

Kansas Multi-Tier System of Support



MTSS is a coherent continuum of evidence based, system-wide practices to support a rapid response to academic and behavioral needs, with frequent data-based monitoring for instructional decision-making to empower each Kansas student to achieve high standards.¹

The above graphic illustrates the working components of Kansas MTSS.

- Districts and schools first create an empowering culture by means of dynamic and committed leadership as well as evidenced based professional development for all staff.
- The second level of implementation addresses instruction, curriculum and assessment aligned with MTSS core beliefs.
- At the center of the model is the three tiered approach based on the needs of students: 1) what do we do for all students? 2) what do we do for some students? 3) what do we do for the few?

Introduction

A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is a term used in Kansas to describe how schools go about providing supports for each child in their building to be successful and the processes and tools teachers use to make decisions. MTSS has developed from and expanded upon the Response to Intervention Model (RtI).

There are two federal laws that have made a difference in how schools deliver and coordinate services for children. The first is the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This Act set a standard for schools that by the year 2014 all students are to meet standards in the areas of reading and math and that schools would have a high graduation rate and a low dropout rate.

¹ Adapted from MTSS Kansas, www.kansasmtss.org

The second law influencing districts and schools to adopt a MTSS is the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA is the federal law that defines and explains special education in this country. In this law, the term Response to Intervention (RtI) was introduced and will influence the way districts identify and serve students with exceptionalities.

Core Beliefs

- Every child learns and achieves to high standards
- Learning includes academic and social competencies
- Every member of the education community continues to grow, learn and reflect
- Every leaders at all levels is responsible for every child
- Change is intentional, coherent and dynamic

How to Achieve these Beliefs

- Every child will be provided a rigorous and research-based curriculum
- Every child will be provided effective and relentless teaching
- Interventions will be provided at the earliest identification of need
- Policy will be based on evidence based practice
- Every educator will continuously gain knowledge and develop expertise to build capacity and sustain effective practice
- Resources will be intentionally designed and redesigned to match student needs
- Every leader will be responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating
- Educators, families and community members will be part of the fundamental practice of effective problem-solving and instructional decision making
- An empowering culture creates a collective responsibility for student success

What Does Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Mean?

Districts and schools have many people and programs involved in the education of children, including parents. While the classroom teacher is the major player in the school setting, he or she may have other people to assist with a child's education. These may be reading specialists, special education teachers, counselors, or teaching assistants (paraprofessionals). While our schools operate with the child's best interest in mind, sometimes coordinating efforts and techniques is a challenge.

MTSS is a way for schools and districts to step back and make sure that four things happen from a very coordinated standpoint:

- Students who need additional support are identified early
- Students identified as needing more support are provided support targeted at their specific needs using sound instructional programs or strategies
- Students progress is monitored frequently so we know if we are on track with our efforts
- Teachers and schools are using the data to change the path when needed and they have a formal system of support to assist with these changes

Definition of MTSS

MTSS is a coherent continuum of evidence based, system-wide practices to support a rapid response to academic and behavioral needs, with frequent data based monitoring for instructional decision-making to empower each Kansas student to achieve high standards.

What are the goals of MTSS?

The main goal of MTSS is for schools to use their resources in ways that help figure out what it takes for each child to be successful. This is accomplished by:

- Being prevention oriented: knowing who needs support early each year and putting those supports in place
- Implement evidence based interventions for all students and tailoring interventions based on a student's needs.
- Using progress monitoring data to know when to make a change with our efforts

What does MTSS look like?

<i>ACADEMICS</i>	<i>BEHAVIOR</i>
Few Students: Tier 3	Few Students: Tier 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More intense supplemental targeted skill intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student centered planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customized interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customized function-based interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Frequent progress monitoring to guide intervention design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Frequent progress monitoring to guide intervention design
Some Students: Tier 2	Some Students: Tier 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supplemental targeted skill intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supplemental targeted function-based interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Small groups 	Small groups or individual support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Frequent progress monitoring to guide intervention design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Frequent progress monitoring to guide intervention design
All Students: Tier 1	All Students: Tier 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence based core curriculum & instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Positive behavioral expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment system and data-based decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explicitly taught and reinforced
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistent approach to discipline
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment system and data-based decision making

Kansas Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

Behavior

- Student centered planning
- Customized function-based interventions
- Frequent progress monitoring to guide intervention design

Academics

- More intense supplemental targeted skill interventions
- Customized interventions
- Frequent progress monitoring to guide intervention design

Few

Some

- Supplemental targeted function-based interventions
- Small groups or individual support
- Frequent progress monitoring to guide intervention design

- Supplemental targeted skill interventions
- Small groups
- Frequent progress monitoring to guide intervention design

All

- All students, All settings
- Positive behavioral expectations explicitly taught and reinforced
- Consistent approach to discipline
- Assessment system and data-based decision making

- All students
- Evidence-based core curriculum & instruction
- Assessment system and data-based decision making

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Is MTSS the same in all schools?

No. While all schools in Kansas share the same goal for MTSS, they may go about accomplishing that in different ways. Schools in our state have different resources and may have different ways of working together.

What if the child's response to the interventions leads the team to suspect that he/she might be a child with exceptionality?

If intense interventions attempts are unsuccessful, or if what works requires a very intense or high level of support to maintain the child's progress, the team may carry the intervention forward into a special education initial evaluation. Also, at any point in time regardless of the interventions or supports being provided to the student, the parent may request an initial evaluation. During any initial evaluation the team will be part of carrying out a more intense intervention plan to determine 1) is the child a child with an exceptionality and 2) does the child need specially designed instruction in order to progress in the general education curriculum. The outcome of this process is always an intervention plan. If the child is found to be a child with exceptionality, the plan will be an Individual Education Plan (IEP). If the child is not found to be a child with exceptionality, the plan will be a Student Improvement Plan, or in some instances a Section 504 Plan. In the end, it should be the school's goal to have a plan in place that they think will work for the child and a progress monitoring system to help determine if the plan is working.

From: *Parent Involvement in a Multi-Tiered System of Support*

Dawn Miller, Ph. D.

Northeast Kansas Education Service Center, Project SPOT

Adapted from the work of John Copenhaver,

Director, Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center

Kansas School Counseling And MTSS

The Kansas School Counseling Pyramid of Intervention is a graphic organizer that illustrates layers of instructional and behavioral intervention efforts that can be provided to students according to their individual needs. Additionally, the Student Achievement Pyramid of Intervention can serve as a framework for discussion among collaborative professional learning communities that are willing to explore and engage in all avenues available to assist students in their learning process.

While the Kansas School Counseling Pyramid of Intervention may sound like "educational jargon," it provides a framework to align practices with the mission of learning for everyone. Richard DuFour says that pyramids of intervention prod us to ask the following questions:

- "Are our kids learning?
- How do we know that they are learning?
- And, most importantly, what are we prepared to do when they do not learn?"

DuFour asserts that the final question is the distinguishing characteristic of a professional learning community.

In a professional learning community, DuFour states, there is a commitment to help students learn, but the commitment goes much deeper than in schools without professional learning communities. "In the professional learning community, we say that learning is so important that we are going to do whatever it takes (academically and behaviorally) to help you learn, and we are not going to let up on you until you do learn."

Research consistently points out that student growth is enhanced when evaluation results are used to guide continued instruction. This concept of monitoring students' progress, or "progress monitoring," enables educators to determine if students are increasing their skills as expected, or if they need additional instructional interventions to enable them to maximize academic and behavioral success.

KANSAS SCHOOL COUNSELING PYRAMID OF INTERVENTION

The Kansas School Counseling Pyramid of Intervention represents the process of continually implementing “progress monitoring” and then providing layers of more and more intensive interventions so that students can be successful and progress in their learning. This proactive approach does not wait until students have large gaps in their learning that are almost too great to overcome. Neither does it allow high-achieving students to languish in a curriculum that is not challenging to them. This approach focuses on determining when students are struggling and providing strategic interventions to help them shore up their areas of need; it also documents students’ strength and provides additional challenge in a variety of ways. Kansas School Counseling Pyramid of Intervention begins with standards-based classrooms serving as the foundation for teaching and learning.

The graphic organizer is a representation of an integration of the American School Counseling Association’s (ASCA) Comprehensive Program and the Kansas MTSS initiative; it is a tool from which school counselors could select appropriate levels of intervention based on the specific needs of students.

The Comprehensive School Counseling Program

The building block components of the comprehensive school counseling program (www.schoolcounselor.org) are represented on the outside of the pyramid as:

- Assessments and Use of Data
- Guidance Curriculum
- Guidance and Counseling Competencies
- Teaming and Collaboration
- Advocacy

The comprehensive school counseling framework is a standards based foundation for successful school counseling programs and must be in place in order to facilitate an effective intervention strategy. For more information on implementing a comprehensive program that includes the Kansas standards and model practices go to <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=149>.

Levels (Tiers) of Intervention

Tier 1: Standards Based Classroom Learning describes effective instruction that should be happening in all classrooms for all students. As Kansas moves towards phasing in the implementation of the Kansas school counseling standards it is recognized that the curriculum standards are the foundation for the learning that occurs in each classroom. This type of instruction/ learning focuses on the standards and includes evidenced based instruction that is differentiated according to students’ various needs in all three domains (personal-social; academic; career). Counselors utilize progress monitoring results to guide and adjust instruction. Tier 1 is not limited to instruction in the academic content areas, but also includes all developmental domains such as **behavioral and social development**. This tier represents effective, strategic, and expert instruction that is ideally available in all classrooms. Through standards-based learning and on-going formative assessments we can answer DuFour’s questions of “are kids learning; and how are they learning?”

Tier 2: Needs Based Instruction/Learning: Intentional Guidance and Counseling: Tier Two becomes the answer to the question “what are we prepared to do when they do not learn?” Tier 2 describes pre-planned interventions that should be in place for students who are not being sufficiently successful or adequately challenged with Tier 1 interventions alone. In many schools in Kansas, students who need additional

interventions in the general classroom have been referred to the Student Support Team and possibly evaluated for special education services. The new conceptual framework illustrates the potential for having interventions for students before their gap becomes so large that specialized instruction is needed. Tier 2 interventions are not a substitution for Tier 1 interventions, but are layered in addition to the Tier 1 instruction that is provided. Tier 2 interventions are not solely reliant on the expertise and diligence of individual teachers across the school. They should include pre-planned interventions developed and supported at the school level, thereby becoming “standard intervention protocols” that are proactively in place for students who need them. Working collaboratively, counselors and school leaders should determine concepts and content areas that have traditionally proven difficult for students in their school. Then, they should develop interventions that are available when specific students show weaknesses in those areas. For middle school students who struggle with getting along Tier interventions may include structured, diligent, pre-planned small group interventions for those specified students. Similarly, schools should determine concepts and content areas that are likely to have been mastered by highly able students and, through strategies such as advanced placement, dual credit, service learning, mentoring/shadowing etc. be prepared to provide modified curriculum. All students who need a Tier 2 intervention (in addition to their Tier 1 instruction) should be identified through the progress monitoring evaluation data.

Tier 2 interventions can be used at all school levels. Virtually every high school has students who become disenfranchised and unsuccessful and therefore become high risk for dropping out of school. High schools, possibly in collaboration with local middle schools, can anticipate this and identify those students very early in their high school careers who are high risk for this type of difficulty. They can then build systematic mentoring programs that encourage students to become active and engaged in high school activities. In addition, specific academic interventions can be established for students who are missing core academic skills (e.g. strong reading skills) that will increase the probability that high risk students will have the necessary skills to be successful. To maintain motivation and improve academic achievement, high schools should use a variety of strategies to encourage more students to engage in rigorous coursework, e.g., vertical teaming that leads to AP courses.

Tier 2 interventions should not be endless for individual students who are struggling. Schools must ensure that specific students are not labeled as being “Tier 2 students” and thereby create lower expectations or tracking for those students. Tier 2 interventions are proactive and maintain high expectations for all students.

Tier 3: Student Support Team Driven Instruction/Learning provides an additional layer of analysis and interventions. The Student Support Team (and other small group teams such as the Gifted Eligibility Team) meet to discuss students who are still not provided the instructional/behavioral experiences to meet their needs. During this process, the diagnostic team analyzes the specific needs of the individual student. In Tier 2, schools establish standard intervention protocols that are available across the school. Tier 3 becomes much more individualized as the student’s teachers, counselor, and parents systematically determine the issues that need to be addressed for the student. Instructional interventions are then strategically put in place for the student and progress monitoring processes, including sensitive instruments that may be formal or informal in nature, are implemented frequently to determine if the student is responding to the interventions. Effective Tier 3 activities are exemplified by systematic activities to determine a student’s needs, implementation of scientifically-based interventions that are strategically incorporated with fidelity to meet the student’s individual needs, and frequent progress monitoring to inform continued instruction (i.e. grief counseling; crisis managements; individual responsive services).

Tier 4: Intervention Sources are developed specifically for targeted students based on their respective needs, they will participate in or receive services from government, non profits, and / or private agencies for interventions to address chronic issues that impede learning. Examples: substance and addiction, foster care, juvenile justice system, mental health prior to specialized services. Tier 4 will provide instruction that is targeted and specialized to meet students' acute needs. Tier 4 interventions would include students who have been identified with needs that exceed the current capacity of the school counseling program. KSDE encourages schools to recognize and then refer to appropriate community services those incapacities that exceed the scope of the school counseling program. It may include special education and related services for eligible students, provided in the general education classroom, or in some cases, in a resource room. Tier 4 does not represent a location for services, but indicates a layer of interventions that may be provided in the general education class or in a separate setting beyond the capacity of school professionals. Tier 4 is not a substitute for Tier 2, but is layered upon Tier 2 interventions.

For more information contact Kent Reed (kreed@ksde.org) at the KSDE.