

MTSS: Universal, Additional and Intensified Short Film Transcripts

MTSS: One system of support for all students

What is Universal Support?

When a school uses a multi-tiered system of support, or MTSS, all students achieve better academic and behavior outcomes.

MTSS efficiently matches measured student needs with evidence-based practices for teaching and learning. Schools rethink how to use their space, personnel, materials, and schedules so that all students can learn together within the core curriculum and with high quality instruction.

All students participate in Universal instruction, while a small portion of students receive additional support, and a few students receive intensified support. Students move fluidly between these three tiers. For example, a student may receive additional math support for just a few weeks to master a difficult concept, and receive intensified English language support for the whole year.

Universal support relies on a core curriculum aligned with academic standards and uses the principles of Universal Design for Learning, or UDL. UDL helps teachers provide instruction in diverse ways; allows students multiple means of showing what they know and can do; and motivates students to tackle difficult subjects and skills in a variety of ways. UDL helps each and every student experience full membership in the classroom and school.

Universal support integrates the academic curriculum with a schoolwide behavioral and social-emotional support system. This integrated system is proactive in teaching social behaviors that emphasize positive goals and expectations so all students can successfully manage their behavior while learning.

Universal support applies Differentiated Instruction, which matches measured student needs with evidence-based practices. Differentiated instruction is provided through co-teaching, collaboration, and peer learning. School and grade level teams plan, implement, and continually evaluate curriculum, schedules, personnel, and resources of universal support to meaningfully engage each and every student without segregating them from their classmates and friends.

While some students will still need additional and intensified support, universal support can meet many of their needs. Every adult in the school is involved in providing universal support, including general and special educators, administrators, staff, family, and community members. Universal support is designed for all students, including those who struggle to learn and those who excel; those who are learning in a new language; and those who are affected by other circumstances outside the classroom.

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What is Additional Support?

When a school uses a multi-tiered system of support, or MTSS, all students achieve better academic and behavior outcomes.

MTSS efficiently matches measured student needs with evidence-based practices for teaching and learning. Schools rethink how to use their space, personnel, materials, and schedules so that all students can learn together within the core curriculum and with high quality instruction.

MTSS proactively looks for those students who are most likely to need more or different instruction, and provides it through the system's second tier.

To identify students who may need additional support, the school periodically assesses all students on key performance indicators that are able to predict the need for more support. This process is known as Universal Screening.

Valid and reliable screening tools provide data and decision rules to predict which students might need more help with reading, math, behavior, and social-emotional learning. Only a small portion of students need more than what universal support provides.

Additional support uses evidence-based Interventions to meet the needs for these students. The interventions are targeted to specific skills, often provided in small groups for high efficiency, and are expected to produce a rapid student response. This level of intervention occurs seamlessly within the natural flow of the classroom and school.

Additional support also includes progress monitoring. Students receive additional support only as long as needed. Teachers routinely measure student learning and behavior, and when the data show the student meeting outcomes, teachers withdraw the additional support, because it is no longer needed. If a student does not make sufficient progress with the additional support, a school or grade level team engages in data-based decision making to determine whether to provide Intensified Support, the third tier of MTSS.

Because of this fluid movement among tiers, any student can get what they need, when they need it, and for as long as they need it to achieve their academic and behavioral goals.

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What is Intensified Support?

When a school uses a multi-tiered system of support, or MTSS, all students achieve better academic and behavior outcomes.

MTSS efficiently matches measured student needs with evidence-based practices for teaching and learning. Schools rethink how to use their space, personnel, materials, and schedules so that all students can learn together within the core curriculum and with high quality instruction.

Intensified support provides a few students with specially designed instruction, extra support, and other services. This tier is more resource intensive than the universal and additional tiers, and usually involves ongoing, daily support. Intensified support is not a substitute for participation in universal support and, like additional support, occurs seamlessly within the natural flow of the classroom and school.

Schools identify students' need for intensified support in three ways: universal screening, additional support progress monitoring, or an existing individualized support plan. The specially designed interventions take into account individual student needs, which may be a complex combination of needs not easily met by the targeted skill instruction provided in additional support structures. Like additional interventions, the specially designed interventions are evidence- or research-based, and student progress is monitored for effectiveness.

Although intensified support may be long-term, it may also be short-term and withdrawn when progress monitoring data indicate the student no longer needs it. Progress monitoring data may also indicate the need for a different intense intervention. School and grade level teams that include general and special educators and other specialists or therapists work together to define and deliver intensified support.

MTSS Intensified Support ensures that each and every student is welcomed, valued, and supported in the classroom and school.



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