

Multi Systems of Support (MTSS) Handbook 2024-2025



Learning and Compliance Support Services
Brush Country Special Education Cooperative

Introduction

MTSS Overview

MTSS embodies a whole-child approach, addressing the diverse needs of students encompassing academics, behavior, and social/emotional well-being. Central to MTSS is the utilization of assessment data to tailor instruction and decision-making for every student. By utilizing MTSS, schools can pinpoint students requiring extra assistance and deliver evidence-based interventions aimed at narrowing academic and behavioral disparities.

Mission Statement

To empower educators to adopt a holistic approach in addressing the individual needs of every student at all levels, thus transforming the district into an exemplary school system. This ensures that each graduate is prepared to thrive as a valuable contributor to the community.

Member District Goals and Guardrails



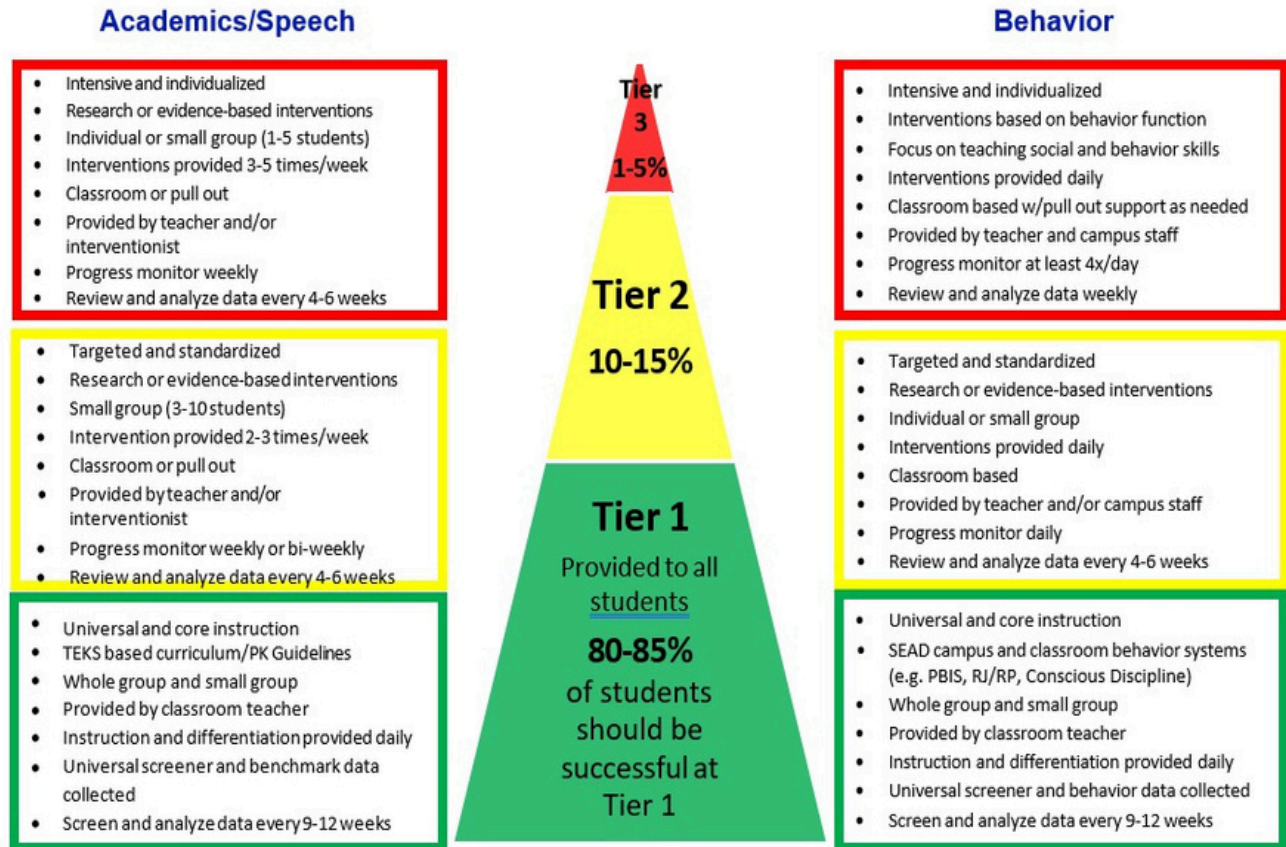
RTI vs. MTSS

Some individuals perceive the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) as an evolved iteration of Response to Intervention (RTI). Within this perspective, although both RTI and MTSS operate on multi-tiered structures, MTSS expands beyond as a comprehensive model for continuous school improvement. It prompts educators to examine district, campus, and classroom systems and culture by thoroughly analyzing data on all students to identify those requiring additional support to achieve their full potential. The following chart elucidates the distinctions between RTI and MTSS within this framework:

	RTI	MTSS
Students:	Students identified as "at risk" or being considered for special education evaluation.	All students, including those already being served by programs such as 504/Dyslexia, Bilingual, GATE, Special Education, etc.
Supports:	Academic	Academic, Behavioral, and Social-Emotional
Purpose:	Remediation and Intervention	Prevention, Differentiation, and Intervention
Focus:	Isolated – academic needs are discussed in isolation.	Integrated – academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs are discussed together. The whole child is considered.
Collaboration:	Teachers of at-risk students, special education teachers, Psychological Services, Campus Administrators	All campus and district staff
Campus Management:	A campus administrator(s)	Teachers, grade level / content teams (PLC), and a MTSS Campus Team.

While others interpret RTI as a subset, or component of MTSS, referring to only the academic intervention systems in place to support students, separate from any other intervention systems such as those for behavior, social-emotional learning, and health.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)



Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

Universal Screening

An essential component of MTSS, universal screening of all students enables educators to establish academic and behavioral baselines and identify learners needing additional support. Based on the screening results, instructional decisions can then be made to improve learner outcomes. Universal screening is the key to a prevention mode, helping classroom teachers to differentiate their instruction and/or provide early intervention services so that students can be assisted before they fall too far behind.

Universal screening is used for two purposes:

1. Identify students who are presently at/above, near, or below grade the standard or cut point on the criterion measure, and
2. To demonstrate the nature and size of the school/district problem (i.e., what percentage of students fall into each category).

Universal Screening Tools

1. STAAR Testing
2. Bench Mark and Performance Indicator Assessments
3. Dyslexia-Based Reading Assessments
4. TPRI
5. I-Station Reading
6. Think Through Math (TTM)
7. Speech Screenings

Tiered Systems in an MTSS Framework

TIER 1—UNIVERSAL

Tier 1 is the least intensive level of the MTSS framework and typically includes the core curriculum and instructional practices used for all students. Tier 1/core instruction generally includes:

A core curriculum that is research-based and aligned to identified “priority standards”

Instructional practices that are culturally and linguistically responsive.

Universal screening to determine students’ current levels of performance

Differentiated learning activities (e.g., mixed instructional grouping, use of learning centers, peer tutoring) to address individual needs.

Accommodations to ensure all students have access to the instructional program

Problem-solving to identify interventions, as needed, to address behavior problems that prevent students from demonstrating the academic skills they possess.

Students who require interventions continue to receive instruction in the core curriculum.

TIER 2—TARGETED

Tier 2 (secondary prevention) typically involves small-group instruction that relies on evidence-based interventions that specify the instructional procedures, duration, and frequency of instruction. Tier 2 instruction usually consists of adult-led small-group instruction using validated interventions implemented with fidelity. Tier 2 supports are expected to benefit most students who do not respond to effective Tier 1 instruction. When data indicates students are not benefiting from Tier 2 interventions, more intensive instruction or an individualized form of intervention should be delivered through Tier 3 supports and services.

TIER 3—INTENSIVE

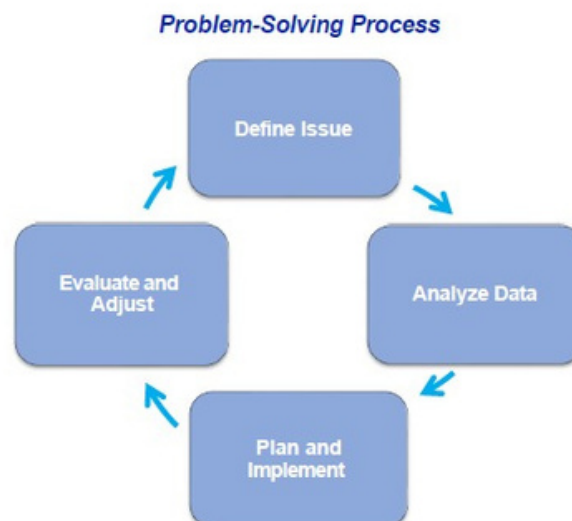
Tier 3 (tertiary prevention) is the most intensive of the three levels and is individualized to target each student’s area(s) of need. At Tier 3, the teacher often begins with a more intensive version of the intervention program used in secondary prevention (e.g., longer sessions, smaller group size, more frequent sessions). However, the teacher does not presume it will meet the student’s needs. Instead, the teacher conducts frequent progress monitoring (i.e., at least weekly) with each student. These progress monitoring data quantify the effects of the intervention program by depicting the student’s rate of improvement over time. When the progress monitoring data indicate the student’s rate of progress is unlikely to achieve the established learning goal, the teacher engages in a problem-solving process. That is, the teacher modifies components of the intervention program and continues to employ frequent progress monitoring to evaluate which components enhance the rate of student learning. By continually monitoring and modifying (as needed) each student’s program, the teacher can design an effective, individualized instructional program.

The Data-Based Problem-Solving Approach

The Problem-Solving Approach within MTSS places equal emphasis on the learner, the environment, and the curriculum. This methodology is employed to analyze concerns and challenges across each tier, facilitating informed decision-making rooted in data analysis. Unlike a linear process, it dynamically aligns instructional resources and services with both individual and systemic requirements.

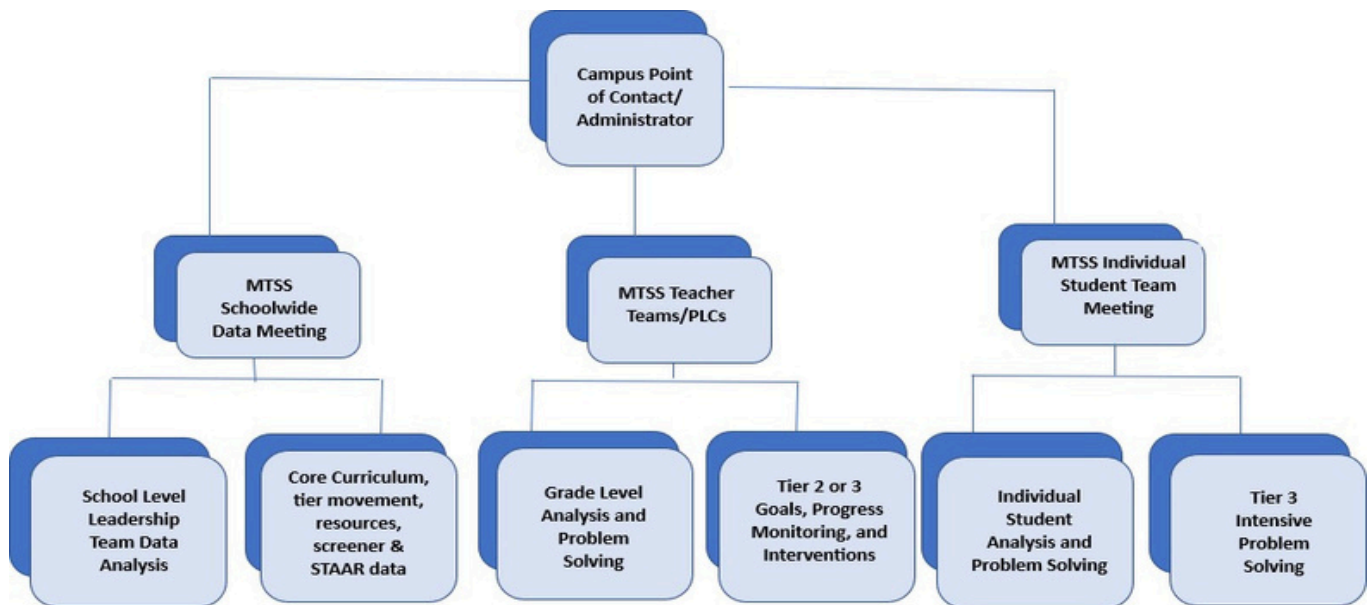
This continuous process comprises four key components:

1. Define - identify the issue or concern.
2. Analyze - use multiple sources of data to determine the cause of the issue or concern. Data to be analyzed may include universal screeners, progress monitoring, parent and teacher information, work samples, etc. Campus data may be analyzed for systems-level problem-solving.
3. Implement a Plan - determine a goal and create a plan that will be implemented with a high degree of fidelity. The plan should include an observation and measurable goal.
 - a. The instruction or intervention that will address the situation or concern.
 - b. How progress will be monitored
 - c. A timeline or review
4. Evaluate - collect and analyze school-wide, small-group, and individual data to evaluate if the plan is working or if changes are needed.



MTSS Team Workflow

The Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is an exemplary educational approach and school improvement model that emphasizes collective responsibility and covers a wide range of tasks. The MTSS Campus Administrator will provide training to staff, serve as the campus expert/contact, and work with campus and district instructional leaders to address campus structures and protocols, meetings, data analysis, problem-solving, and documentation. MTSS necessitates a team approach that includes the leadership and collaboration of all instructional leaders and educational professionals.



MTSS Teams Roles and Duties

Roles	Responsibilities
Administrator(s)	Establish and maintain procedures and timelines for instruction/intervention; monitor fidelity; assist in development of guidelines for assessing, planning, and delivering appropriate professional development. Appoints or selects a school-level MTSS chair and a team of representatives.
POC	Establish procedures for instruction and intervention practices; assessment protocols; monitoring and reporting assessment data; fidelity monitoring; develop guidelines for assessing, planning, and delivering appropriate professional development; maintain MTSS files/folders/paperwork.
Lead Teacher	Critiques established procedures for successful delivery of instruction and intervention for reading, English/Language Arts, writing, and mathematics; provides ongoing professional development and coaching for successful achievement of all students.
Classroom Teachers	Interpret established school-level procedures to deliver high quality instruction follow implementation guidelines for administering and analyzing appropriate assessments; delivering instruction and intervention with high levels of fidelity; and participating in assessing, planning, and attending professional development sessions for the purpose of ensuring success for all students.
Specialists (psychologist, special education teacher, speech/language, others)	The specialist serves the school to help critique established procedures for delivering high quality instruction and intervention and make appropriate recommendations for successful implementation.
School Counselor	Instructional planning according to academic ability using analysis of appropriate assessments; consults with teachers/students to ensure delivery of high quality instruction/intervention; participates in professional development to ensure instructional consistency; facilitates administration of assessments for accurate decision making to ensure success for all students.

Documentation - Meetings & MTSS Work

The primary objective of MTSS is to ensure the delivery of quality instruction that maximizes student learning across all domains. While instruction is the main focus, thorough documentation of all components of the problem-solving process is essential. Not only is it necessary to keep a record of discussions and actions taken, but information must be able to be shared across stakeholders. During problem-solving conversations, having access to data regarding past interventions, strategies, and services provided enables the team to progress in a more streamlined and effective manner. Initiating new interventions each year or upon a student's transition to a different school impedes the intervention process and delays the delivery of high-quality support. Therefore, comprehensive documentation is essential for these reasons.

What	Who	Where
Tier 1 Systems/Data Reviews	MTSS Schoolwide Data Team	Agendas/minutes Documented -Per campus protocol
Tier 2/3 Problem-Solving meetings	MTSS Teacher Teams/PLC	Agendas/minutes Documented in SuccessEd
Tier 3 Problem-Solving meetings	MTSS Individual Student Team	Agendas/minutes Documented in SuccessEd
InterventionPlans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal • Intervention materials and strategies Frequency/duration •Scoring-Progress Monitor • Tacking- to-dos • Progress monitoring 	Classroom/Content Area Teachers	Documented in SuccessEd
Progress Monitoring Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom/Content Area Teachers • MTSS POC •InstructionalCoaches • Behavior Specialists 	Documented in SuccessEd
Referral for Additional Services orEvaluation	MTSS Individual Student Team	Document in SuccessEd that the referral was made, then follow protocols based on the requested program.

Writing Measurable Goals

Grade-Level	Non-Example	Example
Kinder	Rosa will demonstrate appropriate classroom behaviors.	Rosa will stay in her seat during academic work periods as measured by the student's point sheet. or Rosa will raise her hand and wait to be called on when wanting to speak during classroom activities as measured by the student's point sheet.
1 st Grade	Chris will improve phonics skills.	Chris will identify letter sounds for all 26 letters of the alphabet (short vowel sounds) with 95% accuracy as measured using letter/sound flashcards.
3 rd Grade	Gustavo will get better at adding and subtracting two-digit numbers.	Gustavo will determine the correct operation and solve problems requiring addition and subtraction of two-digit numbers with and without regrouping, with 80% accuracy, as measured on teacher made assessments.
5 th Grade	Maria will improve in reading.	Maria will read 2- and 3-syllable words from the 3 rd grade list accurately and fluently by reading at least 80% (16 of 20) of words correctly within 30 seconds.
Middle School	Julio will master probability and statistics TEKS.	Julio will determine whether problems are permutations or combinations, choose the correct formulas and solve problems with and without visual representations, with 80% accuracy, as measured on teacher made assessments.
Middle School	Manuel will improve his study skills.	After assistance creating an organization system, Manuel will complete and turn in assigned work on time, as measured by scoring a weekly average of 3 or better on a 4-point teacher feedback sheet.
High School	Emma will be able to read quickly and accurately.	Given a 7 th -grade instructional level text (DRA 60 / Lexile 850-950 / F&P W), Emma will read 80 words per minute with 85% accuracy.
High School	Angel will learn how to write equations and understand what a function is.	Given a graph, table, word problem, or set of points, Angel will be able to accurately determine if each relation is a function and write an equation for each function. Target score is 4 out of 5 on a teacher-made assessment of consistent difficulty.

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring is a set of assessment procedures for determining the extent to which students benefit from classroom instruction and monitoring the effectiveness of the curriculum. A fundamental assumption of education is that students will benefit from high-quality instruction. Typically, students will learn and achieve the skills and content taught in the classroom. For students who are not responsive to classroom instruction, alternative interventions can be provided and the student's response to that instruction can be monitored. Progress monitoring is a valid and efficient tool for gauging the effectiveness of instruction, determining whether instructional modifications are necessary, and providing important information for eventual classification and placement decisions. It is essential that progress monitoring take place, the results must be documented, and these results must be considered when making instructional decisions for students.

Student progress will be monitored using Curriculum Based Measures such as:

Reading

- Fluency Probes Running Records
- Performance Indicators
- Teacher Assessments
- Comprehension Quizzes
- I-Station Data Grades
- Instructional Progress
- Conversation Data

Math

- Math Fluency Probes
- Performance Indicators
- Teacher assessments
- Computation Quizzes
- Think Through Math (TTM)
- ALEKS Math (HS only)

Behavior

- Brown Scales for ADD/ADHD
- Number of Referrals
- Functional Behavior Assessments
- Behavior Specialist Recommendations
- Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

Communication

- Articulation Screening Tool
- Developmental Articulation Screening Sheets

Testing Accommodations

To be eligible for testing accommodations under MTSS, a student must first be receiving intensive intervention strategies through Tier 3 services*.

The student should have routinely, effectively, and independently used the testing accommodation during classroom instruction and testing for at least 4 weeks before the official standardized test. It's important to individualize the accommodations since what works for one student may not work for another.

- A committee should be convened, and the parents should be made aware of both:

1. Intervention strategies AND

2. Testing accommodations that will be implemented for the student by the teacher of record.

- SB1153, each school year, school districts must notify a parent of each child who received assistance from the school district for learning difficulties, including intervention strategies that the school district provides to the child.

- A teacher input form is available in SuccessEd in the RTI section that the teacher can complete to make accommodation recommendations.

**If a student was previously classified as Tier 3, and the teacher has consistently utilized testing accommodations, resulting in the student's progression to Tier 2, then it may be appropriate to reevaluate the necessity of those testing accommodations at Tier 2.*

Testing Accommodations Cont.

Testing accommodations should be practiced and used by the student routinely, effectively, and independently, during classroom instruction. What does that look like?

Routinely

- ★ The student should routinely receive the accommodation during classroom instruction and testing.
- ★ The student has used the accommodation often enough that he or she is comfortable using it on the day of the state assessment.
- ★ This does not necessarily mean that the accommodation must be used every day during instruction.

Independently

- ★ The student should be able to use the accommodation independently, when applicable, during the state assessment.
- ★ For accommodations where independence is applicable, there should be no need for teacher assistance when using the accommodation.

Effectively

- ★ Educators should collect and analyze data pertaining to the use and effectiveness of accommodations (e.g., assignment/test scores with and without the accommodation, observational reports).
- ★ This data will show whether the student will need the accommodation or whether it is now unnecessary.

Organizing the MTSS Files

All MTSS files should be kept in a central location within the school. While teachers may have copies of the current paperwork to refer to in their classrooms, updated student files must remain in the central location. Any personal or private information shared in student social histories, outside evaluations, or parent notes must be kept confidential. Paperwork should be kept in the file with the most recent information first. All paperwork from the same school year should be organized in this manner and stapled together at the end of the year. When a student transitions from elementary to middle school, the MTSS folder should be placed in the cumulative folder and delivered to the middle school. The middle school MTSS chair should also receive a list of all MTSS students, current and inactive. The middle school chair (or principal designee) will pull the MTSS folders and relocate the folders to the appropriate location in the middle school. If a student with an MTSS file transfers to a new school, staple all paperwork and attach it to the MTSS notification sheet in the student's cumulative folder.

TIER I – All Students Receive Core Classroom Instruction

- Journaling
- Lexia Phonics
- Zoo Phonics
- Accelerated Reader
- I-Station
- Think Through Math
- Modeling Good Speech
- Positive Reinforcement
- Consequences

Tier I is implemented in the general education classroom by the general education teacher.

TIER II—Some Students Will Receive Additional Targeted Instruction

- Increased Frequency and Duration for I-Station, Think Through Math & ALEKS Math
- Brain Train
- Peer Tutoring
- Tutoring (Before, During, or After School)
- Teach/Reteach Difficult Concepts
- Small Group Instruction
- Accommodations
- Reading Specialist
- Continued Modeling of Good Speech
- Practice Academy
- Behavior Chart or Contract

TIER III—A Few Students Will Receive Intensive Targeted Instruction

- Increased Frequency and Duration for I-Station, Think Through Math, and ALEKS Math
- Manipulatives
- Visual Aides
- Small Group Instruction
- Accommodations
- Behavior Intervention Plan

***The interventions are recommended and are not limited to the above list. Interventions should be determined by the MTSS committee on each campus based on the student's individual needs.*

MTSS Procedures

Identify students who need MTSS.

1. Contact the counselor to add students to the roster for a formal MTSS meeting
2. Complete the Tier I Referral Form
3. Continue collecting/recording data for first the meeting
4. Document strategies used prior to MTSS

Tier I meeting is held with the MTSS committee

1. Information and concerns are reviewed by the committee
2. Interventions are recommended and determined by the committee
3. Committee recommends action for students (*Tier I, 504, SpEd, etc.*)

Monitor students on Tier I

1. Implement interventions (put in place at the previous meeting)
2. Continue collecting data reflecting the use of interventions
3. Review data

Student Progress Made :

1. Continue using current interventions
2. Continue collecting data and monitor progress
3. If progress declines contact the counselor for a Tier II MTSS meeting

No student progress made:

1. Contact the counselor for a Tier II MTSS meeting.
2. Continue collecting data for the Tier II meeting

Tier II meeting is held with the MTSS committee

1. Information and concerns are reviewed by the committee
2. Adjustments Interventions are recommended and determined by the committee
3. Committee recommends action for the student (remain on TIER II, move to TIER III, 504, SpEd, etc.)

Monitor student on Tier II (*or current placement*)

1. Implement interventions (*put in place at previous meeting*)
2. Continue collecting data reflecting use of interventions
3. Review data

Student Progress Made:

1. Continue using current interventions
2. Continue collecting data and monitor progress
3. If progress declines contact the counselor for a Tier III MTSS meeting

No student progress made:

1. Contact the counselor for a Tier II RTI meeting.
2. Continue collecting data for the Tier II meeting

Tier III meeting is held with the MTSS committee (*or current placement*)

1. Information and concerns are reviewed by the committee
2. Adjustments Interventions are recommended and determined by the committee
3. Committee recommends action for the student (remain on TIER III, move to 504, SpEd, etc.)

Behavior

Current research suggests that behavior interventions are most effective when delivered in an instructional format, similar to academic interventions. Studies conducted over the past decade clearly indicate that popular responses to behavior issues in schools have not led to improved behavior as intended. In fact, punitive responses often result in decreased behavior competency. The best outcomes are achieved when Tier 1 behavior systems are strong and directly taught throughout the year. Additionally, students who require more intensive support should have access to direct, explicit behavior interventions at Tier 2 and Tier 3.

In one study, classroom-based interventions led by teachers or paraprofessionals that focused on self-monitoring reduced problems with teachers, discipline, and suspension rates, and increased on-task learning behavior for students with emerging mental health problems (Wyman, Cross, Brown, Yu, Tu, & Eberly, 2010).

To illustrate using effect size:

Popular Behavior Treatments:

Treatment/Intervention	Effect Size
Punitive discipline	-.13 to +.06
Referral to outside counseling	.00 to +.08
Meeting with the student	.00
Analyze cognitive strengths and weaknesses	.00

Effective Behavior Treatments:

Treatment/Intervention	Effect Size
Mentor-based support	+.60 to +1.00
– Check in/Check <u>out</u>	
– School-based Mentoring	
Social Emotional Learning	+.90
Social Skills Training	+.68
Behavior monitoring (DBRC)	>+.50

(Kavale, 2005; Marquis et al., 2000; Blueprints for Promising Treatments, 1999) Based on the most current behavioral research, school districts that implement the Check-in/Check-out, Social Skills Instruction, and use a Daily Behavior Report Card (DBRC) as standard Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions have shown marked improvement in behavior.

MTSS Behavior Intervention Matrix

	Tier 1	Tier 2		Tier 3	
	Instructional Practices/PBIS Strategies	Interventions	Progress Monitoring	Interventions	Progress Monitoring
Elementary and Secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School-wide expectations Classroom expectations (no more than 5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct and explicitly taught. Visually presented. Developmentally appropriate Classroom procedures and routines, directly taught, modeled, practiced, and reviewed. 3:1 ratio of acknowledgements to corrections Opportunity for movement Periodic brain breaks Opportunities for purposeful peer talk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think, pair, share Shoulder partner Turn and talk. Active Monitoring Behavior Narration Think aloud problem-solving. Fluid Redirection Positive Reinforcement Brief Redirection Offering choices Opportunities to respond. Opportunities to redo Age-appropriate instructional chunks ≤ 2-minute transitions Use of attention signals (multi-sensory) Avoid power struggles. Restorative Chats 	<p>Check in/Check Out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentor may see up to 10 students. Standardized DBRC Standardized CICO <p>Social Skills Instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly lessons Groups of <10 <p>Daily Behavior Report Card (DBRC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standardized Based on school-wide expectations Includes feedback loop 	<p>DBRC data collected daily during each period of day. Analyze data every 4-6 weeks.</p>	<p>Check in/Check Out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentor may see up to 5 students. Individualized DBRC Individualized CICO <p>Social Skills Instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily lessons Groups of <5 <p>Daily Behavior Report Card (DBRC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individualized Based on behavior function Includes feedback loop 	<p>DBRC data collected daily during each period of the day. Analyze data every 2-3 weeks.</p>

Check-In/Check-Out

Check-In/Check-Out Check-in/Check-out (CICO) at Tier 2 is designed to be a group-oriented intervention, designed for students with problem behaviors who:

- Have been unresponsive to Tier 1 strategies and systems.
- Do not require more immediate individualized interventions.
- Exhibit problem behaviors across multiple settings or contexts.

Because CICO at Tier 2 is a group-based, standardized intervention, it is efficient and requires few resources. For example, the program can accommodate many students who can begin the process at any point during the year. Important considerations for CICO.

- Requires staff who are consistently available at the beginning and end of the day.
- Replaces other before and after school staff duties
- No more than 10 students for each mentor (fewer is better).
- Requires brief training with the student(s) to introduce mentors and explain processes.

Benefits of Check-In/Check-Out (CICO)

- Provides non-contingent positive adult contact.
- Addresses events or situations that occur outside of school (setting events).
- Supports positive adult/student relationships.
- Embeds social skills training and implementation into the school day.
- Links to school-wide behavior goals and expectations.
- Encourages goal-setting with regular feedback.
- Encourages and reinforces student reflection and self-monitoring.

Check-In/Check-Out Daily Routine

1. Students check in with designated CICO staff members each morning to review goals and set a positive tone for the day. It's important to have a consistent mentor and check-in location.
2. The CICO mentor inquires about the student's previous evening and morning.
3. Students and staff review expectations and set goal together.
4. Staff ensures students have the necessary items. (including DBRC) for a successful day.
5. At the end of the day, students check out with a CICO mentor.
6. Student talks about the day and shares a high/low.
7. Staff collects/reviews DBRC and discusses strategies for improvement
8. The staff ensures students have the necessary items for homework.

Daily Behavior Report Card (DBRC) Overview (Examples of DBRC)

A Daily Behavior Report Card can be designed as a Tier 3 or Tier 2 intervention. At Tier 3, goals and behavior scales are individualized for each student. At Tier 2, goals and behavior scales are standardized to match school-wide expectations. Students needing Tier 2 support at a campus use a standardized DBRC making it efficient, inexpensive, and time effective. Use of a DBRC is appropriate for students in Pre-K through high school who:

- Have been unresponsive to Tier 1 strategies and systems.
- Do not require more immediate individualized interventions.
- Exhibit problem behaviors across multiple settings or contexts.

DBRC also provides built-in systems for:

- Monitoring student progress
- Evaluating fidelity of implementation
- Transitioning to self-management
- Communication with Parents/guardians

Benefits of Daily Behavior Report Card

- Links to school-wide behavior goals and expectations (ex: Safe, Respectful, Responsible)
- Provides frequent student feedback
- Includes daily progress monitoring data
- Embeds social skills training and implementation throughout the day.
- Supports regular home-school communication
- Encourages and reinforces student improvement and self-monitoring
- Provides a framework for goal setting and CICO conversations.

Daily Behavior Report Card (DBRC) Daily Routine

1. Students receive DBRC each morning from designated staff members (usually CICO mentors), review strategies, and set goals for the day.
2. Teachers provide specific behavior feedback at designated times throughout the day.
3. Teachers mark numerical ratings corresponding to each student's behavior.
4. At the end of the day, students check out with staff members and review DBRC data and goals.
5. Points are tallied and reinforcement/rewards are provided based on behavior.
6. DBRC ratings are entered into progress monitor systems for analysis and documentation.
7. Students take DBRC home for parent signature and positive feedback.

Social Skills Instruction Overview

The ability of students to interact effectively with peers and adults is crucial to their development and success at school. Studies show a strong correlation between poor social skills and low academic achievement. Strengthening social skills usually results in improved academic outcomes. Social Skills Instruction provides direct, explicit instruction to students experiencing behavior challenges at school. Lessons address communication, self-monitoring, problem-solving, and goal-setting and provide opportunities for students to discuss proactive strategies in a supportive environment. Addressing social skills throughout the school day “at the moment” is not sufficient for students experiencing challenging behaviors. Participating in a social skills class is appropriate for students who:

- Have been identified as “at-risk” by a behavior screener
- Have been unresponsive to Tier 1 strategies and systems
- Exhibit problem behaviors across multiple settings or contexts
- Benefit from direct instruction, hands-on activities, and opportunities to practice
- May be reluctant to participate in large group social lessons

Benefits of Social Skills Instruction

- Links to school-wide behavior goals and expectations. (ex. Safe, Respectful, Responsible)
- Is an effective, research-based behavior intervention.
- Allows opportunities to practice strategies and build on existing skills.
- Provides time to address issues and concerns that arise throughout the school year.
- Encourages and reinforces student improvement and self-monitoring.
- Includes students who may have problem behaviors that are not considered “disruptive”.
- Allows flexibility to target specific skill deficits or student issues that arise.

Social Skills Instruction Key Points

1. Social skills lessons should be planned, focused, and scheduled within the school day.
2. Lessons should follow a standard lesson structure-warm up, direct instruction, practice, wrap up-with opportunities for extension activities.
3. Tier 2 lessons should occur at least weekly; Tier 3 lessons should occur daily.
4. Lessons should be at least 20 minutes for elementary students and at least 30 minutes for secondary students.
5. Students should be grouped based on behavior needs

Behavior Intervention Logistics

Logistics

For any intervention to have the desired effect, it must be provided consistently and with fidelity. Because Tier 2 and Tier 3 behavior interventions are partially provided by staff other than the classroom teacher, ample planning and preparation are necessary before implantation. Consider the following Guiding Questions before beginning Tier 2 behavior interventions.

- How many students will be receiving Tier 2 support?
- How many CICO mentors are needed?
- Is there time in the master schedule for delivery of Tier 2 supports?
- What qualities are important for staff who provide behavior interventions?
- Which staff members exhibit those qualities?
- When will staff receive training on behavior interventions?

There are multiple ways to provide all interventions. While the locations and times of day may look different from one school to another or from one grade level to another, each campus needs to think through the process and determine a structure that works for them. The table below give examples of possible providers, time, and location for the carious essential behavior interventions.

Intervention	Possible Providers	Possible Time	Possible Locations	Other Considerations
Checkin/Check out (CICO)	Paraprofessional Counselor Interventionists Support Staff (librarianetc.)	Upon arrival At dismissal Morning routine/meeting/ breakfast 5 minutes before dismissal	Counselor's office Teacher's class Hallway Cafetiera Library BusLane	CICO serves as am/pm duty Plan for mentor absences no more than 8-10 studentsor mentors
DailyBehavior ReportCard (DBRC)	CICO mentor	Checkin/Check out	Checkin/Check out	Provide DBRC and review at CICO Staff training of Feedback Loop (required)
Social Skills Instruction	Counselor Paraprofessional Interventionists Behavior Teacher	Lunch Advisory Flex Time Weekly Pull Out	Counselor's office Conference room Behavior teacher classroom Library	Consider grouping by skill deficit or need. May group grade level/age

Behavior Fidelity Checks

Fidelity Checks

To be effective, interventions must be provided with consistency and fidelity. Fidelity simply means delivering the intervention in the way it was designed. It is not reasonable to expect any intervention to work if it is delivered inconsistently or without all the necessary components.

The following checklists are provided to increase fidelity of implementation of the essential behavior interventions previously described. They should be used in the following ways:

- Referenced during staff training of behavior interventions
- Provided To all staff who deliver instructions to assist with implementation
- Used periodically by campus administration to spot check fidelity.

Check in

- ☐ Occurs prior to the start of the school day.
- ☐ Mentor asks about morning and previous evening.
- ☐ Distribute new DBRC and review goals.
- ☐ Review the skills and strategies needed to meet goals.
- ☐ Check for supplies.
- ☐ Send to first class with positive message.

Check out

- ☐ Occurs at end of day.
- ☐ Mentor asks how the day went.
- ☐ Student turns in DBRC.
- ☐ Mentor looks for missing data and scans scores.
- ☐ Discuss skills used to earn high scores.
- ☐ Discuss what choices led to low scores.
- ☐ Check for supplies needed at home.
- ☐ Send home with positive message.
- ☐ Mentor records data in spreadsheet

DBRC Feedback

- ☐ Teacher requests form from student
- ☐ Teacher states behavior observed and records number using DBRC scale.
- ☐ If behavior is less than the goal, teacher states the goal and behavior needed to achieve goal.
- ☐ If behavior is at the goal, teacher provides positive acknowledgement.
- ☐ Teacher speaks discreetly using an instructional tone.

Social and Behavioral Skills: A Developmental Timeline

Age	Emerging Social Skills	Behavior Skills to Teach
4 years	Enjoy doing new things Like to play "house" Are more creative with make-believe play Would rather play with other children than by themselves Cooperative with other children Cannot tell what is real and <u>what's</u> make believe often Talk about likes and interests Understand the idea of "same" and "different" Play board or card games	Listening Waiting for adult's attention Following directions Interrupting appropriately Using kind words Ignoring Asking for help Dealing with teasing Waiting for one's turn Dealing with losing Dealing with consequences
5 years	Want to please and be like their friends Are more likely to agree with rules Like to sing, dance, and act Show concern and sympathy for others Are aware of gender Can tell <u>what's</u> real and what's make believe Are sometimes demanding and sometimes very cooperative	Listening Waiting for adult's attention Following directions Interrupting appropriately Using kind words Ignoring Asking for help Dealing with teasing Waiting for one's turn Dealing with losing Dealing with consequences
5-7 years	Develop greater empathy Establish and maintain positive relationships Start developing a sense of morality/right-wrong Able to control impulsive behavior Can identify and manage emotions better Forming a positive self-concept and self-esteem	
7-8 years	Are more aware of other's perceptions May complain about friends and other kids' reactions Want to please but <u>aren't</u> as attentive to directions Try to express feelings with words, but may resort to aggression when upset. Have moments of extreme insecurity and need encouragement Change between being helpful and upbeat to being rude and selfish Enjoy being part of a team or group More easily influenced by peers	Listening Waiting for adult's attention Following directions Interrupting appropriately Ignoring distractions Asking for help Dealing with teasing Dealing with losing Apologizing Dealing with consequences Contributing to discussions Answering classroom questions

Social and Behavioral Skills: A Developmental Timeline (cont.)

Age	Emerging Social Skills	Behavior Skills to Teach
9-10 years	<p>Start narrowing peer groups to a few close friends they share secrets and jokes with</p> <p>May withdraw from family activities and conversations to start developing their own identity.</p> <p>Are affectionate, silly, and curious, but can also be selfish, rude, and argumentative.</p> <p>Uncertain about puberty and body changes</p> <p>Have mood swings and struggle with self-esteem.</p> <p>Test limits: try to figure which rules are negotiable</p> <p>Growing interest in friends; increasingly independent from family</p> <p>Find peer pressure increasingly hard to resist</p>	<p>Active Listening</p> <p>Following directions</p> <p>Apologizing</p> <p>Ignoring distractions</p> <p>Asking for help</p> <p>Dealing with teasing</p> <p>Dealing with consequences</p> <p>Dealing with anger</p> <p>Dealing with being rejected or left out</p> <p>Walking away from a fight</p>
11-15 years	<p>Start thinking more logically</p> <p>May be introspective or moody</p> <p>Value friends' opinions more.</p> <p>May test out new ideas, clothing, and mannerisms</p> <p>Give in to peer pressure more easily.</p> <p>Have experiences with bullying.</p> <p>Are sensitive to other people's opinions</p> <p>Develop a sense of pride in accomplishment</p> <p>Have and keep secrets.</p> <p>Aware of what is appropriate in different situations</p> <p>Recognize personal strengths and weaknesses</p> <p>Want to be accepted and have friends.</p> <p>Do not share as much with adults; may be argumentative.</p> <p>Begin to analyze their own feelings</p>	<p>Making things right</p> <p>Understanding differences</p> <p>Taking turns in conversations</p> <p>Accepting feedback</p> <p>Dealing with consequences</p> <p>Working collaboratively</p> <p>Persevering</p> <p>Managing rejection</p> <p>Resolving conflict</p>
16-18 years	<p>Strive to be independent</p> <p>May start distancing themselves from family</p> <p>Look for their own strengths/weaknesses</p> <p>Introspection may make them seem self-centered/impulsive/moody Show pride in successes.</p> <p>Want to spend a lot of time with friends</p> <p>Start relating better to adults.</p> <p>Start looking for ways to contribute to others</p> <p>Able to voice emotions (both negative and positive) and try to find solutions to conflicts</p>	<p>Accepting criticism</p> <p>Offering feedback</p> <p>Handling rejection</p> <p>Understanding self</p> <p>Developing self-respect</p> <p>Identifying assertive vs. aggressive behavior</p> <p>Setting goals</p> <p>Resolving conflict</p> <p>Stress management</p>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Learn the Signs. Act Early: Developmental Milestones. Leyden, R., & Shale, E. (2012). What's happening? Ages, Stages and Milestones in What Teachers Need to Know about Social and Emotional Development. Camberwell, Victoria: ACER Press.

MTSS and Referring to Special Education

Should an FIIE be conducted while a student is receiving MTSS?

When is the appropriate time to evaluate?

The appropriate time to evaluate is when there is a suspicion that a student has a disability and requires special education.

If a student is receiving MTSS services, and there is a decision to conduct an FIIE, the student should continue with MTSS services while the evaluation is being conducted.

19 TAC 89.1011(a) states:

a. Referral of students for a full individual and initial evaluation for possible special education services must be a part of the district's overall, general education referral or screening system. Prior to referral, students experiencing difficulty in the general classroom should be considered for all support services available to all students, such as tutorial; remedial; compensatory; response to evidence-based intervention; and other academic or behavior support services. If the student continues to experience difficulty in the general classroom after the provision of interventions, district personnel must refer the student for a full individual and initial evaluation. This referral for a full individual and initial evaluation may be initiated by school personnel, the student's parents or legal guardian, or another person involved in the education or care of the student.

How does this rule fit with the requirement that MTSS may not be used to delay an evaluation of a student suspected to have a disability and the need for special education services?

The key phrase in the rule is ". . . students experiencing difficulty in the general classroom should be considered for all support services available to all students . . ." It does not state that the student must receive these supports.

If the student receives general education support services, and if the student continues to struggle, then the student must be referred for a full individual and initial evaluation (FIIE).

But, at any time, if a student is suspected of having a disability and needing special education services, the student must be referred for an FIIE.

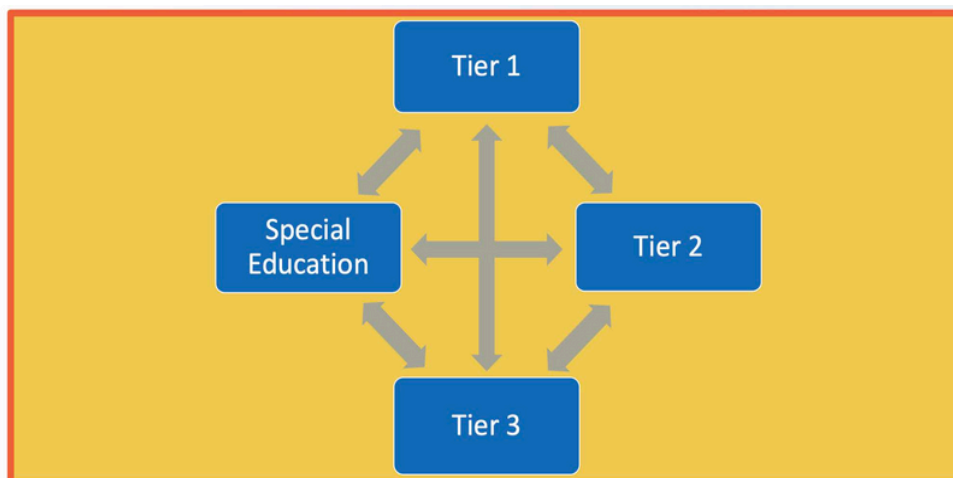
Ideally, intervention should be provided as soon as a child displays an instructional need. Beginning the intervention as soon as a gap in learning or performance is being displayed, increases the likelihood that the student will close the gap between their current level of performance and grade level expectations.

The Building RtI Capacity website provides information and resources on the relationship between RtI implementation and IDEA, including an online professional development module entitled “Connecting RtI Implementation and IDEA: What School Leaders Need to Know.”

How does MTSS show whether there is an “educational need” for special education?

- MTSS, if done with fidelity and evidence-based interventions, can provide useful data about the level of support a student needs.
 - Suppose a student is responding positively and closing the gap between their performance and their same-aged peers. In that case, the intervention is succeeding and the student probably is not a student that would need the specially designed instruction of special education.
 - Suppose a student is not responding sufficiently, or closing the gap between their performance and their peers’ performance. In that case, the student may be a student with a disability and a need for special education services.
- An FIIE helps the Admission, Review, and Dismissal committee determine the educational need for special education and related services. Data collected from MTSS can and should be used as part of that evaluation.

Is MTSS automatically “over” once a student is determined eligible for special education?



Campus Timeline for MTSS Activities

Month	Suggested Actions
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide MTSS Training for campus staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – New teachers—initial/full training – Returning teachers—refresher with updates • Schedule MTSS Schoolwide Data, MTSS Teacher Teams/PLC, and MTSS Individual Student Team Meetings on Master calendar. • Schedule intervention time into the master schedule. • Create campus behavior plan and provide training with clear expectations and ensure consistency and alignment. • Provide small group problem-solving expectations to faculty • Ensure MTSS expectations and procedures are reflected in staff handbook. • Identify students considered at-risk at end of previous year and ensure they are scheduled correctly to maximize intervention effectiveness. • Review students with attendance issues and set up proactive plan for monitoring. • Create/update recommended academic campus interventions for each area. • Administer universal screeners.
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish administering universal screeners. • Ensure MTSS Teacher Teams / PLCs engage in regular problem-solving to identify high priority students and skills using data (screeners, benchmarks, etc.), create small-group intervention plans and monitor progress. • Monitor classroom expectations through classroom observations for Tier I and II behavior management, instructional systems and strategies. • Plan for ongoing professional development related to behavior, intervention planning, data analysis, etc. • Inventory campus academic, behavioral, and attendance interventions. • Monitor attendance and create plans for students with high absences/tardies.

Month	Suggested Actions
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure MTSS Teacher Teams / PLCs engage in regular problem-solving to identify high priority students and skills using data (screeners, benchmarks, etc.), create small-group intervention plans and monitor progress. • Plan for ongoing professional development related to behavior, intervention planning, data analysis, etc. • Monitor attendance and create plans for students with high absences/tardies. • Observe classrooms and common areas to assess campus and classroom management plans and instructional systems. • Attend teacher/parent conferences of students with significant concerns. • High Schools: Ensure credit audit for all students. Create plans for credit recovery and document interventions in Branching Minds. Request problem-solving meeting for students with multiple concerns.
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure MTSS Teacher Teams / PLCs engage in regular problem-solving to identify high priority students and skills using data (screeners, benchmarks, etc.), create small-group intervention plans and monitor progress. • Plan for ongoing professional development related to behavior, intervention planning, data analysis, etc. • Monitor attendance and create plans for students with high absences/tardies. • Observe classrooms and common areas to assess campus and classroom management plans and instructional systems. • Attend teacher/parent conferences of students with significant concerns. • High schools: Review credit recovery plans

Month	Suggested Actions
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure MTSS Teacher Teams / PLCs engage in regular problem-solving to identify high priority students and skills using data (screeners, benchmarks, etc.), create small-group intervention plans and monitor progress. • Plan for ongoing professional development related to behavior, intervention planning, data analysis, etc. • Monitor attendance and create plans for students with high absences/tardies. • Observe classrooms and common areas to assess campus and classroom management plans and instructional systems. • Attend teacher/parent conferences of students with significant concerns. • For students receiving intervention with fidelity for longer than 9 weeks and experiencing little or no growth despite adjustments to current plan, consider increasing intensity of intervention (tier) or schedule a Campus MTSS Meeting. • High schools: Review credit recovery plans
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer middle of year (MOY) screeners. Conduct an MTSS Schoolwide Data Meeting • Refocus on campus and classroom behavior system with booster training. • Ensure MTSS Teacher Teams / PLCs engage in regular problem-solving to identify high priority students and skills using data (screeners, benchmarks, etc.), create small-group intervention plans and monitor progress. • Plan for ongoing professional development in target areas. • Monitor attendance and create plans for students with high absences/tardies. • Attend teacher/parent conferences of students with significant concerns. • For students receiving intervention with fidelity for longer than 9 weeks and experiencing little or no growth despite adjustments to current plan, consider increasing intensity of intervention (tier) or schedule an MTSS Individual Student Team Meeting. • High schools: Review credit recovery plans and update credit audit information.

Month	Suggested Actions
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure MTSS Teacher Teams / PLCs engage in regular problem-solving to identify high priority students and skills using data (screeners, benchmarks, etc.), create small-group intervention plans and monitor progress. • Plan for ongoing professional development related to behavior, intervention planning, data analysis, etc. • Monitor attendance and create plans for students with high absences/tardies. • Observe classrooms and common areas to assess campus and classroom management plans and instructional systems. • Attend teacher/parent conferences of students with significant concerns. • For students receiving intervention with fidelity for longer than 9 weeks and experiencing little or no growth despite adjustments to current plan, consider increasing intensity of intervention (tier) or schedule an MTSS Individual Student Team Meeting. • High schools: Review credit recovery plans
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure MTSS Teacher Teams / PLCs engage in regular problem-solving to identify high priority students and skills using data (screeners, benchmarks, etc.), create small-group intervention plans and monitor progress. • Plan for ongoing professional development. • Monitor attendance and create plans for students with high absences/tardies. • Observe classrooms and common areas to assess campus and classroom management plans and instructional systems. • Attend teacher/parent conferences of students with significant concerns. • For students receiving intervention with fidelity for longer than 9 weeks and experiencing little or no growth despite adjustments to current plan, consider increasing intensity of intervention (tier) or schedule an MTSS Individual Student Team Meeting. • High schools: Review credit recovery plans

Month	Suggested Actions
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure MTSS Teacher Teams / PLCs engage in regular problem-solving to identify high priority students and skills using data (screeners, benchmarks, etc.), create small-group intervention plans and monitor progress. • Plan for ongoing professional development • Monitor attendance and create plans for students with high absences/tardies. • Attend teacher/parent conferences of students with significant concerns. • For students receiving intervention with fidelity for longer than 9 weeks and experiencing little or no growth despite adjustments to current plan, consider increasing intensity of intervention (tier) or schedule an MTSS Individual Student Team Meeting. • High schools: Review credit recovery plans
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure MTSS Teacher Teams /PLCs and MTSS Individual Student Teams review status of all students receiving interventions. • Administer end of year screeners and analyze data. Conduct an MTSS Schoolwide Data Meeting • Compile a list of “red flag” students who will need continued intervention and attention at the beginning of the next school year. • Prioritize professional development needs for the summer and BOY next school year. • Identify staff for various professional development opportunities and invite. • Attend teacher/parent conferences of students with significant concerns. • For students receiving intervention with fidelity for longer than 9 weeks and experiencing little or no growth despite adjustments to current plan, consider increasing intensity of intervention (tier) or schedule an MTSS Individual Student Team Meeting. • High schools: Review credit audits for all students. Create credit recovery plans in collaboration with students. • Grades 3, 5, and 8 conduct ALC Meetings

Month	Suggested Actions
June / July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 3, 5, and 8 schedule ALC meetings. • Ensure MTSS expectations and procedures are reflected in staff handbook. • Schedule intervention time into the master schedule. • Create campus behavior plan with clear expectations and acknowledge system. • Schedule MTSS Schoolwide Data, MTSS Teacher Teams/PLC, and MTSS Individual Student Team Meetings on Master calendar.

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