

# **Sam Adams Elementary School Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)**



**Mission Statement:** The idea of MTSS is to catch learners when they begin to struggle. This process, based on scientific research, will be a safety net for all at-risk learners; thereby assuring that all students achieve their maximum potential through collaborative, supportive and continuous efforts of all stakeholders.

**What is MTSS?** A multi-tiered system of support is a framework consisting of 3 tiers for service delivery that is systematic, data-based and focused on identifying and resolving student academic and behavioral difficulties. This is done through the implementation of scientifically based instructional practices that are based upon the individual needs of the student.

**MTSS provides the following:** High-quality instruction and intervention that is matched to the student's individual needs. Frequent assessment through progress monitoring to make decisions about change in instructional strategies and goals. Educational decisions, based on the results of progress monitoring, which include intervention selection and possibly placement in special education.

**Key Elements of MTSS:**

**MTSS isn't a specific curriculum. It's a proactive approach that has key elements:**

- Universal screening for all students early in each school year
- Increasing levels of targeted support for those who are struggling
- Integrated plans that address students' academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs
- A schoolwide approach to student support, with teachers, counselors, psychologists, and other specialists working as a team to assess students and plan interventions.
- Professional development so staff can provide interventions and monitor progress effectively
- Family involvement so parents and caregivers can understand the interventions and give support at home
- Frequent monitoring of students' progress to help decide if they need more interventions
- The use of evidence-based strategies at every tier of support

## **Explanation of the Tiers:**

1. Tier 1 is effective, standards-based instruction that occurs in the general education classroom and is delivered by a general education teacher. Commonly referred to as “core instruction,” it is designed to meet the needs of a minimum of 80% of all students. At this level, the classroom teacher uses research based instruction and curriculum.

2. Tier 2 is supplemental, small-group instruction designed specifically for those students who are not making adequate progress in Tier 1. Tier 2 interventions do not supplant Tier 1 instruction but are provided in addition to what the student is receiving at Tier 1. Interventions are designed to match the needs of students identified as at risk through screening and progress monitoring measures and provide a minimum of 20 –30 minutes per session at a minimum of 3-4 times per week by trained, knowledgeable, and skilled school personnel for a minimum of 4-6 weeks.

3. Tier 3 is supplemental, individualized, and customized intervention provided to students in a smaller group format of three to five students and delivered with greater frequency (3-5 times per week) and duration (30-40 min.). Students in Tier 3 continue to receive core instruction at Tier 1. Progress monitoring should be done weekly. Interventions at Tier 3 are tailored to the student's needs and provided by a highly trained, knowledgeable, and skilled educator within the building remediation class.

## **MTSS Screening:**

School-Wide Screening Within MTSS, is used to determine which students might be at risk and in need of closer monitoring in the general education curriculum. School-wide screening also serves to identify students in need of further assessment and possible inclusion in Tier 2 intervention. It is recommended that schools use school-wide screening, also known as benchmarking, 3 times per school year (fall, winter, spring) in combination with other progress monitoring techniques to identify students who require more intense interventions. NWEA MAP and dibels testing are both ways that school-wide screening can occur. The data that is collected is compared to grade level criteria which are available for the benchmarks in order to determine what students are not currently on target for their grade level. This data is used, in conjunction with teacher input, to determine what students may be at risk for future academic difficulty.

Intervention: A specific skill-building strategy implemented and monitored to improve a targeted skill (i.e., what is actually known or demonstrated) and to achieve adequate progress in a specific area (academic or behavioral). Scientifically Research-Based Intervention: Specific curriculum that has been proven to be effective for most students. To meet the label of “scientifically based,” the research must: Employ systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment; Involve rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated

hypotheses and justify the general conclusions; Rely on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across observations; and Be accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparatively rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

#### **Examples of Research-Based Interventions in Reading/Math:**

- **Wilson**
- **Sondag**
- **Texas Reading/Comprehension**
- **Flying Start**
- **LLI**
- **Making Meaning**
- **Foot Prints**
- **Rocket Math**

#### **Progress Monitoring**

Progress monitoring is the scientifically based practice of assessing students' academic performance on a regular basis. It is used to determine the extent to which students are benefiting from classroom instruction and for monitoring the effectiveness of interventions. Progress monitoring should occur at least once per month in Tier 1, but could occur as often as 3 times per week in Tier 3. There are three main purposes of progress monitoring:

1. To determine whether children are profiting appropriately from the instructional program, including the curriculum;
2. To build more effective programs for the children who are not benefitting from the core curriculum or other interventions;
3. To estimate rates of student improvement. 5 In an MTSS paradigm, progress monitoring assists school teams in making decisions about appropriate levels of intervention. Progress monitoring tools are especially helpful because they assess specific and targeted skills, are sensitive to small increments of growth over time and can be administered frequently. Progress monitoring tools are also relevant to the development of interventions and instructional strategies for students who are struggling. Progress monitoring can be used for students at any Tier to determine if they are making progress over time.

#### **Examples of Progress Monitoring Tools:**

**Dibels**  
**Cycle Pre-Test and Post-Test**  
**Sondag**  
**NWEA**  
**DRA**  
**Rocket Math**

## **SAM ADAMS' CLASS EXPECTATIONS**

1. Respect yourself, the teacher & others
  - Show respect for the teacher, yourself and others at all times.
  - Respect others' property. Avoid touching or writing on anything that does not belong to you (including desks, textbooks, teacher's belongings, walls, chalkboard, etc.). Don't expect that others will clean-up your messes. Please pick-up after yourself.
  - Respect yourself and the rest of us by using appropriate language and wearing appropriate clothing.
  - Be a kind person.
2. Put forth your best effort at all times
  - Always do your own best work.
  - Put learning ahead of getting good grades.
  - Put quality ahead of just getting it done.
3. Be prepared for class each day
  - Come prepared with all materials necessary:
    - An organized class binder containing all necessary materials and handouts
    - Looseleaf paper, pens (blue or black), and pencils
    - A red or purple pen for grading in class or underlining important elements in note taking
    - Highlighters for emphasizing important text
    - A planner to help keep you organized - the most successful students are organized.
4. Follow directions when given
  - When directions are given, do your best to follow them the first time. If you are confused or have questions, ask. I would rather have you stop class to clarify than be off task while everyone else is working.
5. Pay attention, participate and ask questions
  - Engage in what is going on in the classroom. **If you have a question, ask it!** Otherwise, I might not know until the test that you did not understand something. There are no stupid questions, and chances are, if you are wondering about it, someone else in the class is to. Be proactive about your learning and don't be afraid to ask for help. If you feel most comfortable waiting until after class, that is okay, too, but do keep communication open between us.

6. Preserve a positive learning environment
  - Student actions that interfere with teaching or learning in the classroom will NOT be tolerated.
  - Use class time to learn reading/math. Please do not spend your time grooming, sleeping, talking, writing notes, playing cards, listening to your Ipod, text-messaging friends, or doing work for other classes.
  - Minimize classroom interruptions by walking to class quietly and not leaving the classroom during the half hour.
7. Take responsibility for your actions
  - If you are confronted about a rule infraction, own up to it. Don't deny it, lie about it, or blame someone else.
  - Take responsibility for missed assignments.
  - All expectations will be enforced. Students that choose to break these expectations will face the possibility of consequences.

## **CLASS CONSEQUENCES**

1. Verbal warning
2. Call home
3. Detention
4. Referral to assistant principal

\* Serious offenses can, at the teacher's discretion, result in more severe consequences regardless of previous steps taken. Any infraction of the rules may affect your learning readiness grade. It can also be cause for further action at the teacher's discretion.

## **MTSS**

### **Reference Guide A Glossary of Key Terms**

**Accommodation-** is a change made to instruction and/or assessment that does not change the expectations for performance or change the construct that is being measured.

**Accommodations-** provide access to buildings, curriculum, and assessments.

**Accuracy-** is free from error.

**Adaptation-** is an adjustment to the instructional content or performance expectations of students with disabilities from what is expected or taught to students in general education. Adaptations can include decreasing the number of exercises the student is expected to complete, assigning different reading materials, or allowing use of a calculator.

**Assessment-** is the process of measuring and documenting what students have learned.

**At-Risk Student-** is a student who due to circumstances is statistically more likely than other to fail academically.

**Baseline Data-** includes basic information on a student's current performance level, which is gathered before a program or intervention begins. It is the starting point used to compare a student's learning before a program or instruction begins.

**Benchmark Assessment-** is the periodic assessment (a minimum of three times per year) of all students compared to age or grade-level standards. The benchmark reflects a specified level of student performance that is expected of students at a particular grade level. A student's performance is measured against this established benchmark to determine how they are performing relative to same age or grade-level peers.

**Data-based Decision-making-** utilizes student data to guide the design, implementation, and adjustment of instruction and/or intervention.

**Data Points-** are points on a graph that represent student achievement or behavior relative to a specific assessment at a specific time.

**Diagnostic Screeners-** are measures that determine early identification of a student's area of academic concern. Differentiated Instruction matches the specific strengths and needs of each learner. It involves adjusting the curriculum, teaching/learning environment, and/or instruction to provide appropriate learning opportunities for all students to meet their needs. When teachers differentiate instruction they typically make adjustments to content, process, product, and/or the learning environment.

**Disaggregated Data-** are calculated and reported separately for specific subgroups (e.g., race, economic status, special education status, etc.).

**Documentation-** is any material or evidence that serves as a record (grades, attendance, progress monitoring data, student work samples)

**Duration-** For the purposes of documenting response to intervention, duration refers to the length (number of minutes) of a session multiplied by the number of sessions per school year. "Sufficient duration" is dependent on a number of factors including the program or strategy being used, the age of the student, and the severity of the deficit involved. Some programs offer guidelines or recommendations for duration and may even limit the number sessions in which a child can participate, believing that a child who does not make adequate gains after the specified amount of time would likely benefit from an alternative intervention.

**English Language Learners (ELLs)-** are students whose first language is other than English and who are in the process of learning English. These students typically speak a language other than English at home and score below proficient on English assessments when they enter our school system.

**Evidence-based Instruction-** refers to educational practices or strategies that have been demonstrated through one or more research studies to be effective.

Explicit Instruction is clear, deliberate, and visible. 26 Fidelity refers to how accurately and consistently instruction, intervention or assessment is delivered, and/or administered in the way it was intended. Five Critical Elements of Reading Instruction across the Curriculum (These shall be applied in all academic areas.)

**1. Phonemic Awareness** is the ability to hear and manipulate the sounds in spoken words and the understanding that spoken words and syllables are made up of speech sounds. Print is not necessarily involved. For example, asking the student: "What sound do you hear at the beginning of the word cat?" or "What word rhymes with tree?"

**2. Phonics** addresses the relationships between letters and their related sounds, an understanding that these relationships are systematic and largely predictable, and the use of these relationships to read and write words.

**3. Fluency** is the ability to read connected text rapidly, smoothly, effortlessly, automatically, with prosody, and with little conscious attention to decoding (the ability to apply knowledge of letter sound relationships, including letter patterns, to decipher and pronounce written words), thereby allowing the reader to focus attention on the meaning and message of the text. Text is read with appropriate intonation and expression that sounds very much like conversational speech.



**4. Vocabulary** development involves knowledge of word meanings, morphology, and word-learning strategies and usage.

**5. Comprehension** is the process of constructing meaning from written text. It includes such skills as: activating prior knowledge, understanding what is read, sequencing, summarizing, making inferences, predicting, and making connections between new and unknown information.

**Flexible Grouping-** allows for students to move between different groups based upon their performance and instructional needs.

**Formative Assessment/Evaluations-** are classroom/curriculum measures of student progress; monitors progress made toward achieving learning outcomes; informs instructional decision making.

**Frequency-** is the rate of occurrence. Instructional Intervention is clear, targeted, deliberate, and carefully planned instruction delivered by trained personnel tailored to meet the identified needs of struggling students.

**Instructional Strategies-** are approaches a teacher may take to achieve objectives. Intensive Intervention is instruction delivered with increased opportunities for additional instruction, practice, and feedback.

**Outcome Assessment-** is the measurement of how students perform at the end of planned instruction or at the end of the year.

**Parental Engagement-** refers to meaningful and active involvement of parents and family members in the educational process.

**Progress Monitoring-** incorporates continuous measurement of student learning to determine progress toward targeted skills to adjust instruction. The assessment process involves the collection and analysis of student data to evaluate academic performance on specific skills. Curriculum-based measures may be used to quantify level of performance relative to peers and rate of progress.

**Rate of Progress-** refers to student performance across time, determined by analyzing multiple points (minimum of three) of data that are graphed.

**Reliability-** is the consistency with which a screening tool is administered from one administration to the next. Research-based Instruction involves educational practices, instructional strategies, and interventions that have been validated as effective through independent, well-designed empirical research studies.

**Research-based Interventions-** are instructional programs, strategies, methods, and materials that have been proven to work through independent, well-designed empirical research studies.

**MTSS Team-** is a collaborative team that meets on a regular basis and whose major functions include the planning and development of their school's Response to Intervention (RTI) process as well as for the purposes of evaluating student data, planning interventions, and monitoring student response to intervention.

**Targeted Instruction-** is teaching focused on an identified goal and based on the identified strengths and needs of a student.

**Tiered Instruction-** is an instructional delivery model which outlines intensity of instruction within a multi-tiered prevention/intervention system.

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**Validity-** is the extent to which a screening tool accurately measures the underlying construct that it is intended to measure.