



INTERVENTIONS

7.7

BACK TO ROADMAP

ESTABLISH DATA-DRIVEN INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

- Reflect on the relationship between Tier 1 gaps and Tier 2 interventions

REFLECT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TIER 1 GAPS AND TIER 2 INTERVENTIONS

Analyze and respond to the Tier 1 gaps that are creating and sustaining Tier 2 support needs.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is a prevention-based, 3-tiered Response to Intervention (RtI) framework for efficiently planning, implementing, monitoring, and adjusting school-based interventions to help all students thrive. The tiers within this framework describe interventions addressing various aspects of student needs, including attendance, academics, behavior, SEL, mental health, etc. As such, these **tiers describe interventions and supports, and not students**, with tier 1 designed to provide universal supports meeting the needs of 80% of students, tier 2 meeting 15-20% of student needs who need more support than is provided in tier 1, and tier 3 focusing on 3-5% of students not yet responding to supports in tiers 1 and 2.

We all need different types of supports in different settings and at different times, and so we move between tiers of support based on our response to the interventions within these tiers. ***This guide highlights key considerations for examining the relationship between tier 1 and tier 2 interventions at your high school.*** As a 9th Grade Success Team working within your school's MTSS framework, it is essential to pay close attention to how many students are being supported in each tier at a time, since the whole framework is designed to make your interventions feasible to implement.

- **Focus on instruction and practice at all 3 tiers:** more than any other institution, schools are designed to teach skills to students. Whenever you are engaged in problem solving as a team, first ask yourselves: what skills need to be taught to students so they can improve their outcomes

in this domain? Then, consider if these skills need to be taught to all students (tier 1), some groups of students (tier 2), or a few individual students (tier 3). Be sure to match the skill to the setting best designed to maximize opportunities for ***direct instruction, modeling, practice, and feedback.***

- **Define your parameters for each tier of support:** identify explicit entry and exit criterion for students to receive varying levels of support at the various tiers in your school. Make sure to include a wide array of socially meaningful indicators, such as: behavior, attendance, grades, mental health, SEL, etc.
- **Track fidelity of adult implementation:** in order for students to respond to interventions at all tiers, schools must provide the professional development, coaching, and monitoring to make sure that adults have the skills and capacity to implement evidence-based instruction with fidelity. For an excellent, validated assessment of your work at each tier, consider using the Tiered Fidelity Inventory, available here: <https://www.pbisapps.org/products/tfi>
- **Make sure that students and families are central to your work:** one of the amazing gifts of working with high school students is their creativity and connection to their communities¹. When your team is recruiting members, ensure that students and families have ongoing, meaningful, and central roles on your MTSS teams. Encourage them to design meaningful incentive programs, lead tier 1 celebrations, co-create instructional resources, and share feedback with teachers on pedagogy.

¹ Flannery, K. B., Sugai, G. (2009). SWPBS implementation in high schools: Current practice and future directions. University of Oregon.

- **Base all of your work in culture and belonging:** at the heart of effective MTSS work is a school community rooted in joy, belonging, safety, and equity. If your team is struggling to implement tier 1 with *technical* shifts not rooted in culture and belonging, consider shifting to more *adaptive* work that centers these priorities.

- ▷ If your focus is **academics**, we recommend working with your community, district and CHSS coach to identify culturally responsive instructional resources;
- ▷ If your focus is **attendance**, we recommend this best practice guide from Washington State: <https://ospi.k12.wa.us/student-success/support-programs/attendance-chronic-absenteeism-and-truancy/best-practices-improving-attendance>;
- ▷ And if your focus is **behavior**, we recommend the Culturally Responsive PBIS Field Guide: https://assets-global.website-files.com/5d3725188825e071f1670246/6062383b3f8932b212e9c98b_PBIS%20Cultural%20Responsiveness%20Field%20Guide%20v2.pdf

- **Track % of students served, and movement between tiers:** on a regular basis, collect, summarize, and review data on your parameters, to make sure that you can reasonably implement the instructional supports you've designed for each tier. This MTSS framework is designed to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, and schools simply can't sustain the intensity of supports needed for more than the 20% at tier 2 or 3-5% at tier 3. If tier 2 gets above 20% and tier 3 remains below 5% this indicates a need for increased tier 1 instruction. If tier 2 falls below 15%, and tier 3 exceeds 5%, this may indicate a need for increasing your tier 2 supports.

- **Consider expanding tier 2 supports within classrooms:** If your % students served at tier 2 is below 15%, it is helpful to expand the

implementation of small group instruction within classrooms. Given the limitations of pull-out group supports in all schools, and the frequent need for these providers to focus on students in need of tier 3 interventions, the most efficient setting for small group interventions is within classrooms.

- **Utilize your instructional opportunities strategically:** when your team identifies a need for increased tier 1 instruction, map out all of your existing "openings" for such instruction to take place, and go with what is available. For example, if your school has an advisory period daily, or weekly: modify the curriculum you're using to better teach the skills your team has identified; if you don't have advisory, work to integrate this skill instruction within content-area classrooms.
- **Celebrate, communicate, motivate:** the brains of teenagers are highly attuned to social feedback, so we want to leverage this asset by creating a school-wide culture of recognition, positive modeling, practice, and feedback. We are ALL motivated by a variety of complex intrinsic and extrinsic reinforcers at different times and settings, so we want to create diverse reinforcement-rich environments to recognize a wide array of students for their growth.
- **Focus on what's working:** when your team is engaged in problem-solving, learning to look first within your school community for solutions can increase trust, buy-in and collaborating between teachers, and can increase the sustainability of supports over time. Which teachers or departments have exceptionally high pass rates, low discipline referral rates, strong attendance and great relationships with students? **Identify them, ask them what works, and replicate with other teachers who are struggling. Remember, the whole focus of MTSS is on modifying what's within our locus of control as teachers and staff to improve student outcomes.**

