

MTSS & Academics

Pennsylvania's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is a standards-aligned, comprehensive school improvement FRAMEWORK for enhancing academic, behavioral and social-emotional outcomes for ALL students.

MTSS ensures equity in opportunity for students--including Black/African American and Latinx students, students with disabilities, and English Language Learners--who have been marginalized and negatively impacted by existing systems.

Equity-based MTSS ensures that:

- All schools offer high-quality programming that equitably meets the needs of every student
- All students have equitable access to resources and opportunities
- The school environment supports all students by recognizing the strengths and needs of individual students and ensuring those strengths and needs are addressed
- Families are acknowledged as part of the school community and have a sense of belonging in the school

In the School District of Philadelphia, with regard to enhancing academics, there is focus on leveraging tiered instruction in order to support every student with their growth in ELA and Math.

The core of MTSS involves tiers, called Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3. Each tier is designed to provide students support for their academic, social-emotional/behavioral, attendance and health and wellness needs through increased duration and intensity.

With regard to academics, SDP recognizes that when examining root causes there is a need to examine the underlying causes behind the performance challenges that a student may present in the classroom.

For instance:

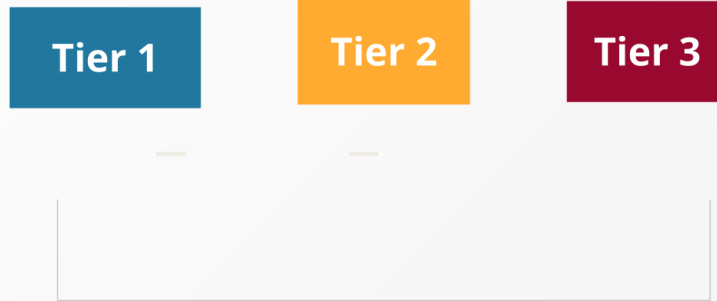
- Is the root cause related to an **academic issue**? e.g., Inability to recall math facts for solving math problems

- Is the root cause related to a **social-emotional learning/behavioral issue**? e.g., Student experiencing child abuse/neglect
- Is the root cause related to an **attendance issue**? e.g., Lack of student or parent motivation for child to attend school/class on time every day
- Is the root cause related to a **health and wellness issue**? Lack of basic needs such as access to water

As a result, equity-based MTSS considers the social-emotional/behavioral, attendance and health and wellness in alignment with academics when implementing tiered instruction. Descriptors have been identified to indicate the interdependent relationship of academics, social-emotional/behavioral, attendance and health and wellness for each tier in the MTSS framework.

Equity-Based MTSS Descriptors & Tiers of Support Overview

- Students are assessed to determine who is on target, who is advanced, or if learning gaps exist.
- Increasingly intense research-based & evidence-based interventions are provided and student progress is monitored.
- Students transition through tiered supports in accordance with progress monitoring results.



Standards Aligned Instruction

- Research based
- Core instruction
- Differentiated instruction
- Delivered with fidelity
- Systematic and Explicit

SPED INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

TIER	High-quality instruction and supplemental support, plus positive school wide climate and social-emotional learning, occur for <u>all</u> students.
1	<p>Academics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student instruction utilizes the high-leverage strategies identified in the Literacy and Math Instructional Guidelines. • Support groups are developed based on data to address gaps in learning. • Students on grade-level receive enrichment support to maintain/exceed grade-level expectations during electives/enrichment periods. • Scaffolding of content, processes, and products occurs based on students' needs. • Universal screening of literacy and math at all grade levels and occurs at least three times a year (STAR). • Analysis of universal screener data occurs within one week of screening to determine students in need of enrichment/intervention. • Students who are at-risk for a learning gap experience re-teaching of essential standards, skills

and strategies.

Social-Emotional/Behavioral:

- Schoolwide climate programs emphasize clear behavioral expectations and positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior.
- Classroom teachers implement strategies to build a classroom community and increase students' sense of belonging.
- Daily community meetings are implemented at all grade levels.
- Social-emotional skills are taught explicitly, and multiple opportunities for practice and engagement with these skills are provided each day.
- Restorative practices are used to address minor behavioral infractions.
- Universal screening for emotional/behavioral risk occurs 3 times a year at all grade levels.

Attendance:

- Attendance at Tier 1 is supported by a positive school climate, engaging instruction, and schoolwide expectations surrounding regular, on-time attendance.
- Attendance initiatives are layered into Tier 1 approaches as part of the school improvement plan process.
- Use of data to inform which subgroups of students need support with improving their daily attendance.
- Tier 1 strategies include attendance incentives, high quality consistent family engagement, and strong relationships between teachers and students.

TIER High-quality instruction, supplemental support, and a Tier 2 intervention occur for some students.

2

Academics:

- Students are not on grade-level based on target % according to the universal screener (STAR); a learning gap exists.
- Students receive support with Tier 2 supplemental adaptive programs that enhance but do not supplant the core curriculum.
- Students experience a Tier 2 intervention that directly targets a skill deficit, or specific learning need in order to decrease a learning gap.
- Targeted instruction for struggling students is received during electives or intervention periods several times per week.

- Small group instruction occurs with 4-6 students at least 3 times per week.
- Progress monitoring occurs to show student growth in response to the intervention and a decrease in a learning gap.
- Progress monitoring assesses academic performance, to quantify a rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention.

Social-Emotional/Behavioral:

- Students are not responding to Tier 1 Social-Emotional/Behavioral programming and data from the universal screening and/or the teacher completed Behavioral Referral Form indicates need for additional support.
- Students receive evidence-based Tier 2 intervention that targets the identified deficit and/or the skill areas that need to be strengthened.
- Tier 2 intervention occurs for 6-8 weeks
- During the 6-8 weeks of intervention, progress monitoring occurs to assess how students are responding to the intervention. The progress monitoring data is used to make adjustments to specific interventions within Tier 2 and to determine when students have made progress and can move to Tier 1.
- Fidelity of implementation of the intervention is assessed to ensure that students receive the evidence-based intervention as designed.

Attendance:

- Students that are exhibiting attendance concerns are identified for Tier 2 supports via ongoing data monitoring.
- At a Student Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC), a student attendance plan is created (SAIP) to remove identified barriers to regular attendance.
- At the SAIC, all parties both external city partners and internal relevant staff are included and the conference is held, even if parents/guardians are unable to attend the conference.
- The attendance team or designee must progress monitor the student's attendance to ascertain if the barriers that were identified at the conference are being addressed and the student's attendance is improving as a result.

TIER 3	High-quality instruction, supplemental support, and a Tier 3 intervention occur for <u>a few</u> students.
	<p>Academics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students are not on grade-level based on target % according to Aimsweb Plus or STAR; a significant learning gap exists

- Instruction and intervention target a student's specific learning needs
- Students receive daily Individualized and tailored instruction targeted for deficits with a focus on academic-level mastery with acceleration into grade-level mastery
- Small group instruction occurs with 1-3 students; duration and frequency of Tier 3 interventions increase with lowering the student-teacher ratio
- Tier 3 interventions tend to be different from Tier 1 & Tier 2 interventions, especially if a student has not made progress at Tier 2.
- Progress monitoring occurs to show student growth in response to intervention with closely monitoring data points for gradual improvement or progress toward Tier 2
- Frequent progress monitoring and fidelity of implementation of the intervention occurs to ensure advancement into grade-level materials.

Social-Emotional/Behavioral:

- Students are not responding to Tier 1 and Tier 2 Social-Emotional/Behavior support as identified by the Behavior Referral Form, Universal Screening, and progress monitoring
- Social-Emotional/Behavioral supports are targeted to students specific need
- Supports are implemented in both individual and group format depending on the individualized need of students
- Tier 3 intervention often involves a community-based mental/behavioral health agency that provides support in school, home, and community as determined by the agency's assessment.
- Progress monitoring occurs on a routine basis to determine how the student is responding to the intervention. This data is used to make adjustments to specific interventions within this tier and to determine when students have made progress and can step-down to a lower tier

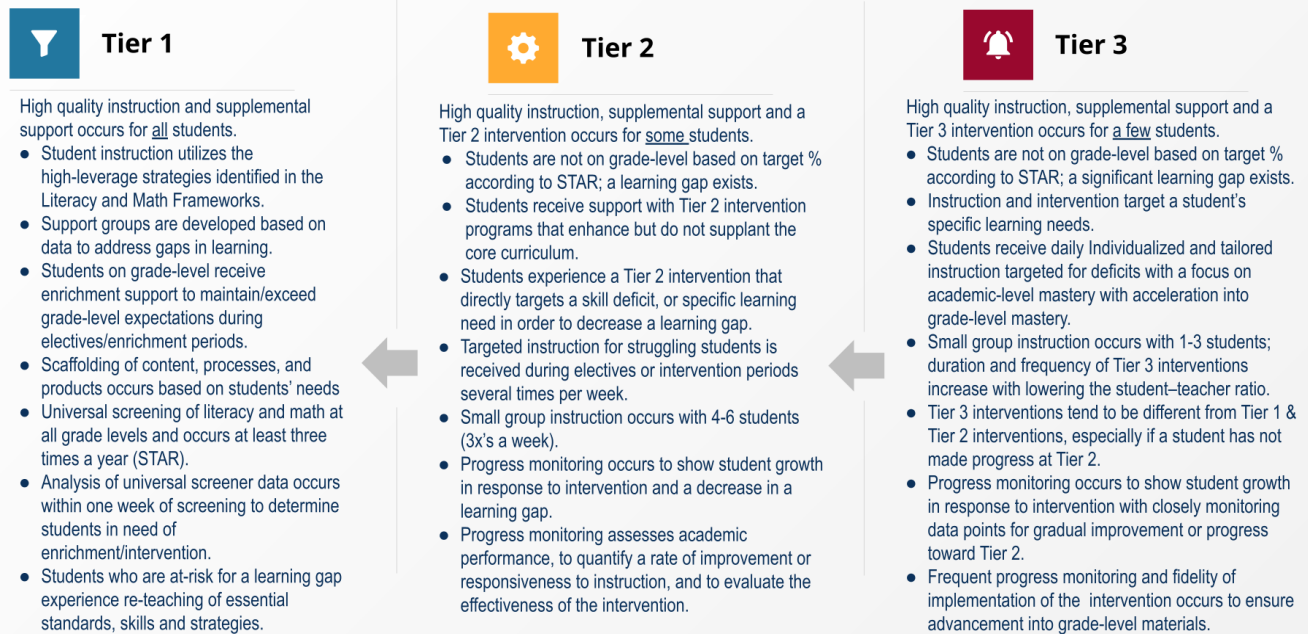
Attendance:

- After progress monitoring, if a student's attendance does not improve and 10 or more unexcused absences occur, the student may be referred to truancy court.
- The case will first be heard in Regional Truancy Court. If the student's attendance does not improve as a result of that intervention the Hearing Officer may refer the case to Family Court
- A truancy provider will be assigned to assist the family at Regional TRuancy Court if they have not already been assigned to the family earlier in the process.

MTSS Tiered Instruction

To effectively implement MTSS with an academic focus, tiered instruction is significant to the MTSS process. In ELA & Math, tiered instruction occurs for every student in order to meet their academic needs through multiple levels and intensities of instruction. The goal of tiered instruction is to reflect Common Core Standards-Aligned High-Quality Core Instruction that provides differing levels of support in Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 for students with identified learning gaps, English Learners, students with disabilities, and advanced learners.

Tiered Instruction for Students with Identified Learning Gaps



Tiered Instruction for English Learners



Tier 1

In addition to high quality instruction and supplemental support provided for all students, special considerations for Tier 1 instruction for ELs must include:

- Appropriately scaffolded for students' linguistic and academic needs
- Culturally relevant principles applied to instruction and assessment
- Meaningful opportunities for students to practice the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)



Tier 2

When an EL falls behind their "true peers", a problem-solving protocol should be used by the classroom teacher and ESL teacher **collaboratively** to determine potential barriers.

Tier 2 supports may include, but not limited to:

- Use of additional materials in Tier 1 core instruction to meet grade-level standards. Tier 2 interventions should not replace ESL core instruction.
- Small group instruction (3-5 students)
- Instruction must continue to be scaffolded, taking into consideration students' language proficiency levels and cultural backgrounds.



Tier 3

ELs who have received Tier 2 research-based interventions without demonstrating significant gains require a team-based problem solving approach. Questions to ask include, but are not limited to:

- Have Tier 2 interventions supplemented core ESL instruction (not replace it)?
- Were appropriate scaffolds utilized to deliver instruction within the ELA /Math instructional expectations?
- Were Tier 2 interventions implemented following a plan designed collaboratively by the classroom teacher and ESL teacher?

Tiered Instruction for Students with Disabilities



Tier 1

High quality instruction and supplemental support occurs for all students.

- Student instruction utilizes High-Leverage Practices (HLP's) in Special Education, Universal Design for Learning Strategies, and other research-validated strategies to provide **access the general education core**.
- **New (novel)** information, concepts, and skills should be introduced with an Explicit Instruction model prior to exploration.
- Ensure students have the necessary prerequisite knowledge and skills when engaging students in **exploratory** learning tasks
- Scaffolding of content, processes, and products occurs based on students' needs. Scaffolds are **temporary supports utilized** until the student's performance indicate the supports are no longer needed.



Tier 2

High quality instruction, supplemental support and a Tier 2 intervention occurs for some students.

- Students receive support with Tier 2 intervention that directly targets a skill deficit, or a specific learning need in order to decrease a learning gap. The program(s) should enhance, but it does not supplant the core curriculum.
- Students receiving a Tier 2 intervention should include the scaffolding of content, processes, and products based on students' needs.
- Small group instruction occurs with 4-6 students (4x's a week minimally for 30-45 minutes a session).
- Progress monitoring should be on-going (minimally 2X monthly) to determine if a student has made meaningful progress. This monitoring will assess the academic performance, to quantify a rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention.



Tier 3

High quality instruction, supplemental support and a Tier 3 intervention occurs for a few students.

- Intensive Intervention utilized has demonstrated efficacy for students with intense intervention needs and occurs one-to-one or in a small group of up to 3 students for a specified amount of minutes per day. Time in Intensive Intervention should be greater than that provided during Tier II.
- Intensive Intervention is structured to provide students **increased response opportunities, transference of knowledge and skills to other contexts, and behavioral support** to ensure student **self-regulation** and minimization of unproductive student behaviors.
- **All principles of Explicit Instruction** are implemented.
- Progress monitoring occurs frequently (e.g. twice-monthly at a minimum or weekly when necessary) allowing for the systematic adjustment of the intervention over time when the data suggests an adjustment is warranted.

Tiered Instruction for Advanced Learners



Tier 1

High quality instruction and supplemental support occurs for all students.

- Student instruction utilizes the high-leverage strategies identified in the Literacy and Math Frameworks.
- Flexible ability groups are developed based on data to address advanced learning
- Students above grade-level receive enrichment support to exceed grade-level expectations during electives/enrichment periods.
- Universal screening of literacy and math at all grade levels and occurs at least three times a year (STAR).
- Analysis of universal screener data occurs within one week of screening to determine students in need of enrichment/intervention.
- Differentiated content, processes, and products occurs based on students' needs.
- Students receive tiered assignments that are flexible or faster paced.
- Time is given to work with other advanced learners.
- Progress monitoring occurs to ensure maintenance and advancement of grade-level materials..



Tier 2

High quality instruction, supplemental support and a Tier 2 intervention occurs for some students.

- Students are above grade-level based on target % according to STAR.
- Students receive support with Tier 2 intervention programs that enrich but do not supplant the core curriculum.
- Students experience a Tier 2 intervention that directly targets advancement in a content area.
- Small group instruction occurs with 4-6 students (3x's a week).
- Students may experience pull out programs.
- Students may experience direct services within or outside classroom.
- Students experience cross age grouping.
- Students experience inquiry research.
- Opportunities for dual credit (HS) are presented
- Opportunities for testing out of units or classes
- Opportunities for mentorships
- Opportunities for students to direct portions of learning
- Frequent progress monitoring occurs to ensure maintenance and advancement of grade-level materials.



Tier 3

High quality instruction, supplemental support and a Tier 3 intervention occurs for a few students.

- Students receive daily Individualized and tailored instruction targeted for acceleration into above grade-level content.
- Small group instruction occurs with 1-3 students; duration and frequency of Tier 3 interventions increase with lowering the student-teacher ratio.
- Students may experience early school entrance, early exit, or dual enrollment (HS).
- Opportunities for mentorships/internships
- Opportunities for student directed learning
- Frequent progress monitoring occurs to ensure advancement beyond grade-level materials.

Examples of Supports for Tiers 1, 2, 3

- High Quality Whole Group Instruction
- Scaffolding of content, processes, and products based on students' needs (instructional supports to enhance a student's learning & aid in skill mastery)
- Blended Learning (combination of classroom and online learning and includes station rotation)
- Tiered Assignments
- Instructional Strategies
- Online Adaptive Programs/Products
- Frequent Feedback (Informal, Formal, Formative, Summative, Constructive, Student)
- Flexible Grouping
- Small Group Instruction-occurs at least 3 times per week (Tier 2: 4-6 students) (Tier 3: 1-3 students)
- Increased Opportunities for Student Practice in Targeted Instruction
- Project-Based Learning
- After-school Enrichment
- Virtual Learning Opportunities
- Push-in/Pull-out Services
- Independent Study
- Student Conferencing
- Progress Monitoring

To support students with tiered instruction, specific strategies have been identified to support [Reading Areas of Concern](#) and [Math Areas of Concern](#).