

Students

**SUBJECT: MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (MTSS) PROCESS/ACADEMIC INTERVENTION SERVICES**

MTSS is a collaborative, evidence-based approach to differentiating and personalizing instruction, intervention, and enrichment, across academics and the social/emotional spectrum for all students. In accordance with Commissioner's regulations, the District has established administrative practices and procedures for implementing District-wide initiatives that address an MTSS process applicable to all students. This individualized, student-centered approach is one of the most effective ways to provide an equitable educational experience because it leverages research-based approaches along with teacher expertise to assist educators in understanding their students' needs and enables them to make strategic and data-driven decisions.

MTSS is a framework that helps educators to identify students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional strengths and challenges and provide differentiated support for students based on their needs. The framework is used with the intent to clarify, streamline, and incorporate best tools and practices so that each student has the best chance of meeting their full potential. MTSS is not a specific curriculum, but a proactive approach establishing targeted supports. MTSS integrates data and instruction within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and support students' social, emotional, and behavior needs from a strengths-based perspective. For students suspected of having a potential learning disability, the District will provide appropriate MTSS services pursuant to Commissioner's regulations prior to a referral to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) for evaluation.

The New York State Education Department (SED) has released a guidance document to assist school districts in designing and implementing an effective MTSS process, which includes, but is not limited to, information regarding regulatory requirements, quality indicators, staff development, tools to assist districts in selecting a specific model and procedures for the use of MTSS data in determining if a student has a learning disability. This guidance document is available on the SED's official website.

The District has established procedures for identifying students with learning disabilities that use a research-based MTSS process prior to, or as part of, an individual evaluation to determine whether a student has a learning disability. An MTSS process is required for all students in grades kindergarten through grade 8 suspected of having a learning disability in the area of reading. MTSS cannot be utilized as a strategy to delay or deny a timely initial evaluation of a student suspected of having a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**Minimum Requirements of District's MTSS Program**

The District's MTSS process will include the following minimum requirements:

- a) Scientific, research-based instruction in reading and mathematics provided to all students in the general education class by qualified personnel. Instruction in reading, per Commissioner's regulations, means scientific, research-based reading programs that include explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency (including oral reading skills) and reading comprehension strategies;

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- b) Research - and Evidence-based instruction in social emotional wellness provided to all students in the general education class by qualified personnel, as aligned to the NYS SEL Benchmarks.
- c) Screenings will be provided three times a year to all students in grades K-8 to identify those students who are not making academic progress at expected rates;
- d) Scientific, research-based instruction matched to student need with increasingly intensive levels of targeted interventions for those students who do not make satisfactory progress in their levels of performance and/or in their rate of learning to meet age or grade level standards;
- e) Repeated assessments of student achievement which should include curriculum-based measures to determine if interventions are resulting in student progress toward age or grade level standards;
- f) The application of information about the student's response to intervention to make educational decisions about changes in goals [i.e., goals for all students, not just Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals], instruction and/or services and the decision to make a referral for special education programs and/or services; and
- g) Written notification to the parents when the student requires an intervention beyond that provided to all students in the general education classroom that provides information about:
  - 1. The amount and nature of student performance data that will be collected and the general education services that will be provided as enumerated in Commissioner's regulations;
  - 2. Strategies for increasing the student's rate of learning; and
  - 3. The parents' right to request an evaluation for special education programs and/or services.

**Structure of RtI Program**

The District's MTSS program will consist of multiple tiers of instruction or assessments to address increasingly intensive levels of targeted intervention to promote early identification of student performance needs and/or rate of learning, and to help raise achievement levels for all students.

Student Support Teams (SSTs), whose members may include, but are not limited to, regular education teachers, special education personnel, the school psychologist, reading and math coordinators, designated administrators, and other individuals deemed appropriate by the District, will be available for each building or grade level classification to address the implementation of the District's MTSS process.

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The SST's responsibilities will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) Determining the level of interventions and student performance criteria appropriate for each tier of the MTSS model;
- b) Analyzing information and assessments concerning a student's MTSS and making educational decisions about changes in goals, instruction, or services;
- c) Determining whether to make a referral for special education programs or services.

**Criteria for Determining the Levels of Intervention to be Provided to Students**

The Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with the Deputy Superintendent and each Building Principal, shall maintain a description of academic intervention and/or MTSS services for each school. This description will include any variations in services in schools within the district and will specifically delineate: the district-wide procedures used to determine the need for academic intervention/MTSS services; the academic intervention instructional and/or MTSS services to be provided; whether instructional services and/or support services are offered during the regular school day or during an extended school day or year; and the criteria for ending services, including, if appropriate, performance levels that students must obtain on district-selected assessments.

On a yearly basis the Superintendent or their designee will ensure that building administrators and building level MTSS teams review and revise the description of academic intervention services based on student performance results and present such revised description to the Board for approval.

**Types of Interventions**

The District will provide multiple tiers of increasingly intensive levels of targeted intervention and instruction for those students who do not make satisfactory progress in their levels of performance and/or in their rate of learning to meet age or grade level standards.

It is expected that use of the Tier Level of instruction will be specific to each student's needs and will be an ongoing process, with students entering and exiting tiers of intervention according to the analysis of student performance data and progress monitoring.

**Tier One Instruction**

Tier One instruction is provided to all students in the general education setting. The use of scientific, research based instruction in the areas of reading and math will be provided by the general education teacher and/or other qualified personnel as appropriate, and will emphasize proactive, preventative core instructional strategies in the classroom setting. Group and/or individualized instruction, assessment, and reinforcement activities will be provided as deemed appropriate by the classroom teacher.

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The analysis of Tier One student performance data will be used to identify those students who need additional intervention at the Tier Two Level of instruction.

Tier Two Instruction

In general, Tier Two instruction will consist of small group, targeted interventions for those students identified as being "at risk" and who fail to make adequate progress in the general education classroom. Tier Two instruction will include programs and intervention strategies designed to supplement Tier One interventions provided to all students in the general education setting.

Tier Two instruction will be provided by classroom teachers in grades K-5, may be provided by 6-8 teachers, and may be provided by specialized staff such as reading and math teachers, tutors, speech therapists, school psychologists, and/or school counselors as determined by the SST.

At the conclusion of Tier Two instruction, the SST will review the student's progress and make a determination as to whether Tier Two interventions should be maintained, the student returned to the general education classroom if satisfactory progress is shown, or referred for Tier Three instruction.

Tier Three Instruction

Tier Three instruction is the provision of more intensive instructional interventions, tailored to the needs of the individual student, and is provided to those students who do not achieve adequate progress after receiving interventions at the Tier Two level. Tier Three instruction may include longer periods of intervention program and services than those provided in the first two Tiers based upon the significant needs of the student.

Tier Three instruction will be provided by those specialists, as determined by the SST, best qualified to address the individual student's targeted area(s) of need. If deemed appropriate by the Team, and in accordance with applicable law and regulation, a referral of the student may be made to the CSE.

Progress monitoring on a continuous basis is an integral part of Tier Three and the student's response to the intervention process will determine the need or level of further intervention services and/or educational placement.

**Amount and Nature of Student Performance Data to be Collected**

The SST will determine the amount and nature of student performance data that will be collected to assess, on an ongoing basis, student performance results and address ongoing academic needs as warranted. This data collection will reflect the Tier Level of intervention provided to the student. Student performance data will also be used to review the District's MTSS program and make modifications to the program as deemed necessary.

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**Manner and Frequency for Progress Monitoring**

The SST will monitor the progress of those students receiving intervention services beyond that provided to all students in the general education classroom. The Team will meet with the student's teacher(s) and determine if further adjustments must be made to the student's current instructional program and/or a change made to the Tier Level of intervention provided. Monitoring of student progress will be an ongoing part of the program from the initial screening to completion of the MTSS process as applicable. Parents may also request that the SST review their child's progress.

Fidelity measures (e.g., an observational checklist of designated teaching behaviors in accordance with the MTSS process being implemented) will also be completed by Team members to assess whether the intervention was implemented as intended and uniformly applied. Clear benchmarks will be established for student performance and performance charts will be plotted at the completion of the instructional period or intervention process.

**Staff Development**

All staff members involved in the development, provision, and/or assessment of the District's MTSS program, including both general education and special education instructional personnel, will receive appropriate training necessary to implement the District's MTSS program. Staff development will include the criteria for determining the levels of intervention provided to students, the types of interventions, collection of student performance data, and the manner and frequency for monitoring progress.

34 CFR §§ 300.309 and 300.311

Education Law §§ 3208, 4002, 4401, 4401-a, and 4410

8 NYCRR §§ 100.2(ii), 200.2(b)(7), 200.4(a), 200.4(j)(3)(i), and 200.4(j)(5)(i)(g)