcomes. With effective partnerships in place, families are empowered to ensure that students have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

Families, educators, and community members possess varied levels of education, cultures, languages, needs, and interests. District and school staff should consider the diverse needs of families and the community as they create opportunities to establish trusting relationships. The collaboration of families, schools, and communities as equal partners will increase student, classroom, school and district outcomes through the promotion of equity for all. These partnerships are critical for the successful implementation of MTSS.

Communication between schools and families is imperative for student success. Providing information to families and community stakeholders is an effective way to facilitate support, educational progress, and encourage active involvement. Schools should have an open-door policy for families and community members and welcome all feedback. Resources and services for families, students, and the school through community groups, including businesses, agencies, cultural and civic organizations, and colleges or universities should be available as part of the MTSS implementation. Communication with all stakeholders can be disseminated through various channels, however, it should be considered that access to technology, and other resources, varies among families.

Parent Communication Tips

Teachers, or other school personnel as designated, should consistently communicate with parents of all students at all academic and behavioral tiers. It is essential to provide parents with methods to help their child at home and follow-up to see what additional supports might be needed. Parents can serve as integral participants in TST meetings, providing important student data, they should be kept abreast of scheduled meetings and when unable to attend, be provided with a meeting summary.
Best practices suggest notifying parents when students are placed in interventions, but parents **MUST** be notified when students are placed in Tier III. Progress monitoring of intervention results should be sent home regularly and also shared with parents at TST meetings.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Parents and students may provide critical information regarding student needs.
- Community members may provide excellent support to schools in the form of volunteering, career development, mentoring, etc.
- Parental and community involvement is essential in providing consistency regarding routines and expectations that increase student outcomes.

RESOURCES

- Promising Partnerships Practices
- Home Reading Helper
- U.S. Department of Education Family and Community Engagement
- Parent & Kids Magazine
- United Way
- The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
- Department of Mental Health
- Mississippi State Department of Health

Mississippi Department of Education

- Family Guides to Student Success (Spanish)
- Family Guides to Student Success (English)
- Parent & Family Guide to Understanding Response to Intervention
- Parent Support Groups
- Office of Early Childhood

Depending on cultural expectations, parents/guardians and community members may vary in their expectations for collaboration, which educators should respect by accommodating differences to best support learners' education. Additionally, the importance of community and family support in the education of English language and other diverse learners cannot be overstated. As partnerships are strengthened through collaboration, educators become more informed of student strengths, qualities, learning preferences, and needs.

COMPONENT 5 EVIDENCE-BASED INSTRUCTION, INTERVENTION, AND ASSESSMENT

Overview

Before deciding on an educational program, product, or practice, educators should identify practices, instructions, and interventions supported by evidence. Per Section 8001(21)(A) of *The Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), the term "evidence-based", when referring to instructional practices and/or intervention, means an activity or strategy that-

A. Demonstrated a **statistically significant effect** on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes –

- **STRONG EVIDENCE** from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study; **OR**
- **MODERATE EVIDENCE** from at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study; **OR**
- **PROMISING EVIDENCE** from at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias;

OR

B. **Demonstrates a rationale** based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes; *and* **includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects** of such activity, strategy, or intervention.

ESSA defines four levels of evidence. The top three levels require at least one study that found a **statistically significant effect** on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes. The specific level of evidence (1-3) depends on the study's design:

LEVEL 01	**STRONG EVIDENCE** **At least 1 well-designed and well-implemented **experimental** study (i.e., randomized)	Required for all Title I School Improvement plans **AND** Eligible for a priority under 7 competitive grants
LEVEL 02	**MODERATE EVIDENCE** **At least 1 well-designed and well-implemented **quasi-experimental** study (i.e., matched)	
LEVEL 03	**PROMISING EVIDENCE** **At least 1 well-designed and well implemented **correlational** study with statistical controls for selection bias	

The fourth level of evidence includes ideas that do not yet have an evidence base qualifying for the top 3 levels. Given the requirement in the 2nd bullet below to examine the effects of these ideas, this level can be referred to as "evidence-building".

LEVEL 04	**EVIDENCE-BUILDING** ****Demonstrates a rationale** based on high-quality research or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes ****Includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects** of such activity, strategy, or intervention	Included for all other uses of "evidence-based"

NOTE: Schools identified as school improvement schools must choose an intervention that is Strong, Moderate, or Promising, in order to purchase said intervention using federal monies. For further information, refer to MDE's *Sharing What Works: Supporting Schools - A Framework for Effective Practices*.

Evidence-Based Programs

The MDE supports school district efforts to invest in proven strategies that have an evidence-base for effectiveness toward improving outcomes for children in our schools. The factors that uphold or support the MDE's position include but are not limited to the expectations and requirements bulleted below.

- State law requires that we categorize all programs and activities based on evidence of effectiveness (Miss. Code Ann. § 27-103-159).
- Federal law requires that we select and implement evidence-based programs when using federal funds (ESSA).
- Mississippi State Board of Education established the expectation that we are to create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce. To obtain this vision, we must use evidence-based practices/programs with a proven track record of success.

Identifying Evidence-Based Programs

The tools below provide districts and schools with guidance for identifying and selecting evidence-based interventions that meet the four levels outlined in the ESSA.

STEP 01
IDENTIFY LOCAL NEEDS

- Identify local needs based on improvement identification.
- Collect and analyze data (what are data being examined – how do the data connect to the reason for identification).

STEP 02
SELECT RELEVANT, EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS

- What evidence-based strategies or high-quality resource materials are being vetted for addressing the cause of identification?
- How do they align with the school's current context?
- Does the evidence demonstrate a positive effect on improving student outcomes? How do you know?
- How was this decision made?

STEP 03
PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Now that the evidence-based strategies or high-quality resources have been selected, what does the school's Comprehensive Support and Improvement, Targeted Support and Improvement, or Additional Targeted Support and Improvement plan for implementation look like?
- Has it been developed and approved by the appropriate entities?
- Has the process for implementing the plan along with the evidence-based interventions been clearly conveyed or laid-out to engender increased likelihood for fidelity of implementation?

STEP 04
IMPLEMENT

- As the plan is being implemented, what on-going supports or guidance is being provided and by whom to ensure fidelity of implementation?

STEP 05
EXAMINE AND REFLECT

- As the plan is being implemented, what meaningful reflection is taking place to determine quality of efforts (what data are being examined – leading and lagging, formative and summative) to validate implementation efforts?

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Ensure the evidence-based interventions selected are those that have been proven effective for a similar population of students.
- Consider the capacity to implement the chosen program effectively, such as necessary personnel, professional development, space, and technology.
- If federal funds are being used to purchase interventions, the intervention must be at a level of Strong, Moderate, or Promising.

RESOURCES

- MDE Office of School Improvement
- What Works Clearinghouse
- Results First Clearinghouse Database
- Best Evidence Encyclopedia
- Evidence for ESSA
- RAND report on school leadership interventions under ESSA
- Next Generation High Schools
- Roadmap to Evidence Based Reform for Low Graduation Rate High Schools
- Results for America
- Preschool Curriculum Report
- SERP Institute
- SIG Network
- Synthesis of Evidence Resources
- National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance
- Ed Reports
- Implementing Evidence-Based Literacy Practices
- Guides for Identifying Evidence-Based Interventions for School Improvement
- Evidence-Based Improvement: A Guide for States to Strengthen Their Frameworks and Supports Aligned to the Evidence Requirements of ESSA

COMPONENT 6 UNIVERSAL SCREENING AND PROGRESS MONITORING

Overview

Universal screening is a process in which academic and behavioral data are analyzed to determine whether a student is likely to meet, exceed, or not meet benchmarks. A screener is an assessment given as one part of the screening process, to establish a baseline from which students are beginning, and to align the instructional starting point to student need(s). Screeners are typically a form of data collection designed to be quick, and repeatable. Multiple types of data should be collected to assist in a complete universal screening process. Data from the universal screening process are used to make decisions about interventions.

Progress monitoring is a process used to assess a student's academic and behavioral performance and measure student improvement or responsiveness to instruction and intervention. Progress monitoring can be formal (quantifiable, norm referenced tools) or informal (teacher-developed, formative tools) and can be implemented with individual students or an entire class. The frequency of progress monitoring will increase with the intensity of an intervention or additional challenge. Like universal screening, progress monitoring is a process, and therefore data should include multiple pieces of evidence with a focus on individual student improvement.

Universal screening and progress monitoring are central to making educational decisions. Data is used to adjust the intensity and nature of interventions depending on a student's responsiveness.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Universal screener for K-3 must be chosen from the state approved list.
- For the screening process for 4-12, see the *Multi-Tiered System of Supports Screening Process Grades 4-12*.
- If using a universal screener tool for your progress monitoring measure, ensure it aligns with the identified deficit area.

RESOURCES

- Establishing Performance Goals for Intervention Students
- Progress Monitoring Charts
- Free Graph Maker
- *Finding the Right Starting Point for Reading Interventions: Universal Screener Companion Guide, K-3*
- MTSS Screening Process Grades 4-12

THINGS TO CONSIDER *(continued)*

- Best practices recommendations:
  - Tier II progress monitoring should be completed once every 2 weeks.
  - Tier III progress monitoring should be completed once every week.
- Establish a measurable goal before implementing progress monitoring.
- Progress monitoring results should be graphed or charted against the established goal in order to determine student growth.
- Progress monitoring tool measures specific deficit area for which student is receiving intervention.

SECTION 4
Implementing the Tier Process with Fidelity

The goal of MTSS is to improve student outcomes for all students. In order to achieve improved student outcomes, each component of the MTSS framework must be implemented with fidelity. Fidelity of implementation is the commitment to following all policies and procedures when delivering an intervention. Procedural fidelity, as well as fidelity of implementation, should be measured regularly.

FIDELITY CHECKS

The MTSS Documentation Packet contains fidelity checks that should occur at regular intervals.

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

A tool to aid in the fidelity of implementation could include a yearly calendar that will provide a schedule for regular screenings, meetings, and data reviews. See Appendix C for a sample month-by-month MTSS implementation schedule.

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

In order to ensure compliance regarding the intervention process the MDE may monitor the following process standard regarding instructional practices:

20. The school district meets the following instructional management requirements {Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-3- 49(2)(a-c) and 37-3-49(5)} (7 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 3, Ch. 41, R. 41.1):

    20.1 The school district implements an instructional management system that has been adopted by the school board and includes, at a minimum, the competencies and objectives required in the curriculum frameworks approved by the State Board of Education that are available to all teachers in each school. (Districts Meeting the Highest Levels of Performance are exempted.)

    20.2 The instructional management system includes a tiered instructional model in accordance with (7 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 3, Ch. 41, R. 41.1), including academic interventions, behavioral interventions, and Literacy-Based Promotion Act requirements.

RESOURCES

- MTSS Documentation Packet
- Multi-Tiered System of Support Fidelity of Implementation Rubric
- Self-Assessment of MTSS Implementation (SAM)

SECTION 5
High-Quality Tier I Core Instruction

Tier I, high-quality, core instruction is present at all three levels of the tiered model and should include the adoption and use of an evidence-based curriculum that is aligned to the *Mississippi College- and Career-Readiness Standards* (MCCRS). Tier I instruction should include the use of a developmentally appropriate universal screener for academics and behavior. The data obtained from the universal screening assessments, as well as formative and summative assessments, should be used to inform instruction and lesson plan development. Instruction should be differentiated and scaffolded based on the specific needs of students. During Tier I, students must be given time to observe explicit modeling of new concepts and skills that are introduced as well as allowed time for guided practice, and independent practice of the newly introduced skills. Effective classroom management, active student engagement, and positive behavioral supports are key components of Tier I instruction. With effective high quality instruction, approximately 80% of students' needs are met at the Tier I level, therefore Tier I is the first level of prevention.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TIER I INSTRUCTION

- What percentage of students are achieving academic and behavioral expectations?
- What percentage of students in subgroups are achieving academic and behavioral expectations?
- Are the classroom and school environments conducive to learning?
- Are systems in place to ensure quality classroom instruction?
- Is implementation of culturally responsive practices in place?

RESOURCES

- MDE 2019 Access for All Guide
- Tennessee Department of Education Access Materials
- Kentucky Department of Education – Differentiated Instruction
- Reading Next – A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy
- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports OSEP Technical Assistance Center
- Universal Design for Learning

SECTION 6
Tier II Supplemental Instruction

Tier II (typically 10-15% of the population) is supplemental, targeted academic and/or behavioral instruction that is provided in addition to the core instruction. Tier II interventions are designed for students who have not positively responded to Tier I efforts, instruction, and/or behavior management within the general classroom. It is recommended that a hearing screening and a vision screening take place at Tier II to rule out an underlying problem that might be causing lack of progress at Tier I. Within this tier of intervention support, the teacher typically provides additional instructional support aligned to core lessons. The interventions are carefully developed using various instructional planning resources. Tier II interventions should focus on specific, identified skill gaps, and they should be closely monitored. Tier II interventions should be data-driven and follow a progression of skills. The interventions should be scaffolded based on the individual needs of the student. Intervention sessions should be conducted one-on-one or in a small group setting for 20-30 minutes 3-5 days per week. Key instructional features that characterize Tier II intervention sessions are differentiated instruction, modeling, multiple student responses, and immediate feedback. Students receiving Tier II should be progress monitored minimally every other week (twice a month). Regular fidelity checks should be administered at equal intervals to ensure implementation of the intervention is carried out with integrity.

The MDE recommends that a documented review occurs at 4 weeks and again at 8 weeks after implementation of Tier II.

REFERRAL TO TST

A student should be referred to the Teacher Support Team (TST) if progress monitoring data does not show adequate student progress and further support is needed. Additionally, students who populate the MSIS screen for one of the following indicators must be referred to TST within the first 20 days of school.

1. Grades K–3: Student has failed one grade. Grades 4–12: Student has failed two grades.
2. A student failed either of the preceding two grades and has been suspended or expelled for more than 20 days in the current school year.
3. A student who did not score at the required achievement level on any part of the Grade 3 or Grade 7 statewide accountability assessment.
4. A student is promoted from Grade 3 to Grade 4 under a good cause exemption of the Literacy-Based Promotion Act.

SECTION 7
Tier III Intensive Interventions

Tier III (typically 1-5% of population) provides the most intensive, targeted instruction specifically designed to meet the individual needs of the student. Tier III instruction should be designed to increase an individual student's rate of progress, close deficit gaps between the student and their peers, based on the student's need as determined by assessment data (universal screenings, hearing and vision screenings, diagnostic assessments, progress monitoring, etc.) and aligned to the core curricula. Intensive interventions should be evidence-based, taught explicitly and systematically, and judiciously monitored for fidelity during implementation. Intensive instruction is provided in small groups or on an individual basis as dictated by the collected data. Tier III intervention should occur:

- as outlined by the intervention program,
- in accordance with the individualized plan, or
- for 30-60 minutes daily.

Tier III interventions should be progressed monitored weekly (one data point per week). Also, it should be determined that a student's lack of growth is not due to a hearing or vision problem that may be keeping him/her from mastering skills.

The MDE recommends two (2) Tier III documented reviews, with the first documented review conducted no later than eight (8) weeks after implementation and the cumulative documented review no later than sixteen (16) weeks after implementation.

NEXT STEPS (INTERVENTIONS ARE NOT SUCCESSFUL)

When data is reviewed and analyzed, a decision should be made regarding the success of the intervention plan. If it is concluded that the intervention plan was not successful the TST must decide if the intervention should be revised, goals adjusted, or the student should be referred to the **Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET)** for a Child Find Study. (Note: A referral to the MET may be requested at any time, by anyone, for any student. The MTSS process is not a prereferral for the evaluation process.)

CHILD FIND

Child Find requires all school districts to identify, locate and evaluate all children with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities. School districts are required to identify all children who may need special education services even if the school is not providing special education services to the child. Schools are required to locate, identify and evaluate all children with disabilities from age 3 to age 21. The Child Find mandate applies to all children who reside

within the state, including children who attend private schools and public schools, highly mobile children, migrant children, homeless children, and children who are wards of the state.

Students suspected of having a disability that are identified through Child Find continue to receive high quality classroom instruction and supports for academics and behavior. All requests for comprehensive assessments for children suspected of having a disability should be submitted immediately to the district's special education director, school administrator or the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team. Written consent for the evaluation must be obtained from the parent prior to the assessment.

The MTSS process cannot be used to deny, delay, or negate in any way the appropriate evaluation of a child suspected of having a disability.

IDEA **does not** require all students go through the MTSS process prior to a comprehensive assessment. Students eligible for special education services after comprehensive assessments will have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) put in place. Students that are not eligible for an IEP will return to the MTSS process and **may** be eligible for a 504 plan.

SECTION 8
Behavior

In MTSS, behavioral instruction and intervention is one layer provided in the continuum of supports for Tiers I, II, III. The Positive Behavioral Supports and Interventions (PBIS) framework provides guidelines and suggestions for each tier.

Tier I includes best practices that should be school, program, and/or facility wide and included in every classroom. Developing school, program, or facility wide expectations, classroom/area rules, a reinforcement and consequence system, and a consistent office discipline referral (ODR) system is the beginning of implementing Tier I supports. Teaching the developed expectations and rules as well as classroom and area procedures is the second step in implementing Tier I supports. Analyzing data from ODRs and other linked data sources and sharing this data with staff, students, families, and the community in order to plan for and make changes as needed is the last step in implementing Tier I supports. The REACH MS website resource section contains forms, checklists, case studies, examples, etc. for Tier I implementation.

Tier II includes best practices for those students who are not making progress with Tier I supports. Unsuccessful behaviors are not only those external behaviors like physical aggression and not following rules (i.e., running in the hallway, repeatedly out of seat) and norms/laws (i.e., stealing, truancy) but also includes other, less noticeable external behaviors and internal behaviors. These less noticeable behaviors include off-task behavior, not completing assignments, difficulty with peer relationships, sleeping in class, etc. Behavioral interventions at Tier II include an individualized reinforcement and consequence system (i.e., where students need fewer positive behaviors to earn reinforcement), check-in and check-out, check and connect, behavioral contracting, teaching of social emotional skills, organizational aides, and increasing executive functioning through games, breaks, etc. A targeted support plan that includes specific intervention recommendations is encouraged. The REACH MS website resource section contains forms, checklists, case studies, examples, etc. for Tier II implementation.

Tier III includes best practices for students who are not making progress with Tier II supports. The supports provided at Tier III should be individualized to each student. In order to provide individualized supports, it is important to understand the function(s) of a student's behavior(s). Without determining the function of a behavior, it is difficult to develop individualized interventions. Though not required by law, functional behavioral assessments (FBA) provide information from multiple sources in the form of observations, interviews, and anecdotal notes. The data collected through FBAs make it possible to develop function based behavior support plans (BSP), individualized to each student. BSPs define the target behavior(s), provide information on current behavior(s), and detail interventions to use in order to assist the student in meeting the target behavior(s). At a minimum, observation(s) notes should be used to create a BSP that lists possible interventions to use. Behavioral interventions at Tier III include individualized reinforcement and consequence systems with specific reinforcement options

gathered through an interest inventory or observation, individualized schedules, replacement behaviors, etc. The REACH MS website resource section contains forms, checklists, case studies, examples, etc. for Tier III implementation.

For students who are in Tiers II or III due to behavioral needs, it is important to determine the amount of behavioral support needed versus the need for both academic and behavioral support as many inappropriate behaviors are exhibited due to struggles with academic work (in length, in difficulty, in type of assignment, etc.). For example, a student who talks to and disturbs others at the end of whole groups may do so because his attention timespan has ended. Another student may become angry or upset at the difficulty of a math worksheet and have verbal outbursts or kick chairs. These students may be provided with both academic and behavioral interventions.

SECTION 9
Counselors Role in MTSS

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) supports counselors as stakeholders in the development and implementation of a MTSS. School counselors play a significant role in supporting positive student behavior and academic success by participating as members of the shared leadership team, coordinating and implementing the school's behavior intervention systems, facilitating Tier I behavior screeners, and providing group and individual counseling, to promote equity for all students. By implementing a comprehensive school counseling program designed to affect student development in the academic domain (achievement), the career domain (career exploration and development) and the social/emotional domain (behavior), school counselors align their work to MTSS.

ASCA MODEL

TIERS OF LEARNING SUPPORTS	EXAMPLES OF LEARNING SUPPORTS
Tier 1: Universal Core Instructional Interventions for All Students, Preventative and Proactive	1. Standards and Competencies (Foundation) 2. School Counseling Core Curriculum (Delivery System) 3. Individual Student Planning Direct Student Services (Delivery) 4. Curriculum Action Plan (Management) 5. Curriculum Results Report (Accountability) 6. School Data Profile (Accountability)
Tier II: Supplemental/Strategic Interventions for Students at Some Risk	1. Standards and Competencies (Foundation) 2. Individual Student Planning Direct Services (Delivery) a. Small-group action plan 3. Responsive Services Direct Student Services (Delivery) a. Consultation b. Individual Counseling c. Small-group counseling 4. Closing-the-Gap Action Plan (Management) 5. Closing-the-Gap Results Report (Accountability)

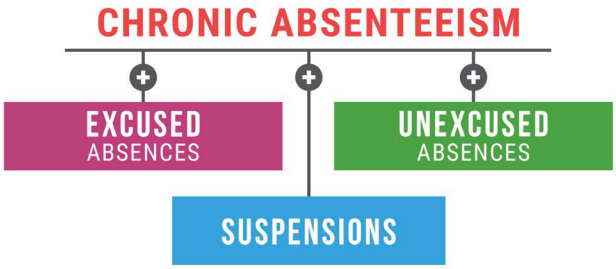
Tier III: Intensive, Individual Interventions for Students at High Risk	1. Standards and Competencies (Foundation)
	2. Responsive Services Direct Student Services (Delivery)
	  a. Consultation
	  b. Individual Counseling
	  c. Small-group counseling
	  d. Referral to school or community services
	3. Closing-the-Gap Action Plan (Management)
	4. Closing-the-Gap Results Report (Accountability)

RESOURCES

- The School Counselor and Multi-Tiered System of Supports

SECTION 10
Chronic Absenteeism

A student who misses 10% or more of school days for any reason (including excused, unexcused, suspensions) is considered chronically absent and at risk for falling behind academically. Parents and students should be made aware of the adverse impact absences have on academic and behavioral success. When viewing student data, if the team determines that absences are the root cause of the student's academic struggles, attendance barriers should be identified, and the student should be placed on a plan to improve attendance and attendance should be monitored.



EARLY WARNING SYSTEM GUIDANCE

STATUS	THRESHOLD: Number of Days Absent	
	Each Quarter	Full Year
On track to graduate (Tier I)	2 days or less	9 days
Sliding (Tier II)	3-5 days	10-18 days
Off track (Tier III)	5 days	18 days

Source: www.kidscount.ssrc.msstate.edu

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- What is the role of the teacher, administrator, counselor, interventionist, and other school personnel regarding the reduction of chronic absenteeism?
- How can we proactively address student behavior in order to avoid student suspensions, causing them to miss class time?
- Why are students missing school (contributing factors) and what evidence-based practices can we put in place to decrease the number of absences?

RESOURCES

- Compulsory School Attendance
- Mississippi Early Warning System
- Attendance Works
- Mississippi Kids Count
- Developmentally Appropriate Practices and Policies

SECTION 11
Developing an IRP

LITERACY BASED PROMOTION ACT AND INDIVIDUALIZED READING PLAN

The Literacy Based Promotion Act (LBPA), revised in 2016, requires that intensive reading instruction and intervention begin for students immediately following the identification of a reading deficiency. Individual Reading Plans (IRP) should be created for Kindergarten and 1st - 3rd grade students with a substantial reading deficiency, as well as students who passed to 4th grade with a Good Cause Exemption. The TST will determine if a student's data supports that a reading deficiency is present, at which time an IRP will be created.

The IRP correlates with, and can be documented in conjunction with, the MTSS Documentation Packet as long as ALL seven (7) components are completed. When creating an IRP the TST must utilize each student's **INDIVIDUAL** data to determine skill deficiencies and deficit areas. Plans for targeted instruction and intervention must be specific to the **INDIVIDUAL** student. It is recommended that Section F: Parental Support Plan/Parent Read-at-Home Plan is reviewed with a parent/guardian to ensure the understanding of strategies and allow for questioning and clarification of how to help the student at home.

RESOURCES

- Literacy Based Promotion Act FAQ
- Mississippi Comprehensive Literacy Plan
- Developing an IRP Webinar

SECTION 12
Utilizing the Documentation Packet

The MTSS Documentation Packet was created to assist districts, schools, and educators with the documentation and implementation of interventions as well as the Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA). The packet provides the means to reflect on policies and practices at the classroom, school, and district level in order to continually improve student outcomes. The packet is organized according to the following sections:

- Student Profile Sheet (PreK, K-8, 9-12)
- Tier I High Quality Classroom Observation
- Tier II (Supplemental Instruction) Documentation
- Teacher Support Team (TST) Referral and Meeting
- Tier III (Intensive Intervention) Documentation
- Appendices
- Recommendations for Documentation

Per State Board Policy 41.1, school districts must complete, at a minimum, documentation as required for all students in Tier II or Tier III. All Tier III documentation must accompany the student's cumulative folder upon promotion or transfer to a new school.

For detailed information on how to complete and utilize documentation, review the MTSS Documentation Packet.

The MDE recommends that hearing and vision screening is administered for students at Tier II. It is required that hearing and vision screenings occur annually (once every twelve (12) months) for all Tier III students. The screener results should be recorded in the MTSS Documentation Packet.

SECTION 13

Utilizing Universal Screeners and Diagnostic Assessments to Identify Deficit Areas

Universal screeners are an integral component of the MTSS process as they provide a piece of the data required for the decision making process. Once screeners are administered, results should be compared to other classroom assessments that may include but are not limited to: standards-based assessments, grades, formative assessments, summative assessments, classroom performance, and teacher observations. These assessments are used to either confirm or challenge the results of the universal screener and determine next steps. Students identified as "at-risk" based on multiple pieces of data should be administered diagnostic or survey level assessments to determine specific intervention needs.

In grades K-3, universal screening assessments will be administered to all students at least three times during the year, with exception to students in grade 3 who are not identified for intervention on mid-year screeners. These students are not required to take the end of the year screener. Results of these screeners provide an especially critical "first look" at individual students. State statute requires that districts select an approved screener from the list provided (Mississippi Code § 37-23-16; Mississippi Code § 37-177-5).

Dyslexia screeners are mandated in the spring for Kindergarten students and the fall for students in grade 1 utilizing a State Board of Education approved screener. These screeners will aid in providing valuable information in the areas of: phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, decoding, encoding, and rapid naming.

RESOURCES

- Finding the Right Starting Point for Reading Interventions
- Student Assessment K-3 Universal Screeners
- Intervention Services Dyslexia Screener Information
- Intervention Services 4-12 Screener Information
- Diagnostic Tools
- Math Mammoth

SECTION 14
Additional Considerations

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Many school districts are putting practices in place to provide support in pre-k rather than moving directly to sending referrals to special education. Implementing MTSS in pre-k is encouraged; however, providing at least one intervention and administering a second screener before a referral is made to special education for those students with a smaller gap is strongly recommended. Many school districts are not evaluating pre-k students who are referred to special education due to a lack of data. It is important that all pre-k students participate in the state kindergarten readiness assessment; use the *Mississippi Early Learning Standards Checklist for Classrooms for Four-Year-Olds* for each child; and use other sources of data such as curriculum assessments, district behavioral screeners, and developmental measures. Simply documenting the frequency and duration of behaviors is helpful.

In 2017, Mississippi began its first stage in the implementation of the Pyramid Model for pre-k programs within and outside of school districts. The Pyramid Model is a three-tiered framework that aligns with positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) and the three tiers in the layered continuum of MTSS supports.

Tier I supports include academic and behavioral best practices found in high-quality early childhood classrooms. The development of expectations and rules is included in Tier I just as it is for K-12. Tier I in the Pyramid Model also addresses intentional teaching of relational skills, the importance of interactions specifically positive ones, classroom arrangement, classroom design, learning centers, schedules, transitions, large and small groups, and giving directions.

Tier II supports are mostly geared towards best practices in teaching social emotional skills with the rationale that the root of most inappropriate behavior in pre-k is a lack of social emotional skill development. Tier II in the Pyramid Model breaks down social skills into friendship and problem-solving skills and includes both positive and negative emotions with intentional focus on the teaching of these social emotional skills. Free printable, social stories, book lists with activities, resources for teaching emotions, and resources for supporting problem solving can be found at the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning.

Tier III supports include behavioral best practices for those few children in a pre-k program who are unable to exhibit successful behaviors with high-quality pre-k school programming and social emotional skill teaching alone. Much like the K-12 PBIS practices, Tier III in pre-k includes conducting Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs) and creating behavior support plans (BSPs). Specific focus is given to determining the form and function of behavior, using prevention strategies, and implementing replacement behaviors.

DYSLEXIA

Districts must accept dyslexia evaluations administered by a licensed psychologist, psychometrist, or speech language pathologist. Students with a dyslexia diagnosis might also receive intervention services and/or qualify for an IEP through IDEA, however not all students with dyslexia will need additional supports. Some students with dyslexia are successful when receiving high-quality Tier 1 instruction along with some general accommodations.
The appropriate supports to put in place for a student with dyslexia should be determined by the TST utilizing data-based problem solving.

State Testing Accommodations for Students with Dyslexia (2017)

Allowable accommodations for students with dyslexia include 20/23, 24, and 25 for all Mississippi Academic Assessment Program tests (ELA and math for grades 3-8, 5 and 8 science, U.S. History, English II, Algebra I, and Biology I) as well as MKAS^2, English Proficiency Test and ACT. ACT accommodations must be approved by ACT prior to testing.

ACCOMMODATIONS CHART FOR ONLINE AND PAPER-PENCIL ADMINISTRATIONS

Students with Dyslexia

#	Accommodation	Mississippi Academic Assessment Program MAAP*	Mississippi K-3 Assessment Support System MKAS^2	American College Testing ACT	English Language Proficiency Test ELPT
20 23	Extended time until the end of the school day.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
24	Administer the test over several sessions, specifying the duration of each session.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
25	Administer the test over several days, specifying the duration of each day's sessions.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Grades 3-8, EOC, Math, ELA, Science Grades 5 and 8, Biology I, and U.S. History

For the above listed assessments, students with disabilities (SWDs), English learners (ELs), and students with a diagnosis of dyslexia that were evaluated by a licensed psychologist, psychometrist, or speech language pathologist (HB 1031, July 2012) may be afforded these extended time accommodations. These accommodations must be listed in the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan and specified for these assessment areas **or** students must have a documented diagnosis of dyslexia on file in accordance with Miss. Code 37-173-1 et seq.

Source: Appendix B, 2017 Mississippi Testing Accommodations Manual

Classroom Accommodations

These are some allowable classroom accommodations for students with dyslexia. Accommodations should be put in place, **AS NEEDED**.

- Allow extra time for completing tests
- Shorten assignments
- Provide audio books
- Provide a copy of the notes
- Reduce homework load
- Reduce copying tasks

RESOURCES

- Dyslexia Screener Information and Forms
- 2017 Mississippi Testing Accommodations Manual

Screening Kindergarten and First Grade Students for Dyslexia

Districts are required to adopt a local school board policy regarding screening students for dyslexia in the fall of 1st grade and the spring of Kindergarten. Students must be screened using a State Board approved screener. If a student does not pass the screener, parents/guardians must be notified. It is important that districts help parents/guardians to understand that a dyslexia screener simply identifies the existence of potential characteristics for dyslexia and is not an assessment that provides an official diagnosis of dyslexia. Screener information and results are to be submitted, as instructed each year, to the Office of Intervention Services.

DIFFERENTIATION THROUGHOUT THE TIERS, ACCOMMODATIONS, AND MODIFICATIONS

The purpose of differentiated instruction is to teach to student differences while working toward the same desired outcome for all students. The process of differentiated instruction allows educators to meet the needs of all students within the same classroom. Differentiation must be purposeful as lessons are scaffolded to meet students on their level and work to help students meet the MCCRS.

When providing classroom accommodations and modifications, it is crucial that the intent of the standard remains intact. The MDE *Access for ALL Guide* provides guidance to teachers and administrators that will help promote equal access to grade-level content for both general education students and students with disabilities who receive instruction in the general education classroom.

RESOURCE

- Access for All Guide

MTSS AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL

The goals of MTSS at the secondary levels are similar to those of the elementary levels in that by providing appropriate instruction and intervention, districts are meeting the needs of a diverse student population and improving outcomes for ALL students. However, MTSS goals differ somewhat at the secondary level as students consider graduation options and begin to consider post-graduation plans and long-term goals. Though long-term goals differ for some students, *Every Student Graduates High School Ready for College and Career* remains a targeted goal for Mississippi students. MTSS provides a systematic process through which schools can improve educational approaches by integrating evidence-based practices across the content areas.

RESOURCES

- MCCRS Scaffolding Documents for ELA and Mathematics
- Problem Analysis Within an RTI Framework at Secondary School
- Center on Response to Intervention, Secondary Schools
- Tiered Interventions in High School
- Mississippi Early Warning System

To meet the objectives of MTSS at the secondary level, it is important to look at the initiatives that are currently in place within a school/district and discuss how those initiatives, and State Board Policy 41.1, may be aligned to work together as a cohesive unit promoting academic, behavioral, and social-emotional growth among students by way of enhanced student learning.

Critical elements of enhanced learning and student success are motivation and engagement therefore, interventions at the secondary level will require a comprehensive approach that addresses the whole student. Literacy development that can be generalized across content areas supports student engagement and motivation. When schools use consistent literacy approaches across content areas students are able to focus more easily on comprehension and content, therefore, increasing engagement.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Students with a special education eligibility receive services as outlined on their Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP Committee is responsible for determining and documenting what services the student requires in order to be successful and that he/she be provided a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

Students with a special education eligibility in language/speech in the areas of articulation, voice and fluency would not typically need additional academic or behavioral supports in the classroom. However, it is common for a student with an eligibility of *language/speech - language impaired* to need additional supports. The IEP Committee may decide to add goals to the IEP to address the student's deficits or place the student in Tier II or Tier III in order to receive supplemental instruction. It is important to remember that the student's deficit skills, not the eligibility determination, dictate the services needed to provide a FAPE.

SPEECH/LANGUAGE

The speech/language pathologist may conduct interventions with students who have articulation, voice, fluency or language deficits before they are identified as a student with a disability. There are ways to fund this activity that would allow the SLP to provide both prevention and rehabilitation services, including using Coordinated Early Intervening Service funds or partially funding with MAEP teacher units.

SECTION 504

Section 504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education (ED). Section 504 provides: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance . . . "

The Office of Civil Rights enforces Section 504 in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance from ED. Recipients of this federal financial assistance include public school districts, institutions of higher education, and other state and local education agencies. The regulations implementing Section 504 in the context of educational institutions appear at 34 C.F.R. Part 104.

The Section 504 regulations require a school district to provide a "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) to each qualified student with a disability who is in the school district's jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability. Under Section 504, FAPE consists of the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the student's individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met.

A Section 504 Plan is a plan developed to ensure that a student who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives accommodations that will ensure their academic success and access to the learning environment.

Section 504 requires recipients to provide to students with disabilities appropriate educational services designed to meet the individual needs of such students to the same extent as the needs of students without disabilities are met. An appropriate education for a student with a disability under the Section 504 regulations could consist of education in regular classrooms, education in regular classes with supplementary services, and/or special education and related services.

The U.S. Department of Education enforces Section 504 and additional information is available on their website.

GIFTED STUDENTS

The state definition of intellectually gifted children in Mississippi shall mean those children and youth who are found to have an exceptionally high degree of intelligence as documented through the identification process. Service to identified intellectually gifted children in grades two (2) through six (6) is mandated by law. In situations where a student is identified as gifted and also identified as a student in need of academic or behavioral intervention, such services should be provided as needed. Districts should abide by standards regarding required number of minutes of gifted instruction each week, per the *2013 Regulations for Gifted Education Programs*. In the even of an extended closure, districts should refer to the Exended Closure Guidance to continue the identification of and service to gifted children.

RESOURCES

- RTI and the Gifted Student
- Gifted Students, Gifted Services, and Response to Intervention
- National Association for Gifted Children

ENGLISH LEARNERS

Tier I

Implementation of high-quality, Tier I core instruction which utilizes best practices is essential to the success of our English learners. (ELs).

It is essential that all teachers who work with ELs receive training on best practices for instructing ELs, Tier I instructional strategies to support English language acquisition, as well as grade level college and career readiness standards. See the *MDE English Learner Guidelines* as well as the MDE English Learner page for resources, tips and videos for instructing English learners. See the MDE Guidance on Extended Distance Learning for English Learners for ways to address the four language domains, adapt best practices, and other tools for supporting Els in a distance learning setting.

When considering a referral to intervention for English learners the TST should consider the following information:

- Amount of time the student has been in this country: In addition to learning a new language, newly arrived EL students need time to adjust to the new culture and expectations in our school systems,
- Similarity or dissimilarity of ethnicity or national origin to that of the U.S., and the type of schooling they attended in their native country, and

- Degree of English language acquisition-students with lower levels of English proficiency will require more supports and scaffolds to support content area learning.

Before implementing interventions for ELs remember to:

- Consult with parents, general education teacher, EL teacher and all other teachers who work with the student,
- Examine all the data (state tests, English Learner Proficiency Test (ELPT), universal screeners, diagnostic assessments, classroom performance, etc.)

  AND

- Determine the specific deficit and select an intervention that will best address the deficit area.

When meeting to determine the need for intervention for ELs, team members to include in the initial and subsequent TST meetings should include at a minimum, the general education teacher, content area teacher for area of struggle, the EL teacher/coordinator, intervention teacher, student's parent/guardian and an administrator.

Using the Data

While EL students may be in the lower 25th percentile of MAAP, universal screeners, and benchmark scores, it is essential that ELPT scores are also examined to determine student's progress towards English language proficiency. For information on understanding these reports see the EL Literacy Focus of the Month video for August.

When determining if an EL student needs intervention, the TST should be sure that they consider all relevant available data including:

1. MAAP scores
2. Universal screener scores
3. Benchmark scores
4. Classroom grades
5. ELPT scores

Consideration of all data including ELPT assessment data should be examined to determine if the struggles are due primarily to academic, behavioral or English language deficiencies. If language acquisition is lower than that of EL peers from the same language background who have been in the US for the same amount of time as well as academic and/or behavioral struggles, the student may need intervention as defined in the MTSS process. Specific LAS Links reports to refer to are the Student Profile Report and the Roster Report which can be sorted according to score in ascending, or descending, order. Consider the scenarios, developed by the United States Department

of Education, to help make decisions about interventions for English learners which are found in the MDE's English Learner Guidelines on page 116.

Cultural Considerations

Keep in mind that students from backgrounds that are significantly different than that of the United States may have a more difficult time adjusting to life and schools in the U.S. It is therefore essential that, prior to conferencing with the parents, the TST and EL teacher conduct basic research in order to better understand the cultural norms of the student's birth country, and avoid cultural biases, when making decisions about the need for intervention.

Interrupted Schooling

Many EL students come from an interrupted schooling background which may include the following reasons:

- They are newcomers with two or more years of interrupted education in their native country.
- They have attended school in the U.S., returned to their native country for a period of time, then returned to the U.S. again.
- They have attended kindergarten in English (L2), 1st and 2nd grade in their first language (L1), then jumped into 3rd grade with instruction in English.
- They have attended U.S. schools since kindergarten but have language and literacy gaps due to ineffective instruction.
- They have attended school in one location for a few months, then moved to another location for a few months, and perhaps had some weeks in between these changes when they did not attend school (Calderón, 2008)."

These issues present a plethora of potential academic and behavioral issues, which may need to be addressed through the MTSS process. Determination for an EL student's placement must take into consideration the degree of deficiency, as well as the specific academic and behavioral deficiency area(s) that will be addressed. Proper documentation for Tier II or Tier III should take place using the MTSS Documentation Packet.

For additional information, and sample student scenarios, to help guide decisions regarding interventions for English learners, see the MDE English Learner Guidelines.

SECTION 15
Scheduling Intervention Time

It is important that schools align schedules to ensure that they are providing high-quality classroom instruction, reflecting current practices and policy requirements, as well as providing ample time for intervention supports for individual students.

For optimal student outcomes within a MTSS, there must be adequate time for instruction based on students' needs. Developing an effective schedule is a process in which many stakeholders need to be included. **Schedules should be reviewed and revised as needed.**

Tier I Scheduling Guidance

- Include both whole group and small group instruction (PreK-12)
- Differentiate instruction based on student needs
- Adhere to State Accountability Standards and District Policy regarding required instructional minutes

Scheduling Approaches for Elementary Schools

Within the Classroom
Tier II Interventions may be carried out within the classroom by the classroom teacher or other staff members who are highly trained in the intervention. Small groups, or individual students, can be pulled during center time or while students are doing independent practice.

Walk-to-Learn
Walk-to-Learn classes are re-grouped across a team or grade level to form groups based on needs. On grade level students are provide enrichment by classroom teachers or other personnel. Students receiving Tier II intervention are provided interventions by other classroom teachers while students receiving Tier III are provided interventions by the most highly qualified teachers, if no interventionist is on staff.

Scheduling Approaches for Middle School and High School

30 Minute Period/Block
During this 30 minute period of time all students are scheduled with a teacher for intervention, remediation, or enrichment. All staff including special subject teachers, para-professionals, counselors, etc., are needed to help carry out this plan successfully. This can be scheduled in one of 3 ways:

- Six 50 or 55 minute periods with one 30 minute period, OR
- Seven 45 or 47 minute periods with a 30 minute period, OR

- Four 85 minute blocks with one 30 minute block.

Elective Course

During these courses direct instruction takes place beyond that of the required ELA and mathematics courses. Computer-based programs may be used for a portion of the time if they are evidence-based, aligned with the deficit area, and delivered with fidelity. These classes should have a smaller student/teacher ratio than those of other classes.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Where should the time come from to create the intervention time?
- Where in the schedule should Tier II and Tier III occur?
- Middle Schools and High Schools: How many periods should be scheduled?
- What resources are required to achieve your scheduling goal?

RESOURCES

- Making It Happen: What Does It Take to Implement Intensive Intervention?
- Implementing RTI: Developing Effective Schedules at the Elementary Level

SECTION 16
MTSS and Diversity

A properly developed and implemented MTSS meets the diverse needs of ALL learners. Each component of MTSS allows opportunities for providing appropriate supports as needed. Since MTSS is NOT A ONE SIZE FITS ALL model, student's unique experiences and backgrounds should provide **starting points** for establishing academic and behavioral intervention goals, rather than serving as "after thoughts" once interventions are in place. Validation and affirmation of each student's strengths, life experiences, cultural background, and education is key to creating a positive school culture and climate where ALL individuals feel safe and respected, making learning more relevant and engaging for each student.

Development Stage	Relevance to MTSS and IEP Development and Implementation
Cultural Destructiveness	Cultural diversity is viewed as a highly negative aspect and is excluded totally from MTSS and IEPs.
Cultural Incapacity	Cultural diversity is viewed indifferently, ignored, and given little if any credibility in the implementation of MTSS and IEPs.
Cultural Blindness	Existence of cultural diversity is acknowledged yet is viewed as having little significance in the implementation of MTSS or IEP development and implementation.
Cultural Precompetence	Cultural diversity is valued as evidenced through greater personal awareness and sensitivity with some, although limited, applications within MTSS and IEP development and implementation.
Cultural Competence	Perceptions about cultural diversity move from awareness and sensitivity to application and incorporation within MTSS and IEP development and implementation.
Cultural Proficiency	Cultural diversity is significantly embedded into MTSS and IEP development and implementation including both general and special education at the school/district levels.

Cultural and linguistic diversity (CLD) does not cease to be integral to diverse students' teaching and learning once they are placed in special education.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Understanding CLD aids in avoidance of pre-labeling a student with a learning disability (allowing adequate opportunities to learn).
- Are data collection procedures appropriate for diverse groups?
- Leadership teams should consist of members who are knowledgeable of CLD learners.

SECTION 17
Interventions through Distance Learning

Providing intervention, accommodations, or modifications through distance learning requires collaboration among family and school staff as intervention plans are created and modified according to student needs. It is necessary to focus on essential skills needed for student success while understanding that lessons will be different from those provided face to face in the school setting.

School teams play an important role in helping students to adjust to distance learning as well as assisting with identification of learning opportunities that exist in daily routines. With some fine tuning of daily routines and creativity, intervention lessons may occur while other family duties are carried out. If the family schedules make it too stressful for parents and educators to connect during the day, this might take place after hours during a more focused time.

Keep in mind that the goal is to continue skill building which requires student motivation and dedication of the student, family, and school staff. Intervention lessons should be stress-free learning periods in which students are engaged and focused.

This is an unprecedented time where flexibility and creativity are required to provide the best interventions for the students in Mississippi. The key is to ensure that the students are continuing to receive the supports they need to be successful. This can be done through planning and communication while practicing all precautions advised by the Health Department or CDC, when applicable.

HOW TO IDENTIFY STUDENTS WITH THE MOST NEED

Identify students that have the most need and ensure that they have access to the available interventions. This can be done through a diagnostic assessment. A diagnostic can be utilized to discover what types of intensive support is needed for each individual student. This information should identify the specific gaps the student is exhibiting and provide information on the deficit area that should be addressed through distance learning.

What can interventions look like with distance learning?

- **In-person Learning:** small group interventions with explicit instruction in the deficit area may continue as designed to ensure a tiered level of support is delivered to all students.
- **At-home Learning:** communicate with families the importance of students completing the assessments/assignments on their own. Help parents understand that teachers are using this information to design the

intervention that will best meet the students' needs. Below are additional resources that can be used at home to address the identified deficiency.

- **Hybrid Learning:** complete assessments, including diagnostics, together in a one-on-one or small group setting. Students can be provided instruction during the face-to-face setting and then practice from home virtually. Progress monitoring may be conducted digitally with a virtual proctor that can sit with the student as they are completing the assignment or assessment.

Whatever the learning situation, interventions and supports will continue for the students. Find what works for you as the interventionist and the students you are serving. Keeping in mind that while you are addressing grade level content you are also addressing the gaps that have been identified.

How can students benefit from distance learning?

- This is a time where we can make the foundation stronger for the students, using a blended strategy of grade appropriate work and fill in the gaps along the way.
- Students can connect what is occurring in interventions to what is occurring in the classroom during Tier I instruction.
- Teachers can provide positive intervention experiences through technology and using various means to connect with students.

Tips

Remain focused on the child and provide support that will benefit their overall success for the future.

The interventionist should reach out to each parent so they understand what will be conducted during the intervention time.

Choose an appropriate intervention to be conducted. This should be an intervention that the parents can easily access at home.

The interventionist should conduct a parent training, so the parents understand the components of the intervention program. This is an opportunity to demonstrate the importance of students completing their work on their own.

The quality of the assignments should provide meaningful work with scaffolding provided as needed for the student.

Utilize a systematic approach with instruction. Identify the areas of need and develop a plan for instruction.

Incorporate other subject areas to expose students to rich content areas, build vocabulary, fluency, and knowledge. Writing should be part of daily/weekly assignments.

Vocabulary building activities may be incorporated during certain times of the daily schedule or siblings may be tapped to assist with sorting and counting activities when appropriate.

CONDUCTING MORE INTENSIVE INTERVENTIONS SUCH AS DYSLEXIA THERAPY

If possible, therapists should send home a copy of the card decks students use during dyslexia therapy so that parents can continue to review them with students. Districts should also send home packets of oral language skills, phonological awareness skills, and letter tiles for them to work on their alphabetizing skills. The goal is to offer supports that parents can provide to their students while they are at home. It is not recommended that they introduce new skills, but rather review the previously taught skills. Therapists may also provide recordings of themselves to show parents how to practice certain skills with their children.

CONDUCTING TEACHER SUPPORT TEAM MEETINGS

Whether or not a meeting is conducted will be determined by the number of weeks the school/district is closed as well as the time of year. For example, if a school is closed for 3-5 weeks, meetings may be suspended until faculty and staff return. However, in a situation such as an extended closure in which students will not return for the remainder of the school year, it is recommended that districts hold virtual end-of-year meetings to review data and create end-of-year notes to be used when making decisions regarding student placement for the fall.

When school resumes, meetings will be held to make decisions regarding Tier placement, utilizing available data in the decision-making process.

DIFFERENTIATING ONLINE RESOURCES FOR ALL STUDENTS AND STUDENTS RECEIVING INTERVENTION SUPPORTS

It is essential that specific deficit areas are on the student's dashboard/assignment list for Tier II and Tier III. Documentation for how the student is progressing in those deficit areas should be provided through the resource.

ENSURING ACCESS TO INTERVENTIONS

Support should be given to students through paper printouts, specifically related to the deficit area, if they do not have access to the online intervention. Determine if the district has a technology "check out" policy for devices or hotspots that can be utilized by students during distance learning.

PROVIDING RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS RECEIVEING INTERVENTIONS

Consider sending home typical manipulatives used by students such as counters, geoboards or other math materials. These types of materials might also be in the form of materials made by the school (e.g., counters made from construction paper cut into pieces). Additional resources might include decodable or leveled readers.

USING DATA TO DOCUMENT STUDENT GROWTH

Acceptable data may include information such as reports from online interventions, collected and scored paper/pencil assignments specific to deficit areas, and/or student performance on virtual face-to-face assessments. These data points can be used for documenting student growth and decision making while students are out of school.

SECTION 18
Glossary of Terms

Accommodations help a student overcome or work around deficits affecting their ability to master the curriculum. Accommodations do not reduce learning expectations; they provide access. Accommodations change the way a student accesses learning without changing the actual standards a student is working toward.

Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence (ABC) data is collected in an effort to identify the function of a behavior. Antecedent reference to the events, action, or circumstances that occur before a behavior. Behavior is the behavior that a student exhibits, and Consequences is the action or response that follows the behavior.

Baseline data is the data that is collected before an intervention or program change begins.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is a plan designed to teach and reinforce positive behaviors. This can help prevent or stop problem behaviors in school. The BIP describes the problem behavior in observable and measurable terms, the reasons the behavior occurs and the intervention strategies that will address the problem behavior.

Behavioral Support Plan (BSP) is developed and implemented by a collaborative team, which includes the student and the parent. The plan includes Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), identified skills for school success, and specific strategies for behavioral instruction. Best practice is for a team to use a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) to create the plan.

Benchmark Assessment is an assessment administered periodically throughout the school year at specified times during a curriculum sequence to evaluate students' knowledge and skills relative to an explicit set of longer-term learning goals. The design and choice of benchmark assessments are driven by the purpose, intended users, and uses of the instruments. Benchmark assessments can inform policy, instructional planning, and decision making at the classroom, school, and/or district levels.

Child Find is the ongoing process to identify, locate, and evaluate all children suspected of having disabilities who need special education and related services as a result of those disabilities.

Comprehensive Assessment System is a coordinated system of multiple assessments, each of which is valid and reliable for its specified purpose and for the population with which it will be used. The system organizes information about the process and context of children's learning and development and provides a comprehensive and multifaceted picture of students' academic

and/or behavioral knowledge, abilities, and dispositions in order to help educators make informed instructional and programmatic decisions at different times in the learning process.

Criterion-Referenced Assessment is an approach to measure student performance in relation to a specific standard. It typically is used to identify a student's strengths and weaknesses in relation to an age-group or grade-level standard; however, it does not compare students to other students.

Culturally Responsive refers to the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning.

Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBA) is an assessment that has three components: (1) measurement materials that are aligned with the annual curriculum, (2) measurement that occurs frequently, and (3) assessment data that are used to formulate instructional decisions. CBA is an umbrella term that includes curriculum-based measurement.

Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) is an approach used to screen students or to monitor student progress in mathematics, reading, writing, spelling, and other content areas. CBM is a distinctive form of curriculum-based assessment because of three additional properties: (1) Each CBM test is an alternate form of equivalent difficulty; (2) CBM measures are overall indicators of competence in the target curriculum; and (3) CBM is standardized, with its reliability and validity well documented. These properties allow teachers and schools to look at student growth over time.

Data-Based Problem Solving and Decision Making A process used by stakeholder teams from multiple settings to analyze and evaluate information related to planning and implementing effective instructional and/or intervention strategies matched to student need.

Developmentally Appropriate describes any activity involving children that is based on knowledge of the age and stages of child development, while understanding that each child is unique.

Diagnostic Assessment is used to diagnose strengths and areas of need in students. Diagnostic assessment involves gathering and carefully evaluating detailed data involving students' knowledge and skills in a given learning area.

Differentiated Instruction is the way in which a teacher anticipates and responds to a variety of student needs in the classroom. To meet student needs, teachers differentiate by modifying the content (what is being taught), the process (how it is taught) and the product (how students demonstrate their learning).

Duration for the purposes of documenting response to intervention, refers to the length (number of minutes) of a session multiplied by the number of sessions per school year. "Sufficient duration" is dependent on a number of factors including the program or strategy being used, the age of the student, and the severity of the deficit involved. Some programs offer guidelines or recommendations for duration and may even limit the number sessions in which a child can participate, believing that a child who does not make adequate gains after the specified amount of time would likely benefit from an alternative intervention.

Evidence-Based refers to scientific, research-based methods that exhibit substantial evidence of effectiveness through multiple outcome evaluations. In other words, programs, strategies, and assessments shown to have had positive outcomes with a given population.

Explicit Instruction is a structured, systematic approach by which to deliver instruction. Explicit Instruction is characterized by a series of supports or scaffolds, whereby students are guided through the learning process with clear statements about the purpose and rationale for the learning, clear explanations and procedures in small steps, checking for student understanding, and achieving active and successful participation by all students.

Fidelity of Implementation refers to the application of an intervention, program, or curriculum according to research findings and/or to a developer's specifications.

Formative Assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievements of intended instructional outcomes. (CCSSO, FAST, SCASS, 2007)

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) is the process used to identify problem behavior, determine the function or purpose of the behavior, and develop interventions to teach acceptable alternatives for the behavior.

Gap Analysis is a method for measuring the difference between the student's current level of performance and benchmark expectations.

Gifted Student is a student who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability(ies), exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields, and who needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities.

Goal Line (also known as the aim line), represents the expected rate of student progress over time. A goal line is constructed by connecting the data point representing the student's initial performance level and the data point corresponding to the student's year-end goal. The goal line should be compared to the trend line to help inform responsiveness to intervention and to tailor a student's instructional program.

Individual Reading Plan (IRP) A personalized reading plan created for any student (K-3) who, at any time, exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading, as well as students who were promoted to 4th grade with a good cause exemption.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with IDEA 2004 that outlines the special education and related services specifically designed to meet the unique educational needs of a student with a disability.

Informal Diagnostic Assessment refers to data that may be used to identify a student's specific skill deficits and strengths. These data may be derived from standardized measures, error analysis of progress monitoring data, student work samples, and behavior rating forms, among other tools. Use of informal diagnostic assessments should allow teachers to identify a student's specific area(s) of difficulty when lack of progress is evident. This assessment will also inform decisions about how to adapt individualized interventions for students.

Intensive Interventions are academic and/or behavioral interventions characterized by increased length, frequency, and duration of implementation for students who struggle significantly; often associated with the narrowest tier of an RTI tiered model; also referred to as Tier III interventions.

Intervention is the systematic and explicit instruction provided to accelerate growth in an area of identified need. Interventions are provided by general education teachers, reading interventionists, trained paraprofessionals or the special education teachers. This instruction is designed to improve performance relative to specific, measurable goals. Interventions are based on valid information about current performance, realistic implementation and include ongoing student progress monitoring data.

Learning Disability is defined by IDEA 2004 in the following manner: The child does not achieve adequately for the child's age or to meet State-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas, when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the child's age or State-approved grade-level standards.

Literacy Based Promotion Act (LBPA) focuses on raising standards to improve reading skills of kindergarten through third-grade (K–3) students and to ensure that third-grade students are proficient in reading.

Modification is an adaptation to instruction or the administration of an assessment that change, lower, or reduce performance expectations for demonstration of a learning outcome.

Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) is responsible for convening to review documentation, determining if a comprehensive evaluation for special education eligibility is necessary, and fulfilling other evaluation/child find responsibilities within fourteen (14) days of a parent or public agency's request for a comprehensive evaluation.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a framework for effective team-based problem solving that is data informed, evidence-based, and flexible enough to meet the academic and behavioral needs of all students.

Norm-Referenced Assessment compares a student's performance to that of an appropriate peer group or normative sample.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) is an implementation framework that is designed to enhance academic and social behavior outcomes for all students by emphasizing the use of data for informing decisions about the selection, implementation, and progress monitoring of evidence-based behavioral practices.

Problem Solving is the recursive, self-correcting, systematic process of finding solutions by accurately identifying problems, analyzing relevant data to understand why a problem is occurring, designing and implementing probable solutions, and measuring the effectiveness of the solutions that were implemented.

Progress Monitoring (PM) is the scientifically based practice used to assess students' academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class. Also, the process used to monitor the implementation of specific interventions.

Rate of Progress is a student's progress toward grade-level achievement goals. Rate of learning is determined by reviewing assessment data as plotted on graphs.

Remediation is instruction intended to remedy a situation; to teach a student something that he or she should have previously learned or be able to demonstrate; assumes appropriate strategies matched to student learning have been used previously.

Response to Intervention (RTI) is the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make changes in instruction or goals and applying child response data to important educational decisions. Also, Response to Instruction / Responsiveness to Intervention.

Scaffolding is the systematic sequencing of prompted content, materials, tasks, and teacher and peer support to optimize learning. Students are given support until they can apply new skills and strategies independently.

Screening see Universal Screening.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible relationships.

Specific Learning Disability (SLD) is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Specific Learning Disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of intellectual disability, of emotional disability or of environmental, cultural differences, or economic disadvantage.

Summative Assessments are tests administered after the conclusion of instruction to provide information regarding the level of student, school, or program success.

Sustainability is the ability of a leadership team to persistently and skillfully maintain its core beliefs and values and use them to guide program adaptations to changes and pressures over time.

Systematic Instruction During this carefully planned and sequenced instruction the teacher presents lessons that build on one another, moving from simple to more complex. Skills are broken down into smaller more manageable chunks, a method called task analysis. Temporary instructional supports may be provided such as manipulatives, written prompts or cues.

Teacher Support Team (TST) is the problem-solving unit responsible for interventions developed at Tier 3.

Trend Line is a line on a graph that presents the line of best fit drawn through a series of data points. The trend line can be compared against the aim line to help inform responsiveness to intervention and to tailor a student's instructional program.

Universal Design for Learning is a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn.

Universal Screening (academic) is a systematic process for assessment of all students within a given grade, school building or district on critical academic skills. These screenings are typically brief assessments, or inventories, focused on target skills that are highly predictive of future outcomes.

Universal Screening (behavior) refers to the informal inventories of behaviors (internalizing and externalizing) to indicate if students need additional support in specific behavior skills.

SECTION 19
Resource Links

- 2017 Mississippi Testing Accommodations Manual: https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OA/OSA/2017-mississippi-testing-accomodations-manual_20171005.pdf
- Access for All Guide: https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/documents/OAE/OAE/2019-access-for-all-guide.pdf
- Attendance Works: https://www.attendanceworks.org/
- Best Evidence Encyclopedia: http://www.bestevidence.org/
- Campaign for Grade-Level Reading: http://gradelevelreading.net/
- Center on Response to Intervention at American Institutes for Research: Data-Based Decision Making: https://rti4success.org/essential-components-rti/data-based-decision-making?page=1
- Center on Response to Intervention, Secondary Schools: https://rti4success.org/related-rti-topics/secondary-schools
- Chadd: https://chadd.org/
- Colorado Department of Education Data Based Problem Solving and Decision Making: https://www.cde.state.co.us/mtss/data-basedproblemsolvinganddecision-making
- Compulsory School Attendance: https://www.mdek12.org/chronicabsenteeism
- Developing an IRP Webinar: https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/8955695212455864067
- Developmentally Appropriate Practices and Policies: https://tryingtogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/DIGITAL-PK-3-school-suspensions-and-expulsions-solutions-.pdf
- Diagnostic Tools: https://intensiveintervention.org/intensive-intervention/diagnostic-data/example-diagnostic-tools
- Dyslexia Screener Information and Forms: https://mdek12.org/OAE/OEER/Dyslexia
- Ed Reports: https://www.edreports.org/

- Establishing Performance Goals for Intervention Students: https://mtss4success.org/
- Evidence-Based Improvement: A Guide for States to Strengthen Their Frameworks and Supports Aligned to the Evidence Requirements of ESSA: https://www.wested.org/resources/evidence-based-improvement-essa-guide-for-states/
- Evidence for ESSA: http://www.evidenceforessa.org/
- Family Guides to Student Success (Spanish): https://www.mdek12.org/OAE/OEER/FamilyGuidesSpanish
- Family Guides to Student Success (English): https://www.mdek12.org/OAE/OEER/FamilyGuidesEnglish
- *Finding the Right Starting Point for Reading Interventions: Universal Screener Companion Guide, K-3:* https://mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OAE/OEER/Literacy/diagnostic_assessment_guidance_screener_companion_guide_combinedaug16_v2.pdf
- Four Step Problem Solving: https://www.usd259.org/cms/lib/KS01906405/Centricity/Domain/663/WPS%20Data%20Based%20Problem%20Solving%20Process.pdf
- Free Graph Maker: https://www.interventioncentral.org/teacher-resources/graph-maker-free-online
- Gifted Students, Gifted Services, and Response to Intervention: http://www.nagc.org/sites/default/files/administrators/GT%20and%20RtI.pdf
- Guides for Identifying Evidence-Based Interventions for School Improvement: https://fcrr.org/projects/essa-evidence-based-interventions-school-improvement-guides
- Home Reading Helper: http://www.homereadinghelper.org/
- Implementing Evidence-Based Literacy Practices: http://www.fcrr.org/literacyroadmap/
- Implementing RTI: Developing Effective Schedules at the Elementary Level: https://rti4success.org/sites/default/files/developing_effective_schedules.pdf
- Intervention Services Dyslexia Screener Information: https://www.mdek12.org/OAE/OEER/Dyslexia
- Intervention Services 4-12 Screener Information: https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OAE/OEER/Intervention/MTSS_ScreeningProcessGuide.pdf

- Johns Hopkins School of Education: http://jhussi.org/283794
- Kentucky Department of Education: https://education.ky.gov/educational/diff/Pages/default.aspx
- Literacy Based Promotion Act FAQ: https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OAE/OEER/Intervention/lbpa_faq_9.25.20.pdf
- Making It Happen: What Does It Take to Implement Intensive Intervention?: https://intensiveintervention.org/sites/default/files/Making-it-Happen_Webinar_QA.pdf
- Math Mammoth: https://www.mathmammoth.com/complete/placement_tests.php
- MDE Office of Early Childhood: https://www.mdek12.org/EC
- MDE Office of School Improvement: https://www.mdek12.org/OSI/EBP
- Mississippi Department of Mental Health: http://www.dmh.ms.gov/
- Mississippi Department of Health: https://msdh.ms.gov/
- Mississippi Comprehensive Literacy Plan: https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/mclp-7-16-2017_final-(1).pdf
- MCCRS Scaffolding Documents for ELA and Mathematics: https://www.mdek12.org/ese/ccr
- Mississippi Early Warning System: https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/early-warning-system-benton-final.pdf
- Mississippi Kids Count: https://kidscount.ssrc.msstate.edu/
- Mississippi Speech-Language-Hearing Association: https://www.mshausa.org/
- Multi-Tiered System of Support Fidelity of Implementation Rubric: https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Documents/MTSS/MTSS_Fidelity_Rubric.pdf
- Multi-Tiered System of Support Flowchart for PreK-12: https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OAE/OEER/Intervention/MTSSflowchart_Nov2018.pdf
- Multi-Tiered System of Support Screening Process Grades 4-12: https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OAE/OEER/Intervention/MTSS_ScreeningProcessGuide.pdf

- National Association for Gifted Children: http://www.nagc.org/
- National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/
- Next Generation High Schools: https://www.ed.gov/highschool
- Parent & Family Guide to Understanding Response to Intervention: https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OAE/OEER/Intervention/familyguiderti.pdf
- Parent & Kids Magazine: https://www.parentsandkids.com/
- Parent Support Groups: https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OAE/OSE/Parents/parent-advocacy-groups-7-17-17.pdf
- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports OSEP Technical Assistance Center: https://www.pbis.org/school/pbis-in-the-classroom
- Preschool Curriculum Report: https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/curriculum-consumer-report.pdf
- Problem Analysis Within an RTI Framework at Secondary School: http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/rti-in-secondary-schools/problem-analysis-within-an-rti-framework-at-a-secondary-school
- Progress Monitoring Charts: https://charts.intensiveintervention.org/chart/progress-monitoring#
- Promising Partnerships Practices: https://www.cde.state.co.us/uip/promising_practices_2018_complete_book
- RAND report on school leadership interventions under ESSA: http://www.ccssoessaguide.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/down_rr-1550-1_12-5-2016.pdf
- Reading Next – A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy. A Report from Carnegie Corporation of New York: https://www.carnegie.org/media/filer_public/b7/5f/b75fba81-16cb-422d-ab59-373a6a07eb74/ccny_report_2004_reading.pdf
- Results First Clearinghouse Database: http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2014/09/results-first-clearinghouse-database
- Results for America: http://results4america.org/

- Roadmap to Evidence Based Reform for Low Graduation Rate High Schools: http://new.every1graduates.org/everyone-graduates-center-roadmap-to-evidence-based-reform-for-low-graduation-rate-high-schools/
- RTI and the Gifted Student: http://rtinetwork.org/professional/rti-talks/transcript/talk/24
- Sample Leadership Team Self-Assessments:
  - https://www.cde.state.co.us/mtss/mtss-schoolself-assessmentevaluationtool
  - https://www.cde.state.co.us/mtss/mlt-selfassessment
- Self-Assessment of MTSS Implementation (SAM): http://www.florida-rti.org/gtips/docs/self_assessment_of_mtss_(sam).pdf
- SERP Institute: http://serpinstitute.org/
- SIG Network: http://www.signetwork.org/content_pages/190
- Student Assessment K-3 Universal Screeners: https://www.mdek12.org/OSA/USDA
- SWIFT Education Center: http://www.swiftschools.org/
- Synthesis of Evidence Resources: http://ssn.airprojects.org/Synthesis_of_Evidence_Resources.pdf
- Tennessee Department of Education Access Materials: https://www.tn.gov/education/tdoe-educator-training/access-materials.html
- Tiered Interventions in High School: https://rti4success.org/sites/default/files/HSTII_lessonsLearned.pdf
- Understood: https://www.understood.org/en
- Universal Design for Learning: www.cast.org
- U.S. Department of Education Family and Community Engagement: https://www.ed.gov/family-and-community-engagement?src=rn
- United Way: https://www.unitedway.org/
- What Works Clearinghouse: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

APPENDICES

- **APPENDIX A** Mississippi State Board Policy: Part 3, Chapter 41, Rule 41.1 Intervention
- **APPENDIX B** MTSS Flowchart for Prek-12
- **APPENDIX C** Month-by-Month Guide to Implementing MTSS

Part 3 Chapter 41
Rule 41.1 Intervention

Adoption Date: January 21, 2005
Revision: December 20, 2018
Effective: March 24, 2019

1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the behavioral and academic needs of every student are met through an instructional model that is designed to address student learning with quality classroom instruction and opportunities for intervention. The Mississippi Department Education (MDE) shall require every school district to follow the instructional model, which consists of three (3) tiers of instruction:
    a. Tier 1: Quality classroom instruction based on Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks
    b. Tier 2: Focused supplemental instruction
    c. Tier 3: Intensive interventions specifically designed to meet the individual needs of students

2. If strategies at Tier 1 and Tier 2 are unsuccessful, students must be referred to the Teacher Support Team (TST). The TST is the problem-solving unit responsible for interventions developed at Tier 3. Each school must have a Teacher Support Team (TST) implemented in accordance with the process developed by the MDE. The chairperson of the TST shall be the school principal as the school's instructional leader or the principal's designee. The designee may not be an individual whose primary responsibility is special education. Interventions will be:
    a. designed to address the deficit areas;
    b. evidence based;
    c. implemented as designed by the TST;
    d. supported by data regarding the effectiveness of interventions.

3. Teachers should use progress monitoring information to:
    a. determine if students are making adequate progress,
    b. identify students as soon as they begin to fall behind, and
    c. modify instruction early enough to ensure each student gains essential skills.

    Monitoring of student progress is an ongoing process that may be measured through informal classroom assessment, benchmark assessment instruments, and large-scale assessments.

4. After a referral is made, the TST must develop and begin implementation of an intervention(s) within two weeks. No later than eight weeks after implementation of the intervention(s) the TST the intervention(s), a second review must be conducted to determine whether the intervention(s) is successful. If the intervention(s) is determined to be unsuccessful, then the student will be referred for a comprehensive assessment.

5. In accordance with the Literacy-Based Promotion Act of 2013, each public-school student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in reading at any time, as demonstrated through:

    a. performance on a reading screener approved or developed by the MDE, or

    b. locally determined assessments and teacher observations conducted in Kindergarten and Grades 1 through 3, or

    c. statewide end-of-year assessments or approved alternate yearly assessments in Grade 3, must be given intensive reading instruction and intervention immediately following the identification of the reading deficiency. A student who was promoted from Grade 3 to Grade 4 under a good cause exemption of the Literacy-Based Promotion Act must be given intensive reading instruction and intervention. The intensive intervention must include effective instructional strategies and appropriate teaching methodologies necessary to assist the student in becoming a successful reader, able to read at or above grade level, and ready for promotion to the next grade.

6. A dyslexia screener must be administered to all students during the spring of their kindergarten year and the fall of their first-grade year. The screening must include the following components:

    a. Phonological awareness and phonemic awareness;

    b. Sound symbol recognition;

    c. Alphabet knowledge;

    d. Decoding skills;

    e. Encoding skills; and

    f. Rapid naming (quickly naming objects, pictures, colors, or symbols (letters or digits) aloud.

7. All students in Kindergarten and grades 1 through 3 shall be administered a state-approved screener within the first 30 days of school and repeated at mid-year and at the end of the school year, to identify any deficiencies in reading. **EXCEPTION: Students in grade 3 who are not identified for intervention on mid-year screeners are not required to be screened again at the end of the school year.** In addition to failure to make adequate progress following Tier 1 and Tier 2,

students will be referred to the TST for interventions as specified in Response to Intervention guidelines developed by MDE if any of the following events occur:

a. Grades K-3: A student has failed one (1) grade;

b. Grades 4-12: A student has failed two (2) grades;

c. A student failed either of the preceding two grades and has been suspended or expelled for more than twenty (20) days in the current school year;

d. A student scores at the lowest level on any part of the Grade 3 or Grade 7 statewide accountability assessment; or

e. A student is promoted from Grade 3 to Grade 4 under a good cause exemption of the Literacy-Based Promotion Act.

8. Referrals to the TST must be made within the first twenty (20) school days of a school year if the student meets any of the criteria a-e stated above in Paragraph 7.

9. School districts must complete, at a minimum, documentation as required for all students in Tier 2 or Tier 3. All Tier 3 documentation must accompany the student's cumulative folder upon promotion or transfer to a new school.

Source: Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-177-1, et seq., (Revised 12/2018)

MTSS FLOWCHART FOR PreK-12

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Ensuring a bright future for every child

To meet the academic and behavioral needs of ALL students

TIER I

- ALL students receive high quality classroom instruction and supports
- Universal screener data should be used to guide instruction, including dyslexia screener at kindergarten and first grade
- Provide evidence-based researched curriculum instruction that is aligned to Mississippi state standards
- Differentiated instruction to meet the diverse needs of all learners
- Utilize a decision making process that is based on multiple data points when determining the need for additional student supports

TIER II

- ALL students continue to receive Tier I high quality classroom instruction and supports
- Offer supplemental instruction that includes evidence-based, targeted, skill building interventions for identified skill deficit(s)
- Utilize progress monitoring that is aligned to the supplemental intervention and the student goals
- Provide individual or small group targeted instruction/intervention and supplemental supports to meet the academic or behavioral needs
- Employ a decision making process that is based on multiple data points when determining the need for additional student supports or returning a student to Tier I, adjusting or changing the Tier II intervention, or referral to the Teacher Support Team

TIER III

- ALL students continue to receive Tier I high quality classroom instruction and supports
- Offer intensive intervention that includes evidence-based, targeted, skill building interventions for the identified skill deficit(s) (increased intensity and frequency and smaller group size)
- Utilize progress monitoring that is aligned to the intensive intervention and the student goals
- Employ a decision making process that is based on multiple data points when determining the need for additional student supports. This may include: continuing Tier III with the same intervention, with an additional intervention attempted, or a change in intervention; returning to Tier II; returning to Tier I **– OR –** be referred to the Multi-disciplinary evaluation team (MET) to determine the need for a comprehensive assessment through the child find process

CHILD FIND

- Students suspected of having a disability continue to receive high quality classroom instruction and supports
- Request (written or verbal) a comprehensive assessment for children suspected of having a disability immediately to school personnel
- Obtain written consent for the evaluation from the parent prior to the assessment
- Do NOT allow the MTSS process to delay nor deny the appropriate evaluation of a child suspected of having a disability
- Understand the MTSS process is not a prerequisite for a comprehensive assessment request
- Develop an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) for students eligible for special education services
- Determine if students not eligible for an IEP should return to the MTSS process and if they are eligible for a 504 plan

MTSS
Multi-Tiered System of Supports

APPENDIX C

MONTH-BY-MONTH GUIDE TO

IMPLEMENTING MTSS

- ❑ Review MSIS list (first 20 day students)
- ❑ Schedule meeting before the 20th day of school
- ❑ Review all available data on students who ended the year on Tier II or Tier III
- ❑ Begin developing an intervention schedule
- ❑ Obtain a master schedule to assist in developing intervention schedule

- ❑ Ensure all students have been met on that generated on the MSIS List
- ❑ Utilize Section 3A of the MTSS documentation packet
- ❑ All TST members should be present at these meetings (principal, assistant principal, counselor, interventionist, classroom teacher, speech pathologist, etc.)
- ❑ Recommendations should be made (Continue in Tier III, move to Tier II interventions, or move to Tier I and continue monitoring)
- ❑ Students begin documented intervention time
- ❑ Notify parents as students are being placed in Tier II and Tier III interventions
- ❑ Utilize Appendix D in the documentation packet if you need a sample parent letter

- ❑ Review student data that is provided from 9 week grades to make decisions about students who may need additional Tier II Interventions
- ❑ Schedule meetings for students who may need to be referred to TST for Tier II or Tier III interventions
- ❑ Schedule documented review meetings for students receiving Tier II (conducted no later than four weeks after implementation)
- ❑ Student Profile sheet should be completed for the TST meeting
- ❑ Work samples should be provided
- ❑ Tier I High-Quality Classroom Observation Form should be completed by the administration
- ❑ Section 2A, 2B, and 2C should be completed and brought to the meeting for students receiving Tier II Interventions
- ❑ Section 3B, 3C, and 3D should be completed and brought to the meeting for students receiving Tier III Interventions
- ❑ Any relevant data should be brought to the meeting to help guide the decision-making process for intervention supports

APPENDIX C

- ❑ Conduct meetings for the cumulative documented review for Tier II students (conducted no later than eight weeks after implementation)
- ❑ Conduct TST meetings for the first documented review for Tier III students (conducted no later than eight weeks after implementation)

- ❑ Conduct documented review meetings for students receiving Tier II Interventions
- ❑ Compile intervention data to show student growth over the semester

- ❑ Conduct documented review meetings for students receiving Tier II and TST meetings for students receiving Tier III Interventions

- ❑ Conduct documented review meetings for students receiving Tier II Interventions

- ❑ Conduct documented review meetings for students receiving Tier II and TST meetings for students receiving Tier III Interventions

- ❑ Conduct documented review meetings for students in Tier II Interventions

- ❑ Conduct documented review meetings for students receiving Tier II and TST meetings for students receiving Tier III Interventions
- ❑ Schedule a date that will be your last day for interventions
- ❑ Compile intervention data to show student growth over the semester and school year
- ❑ Gather information on students in Tier II and Tier III to transfer to feeder school for students transitioning to the next school (moving from elementary to middle school)
- ❑ This information can be documented on a specific form to be kept in the cumulative folder and copied to send to the feeder school
- ❑ Schedule a meeting with the interventionist at the feeder school to provide them with information on the students who will be at their school the next school year

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- The Social/Emotional Worksheet should be completed only on students to determine if they are in need of Tier II or Tier III behavioral interventions.
- When completing the Student profile sheet ensure that all information is completed and all relevant information is attached to the documentation packet (attendance record, discipline record, outside testing reports, etc.).
- Note the changes that have been made to the documentation packet. It is now fillable and located on our website.
- Appendix D is the sample parent letter. There is now a letter for Tier II and a separate letter for Tier III. You can use this letter or adapt it and send your own. It is recommended to keep parents aware of any changes that are made during the intervention process.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports

PreK – 12th GRADE FLOWCHART

Are there academic or behavioral concerns about the child?

YES

- Gather supportive data (PreK: BIR; K-12: state test scores, ODRs; PreK-12: observations, screening results, concerns from another adult, etc.). **NOTE:** Remember to look at multiple sources.
- Have multiple conversations with the caregiver/ family regarding concerns about the child.

NO

Tier 2 interventions not needed at this time

Is the concern academic in nature?

YES

ACADEMIC
Tier 2 interventions needed

NO

BEHAVIOR
Tier 2 interventions needed

If data indicates there are BOTH academic and behavioral concerns, be sure to create an integrated plan that addresses **BOTH ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIOR.**

Does the child demonstrate deficits on any assessments (PreK: MKAS, OWL, Brigance, etc.), screeners, or in the classroom setting?

Utilize multiple data points when making decisions for intervention.

YES

ACADEMIC
Tier 2 interventions needed

NO

Tier 2 interventions not needed at this time

APPENDIX D

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