

The Three Tiers

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

MTSS Overview

The CPS Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) provides a framework for delivering high quality, differentiated instruction and targeted support for students' academic, behavioral, and health/wellness needs in all school and classroom settings. The framework includes both instruction and interventions with targeted supports for those students who require additional, explicit, and more focused instruction to meet the academic and behavioral standards. MTSS is based upon providing increasing instructional time and intensity for academic and/or behavior supports as identified by students' needs. The specific needs of all learners are identified, supported early and effectively.

The MTSS framework uses a continuum of increasingly intense, evidenced-based supports designed to meet the academic and behavioral needs of all learners. The tiers outline the level and intensity of instruction/interventions available across the continuum, although they are not used to describe categories of students or specific instructional programs. A school's multi-tiered service-delivery model must provide a range of supplemental instruction and interventions to increase the time and intensity of each tier.

Schools utilize all educational resources in a comprehensive approach to address student needs proactively. When students are identified through the screening process, progress monitoring, or other on-going assessment procedure as not making satisfactory progress, the problem-solving process is used to develop a plan to meet the needs in deficit areas.

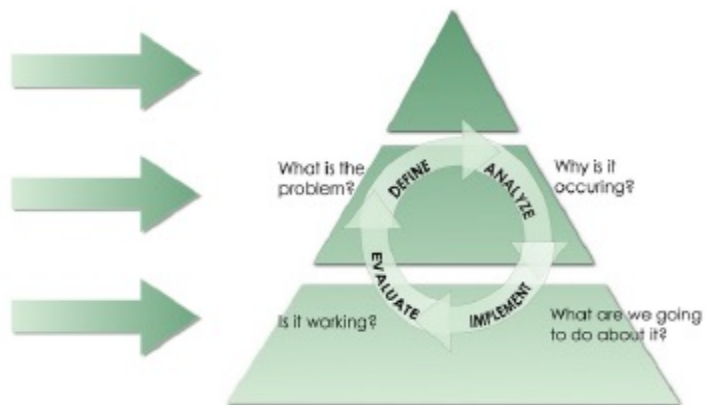
Overview of Tiers 1, 2, and 3

The application of a problem-solving cycle across the three tiers is the most critical component of an effective MTSS system. The problem-solving process is critical for making needed instructional adjustments to ensure continual improvements in both the level of student performance and the student's rate of progress. The problem-solving process in MTSS is a recursive, self-correcting, ongoing methodology for effective decision making at all levels of the system.

Tier 3: Educators provide deep & intense supports based on individual and small group needs (**few**)

Tier 2: Educators provide additional targeted academic and behavioral supports where needed (**some**)

Tier 1: Educators provide universal instruction in the core curriculum to all students (**all students**)



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Tier 1 – Core Universal Instruction and Supports

The three tiers of instruction and interventions differ in intensity, frequency, duration, focus of instruction and/or group size. Tier 1 is the core curriculum and instruction that *all* students receive. CPS expects that Tier 1 instruction is aligned to the [Common Core State Standards](#), all other content area standards, and [ISBE’s Standards for SEL](#). For English learners and standard-English learners, appropriate instruction and interventions are linguistically and culturally responsive: they consider and build on a student’s cultural background and experiences as well as linguistic proficiency (in both English and native language.) This issue of language proficiency and culture also extends to any student who may not be proficient in standard academic language.

Effectively differentiating Tier 1 instruction can be done by designing curriculum and instruction around the principles of [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#). UDL removes or reduces barriers to learning by providing built-in supports and flexible approaches that can be customized to and adjusted for individual learning needs.

Every educator is charged with providing solid Tier 1 instruction for all students. Tier 1 is a constant focus, year to year, and provides in-roads for all content area teachers and all school-based experts, such as Related Service Providers.

Everyone plays a role in removing barriers to accessing high-quality Tier 1 core instruction.

Tier 1 Planning Questions for School-Based Leadership Teams/ILTs:

- Are students provided with CCSS and SEL Standards aligned, scientific, evidence-based core instruction? How is this verified?
- What assessment tools or processes are used to identify instructional needs and the students’ response to instruction?
- Is the core instruction/support effective?
 - What percent of students are achieving standards/benchmark/behavioral expectations? (Goal: 80% or more)
 - What percent of students in priority groups are achieving standards/benchmark/behavioral expectations? (Goal: 80% or more)
 - How are priority groups of students performing in the context of other priority groups?
- If core instruction is not effective:
 - Is the curriculum vertically aligned? How do student knowledge and skills build from year to year?
 - Is the curriculum appropriately matched to the needs of students?
 - Is support provided for implementation fidelity?
- How does the Instructional Leadership Team enhance and support Tier 1 instruction?
- How are parents and students involved or engaged in supporting effective Tier 1 instruction?
- What is the decision rule to determine if students will require supplemental and more intensive, individualized intervention/support?

Tier 2 – Targeted Supplemental Instruction and Intervention

Tier 2 instruction and interventions are provided in addition to the core instruction (Tier 1) that all students receive. Tier 2 instruction does not substitute for the core program – it supplements the core program (e.g., preview, re-teach, review, front load academic vocabulary). A primary purpose of Tier 2 instruction is to strengthen the academic and/or behavior skills of students that serve as barriers to success in Tier 1.

Tier 2 is focused, targeted instruction, interventions, and/or supplemental supports that are provided to some (5%-15%) students who share common academic/behavioral needs. Students are assessed and progress is monitored more frequently than students receiving only Tier 1 instruction. For a list of available Tier 2 academic supports (primarily Literacy and Mathematics) please click [here](#).

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Tier 3 – Intensive Individualized Instruction and Intervention

Often students receiving Tier 3 instruction are taught using a standards-based program that may be different than that used in core instruction that directly addresses identified skill deficits. Tier 3 is about increased time and intensity on a narrowed instructional and skill based focus. It is critical to teach students the skills they need to be successful in the next unit of instruction, grade level, course of study, and/or learning environment. The impact of the instruction provided in Tiers 2 and 3 is influenced significantly by the degree to which Tier 1 standards and instructional practices are incorporated, to the greatest degree possible, into Tier 2 and Tier 3.

Tier 3 is the most intense instruction and intervention that is based on individual student needs (<5% of student population). This instruction is in addition to and aligned with the standards and supplemental academic and behavioral curriculum, instruction, and supports. This can include:

- increased time intensity on a narrowed curriculum focus
- reduced group size

It is essential that students are taught and remediated within the context of standards. In other words, a student receiving Tier 3 services should practice skills and learning within grade level common standards. Students are assessed and progress is monitored more frequently than students receiving only Tier 1 and/or Tier 2 instruction. For a list of available Tier 3 academic supports (primarily Literacy and Mathematics) click [here](#) and for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) supports click [here](#).

Considerations

The length of time a student receives an intervention depends on such factors as: the skill to be learned; the gap between the desired outcome and current level of proficiency and the time needed to close that gap; and/or student age and/or developmental level. Most importantly, the length of time that a student receives an intervention depends on the student's rate of progress and response to that intervention. District, network, and school protocols should define: individuals who may provide interventions; the settings in which the interventions may occur; define characteristics that interventions must possess to ensure they are evidenced-based at various levels of intensity; parameters for the minimum length of the intervention sessions, number of interventions per week and duration; and criteria for when the intervention is terminated.