

MTSS Overview Video Script

Slide #1

Welcome Washoe County School Districts employees. We are here today to give you a brief overview of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports and, specifically, how MTSS academics work.

Slide #2

The Multi-Tiered System of Supports, or MTSS, addresses several components that are interconnected and designed to help our students be successful inside and outside of school. MTSS includes Response to Intervention, or RTI, which emphasizes the academic success of every student by focusing on effective core instruction as well as providing interventions, when necessary, to ensure that ALL students learn. In addition to RTI, MTSS also encompasses Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports or (PBIS), a system that focuses on teaching behavioral expectations in the school environment and re-enforcing appropriate behavior by providing supports and interventions. MTSS also incorporates Social and Emotional Learning, or SEL, a component dedicated to acquiring knowledge and skills related to self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision making and relationship skills. Last, but not least, MTSS includes restorative practices, or RP, which focuses on strengthening relationships, building community, and addressing issues before they become bigger problems.

Slide #3

Here you see the MTSS pyramid that is used in the Washoe County School District. While you examine the pyramid, there are a few things we would like you to note.

First, you may notice along the right side of the pyramid that there is a line labeled “Problem-Solving Model” with two arrows at each end with “comprehensive academics and behavioral services” under the line. It is important to understand that MTSS encompasses both academic and behavior as they are often connected. For example, when a student struggles with behavior issues, their academics are likely to suffer as a result and when a student is struggling academically, the student may in turn exhibit behavioral issues. It is important when utilizing the problem-solving model seen at the center of the pyramid and which we will address in a moment, that Collaborative Teacher Teams and Intervention Assistance Teams use data to identify the real problem so the team can develop an intervention plan and respond accordingly.

In MTSS, one of the sayings we have is, “ALL means ALL.” Tier 1 instruction is provided to ALL our students and is at-grade level, core instruction. Furthermore, Tier 1, or core instruction, should meet the needs of a minimum of 80% of your students. If you find that more than 20% of your school needs Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention, then as Mike Mattos stated, “You don’t have an intervention problem, you have a “what you do all day long in the classroom problem.” At this point, you would have to re-examine and make changes to your core instruction.

Tier 2 should support approximately 10-15% of your students whose data suggest they need support in addition to Tier 1 instruction. Tier 2 support is intensive, targeted small group instruction provided during an intervention time and does not supplant Tier 1 instruction.

Tier 3 focuses on the 3-5% of students whose data suggest they are significantly behind their peers in grade level content and for which tier 1 instruction and /or tier 2 interventions have not been successful. Again, students receiving tier 3 interventions continue to receive tier 1 instruction. However, their interventions will be on a 1:1, 2:1 or 3:1 student teacher ratio under most circumstances and the intensity of service is increased.

Finally, we return to the problem-solving model at the center of the pyramid. Educators use the problem-solving model to make decisions regarding the level of support a student needs. We encourage educators to go through each of the four steps: problem identification, problem analysis, plan implementation, and plan evaluation prior to making any decisions regarding intervention placement. In addition, the MTSS structure in the Washoe County School District is a dynamic process, as opposed to a "Wait to fail" model. The idea is that we place the student at the level of intervention where they will have the best chance of catching up with their grade level peers. As such, we move students to the level of support that the data indicate will most likely meet their individual needs.

Slide #4

Now we will guide you through the important concepts of tier one.

Remember, Tier 1 or core instruction is for all students, regardless of whether they are receiving additional supports within another tier. Core Instruction includes:

- Grade-Level standards. Tier 1 instruction is always provided to students using grade-level essential standards.
- School Wide Behavioral Expectations (PBIS). School-wide behavioral expectations are explicitly taught in every classroom and around the school in each unique setting. They are also frequently revisited. In addition, students are rewarded when positive behavior is exhibited and verbally praised.
- Explicit, Differentiated, and Scaffolded Instruction. As educators, we know that not all students learn the same way. Sometimes we need to adapt the instruction to meet the needs of the student. This in no way means that we provide them with materials that are below their current grade level, but it does mean that we may have to differentiate the lesson and provide students with scaffolded instruction to help them access grade-level material.
- Flexible Grouping and Active Student Engagement. With flexible grouping, the teacher is allowing for students to work with a variety of other students in the classroom as opposed to one "go to" partner. It is important for all students to have the opportunity to learn from one another and allow them to experience working with student at various levels of understanding. It is also important that we make sure that we have active student engagement. If students are not engaged in the lesson, then they are not learning. Therefore, it is important to vary academic instruction and implement different learning tasks throughout a school day or class period.
- Social and Emotional Learning. It is important to provide both explicit SEL instruction in your school day as well as integrating SEL strategies/activities in your academic instruction. The Social and Emotional well-being of our students is a priority as it influences their academic success.

- Restorative Practices. Restorative practices, and in particular the art of circles, is an important piece of building a community within your classroom and within your school. However, it is extremely important that you have had proper training prior to engaging in these activities as students sometimes disclose information that you or other students within the circle may not be equipped to deal with in that space.

Finally, an important part of Tier 1 instruction is universal screening. We want to know whether our instruction is meeting the needs of at least 80% of our students. It is also a necessary first step to help us identify students that may need additional support. In WCSD, the Measures of Academic Progress, or MAP, in conjunction with PBIS data, have traditionally been used as our universal screeners for kinder through 8th grade. 1st through 8th grade student are assessed using MAP in the fall, winter and spring. Kinder only uses MAP in the Winter and Spring while Brigance is used to assess Kinder students in the Fall. Keep in mind, these assessment provide a single data source that may serve as an indicator of where the student is in his/her learning; if data suggest Tier 1 is not meeting the student's needs, we gather more data from other sources to confirm the need for more intensive support at Tier 2 or Tier 3.

Slide #5

Tier 2 consists of targeted group intervention and is meant to be “close to the core.” In other words, students whose data suggest they have not mastered a grade-level standard or standards and/or behavioral expectations after receiving Tier 1 instruction are identified to receive Tier 2 supports. There are some schools where Tier 2 supports are provided to students whose data demonstrate an achievement gap that is below grade level standards and/or behavioral expectations. Tier 2 is provided to meet the needs of 10-15% of the student population who do not demonstrate mastery at the Tier 1 level. Tier 2 supports are provided through intensive and targeted interventions in small groups.

Students who require Tier 2 support are identified by collaborative teacher teams that have examined various data sources which can include, but are not limited to, student performance on a universal screener, common formative and summative assessments, state assessments, curriculum-based measurements or CBMs, academic grades, behavioral referrals, anecdotal observations, etc. Remember, this tier should not exceed 10-15% of the student population.

Students identified as “at-risk” academically or behaviorally are placed in small groups according to the skill and/or standard that they need to work on and provided intensive instruction in that area. This instruction includes teacher support, additional scaffolding, and consistent and constructive feedback.

For optimal outcomes, students receiving Tier 2 support should receive approximately 90-135 minutes of intervention instruction per week. It is important to note once again that this does not mean taking them out of Tier 1 core instruction. Rather, time must be built into the school day to provide not only intervention time for struggling students, but also extension time for students that are on track and those students identified as gifted.

Slide #6

Tier 3 involves intensive individualized instruction and is typically reserved for students who have not demonstrated success at the Tier 2 level or students who are significantly behind their grade level peers. Only about 3-5% of your student population should require this level of support.

As always, data-based decision making should be used to determine whether Tier 3 support is warranted. These decisions are usually made after a referral from the Collaborative Teacher Team is made to the school's Intervention Assistance Team, or IAT. At some schools, the IAT is referred to as the MTSS Team. If the IAT determines that Tier 3 support is needed with the use of the Individual Problem-Solving Form for Tier 3, an Individualized Intervention Plan is developed. The student is supported through an intervention that is delivered in a setting with a student to teacher ratio of 1:1, 2:1 or 3:1. This intensive instruction provides more opportunities for the teacher to provide support, feedback, and scaffolded instruction to help the student catch up to their grade level peers at a faster rate.

Slide #7

Keep in mind that the information being provided in this presentation was established prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. The move to distance and/or hybrid learning models in the WCSD may necessitate some creative thinking in how we implement MTSS for our students. For example, the 90-135 minutes of intervention time is ideal when students are attending school in person every day. This may not work with our distance and/or hybrid learners and may have to be adjusted accordingly. In addition, distance learners, and in some cases, brick and mortar learners may not have access to the universal screeners. This means that educators will have to rely on other data points to identify struggling learners.

We encourage educators to stick with the MTSS Framework provided as much as possible, but understand that adjustments may need to be made. For guidance on adjusting the framework, please reach out to the MTSS department.

Slide 7

Thank you for watching this overview of the MTSS framework. For more information, please visit the MTSS-SEL Department's website.