

EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND HOW THEY SUPPORT STUDENT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Several frameworks and models in education share elements of data-based problem-solving to inform instruction and intervention. However, variability in how these frameworks and models are described and understood may be found across states, school districts, individual schools, and communities. Misunderstandings around these differences can lead to ineffective communication, negatively impact the integrity of their implementation and, ultimately, impede student growth.

To be able to effectively collaborate on behalf of students, it is important that teachers, parents, administrators, education specialists, and community partners who interact with school personnel to support students (e.g., physicians, psychologists, social workers, and counselors) adopt a shared language and understanding of the processes utilized in education.¹ To this end, an overview of common educational frameworks, models, and concepts is provided below. These include the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports and Alignment (Kansas MTSS) framework, the Response to Intervention (RtI) model, and the School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) model, mentioned earlier.

The Kansas MTSS framework addresses the whole child through a comprehensive focus on academics, social-emotional learning, and positive behavior supports and instruction. An RtI model traditionally focuses on learning and behavior. Finally, the SWPBS model focuses on behavior. Each of these frameworks consists of three tiers: (a) a core or universal Tier 1 for all students, (b) a supplemental Tier 2 for students who need a little more assistance, and (c) an intensive Tier 3 for students who have significant struggles in a given area.

Due to the variability in how these frameworks and models are interpreted and implemented, it is important that parents/guardians and community partners seek clarification from a given school district on which framework or model is being used along with a description of what that looks like. For example, some school districts may be implementing a generic version of MTSS but not the specific Kansas MTSS framework supported by KSDE. Similarly, some school

districts may be implementing components of the Rtl and SWPBS models but not all of the components and/or not within an overarching MTSS or Kansas MTSS framework.

Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports and Alignment (Kansas MTSS)

The term "Kansas MTSS" is used to describe the overarching framework supported by KSDE and used by several Kansas schools to provide comprehensive core curricula for academics, positive behavior supports and instruction, and social-emotional learning, as well as additional layers of supports to students based on identified needs. In brief, the Kansas MTSS is comprised of a coherent continuum of evidence-based, system-wide practices that support a rapid response to academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs, with frequent data-based monitoring for instructional decision-making in order to empower each Kansas student to achieve to high standards.



Core Beliefs

- Every child learns and achieves to high standards.
- Learning includes academic and social competencies.
- Every member of the learning community continues to grow, learn, and reflect.
- Every leader at all levels is responsible for every child.
- Change is intentional, coherent and dynamic.

To Achieve These Beliefs ...

- Every child will be provided a rigorous and research- or evidence-based curriculum.
- Every child will be provided effective and relentless teaching.

- Evidence-based interventions will be provided at the earliest identification of need.
- Policy will be based on evidence-based practice.
- Every educator will continuously gain knowledge and develop expertise to build capacity and sustain effective practice.
- Resources will be intentionally designed to match student needs.
- Every leader will be responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating.
- Academic and behavioral data will be used to inform instructional decisions.
- Educators, families, and community members will be part of the fundamental practice of effective problem-solving and instructional decision-making.
- An empowering culture will be enhanced/developed that creates collective responsibility for student success.

For more information, visit the [Kansas MTSS website](#).

Components of Kansas MTSS Framework

The following is a very general overview of the components within the Kansas MTSS framework. It is intended to provide a basic understanding of what the Kansas MTSS framework looks like and how it is used to address the learning needs of all students.

A continuum of supports. Supports within the Kansas MTSS framework are provided on a continuum of three tiers based on student need and progress. The level of intensity of instruction is indicative of the tier of support in which it falls.

Tier 1. “All” students receive Tier 1 in the form of instruction and student supports academically, behaviorally, and social-emotionally. As such, Tier 1 focuses on implementation of the district's core curricula and is aligned with the Kansas Standards. Tier 1 services (time and focus) are based on the needs of all students in a particular school, as well as maintaining fidelity to the curricula used. Some schools require more time in identifying and implementing appropriate core curriculum areas based on student demographics (readiness, language, economic factors) and student performance levels to ensure that all students achieve to high standards.

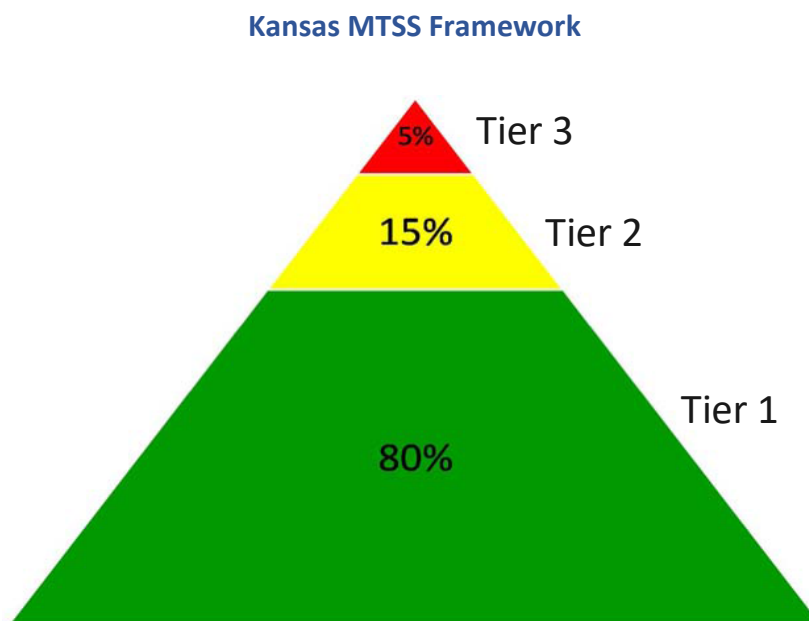
Tier 2. Tier 2 consists of supplemental, evidence-based interventions for 5-15%, or “some” students, who receive Tier 2 services in addition to Tier 1 instruction. Tier 2 services are more “intense” than Tier 1 services (i.e., additional time focused on targeted skills via instruction and intervention, as indicated by data) and may be provided by a variety of trained professionals in a variety of settings. Student progress is monitored to ensure improvement and to determine whether additional adjustments to instruction and interventions are needed. Tier 2 services require effective levels of collaboration and coordination among the staff (general, specialized

and, in some cases, community providers) as well as dedication to adjusting the intervention if progress monitoring does not show adequate growth.

Tier 3. Tier 3 consists of intensive interventions provided to 1-5%, or “few” students, who receive Tier 3 services in addition to Tier 1 instruction. Typically, Tier 3 services are provided to very small groups and/or individual students. The purpose of Tier 3 services is to help students overcome significant barriers to learning the academic and/or behavior and social skills required for success. Tier 3 services may require additional time and a more targeted focus of instruction and intervention, with more frequent progress monitoring. Tier 3 services require effective levels of collaboration and coordination among the staff (general and specialized) and dedication to adjusting the intervention if progress monitoring does not show adequate growth.

The expected outcome of students receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 services is to return the student to only needing Tier 1 core instruction. For students who are referred for a special education evaluation, the information gathered through the Kansas MTSS process is valuable.

For information about special education and special education evaluations, refer to [Special Education Services](#) on the KSDE website.



Determining the Needed Level of Support

The level or tier of support a student needs in any given instructional or development area is determined through data-based decision-making. Such decision-making takes into consideration the results of academic and behavioral/social screeners, along with commonly collected

information such as office discipline referrals, attendance records, grades, and referrals to the school nurse/school counselor/school social worker.

Questions to Consider When Identifying and Implementing Interventions

Adapted from Florida's Multi-Tiered System of Supports.²

1. Is the student appropriately matched to the intervention developed for him/her?
2. Does the intervention address the needs of the whole student - his/her academic, behavioral, social and emotional needs?
3. Is the intervention being implemented with fidelity?
4. Does the student need a long-term plan for catching up to grade-level standards (including transition plans between grades)?

Understanding Fidelity and How It Is Assessed

Adapted from Florida's Multi-Tiered System of Supports.³

Districts and schools consider three types of fidelity when evaluating effective instruction and intervention:

1. Fidelity of implementing the critical components of a multi-tier system of supports.
2. Fidelity of using the problem-solving process across all three tiers.
3. Fidelity of implementing evidence-based instruction and interventions matched to specific need(s).

Response to Intervention (RtI)

Adapted from the RTI Action Network.⁴

RtI is a multi-tiered approach to early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. The RtI process begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all students in the general education classroom. Struggling learners are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning. Such services may be provided by a variety of personnel, including general and special educators and specialists. Progress is closely monitored to assess both the learning rate and the level of performance of individual students. Educational decisions about the intensity and duration of interventions are based on individual student response to instruction. RTI is designed for use when making decisions in both general and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction and intervention guided by child outcome data.

School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS)

Adapted from the OSEP Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support.⁵

SWPBS refers to a systems-change process for an entire school or district. The underlying principle of SWPBS is to teach behavioral expectations in the same manner as any core curriculum subject. Typically, schools focus on teaching three to five behavioral expectations that are positively stated and easy to remember. Some examples include:

- Respect Yourself, Respect Others, and Respect Property
- Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful
- Respect Relationships and Respect Responsibilities

Schools implementing SWPBS generally begin by (a) developing a matrix of what the behavioral expectations look like, sound like, and feel like in all non-classroom areas (such as in the example below); (b) determining how they will teach the behavioral expectations – often through the use of lesson plans; and (c) developing a systematic way to acknowledge and reinforce the desired behaviors.

Respect Property			
Bus	Keep feet and hands where they belong.	Throw unwanted items in wastebasket.	Keep food and drinks in backpack.
Cafeteria	Place tray on kitchen window shelf after scraping leftovers into wastebasket.	Wipe table with sponge provided.	Clean food spills off floor.
Restroom	Flush toilet after use.	Use two squirts of soap to wash hands.	Throw paper towels in wastebasket.
Playground	Report any graffiti or broken equipment to adult on duty.	Return playground equipment to proper area.	Use equipment as it was designed.

OSEP Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports.⁶

In addition, schools implementing SWPBS typically refine their office discipline referral form to reflect agreement on which behaviors will result in an instant referral to the office vs. those that should be handled in the classroom. Data on behavioral incidents (including the day of the week, the month, the time of day, specific behavior(s), location(s), and by specific student) are collected and reviewed regularly to determine whether there are patterns that can be systematically addressed.

References

- 1 Shapiro, E. (n.d.). *Tiered instruction and intervention in a response-to-intervention model*. Retrieved from <http://www.rtinetwork.org/essential/tieredinstruction/tiered-instruction-and-intervention-rti-model>
- 2 Florida's Multi-Tiered System of Supports. (n.d.). MTSS implementation components: Ensuring common language and understanding. Retrieved from http://www.florida-rti.org/educatorResources/MTSS_Book_ImpiComp_012612.pdf, p. 7.
- 3 Ibid., p. 7.
- 4 Shapiro, E. (n.d.).
- 5 OSEP Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support. (n.d.). SWPBIS for beginners [Webpage]. Retrieved from <https://www.pbis.org/school/swpbis-for-beginners>
- 6 Ibid.

Resources

- **Kansas MTSS**
<https://ksdetasn.org/mtss/kansas-multi-tier-system-of-supports-and-alignment>
- **KSDE Special Education Services**
<http://www.ksde.org/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Early-Childhood-Special-Education-and-Title-Services/Special-Education>
- **Advancing Education Effectiveness: Interconnecting School Mental Health and School-Wide Positive Behavior Support**
<https://www.pbis.org/common/cms/files/Current%20Topics/Final-Monograph.pdf>