

A photograph of a classroom scene. A male teacher with curly hair, wearing a dark blazer and light-colored pants, stands on the left side of the frame, leaning forward and looking towards a group of students. Five students are seated at a long wooden table. From left to right: a boy in a blue jacket has his right hand raised; a girl in a white top has her right hand raised; a girl in a light blue top has her right hand raised; a boy in a yellow shirt has his right hand raised; and a girl in a patterned top has her right hand raised. The background features a tall black shelving unit filled with books and potted plants. The overall scene is brightly lit and has a soft, slightly faded appearance.

MTSS for Behavior: A Practical Guide for School & District Leaders

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Executive Summary

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a proactive, data-driven framework designed to meet the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of every student in an integrated and equitable manner. It represents a fundamental shift away from reactive, siloed support systems toward a unified, preventative model that serves the whole child. By organizing supports into three tiers of increasing intensity - universal (Tier 1), targeted (Tier 2), and intensive (Tier 3) - MTSS ensures that all students receive the precise level of support they need to succeed.

This guide provides a comprehensive roadmap for K–12 leaders to build, implement, and sustain an effective MTSS framework behavioral support. At its core, MTSS is driven by a collaborative, multi-disciplinary team that uses data to make informed decisions about student needs, intervention selection, and progress monitoring. Key components detailed in this report include the structure of the three-tiered "behavior side" of the MTSS Pyramid, the process for understanding the function of student behavior, the roles and responsibilities of the MTSS Behavior team, and a 10-step protocol for running effective meetings.

Furthermore, this guide addresses the critical logistics of implementation, including strategic professional development, a streamlined referral process, and methods for measuring impact and ensuring fidelity. A central theme is the role of MTSS as a lever for consistency, using disaggregated data to identify and address disparities in discipline and support.

Ultimately, MTSS is more than a program; it is a transformation of a school's operational culture. It moves a school from asking, "**What is wrong with this student?**" to "**What support does this student need, and how can our system provide it?**" For school leaders, MTSS is a powerful framework for optimizing resources, empowering staff, and creating a learning environment where every student has the opportunity to thrive.

Introduction: Why MTSS Matters Now

In today's complex educational landscape, school leaders are tasked with meeting the diverse and often interconnected needs of every learner. The traditional, reactive model of student support, where intervention occurs only after significant academic or behavioral challenges have emerged, is no longer sufficient. This "wait to fail" approach can lead to lost instructional time, chronic frustration for students and staff, and widening achievement gaps. Similarly, running separate, siloed systems for academics, behavior, and mental health creates inefficiencies, communication breakdowns, and a fragmented experience for students who require comprehensive support.

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) offers a necessary and powerful evolution. It provides a unified, proactive framework that addresses the whole child by integrating academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning (SEL) into one coherent system. Instead of waiting for problems to become crises, MTSS is designed for early identification and prevention, ensuring that students receive timely, evidence-based interventions at the first sign of need.

The MTSS framework is designed to deliver high-quality instruction, proactive interventions, and consistent behavior support for every student, ensuring that no learner is overlooked. Central to its foundation is a commitment to equity, guaranteeing that historically underserved populations have equitable access to the same supports, resources, and services that enable all students to achieve academic and behavioral success.

The adoption of MTSS represents a significant cultural shift. It moves a school's focus from individual student deficits to the strength and responsiveness of its own systems. It fosters a culture of collective responsibility, where general and special educators, counselors, psychologists, and administrators collaborate as a unified team, using shared data and a common language to solve problems.

This systemic approach reduces stress on educators, who are no longer left to manage complex student needs in isolation, and creates a more predictable, consistent, positive, and supportive environment for everyone.

As schools continue to address the lingering effects of educational disruptions and the growing social-emotional needs of students, a robust MTSS framework is not a luxury but a necessity. It is the operational blueprint for building a school that is truly responsive, equitable, and equipped to help every learner succeed.

MTSS 101: Foundations

Core Principles

MTSS is a school-wide framework that organizes how academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and attendance supports are provided to students through a continuum of evidence-based practices. It is not a specific curriculum or program but rather a systematic, problem-solving model for delivering instruction and intervention. The framework is guided by several core principles:



Proactive and Preventive

The primary goal of MTSS is to prevent academic and behavioral challenges from occurring. It emphasizes high-quality core instruction and universal supports for all students to build a strong foundation, rather than waiting for students to fail before providing help.



Data-Driven Decision-Making

Every decision within an MTSS framework - from identifying students in need to selecting interventions and evaluating progress - is grounded in objective data. Teams regularly analyze screening, diagnostic, and progress-monitoring data to guide their actions.



Team-Based and Collaborative

MTSS relies on the shared expertise of a multi-disciplinary team, including administrators, teachers, counselors, behavior specialists, school psychologists, and any staff working directly with students. This collaborative approach breaks down professional silos and fosters collective ownership of student success.



Focus on the Whole Child

MTSS moves beyond a narrow academic focus to address the interconnected needs of students. It integrates supports for academics, behavior, and social-emotional learning, recognizing that a student's well-being in one area directly impacts their success in others.



Tiered Continuum of Support

Supports are organized into three levels, or tiers, of increasing intensity. This layered approach ensures that resources are used efficiently, providing all students with universal support (Tier 1), some with targeted interventions (Tier 2; ~10–15%), and a few with intensive, individualized plans (Tier 3; ~3–5%).

MTSS is guided by prevention, collaboration, and whole-child support, and it is implemented through four essential components: universal screening, a multi-level prevention system, progress monitoring, and data-based decision making.

The Four Essential Components of MTSS

The Center on Multi-Tiered System of Supports describes MTSS as a proactive, preventive framework that integrates data and instruction to maximize student achievement while also supporting students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs from a strengths-based perspective. A complete MTSS is built on four essential components that function together as a unified system:



Screening

A systematic process for identifying students who may be at risk for poor learning outcomes.



Multi-Level Prevention System

A continuum of supports organized across three tiers of increasing intensity for instruction and intervention.



Progress Monitoring

Ongoing, frequent collection and use of data to assess student performance over time and determine response to support.



Data-Based Decision Making

Using screening, progress monitoring, and other data sources to select supports, evaluate effectiveness, and adjust instruction and intervention.

When these components are implemented in an integrated way, supported by clear infrastructure, routines, and role clarity, schools and districts are better positioned to deliver consistent supports and improve outcomes for students and staff.

With these four essential components in place, MTSS becomes a unified way to identify needs early, match support to need, monitor progress, and adjust interventions over time. Importantly, those same components are not limited to academics, they provide the structure for delivering prevention and intervention across the full range of student needs. That's why a fully implemented MTSS framework is intentionally comprehensive, addressing multiple, interconnected domains of a student's educational experience, not just one area in isolation.

Domains of a Comprehensive MTSS Framework

Unlike earlier models that often focused exclusively on academics, MTSS is intentionally comprehensive. It is designed to address multiple, interconnected domains of a student's educational experience. The primary domains covered by a fully implemented MTSS framework are:



Academics

This includes core instruction in subjects like reading, writing, and math, as well as targeted and intensive interventions for students who are struggling to meet grade-level standards.



Behavior

This domain focuses on creating a positive and safe school climate by explicitly teaching and reinforcing behavioral expectations. It also includes a continuum of supports to address challenging behaviors, from minor classroom disruptions to more significant concerns.



Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

MTSS integrates the teaching of critical SEL competencies, such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These skills are recognized as essential for both academic and life success.



Attendance

While sometimes considered a data point rather than a separate domain, attendance is a critical component of MTSS. Chronic absenteeism is often an early indicator of academic, behavioral, or social-emotional challenges, and the framework includes strategies to support and improve student attendance.

How MTSS Supports Academics, Behavior, and SEL

The true power of MTSS lies in its integration of these domains. The framework operates on the understanding that a student's struggles are rarely confined to a single area. For example, a student who acts out in class (a behavioral issue) may be doing so because they are frustrated by an underlying reading difficulty (an academic issue) and lack the skills to advocate for help (an SEL issue). A system that addresses only one of these factors is unlikely to be successful.

MTSS unifies these supports to prevent the communication gaps and duplicated efforts that plague siloed systems. In a school with separate academic and behavioral support teams, a student could fall through the cracks or receive conflicting guidance. By implementing a single, school-wide framework, MTSS compels all staff to adopt a common vocabulary (e.g., Tiers, progress monitoring, function of behavior) and a common process for identifying and supporting students.

- This shared language and process is the foundation for true collaboration. A math teacher, a school counselor, and a special educator can sit at the same table, review the same data, and use the same problem-solving logic to design a comprehensive support plan. This moves the school from a collection of individual practitioners working in isolation to a cohesive team with a unified mission to support the whole child.

When MTSS is working well, it is not "one more thing" on educators' plates; it becomes the fundamental way the school operates to ensure every student can thrive.

This integrated, whole-child approach is what sets MTSS apart from earlier tiered models. To understand why, it helps to distinguish MTSS from RTI - two terms that are related, but not identical.

UP NEXT

Clarifying the Frameworks

RTI vs. MTSS: What Leaders Need to Know

The terms Response to Intervention (RTI) and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) are often used interchangeably, but it is crucial for school leaders to understand their distinct meanings and relationship. While they share common principles, MTSS represents a broader and more comprehensive evolution of the RTI model.

Common Ground

RTI and MTSS are built on a similar foundation. Both frameworks utilize a tiered system of support to provide interventions of increasing intensity to students. They both rely heavily on universal screening to identify students at risk and on progress monitoring to make data-driven decisions about the effectiveness of those interventions. In essence, the tiered logic and the cycle of assessment and intervention are core to both models.

Key Differences

The primary distinction lies in their scope and focus. RTI traditionally originated as a framework to address academic needs, particularly in the areas of reading and math. It provided a systematic process for identifying and supporting students with learning difficulties.

MTSS, on the other hand, is a much broader, whole-child framework. It takes the core tenets of RTI and expands them to create a single, unified system that addresses not only academics but also behavior, social-emotional learning (SEL), and attendance. MTSS also places a more explicit and robust emphasis on system-wide components that support implementation, such as team-based leadership, professional development, and family and community engagement. Furthermore, MTSS is more intentionally focused on equity, using data to ensure that all students, especially those from historically marginalized groups, receive timely and effective support.

One of the most significant shifts with MTSS is its emphasis on unifying systems that may have previously operated in parallel. For example, a school might have used RTI for academics and a separate framework like Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) for behavior. MTSS integrates these into a single, coherent structure.

MTSS and RTI: A Unified Approach to Student Support

For modern school improvement, leaders should embrace MTSS as the overarching framework that guides all student support initiatives. RTI should not be seen as a competing model but rather as the academic component within the MTSS umbrella. This integrated approach is critical for efficiency and effectiveness.

When schools treat academic and behavioral supports as entirely separate systems, they risk creating inconsistent practices, communication gaps, and duplicated efforts. A student's academic struggles and behavioral challenges are often linked, and a fragmented support system is ill-equipped to address their needs holistically. A student might be discussed in an academic RTI meeting one week and a separate behavior meeting the next, with neither team having a complete picture.

By adopting MTSS as the single organizing framework, leaders can streamline processes and foster a culture of shared responsibility. Academic and behavior teams begin to use the same tiered logic, data-review protocols, and problem-solving methods. This alignment ensures that interventions are coordinated, resources are used efficiently, and every student receives comprehensive support tailored to their unique profile.

Lastly, MTSS continues to apply the Response to Intervention methodology which guides teams to implement evidence-based supports, matched to individual student needs, and then evaluate the student's "response to those interventions" using objective data. Keeping this core principle of RTI within MTSS efforts, helps teams assess intervention effectiveness and adjust accordingly in a timely manner.

- ❏ With RTI understood as the academic foundation of MTSS, it's important to clarify how PBIS fits within the broader framework. Because many schools historically implemented RTI for academics and PBIS for behavior, leaders must ensure the two align within MTSS rather than operate as competing systems.

MTSS vs. PBIS: What Leaders Need to Know

The terms Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) are often used together, and sometimes interchangeably, but it's important for school and district leaders to understand how they differ and how they fit together. MTSS is the overarching framework for organizing student supports across domains, while PBIS is a behavior-focused framework that strengthens school climate and behavior systems. In strong implementation, PBIS typically operates within the broader MTSS structure.

Common Ground

MTSS and PBIS share a strong foundational logic. Both are grounded in prevention, early intervention, and data-informed decision making. Each uses a three-tiered model to provide universal supports for all students (Tier 1), targeted supports for some (Tier 2), and intensive supports for a few (Tier 3). Both frameworks also rely on leadership, clear team routines, and regular data review to move schools from reactive responses to proactive planning.

Key Differences

The primary distinction lies in scope and purpose:

MTSS is comprehensive

It organizes how schools provide support across multiple domains, academics, behavior, social-emotional learning (SEL), and often attendance, using shared decision rules, progress monitoring, and problem-solving routines.

PBIS is behavior-specific

It focuses on building predictable, positive environments by teaching expectations, reinforcing appropriate behavior, and using behavior data to improve systems and reduce problem behavior.

In other words, MTSS defines how the overall system operates, while PBIS defines how behavior support is designed and delivered within that system.

MTSS and PBIS: A Unified Approach to Student Support

For effective school improvement, leaders should avoid framing this as a choice between MTSS and PBIS. The goal is alignment. When PBIS is clearly positioned as the behavior component within MTSS, schools gain a shared structure for how supports are delivered and a shared approach for how behavior is taught, reinforced, and monitored.

When MTSS and PBIS operate as separate initiatives, schools often experience fragmented teams, duplicate meetings, inconsistent decision rules, and conflicting guidance for staff. A student may be discussed through one lens in an "academic" meeting and a different lens in a "behavior" meeting, with no unified plan or shared progress monitoring.

By aligning PBIS within MTSS, leaders create **one coherent support system**: academic and behavior data are reviewed together, teams use common tier logic and protocols, and interventions are coordinated across domains. This improves clarity for staff, strengthens fidelity, and results in more consistent supports for students—while making the overall system more sustainable.

Framework Comparison at a Glance: How RTI and PBIS Fit Within MTSS

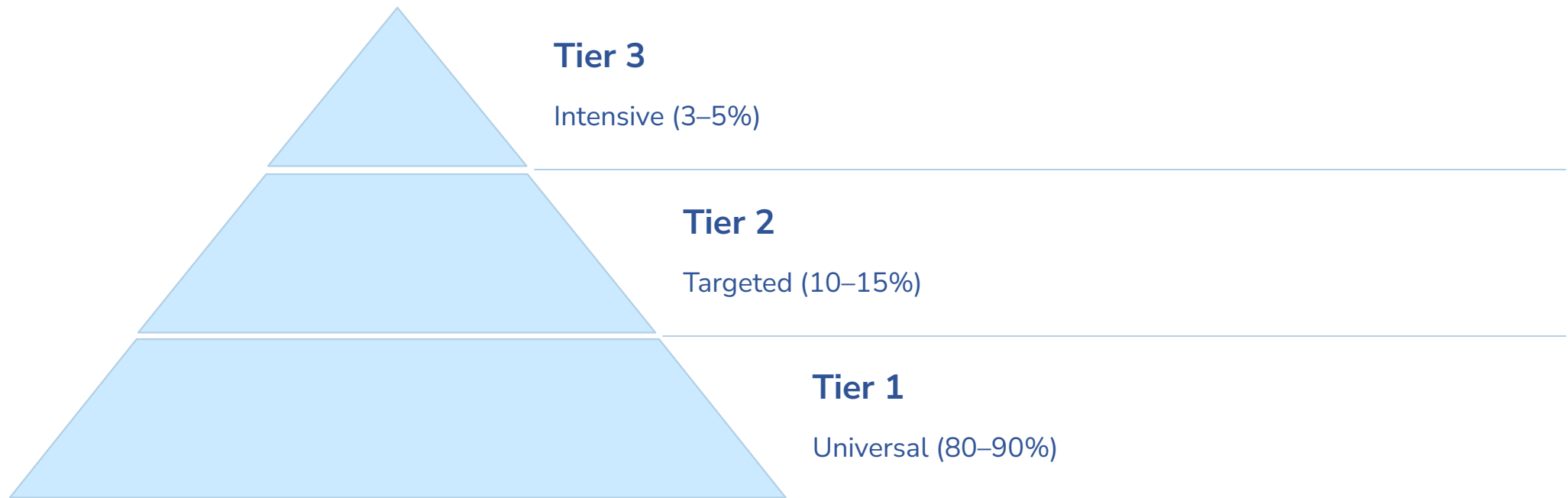
Feature	RTI	PBIS	MTSS
Primary Focus	Primarily addresses academic deficits, especially in reading and math.	Primarily addresses behavior systems and school climate through proactive teaching, reinforcement, and consistent responses to behavior.	Addresses the whole child: academics, behavior, social-emotional learning (SEL), and attendance.
Scope	An intervention and assessment framework.	A behavior-focused framework for organizing and improving schoolwide behavior practices and supports.	A comprehensive, school-wide framework for organizing all supports and aligning systems.
System Emphasis	Focuses on the student intervention process.	Emphasizes prevention-based behavior systems (expectations, routines, acknowledgement, data review) and consistent adult implementation across settings.	Emphasizes system-level change, including leadership, professional development, and collaboration.
Collaboration & Equity	Collaboration is important, but equity is not always an explicit focus.	Collaboration is essential (often via a PBIS team); equity work commonly focuses on discipline and climate data, but depth varies by implementation.	Places a strong, explicit emphasis on collaboration across all roles and on ensuring equitable access to support.
How it fits with MTSS	Often functions as the academic component within the MTSS umbrella.	Often functions as the behavior component within the broader MTSS structure.	The overarching framework that organizes and aligns student supports across domains.

With MTSS and PBIS clearly differentiated and aligned, the next step is translating that clarity into day-to-day practice. The most common way schools visualize and organize implementation is through the three-tiered model, - often shown as a pyramid - so teams can see how universal, targeted, and intensive supports fit together within one coherent system.

MTSS-B in Practice: The Tiered Behavior System

The MTSS Behavior Pyramid (Tiers 1–3)

The core of the MTSS framework is its three-tiered model of support, often visualized as a pyramid. This structure illustrates how supports are layered to meet the needs of all students, with a broad base of universal support and increasingly intensive interventions at the upper levels. In an MTSS for Behavior (MTSS-B) context, this pyramid represents a continuum of function-based supports, meaning interventions are chosen based on why a student is struggling and how much help they need.



The pyramid illustrates how the majority of students are served by universal supports at the base, with increasingly intensive and individualized interventions for smaller groups of students at the upper tiers.

Tier 1: Universal Supports

Tier 1 is the foundation of the pyramid, comprising the high-quality instruction, environmental supports, and behavioral practices provided to all students in all settings. The goal of Tier 1 is to create a positive, predictable, and safe learning environment that prevents most behavioral issues from occurring. When Tier 1 is implemented effectively, it should meet the needs of approximately 80–90% of the student population.

The strength of the entire MTSS system rests on this universal foundation. Tier 1 supports are not just for students; they are the core practices that all staff, teachers, administrators, and support personnel, are expected to implement consistently.

Examples of Tier 1 behavior supports include:



Clearly Defined Behavior Expectations

Establishing, teaching, and reinforcing a small number of positive, school-wide rules (e.g., Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe).



Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Instruction

Explicitly teaching all students essential skills for self-regulation, problem-solving, and interpersonal communication.



Positive, Proactive Discipline

Emphasizing the encouragement and reinforcement of appropriate behavior through systems like school-wide acknowledgement and recognition programs, rather than relying solely on punitive consequences.



Effective Classroom Management

Using evidence-based strategies, such as predictable routines, active supervision, and high rates of student engagement, to create an organized and productive learning environment.



Fair and Consistent Corrections

Responding to misbehavior with calm, fair, and instructive consequences that are applied consistently across classrooms, so students learn from their mistakes.

Tier 2: Targeted Group Interventions

Even with a strong universal foundation, some students will require additional support. Tier 2 provides targeted interventions for this group, which typically makes up 10–15% of the student body. These interventions are designed to address specific skill deficits or behavior problems that have not been resolved by Tier 1 supports alone.

Tier 2 supports are provided in addition to Tier 1; students continue to participate in all universal practices. These interventions are often delivered in small groups and are standardized to be efficient and accessible. A critical first step is the systematic identification of students for Tier 2, which is done by analyzing data such as office discipline referrals (ODRs), teacher referrals, or results from behavior screening tools. Once a student is identified, the MTSS team works to match the intervention to the likely function of the student's behavior.

Examples of Tier 2 interventions include:



Check-In/Check-Out (CICO)

A student checks in with a mentor at the beginning

Tier 3: Intensive Individualized Supports

Tier 3 sits at the top of the pyramid and is reserved for the small percentage of students, typically 3–5%, who have the most significant needs and have not responded adequately to Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports. Tier 3 interventions are characterized by their intensity, duration, and high degree of individualization.

Support at this level often requires a more formal and in-depth assessment process and the involvement of specialized personnel. The support team may expand to include behavior analysts, mental health therapists, or representatives from the family and community agencies to create a comprehensive, wraparound plan for the student.

Examples of Tier 3 supports include:

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

An FBA is a systematic process of gathering data to determine the underlying function or purpose of a student's challenging behavior. The results are then used to develop a highly individualized, comprehensive BIP that details prevention strategies, replacement skills to teach, and specific responses to behavior.

Intensive Academic and Behavioral Integration

Providing intensive, one-on-one or very small group academic remediation that is explicitly integrated with behavior support strategies, especially when academic deficits are driving the behavior.

Wraparound Services

Coordinating with outside agencies to provide mental health counseling, social services, or other community-based supports for the student and their family.

Tier Movement: Decision Rules & Data

Movement between the tiers is a fluid process driven entirely by data. A student is not a "Tier 3 student"; rather, they are a student receiving Tier 3 supports. The goal is always to provide the least intensive level of support necessary for success.

To facilitate this, teams engage in regular progress monitoring. For students receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports, data on their response to the intervention is collected strategically (e.g., daily or during 3rd Period ELA) and reviewed by the MTSS team on a set schedule (e.g., every 2–4 weeks for Tier 2). Based on this data, the team makes one of several decisions:



Continue

If the student is making progress but has not yet met their goal, the intervention continues as planned.



Modify

If progress is slow or has stalled, the team may adjust the intervention to increase its intensity or better match the student's needs.



Intensify (Move Up)

If a student in Tier 2 is not responding to a well-implemented intervention, the team may decide to move to a more intensive, Tier 3 level of support.



Fade (Move Down)

If a student has met their goal and is demonstrating sustained success, the team will develop a plan to gradually fade the intervention and transition the student back to a lower tier of support, with the ultimate goal of success with Tier 1 supports alone.

This data-driven cycle ensures that students receive support that is responsive to their changing needs and prevents them from languishing in interventions that are not effective.

Tier Comparison at a Glance

Feature	Tier 1 (Universal)	Tier 2 (Targeted)	Tier 3 (Intensive)
Percentage of Students	All students (80–90%)	Some students (10–15%)	Few students (3–5%)
Staff Involved	All staff (teachers, administrators, support personnel)	Team-based supports delivered by school staff, with additional support from trained personnel (e.g., counselors, interventionists, teachers) as needed	Team-based supports with specialist involvement when appropriate (e.g., school psychologist, BCBA, special educator) and an expanded problem-solving team
Key Examples	School-wide expectations, SEL curriculum, positive reinforcement, classroom management	Check-In/Check-Out (CICO), Simple BIPs, small-group social skills, behavior contracts, mentoring	Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), wraparound services
Data for Decision-Making	School-wide data (ODRs, attendance), climate surveys	Progress monitoring of specific skills/behaviors (e.g., point sheets, frequency counts), reviewed bi-weekly/monthly	Frequent (daily/weekly) progress monitoring, FBA data, diagnostic assessments

❑ The 80–90% success rate for Tier 1 is more than just a target; it is a **critical diagnostic indicator** of the health of the entire school system. For example, if a school's universal practices are only effective for 60% of its students, the primary problem is not with the 40% of students needing extra help. The problem lies within the core instructional and environmental systems of the school itself. When leaders see a high volume of referrals for Tier 2 and Tier 3 support, it signals that the Tier 1 foundation is not strong enough to bear the load. This reframes the problem from one of individual student deficits to a systemic issue that requires a systemic solution, such as school-wide professional development, revised discipline policies, or improved classroom management coaching.

Tiered supports create a predictable structure for action: what's universal, what's targeted, and what's individualized. The next step is precision - making sure interventions match the real driver of behavior. MTSS-B does this by grounding decisions in functional thinking: behavior is communication, and our job is to identify the purpose it serves so we can teach replacement skills and reduce barriers.

Understanding Behavior in MTSS

In MTSS-B, tiers define the level and intensity of support, but effective intervention at any level depends on understanding **why** the behavior is happening. Because behavior communicates a need, functional thinking helps teams select supports that teach skills and reduce barriers rather than relying on reaction or punishment.

Functions of Behavior

All behavior, both appropriate and challenging, serves a purpose for the individual. In the context of MTSS-B, this purpose is referred to as the function of the behavior. The core idea is that students engage in certain behaviors because they have learned that doing so helps them get something they want or avoid something they do not want. While there are many nuances, most behaviors can be categorized as serving one of a few primary functions.

Example: Attention-Seeking

A student who frequently calls out in class may be seeking attention from the teacher or peers.

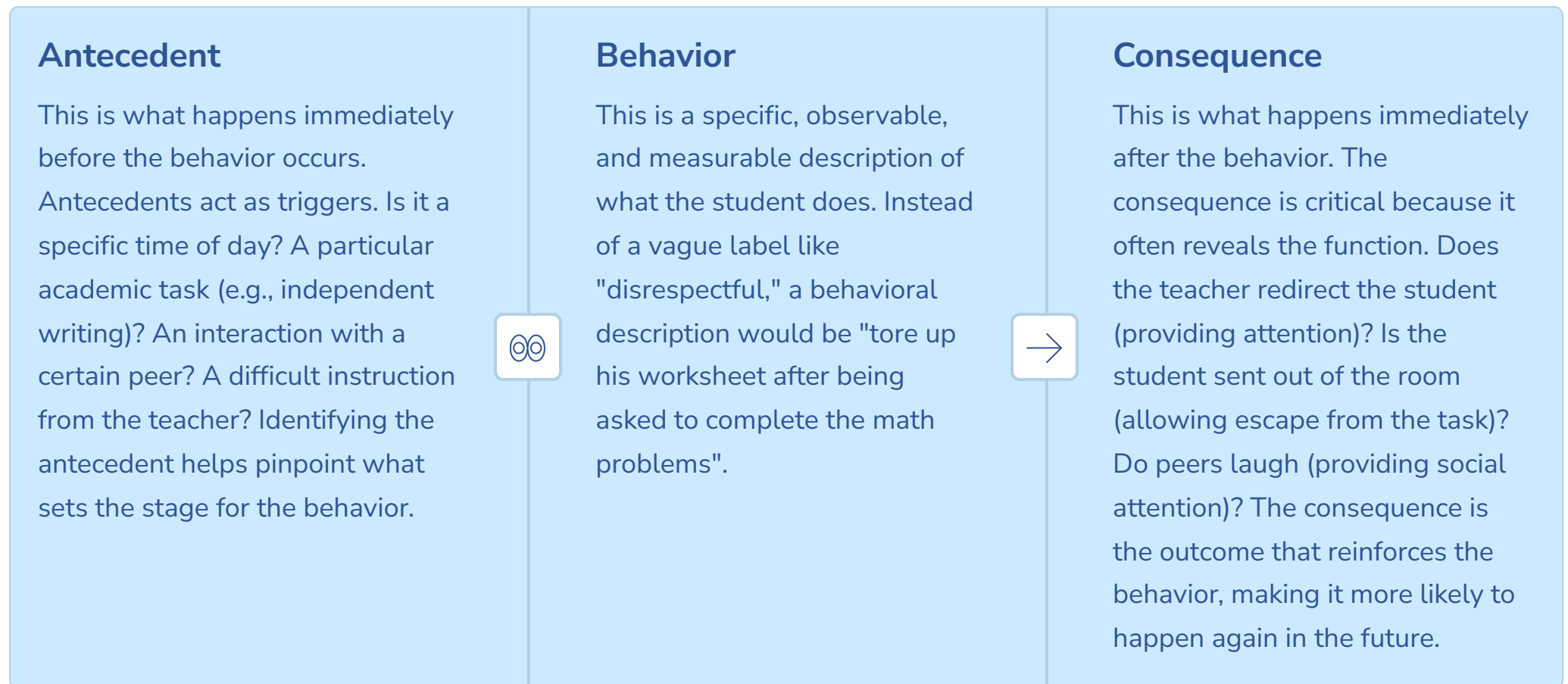
Example: Escape/Avoidance

Another student who puts their head down and refuses to work may be trying to escape a task they find difficult or overwhelming.

An effective intervention must be matched to the specific function. Ignoring or removing attention from a student whose behavior is motivated by escape could inadvertently make the behavior worse. Conversely, teaching a student an appropriate way to ask for a break is a function-based solution for escape-motivated behavior.

ABC (Antecedent–Behavior–Consequence) Basics

To determine the likely function of a behavior, educators can use a simple but powerful framework of observation that looks at the full context in which the behavior occurs. This involves analyzing the Antecedents, the Behavior itself, and the Consequences that follow.



By systematically observing, recording, and analyzing these ABC patterns as a team, educators can move from guessing about a behavior's cause to forming a data-informed hypothesis about its function.

Understanding behavior through a functional lens is essential and must lead to action. For functional thinking to shape real outcomes, it needs to be embedded in a consistent team process for reviewing data, developing hypotheses, and coordinating supports. In MTSS-B, that responsibility belongs to a clearly defined, collaborative team.

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Implementation Infrastructure (Teams, Meetings, PD, Referrals)

Building the Right MTSS Team

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports cannot be implemented by a single individual; it is a collaborative endeavor that requires a dedicated, multi-disciplinary team to drive the work. The MTSS team is the engine of the framework, responsible for reviewing data, solving problems, planning interventions, and ensuring the system functions effectively and equitably.

The composition and authority of this team send a powerful message to the entire school community about the priority of the initiative. An effective team is not a low-level committee but a respected, decision-making body with administrative backing, specialist expertise, and teacher representation. This signals that MTSS is a core function of the school, not a peripheral project.

With that purpose established, the next step is clarity: defining who is on the team and what each role contributes to problem-solving, implementation, and follow-through.

Roles & Responsibilities

A well-rounded MTSS team brings together diverse perspectives and expertise to engage in collaborative problem-solving. While the exact membership may vary based on school size and resources, the following roles are crucial for success:



Administrator (Principal or Assistant Principal)

Administrative leadership is non-negotiable. The administrator champions the MTSS vision, allocates necessary resources (time, funding, staff), and provides the authority to ensure team decisions are implemented. Their leadership and engagement demonstrates that MTSS is a school-wide priority and helps build staff buy-in.



Support Staff & Specialists

This group includes professionals with specialized expertise in assessment and intervention, such as a school psychologist, school counselor, social worker, behavior specialist, or Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). They guide the team in conducting assessments like FBAs, designing evidence-based interventions, collecting and interpreting complex data, and providing coaching to teachers.



General Education Teachers

Teacher representatives are the voice of the classroom. They bring invaluable firsthand knowledge of curriculum, classroom dynamics, and student needs. They help ensure that intervention plans are practical and can be implemented realistically within a general education setting, while contributing valuable classroom data, such as progress monitoring and implementation feedback, to keep the team decisions grounded, practical, and evidence-based.



Special Education Teachers

The special education perspective is vital for ensuring a seamless continuum of support. These teachers offer expertise in differentiation, intensive intervention, and the special education eligibility process, helping to bridge the gap between general and special education services. They also contribute valuable data on student progress, intervention fidelity, and outcomes, which helps teams make informed decisions and strengthen alignment across all tiers of support.

Once internal roles are defined, the work expands beyond staff collaboration. MTSS is strongest when families are active partners and community supports are coordinated, especially when needs are intensive.

Collaboration with Families & Community

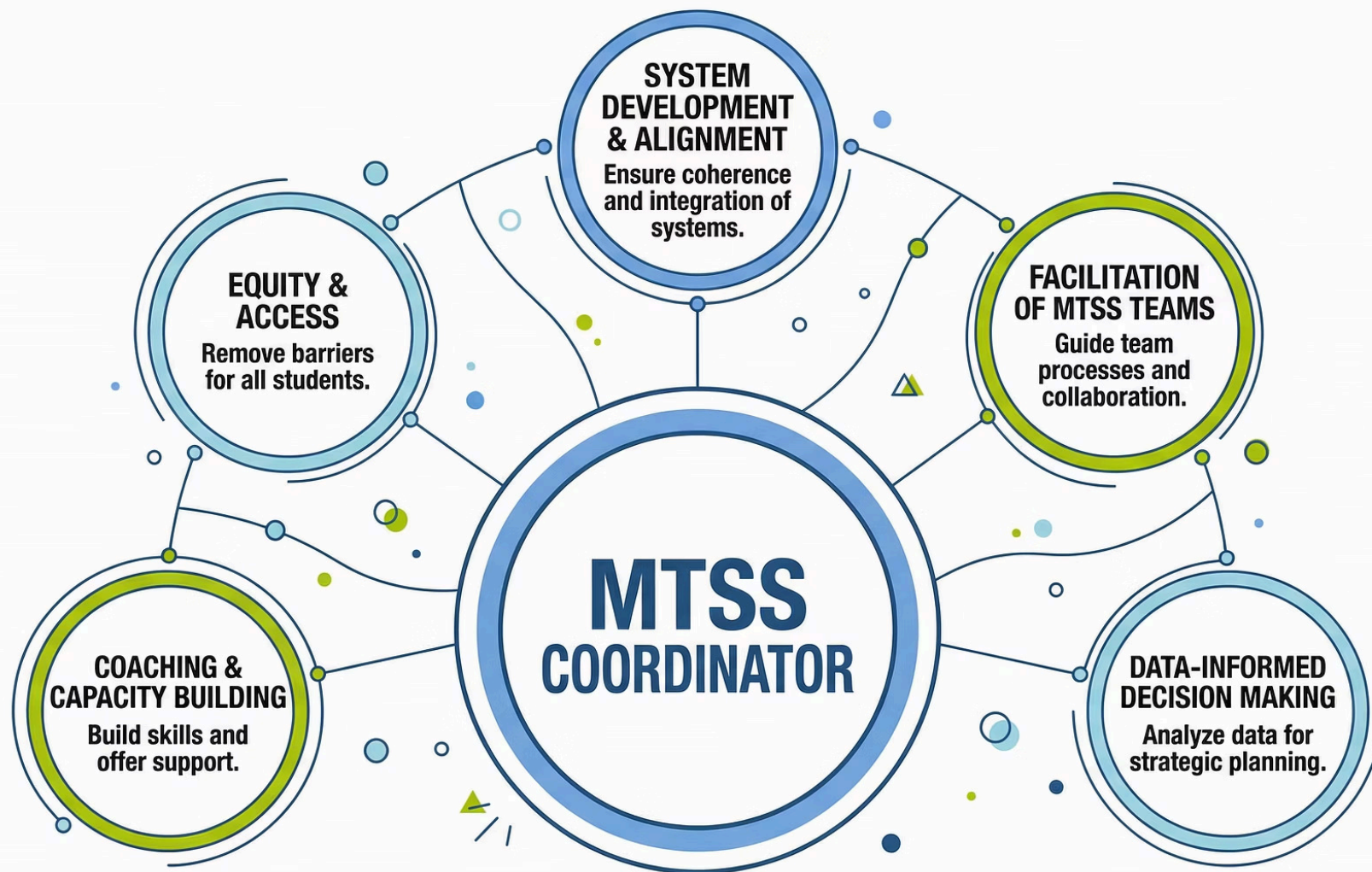
The MTSS team's work extends beyond the school walls. A key function of the team is to serve as a hub for communication and collaboration with families. Parents and guardians possess unique insights into their child's strengths, needs, and history, and their partnership is critical for the success of any intervention. The team ensures that families are informed about the supports their child is receiving and are invited to participate in the problem-solving process, especially at the more intensive tiers.

At Tier 3, the team may need to expand further to include community partners. For students with significant needs, the team might coordinate with outside mental health therapists, social service agencies, or medical providers to create a comprehensive, wraparound support plan. This ensures that school-based efforts are aligned with services the student and family are receiving in the community, creating a truly holistic system of care.

Coordinating these moving parts - team routines, data cycles, family communication, and tiered supports - requires someone to hold the system together. That's where an MTSS Coordinator (or MTSS "Coach") becomes essential.

The MTSS Coordinator: Role & Toolkit

As MTSS frameworks become more robust, many schools and districts find it essential to establish a dedicated MTSS Coordinator position. This role serves as the linchpin of the entire system - the "air traffic controller" responsible for organizing, aligning, and sustaining all the moving parts of the framework. The MTSS Coordinator is a systems thinker who bridges the gap between administrative vision and classroom practice, making them a primary agent of change management.



Core Responsibilities

While the specific duties can vary, the MTSS Coordinator's role typically encompasses five key areas of responsibility:

1 System Development & Alignment

The coordinator builds and maintains the overall MTSS structure. This includes establishing clear criteria for movement between tiers, developing guiding documents like an MTSS handbook, and ensuring that academic (RTI) and behavioral (PBIS) initiatives are integrated into one unified system.

2 Facilitation of MTSS Teams

The coordinator often leads or co-leads MTSS meetings. They are responsible for using structured agendas and problem-solving protocols to keep discussions efficient, data-focused, and solution-oriented. They ensure that action items are clear and that there is follow-through on team decisions.

3 Data-Informed Decision Making

As the data overseer, the coordinator manages universal screening processes, helps teams analyze data to identify students in need, and supports the setup of progress monitoring systems. A crucial part of this is monitoring the fidelity of intervention implementation to ensure plans are being carried out as intended.

4 Coaching and Capacity Building

An effective coordinator does not do all the work themselves; they empower others. This involves providing ongoing coaching, training, and technical support to staff on MTSS processes, intervention strategies, and data tools. The goal is to build the internal capacity of the school so the system is sustainable.

5 Equity and Access

The coordinator serves as the school's conscience on equity. They regularly analyze disaggregated data to identify patterns of disproportionality in discipline or access to interventions. They lead conversations about potential bias and work with teams to ensure that all students, regardless of background, receive timely and culturally responsive support.

Practices & Routines

The most effective MTSS Coordinators are system leaders who operate with a clear set of best practices:

→ Strengthen Tier 1 First

They resist the urge to focus solely on Tier 2 and 3 "fires" and instead prioritize ensuring that universal instruction and supports are strong, as this reduces the number of students needing more intensive help.

→ Emphasize Fidelity of Implementation

They consistently ask the question: "Is the intervention being done as planned?" They understand that an intervention cannot be judged effective if it was not implemented correctly and provide supportive coaching to address implementation barriers.

→ Facilitate Structured Meetings

They insist on using consistent agendas, data tools, and problem-solving protocols to make meetings productive and prevent them from becoming complaint sessions.

→ Build Staff Capacity

Their goal is to make themselves progressively less essential by embedding MTSS practices into the daily routines of the school. They train teacher leaders, create accessible resources, and distribute ownership of the process.

Essential Tools

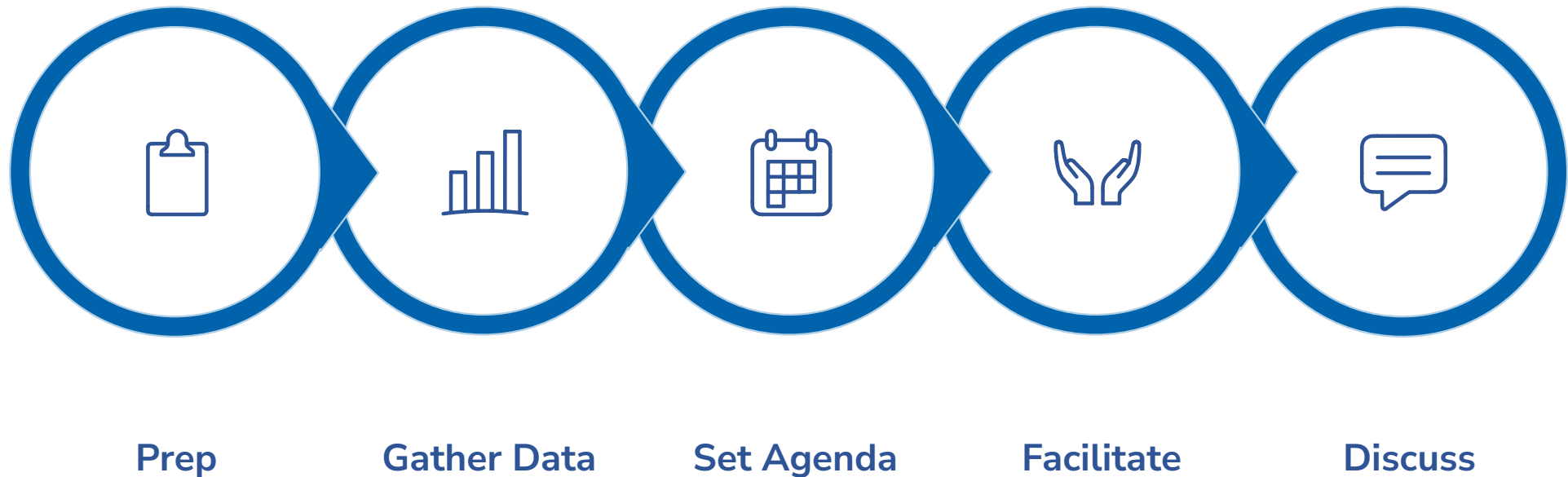
To manage the complexity of the role, an MTSS Coordinator relies on a toolkit of essential resources and technologies:

- **Universal Screening Tools:** Valid and reliable assessments to identify student needs in academics, behavior, and SEL.
- **Data Management Systems:** A centralized platform or dashboard to organize and visualize universal screening and progress monitoring data.
- **Structured Meeting Templates:** Standardized agendas, problem-solving worksheets, and note-taking forms to ensure consistency.
- **Intervention Menus:** A curated library of evidence-based interventions organized by tier and function, which helps teams select appropriate strategies efficiently.
- **Behavior Planning Software:** Digital tools that can help teams create, store, and monitor Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs), track data, and facilitate collaboration.

Tools and templates don't improve outcomes on their own, the impact comes from how consistently teams use them. MTSS meetings are the place where data becomes decisions, and decisions become clear action plans.

Running Effective MTSS Meetings

MTSS meetings are the heart of the collaborative problem-solving process. They are where data is transformed into action. However, without a clear structure, these meetings can easily become unproductive or reactive. Following a consistent, 10-step protocol can ensure that meeting time is efficient, focused, and results in clear plans to support students.



The 10 steps are organized into three phases that ensure preparation, productive discussion, and accountability after the meeting ends.

Pre-Work & Agenda

Effective meetings begin long before the team sits down at the table.

1 Clarify Purpose and Scope

Define the goal of each meeting. Is it a systems-level meeting to review school-wide Tier 1 data and plan professional development? Or is it a student-level problem-solving meeting to discuss new referrals and review progress for students in Tiers 2 and 3? Clarifying the scope ensures the right people attend and the time is used effectively.

2 Build the Right Team

Ensure all necessary roles are represented: an administrator with decision-making authority, general and special educators, and specialists like a school psychologist or counselor. Each member should understand their role and come prepared.

3 Use a Consistent Agenda

A standard agenda is the roadmap for an efficient meeting. It should include sections for reviewing norms, analyzing Tier 1 data, discussing progress for current interventions, problem-solving new referrals, and summarizing action items. Using a template ensures no critical steps are missed.

With the right people and a clear agenda in place, the team can then focus on how to engage in effective meetings for real-time problem-solving.

Conducting the Meeting

The conduct of the meeting determines its productivity and culture.

1 4. Anchor Conversations in Data

All discussions must be grounded in objective data, not anecdotes or hunches. Start every case review by asking, "What does the data show?" Use visual aids like graphs to make trends clear. This practice helps remove emotion and bias from the decision-making process.

3 6. Make Time for Tier 1 Discussion

Do not let meetings become solely reactive. Dedicate time to proactively review school-wide data to assess the health of your Tier 1 system. A spike in referrals from a specific location (e.g., the playground) or grade level may indicate a need for a universal, Tier 1 solution.

2 5. Follow a Structured Problem-Solving Process

When tackling a student case, use a systematic model:

- **Problem Identification:** Define the concern in specific, observable terms.
- **Problem Analysis:** Form a hypothesis about why the behavior is occurring (its function).
- **Plan Development:** Brainstorm and select an intervention that matches the function.
- **Plan Evaluation:** Determine how progress will be measured and when the team will review it.

4 7. Create a Culture of Collaboration and Trust

Establish team norms that promote psychological safety. All members should feel respected and able to raise concerns constructively without fear of judgment. Celebrate small wins to keep morale high and reinforce that the team is a source of support, not scrutiny.

- The rigor of a structured meeting protocol is a direct mechanism for promoting equity. By forcing teams to base decisions on objective data rather than subjective impressions, a well-run meeting reduces the influence of implicit bias. This systematic process acts as a check against subjective decision-making, ensuring that resources are allocated based on demonstrated need, not on potentially biased perceptions of student behavior.

Decisions only matter if they're implemented and reviewed and follow-up routines are what turn meeting time into student progress.

Follow-Up & Progress Review

A meeting's success is measured by what happens after it ends.

1 8. Assign Clear Next Steps and Accountability

The meeting must conclude with a concrete action plan. For every decision, document **who** will do **what** by **when**. This creates clear accountability and ensures that plans are implemented, not just discussed.

2 9. Use Tools to Stay Organized

Use shared digital documents, spreadsheets, or specialized software to track meeting notes, action plans, and student progress. This creates a visible and accessible record of the team's work and ensures continuity even if a team member is absent.

3 10. Reflect and Continuously Improve

Regularly take time to evaluate the meeting process itself. Ask the team: "Are our meetings effective? Are we following our process? How can we improve?" Just as student interventions are adjusted based on data, the MTSS system itself should be refined based on feedback and results.

Even strong teams and well-run meetings won't sustain MTSS if staff aren't trained, supported, and confident in the practices being asked of them. Professional development and coaching are the capacity-building side of implementation.

Professional Development & Coaching

Successful MTSS implementation hinges on the knowledge, skills, and buy-in of the entire school staff. Even the most well-designed framework will fail if educators do not understand it, believe in it, or feel equipped to carry it out. Therefore, strategic and ongoing professional development (PD) is not an accessory to MTSS; it is a core component of its infrastructure.

Effective PD starts with shared beliefs and shared language. Once leadership establishes the "why," training can focus on the practical "how", which is building consistent skills across roles.

Training Models

Effective PD begins with belief that every student can learn and succeed when given the right supports and that ensuring those supports is everyone's responsibility. Once leadership has cultivated that belief, solid MTSS training can occur, that aligns with those beliefs. Once this foundation is laid, a strategic, 5-step training model can build staff capacity:



1. Start with "Why"

Connect MTSS training directly to the daily challenges educators face. Frame it as a way to reduce classroom disruptions, decrease teacher burnout, and make their work more manageable and meaningful.



2. Assess What's Already in Place

Use surveys or focus groups to gauge staff's current knowledge and skills. This allows for targeted training that avoids redundancy and meets educators where they are.



3. Differentiate the Training

Just as with students, one size does not fit all for adult learners. Offer a variety of PD formats to accommodate different roles, learning preferences, and time constraints. This can include video modules, role-specific workshops, live virtual sessions, and in-person training with collaborative practice time.



4. Build in Implementation Opportunities

Training must be explicitly linked to practice. Follow up workshops with clear action steps, peer observations, or collaborative planning time in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to help teachers apply new strategies in their classrooms.



5. Create a Feedback Loop

Establish a system for ongoing feedback through quick surveys or listening sessions. Use this input to make real-time adjustments to the PD plan, demonstrating to staff that their experience matters and building trust in the process.

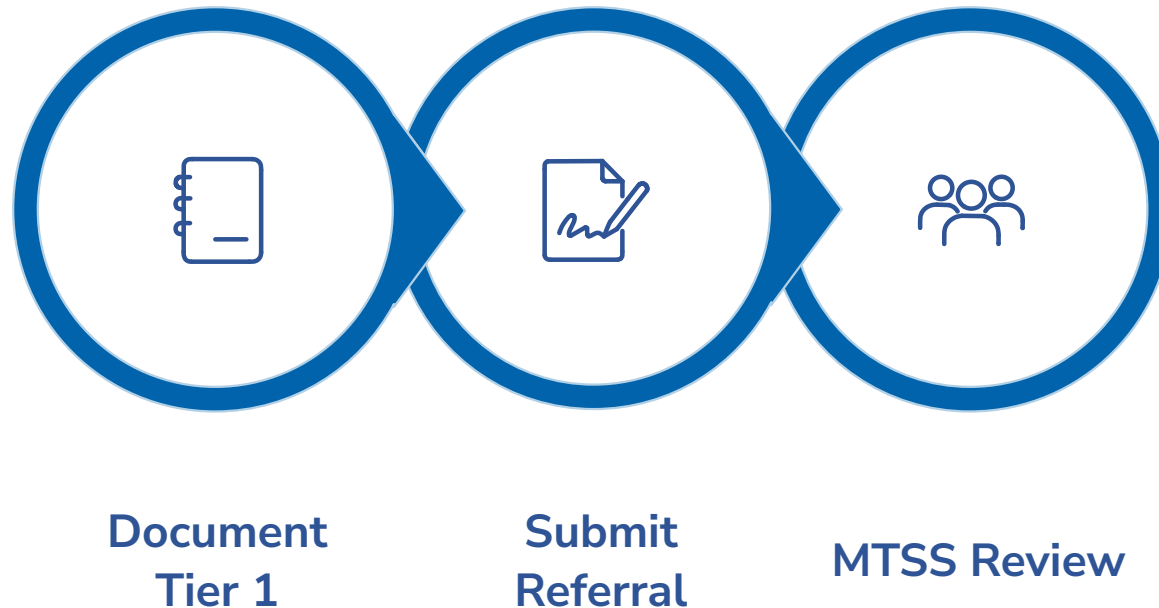
One way to make PD sustainable is to organize it the same way we organize student supports: universal training for everyone, targeted coaching for some, and intensive support for a few.

- A sophisticated approach to professional development conceptualizes the plan itself as a **tiered system of support for adults**. This would include universal training for all staff on foundational concepts (Tier 1), targeted coaching for teams or teachers implementing specific new interventions (Tier 2), and intensive, individualized mentoring for new coaches or team leaders (Tier 3). This mirrors the student support model and ensures staff receive the right level of professional learning at the right time.

As staff learn Tier 1 practices and intervention routines, they also need a consistent pathway for requesting additional support when students continue to struggle. That pathway is the referral process.

Referral Process & Form Essentials

A well-defined referral process is the critical link between classroom-level support and the targeted interventions coordinated by the MTSS team. It provides a clear, consistent pathway for teachers to request assistance for students who continue to struggle despite universal supports. This process, anchored by a standardized referral form, ensures that requests for help are handled efficiently, equitably, and with a focus on solutions.



The referral process connects classroom practice to team-based problem solving through a clear, documented pathway.

When to Refer

A referral to the MTSS team is typically initiated after a classroom teacher has implemented and documented various Tier 1 strategies and interventions without seeing sufficient student progress. The referral should not be viewed as a failure on the part of the teacher or a punitive step for the student. Instead, it is a proactive and appropriate escalation, a formal request for the collaborative expertise of the broader team. Clear, school-wide criteria for when to make a referral (e.g., "after trying and documenting at least three Tier 1 strategies" or "when a student has accumulated three office discipline referrals") help ensure consistency and prevent students from languishing without adequate support.

What the Referral Form Should Capture

A standardized MTSS referral form is more than just paperwork; it is a data collection and accountability tool that structures the problem-solving process before the meeting even begins. An effective form streamlines the work of the MTSS team by ensuring they have the necessary information upfront. Key components of a comprehensive form include:

Pre-Referral Information

A checklist or summary of the Tier 1 strategies and classroom-based interventions that have already been attempted, along with the results. This confirms that universal supports have been exhausted.

Objective Description of Concern

A section for the teacher to describe the specific academic or behavioral concern in observable, measurable terms, including its frequency, intensity, and duration.

Baseline Data

Any relevant data that has already been collected, such as office referral counts, attendance records, behavior tracking sheets, or academic screening scores.

Hypothesis of Function

A space for the referring teacher to share their initial thoughts on the potential function of the behavior or the root cause of the academic struggle.

Intervention Plan Section

A section to be completed by the MTSS team during the meeting. This is where the team documents the selected intervention, the implementation plan, the person(s) responsible, and the progress monitoring method.

Follow-Up Plan

A dedicated space to record the date of the next review meeting and the decision made at that time (e.g., continue, modify, or fade the intervention).

Common Pitfalls & Fixes

Without careful planning, a referral process can encounter several pitfalls. A common issue is inconsistency, where some teachers follow the process while others bypass it. The fix for this is strong administrative leadership that establishes the referral process as a clear, non-negotiable school policy.

Another pitfall is the perception of the form as burdensome paperwork. To counter this, leaders must demonstrate how a well-designed form actually saves time and reduces frustration. By gathering critical information upfront, the form allows meeting time to be spent on collaborative problem-solving rather than on trying to diagnose the issue from scratch. The referral form is a central artifact of the MTSS process that drives data collection, ensures legal documentation of supports provided, and creates a clear record of accountability for the entire team.

Pitfall: Inconsistency

Some teachers follow the process while others bypass it.

Fix: Strong administrative leadership that establishes the referral process as a clear, non-negotiable school policy.

Pitfall: Perceived as Burdensome

Teachers view the form as unnecessary paperwork.

Fix: Demonstrate how a well-designed form saves time by gathering critical information upfront, allowing meetings to focus on solutions.

A clear referral process is a key piece of MTSS infrastructure, but it's only one part of a successful rollout. Implementation requires a phased plan that builds foundations first and then scales tiered supports with fidelity.

Implementation Plan: A Practical Guide

Implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports is a significant undertaking that requires careful planning, strategic communication, and a commitment to continuous improvement. It is not a linear rollout of a finished product but an iterative process of organizational learning. A successful implementation plan addresses both the technical components of the framework and the human elements of change management.

Phases & Milestones

While every school's journey is unique, a logical implementation plan often unfolds in three overlapping phases:

Phase 1: Building the Foundation

This initial phase focuses on establishing the core infrastructure of MTSS. Key milestones include:

- Forming a diverse multi-disciplinary MTSS team (administrators, teachers, specialists, and family voice)
- Establishing a regular, protected meeting schedule and developing team norms and protocols
- Conducting a needs assessment to evaluate the health of the existing Tier 1 universal system
- Developing and delivering foundational professional development to all staff on the "why" and "what" of MTSS

Phase 3: Refinement and Continuous Improvement

In this ongoing phase, the system becomes fully operational, and the focus turns to using data to improve its effectiveness and efficiency. Key activities include:

- Using school-wide data to analyze the health of the overall system and make adjustments at each tier of support
- Conducting regular fidelity checks to ensure interventions are being implemented as intended
- Using feedback loops to refine professional development, meeting protocols, and other system components

1

2

Phase 2: Developing Tiered Supports

Once the foundation is in place, the focus shifts to building out the continuum of interventions.

Milestones in this phase include:

- Creating a school-wide "intervention menu" of evidence-based practices for Tiers 2 and 3
- Designing and implementing a clear, standardized referral process and form
- Training relevant staff (e.g., counselors, interventionists) on how to deliver specific Tier 2 interventions with fidelity
- Establishing a system for progress monitoring and data collection for targeted supports

3

Communication & Change Management

The successful implementation of MTSS depends heavily on securing staff buy-in. Leaders must act as chief communicators and champions of the vision. This involves:



Articulating the "Why"

Consistently communicating how MTSS will benefit both students and staff by creating a more supportive and less stressful environment.



Involving Staff

Including teachers and support staff in the planning process to build ownership and ensure that the system is practical and responsive to their needs.



Celebrating Success

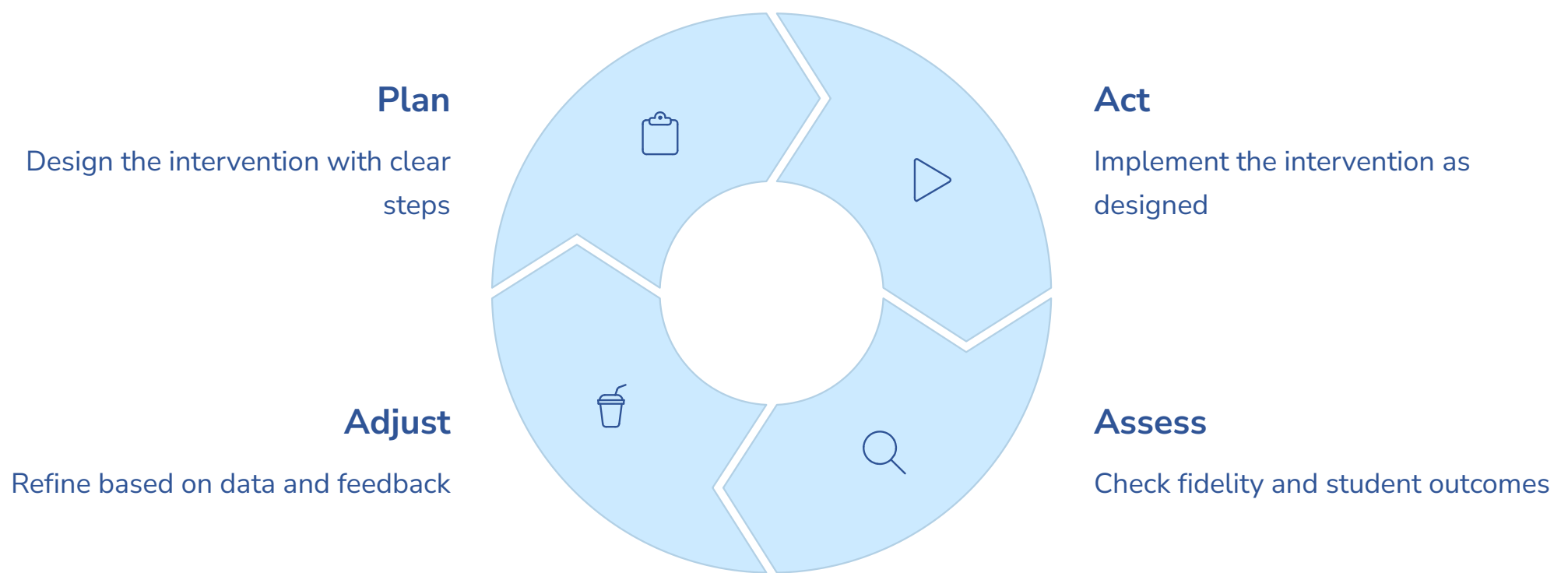
Highlighting and sharing small wins - such as a student who has successfully responded to a Tier 2 intervention - to build momentum and demonstrate the value of the work.

Once staff understand the purpose of MTSS and feel included in the process, the next lever is implementation quality. Fidelity checks ensure that what we planned is actually happening in practice, and help teams problem-solve barriers early.

Fidelity Checks & Continuous Improvement

Fidelity refers to the degree to which an intervention or practice is implemented as it was designed. It is a critical component of MTSS, because an intervention cannot be judged effective or ineffective if it was not delivered correctly. For example, if a student in a Check-In/Check-Out program is not making progress, the team's first question should be whether the check-ins are happening consistently every morning and afternoon.

Fidelity checks should be framed as a supportive, problem-solving tool, not an evaluation of staff performance. They can be conducted through methods like direct observation, self-report checklists, or reviewing permanent products (e.g., completed point cards). When fidelity is low, it signals a need for additional coaching, resources, or perhaps an adjustment to make the plan more feasible for the implementer.



This commitment to monitoring and supporting fidelity ensures that student outcomes are a true reflection of the intervention's effectiveness. This connects directly to the principle of continuous improvement, where the MTSS team uses data not just on students, but on the system itself, to plan, act, assess, and adjust its own practices over time.

Fidelity tells us whether supports are being implemented as designed. Measuring impact tells us whether those supports are improving outcomes. MTSS needs both to make decisions confidently and adjust quickly.

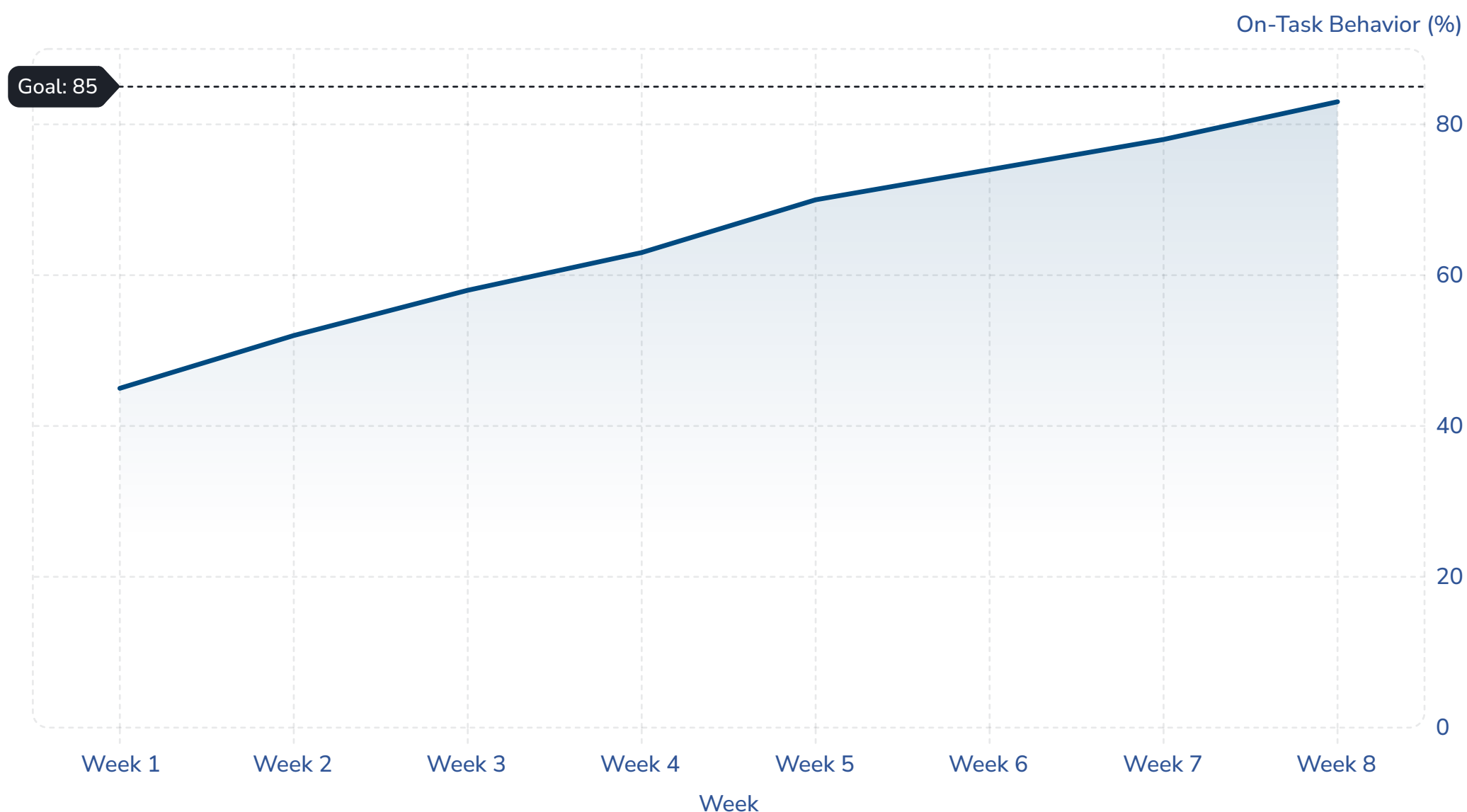
Measuring Impact & Ensuring Fidelity

In a Multi-Tiered System of Supports, data is the compass that guides every decision, and fidelity is the engine that drives results. To be effective, MTSS cannot rely on assumptions or anecdotes; it requires a systematic approach to measuring student progress, evaluating the effectiveness of interventions, and ensuring that supports are delivered as intended.

Universal Screening & Progress Monitoring

Measurement in MTSS begins with universal screening. This involves administering brief, valid assessments to all students, typically three times a year (fall, winter, and spring), to proactively identify those who may be at risk for academic or behavioral difficulties. Screening data, combined with other sources like office discipline referrals (ODRs) and attendance records, allows the MTSS team to identify students who may need Tier 2 support before their challenges become more significant.

Once a student begins receiving a Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention, progress monitoring becomes essential. This is the frequent and repeated measurement of a student's performance on specific skills to track their response to the intervention. For example, a student working on staying in their seat might have their on-task behavior tracked daily using a simple chart. This data is then graphed to provide a clear visual of the student's progress over time. Regular review of this data allows the team to make timely decisions about whether an intervention is working or needs to be changed.



Example: A student's on-task behavior tracked over 8 weeks of a Tier 2 intervention, showing steady progress toward the 85% goal.

Equity Checks

One of the most powerful applications of an MTSS data system is its use as a tool for ensuring equity. By disaggregating all data, including discipline referrals, intervention placements, and academic outcomes, by student subgroups (e.g., race/ethnicity, disability status, English learner status), leaders can hold up a mirror to their school's practices and identify potential systemic biases.

The MTSS team should regularly conduct equity checks by asking critical questions of their data:

Representation

Are certain student groups over-represented in office discipline referrals?

Access

Are all student groups accessing Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions at rates proportional to their need?

Outcomes

Are there disparities in outcomes for students receiving the same intervention?

If, for example, disaggregated data reveals that Black male students are referred for Tier 2 behavior support at a much higher rate than their peers, it shifts the conversation from individual student behavior to systemic practice. It prompts the team to investigate potential causes, such as implicit bias in referrals or a lack of culturally responsive Tier 1 practices. This regular, transparent review of disaggregated data is the primary mechanism through which an MTSS framework can fulfill its promise of creating a more equitable school.

When teams pair progress data with regular equity checks, MTSS becomes a system that is both effective and fair. The final step for leaders is turning these practices into a sustainable plan with clear next moves.

Conclusion & Next Steps for Leaders

Implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports is a transformative journey that fundamentally reshapes a school's culture. It moves an organization from a reactive, problem-focused stance to a proactive, solution-oriented one. When MTSS is working well, it is no longer an initiative; it is simply "the way we do business".

The framework fosters a sense of collective responsibility, empowering teachers, specialists, and administrators to work as a cohesive team to meet the needs of every student. This collaborative, data-informed approach leads to reduced disciplinary incidents, increased instructional time, improved student outcomes, and a more positive and equitable school climate for all.

The path to a fully implemented MTSS is a multi-year process of continuous improvement. It requires patience, persistence, and strong leadership. For school administrators, school psychologists, and other leaders ready to embark on or refine this journey, the following steps provide a practical starting point:

01

Assess Your Current Reality

Conduct a thorough self-assessment of your school's existing practices. What universal supports are already in place? How are you currently identifying and supporting struggling students? What data systems do you have? Understanding your starting point is essential for planning the road ahead.

02

Build a Guiding Coalition

Form a dedicated, multi-disciplinary MTSS team with clear roles and administrative authority. This team will be the engine that drives the implementation process.

03

Prioritize Strengthening Tier 1

Before building out an elaborate system of interventions, focus your initial efforts on ensuring your universal academic, behavioral, and SEL supports are robust, evidence-based, and implemented with fidelity by all staff. A strong foundation is the most critical element of a sustainable system.

04

Develop a Multi-Year Professional Development Plan

Create a strategic, ongoing plan for building staff capacity. Start by cultivating buy-in and then provide differentiated training and coaching to equip all staff with the skills and knowledge they need to contribute to the MTSS framework.

05

Start Small and Build Momentum

Do not try to implement everything at once. Pilot a new process, such as a standardized referral form or a single Tier 2 intervention like Check-In/Check-Out. Celebrate the small successes from these early efforts to build confidence and momentum for broader implementation.

The work of building an MTSS is challenging, but it is also among the most rewarding endeavors a school leader can undertake. By committing to a system of proactive, integrated, and equitable support, you are creating the conditions for **every student and every educator** in your building to thrive.

Appendix: Glossary & Acronyms

ABC	Antecedent–Behavior–Consequence: A framework used to analyze the context of a behavior by identifying the trigger (antecedent) that precedes it and the outcome (consequence) that follows it.
BCBA	Board Certified Behavior Analyst: A graduate-level certification in behavior analysis. BCBAs are experts in the science of behavior and can provide specialized support within an MTSS framework.
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan: A detailed, individualized plan developed for a student with significant behavioral challenges, typically based on the results of an FBA.
CICO	Check-In/Check-Out: A common Tier 2 behavior intervention where a student checks in and out daily with a mentor to receive goal-setting, feedback, and positive reinforcement.
FBA	Functional Behavioral Assessment: A systematic process of gathering and analyzing data to determine the underlying purpose or "function" of a student's challenging behavior.
MTSS	Multi-Tiered System of Supports: A school-wide, proactive framework for integrating academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports into a unified system to meet the needs of all students.
ODR	Office Discipline Referral: A formal report made when a student's behavior warrants administrative involvement. ODR data is a key indicator for monitoring school climate and identifying students in need of support.
PBIS	Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: A proactive framework for improving school climate and student behavior outcomes, which is often integrated as the behavioral component of a broader MTSS.
RTI	Response to Intervention: A multi-tiered approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. It is typically considered the academic component within the larger MTSS framework.
SEL	Social-Emotional Learning: The process through which individuals acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve goals, feel and show empathy, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

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