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Tiered **I**nterventions Using
Evidence-Based **R**esearch

Leadership

MTSS: Relationship With Other Programs

TEA
Texas Education Agency

The Meadows Center
FOR PREVENTING EDUCATIONAL RISK

TEXAS
The University of Texas at Austin

Outline

- MTSS and tutoring
- MTSS and special education
- MTSS and parent/caregiver communication

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MTSS vs. Tutoring

MTSS	Tutoring
Is a well-defined system of interventions and assessments	Is campus-based instruction that varies from campus to campus
Requires the use of research-based interventions	Does not require the use of research-based interventions
Requires the use of reliable, valid measures of progress	Does not require the use of reliable, valid measures of progress
Targets specific student needs based on learning gaps and may require instruction that focuses on below-grade-level knowledge and skills to fill these gaps	Usually focuses on grade-level student expectations within the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)
Provides students with certain amounts of consistent intervention before exiting	Has no set time that a student should receive instruction—students might get tutoring one week and miss the next

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MTSS and Tutoring: Your Implementation

- How does tutoring fit into your MTSS model?
- What does your tutoring program focus on?
  - Foundational skills?
  - Automaticity with skills?
  - Oral language development?
  - Objectives on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)?
- Was your tutoring program created to target instruction and fill gaps? Or was it created to review or reteach grade-level expectations?

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MTSS and Tutoring: Changes to Consider

- Do you need to redefine tutoring as part of universal instruction rather than an intervention?
- What kinds of training are needed to help the faculty and staff understand the relationship between MTSS and tutoring?
- Do you need to restructure student services to alter the relationship between MTSS and tutoring? If so, how?

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MTSS and Special Education

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MTSS vs. Special Education

MTSS

A coordinated system that includes the following:

- Levels of research-based instruction and intervention
- Data collection, management, and analysis
- Ongoing decision making
- Systematic professional development

Special Education

One part of the coordinated system; includes the following:

- Comprehensive evaluation of a student's needs
- Provision of specialized instruction based on these needs
- Consistent review of data to ensure instructional progress

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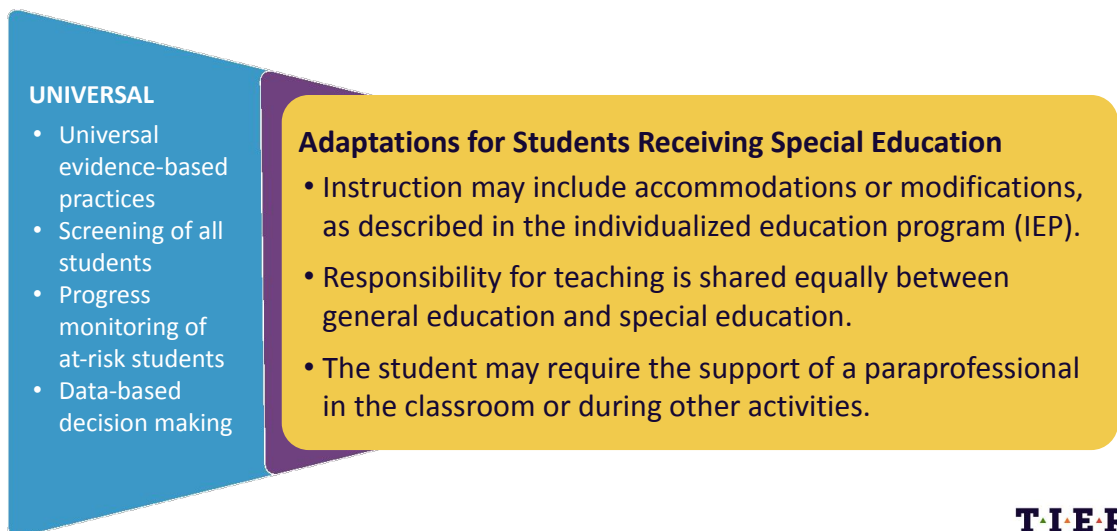## Comprehensive Evaluation for Special Education: MTSS Data to Provide

- All screening, diagnostic, and progress-monitoring data
- Information about core or content area instruction, Tier 2 interventions, and Tier 3 interventions that have been provided
- Proof that these various levels of instruction have been appropriately monitored
- Specific goals set for the student, instructional strategies tried to accelerate the student's response, and the student's actual response
- Other information and documentation required by the special education department

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The MTSS Framework and Students Receiving Special Education

UNIVERSAL

TARGETED

INTENSIVE

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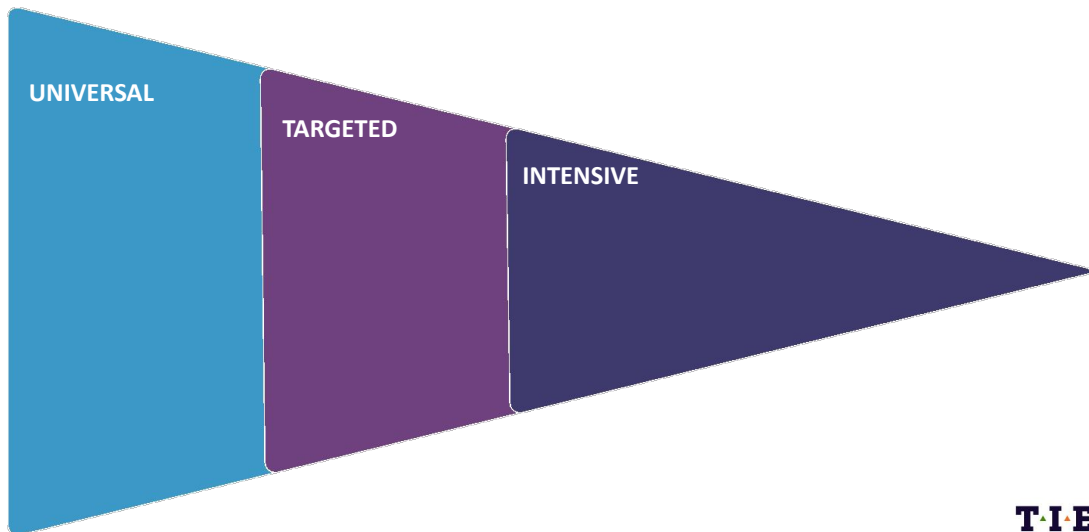
Universal Instruction and Students Receiving Special Education

UNIVERSAL

- Universal evidence-based practices
- Screening of all students
- Progress monitoring of at-risk students
- Data-based decision making

Adaptations for Students Receiving Special Education

- Instruction may include accommodations or modifications, as described in the individualized education program (IEP).
- Responsibility for teaching is shared equally between general education and special education.
- The student may require the support of a paraprofessional in the classroom or during other activities.

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Targeted Intervention and Students Receiving Special Education

UNIVERSAL
- Universal evidence-based practices
- Screening of all students
- Progress monitoring of at-risk students
- Data-based decision making

TARGETED
- Targeted evidence-based practices
- Progress monitoring
- Data-based decision making

Examples
- A student who qualifies for special education in reading and demonstrates a need for Tier 2 intervention in math
- A student who demonstrates a deficit in reading that is not specified in IEP goals but that can be addressed through Tier 2 intervention
- A student who qualifies for special education but does not have specific academic IEP goals

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Intensive Intervention and Students Receiving Special Education

- Are students receiving special education included or excluded in your MTSS framework?
- Is the instruction based on need or based on labels?
- Who takes responsibility for these students' learning?

INTENSIVE
- Diagnostics
- Intensive evidence-based practices
- Progress monitoring
- Data-based decision making

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Consistent, Ongoing Data Review: Ensuring Progress in Special Education

- The data of students receiving special education should be collected, managed, and reviewed just as it is for other students within an MTSS system.

- Ongoing decision making should include consideration of the instructional needs of students receiving special education.

- The needs of these students should be considered when planning core or content area instruction, interventions, and professional development.

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MTSS Is for ALL Students

MTSS is *not* a prereferral process for special education.

All students' needs must be considered within an MTSS system.

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MTSS and Special Education: Your Implementation

- How does special education fit within your MTSS model?
- Are the needs of students receiving special education considered when analyzing data and making instructional decisions?
- Are instruction and interventions based on student need or siloed based on labels?
- Is your MTSS model a prereferral process for special education?
  - How do you know?
  - What kinds of problems would this create?

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MTSS and Special Education: Changes to Consider

- Do you need to redefine the relationship between your MTSS framework and special education department?
- What kinds of training are needed to help the faculty and staff understand the relationship between MTSS and special education?
- Do you need to restructure student services based on the relationship between your MTSS framework and special education department? If so, how?

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MTSS and Caregiver Communication

Notification Requirements

Texas Education Code § 26.0081 states, "Each school year, each school district shall notify a parent of each child…who receives assistance from the district for learning difficulties, including through the use of intervention strategies, as that term is defined by Section 26.004, that the district provides that assistance to the child."

A sample caregiver notification letter and FAQ document can be found on the Response to Intervention page of the Texas Education Agency website in the section titled "Notice and Frequently Asked Questions Relating to Response to Interventions for Children Not Eligible for Special Education": https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/special-education /programs-and-services/response-to-intervention

MTSS and Caregiver Communication

- Create materials, websites, etc. that provide a clear picture of your campus's MTSS framework, including the following:
    - Core or content area instruction
    - Interventions
    - Assessment and data analysis processes
    - Professional development
- Create systems for sharing data, including screening and progress-monitoring data, with caregivers.
- Provide timely communication when changes are made to a student's instructional plan (e.g., being moved into a new intervention).

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Communication Tips

- Be transparent.
- Use caregivers' home language.
- Use clear and relatable language (e.g., don't use acronyms).
- Ensure consistency across the faculty and staff.
- Describe what caregivers should look for in their child's work.
- Be available to confer and allow caregivers to observe their child if possible.

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Ways to Communicate With Parents and Caregivers

- Parent-teacher conferences
- Home visits
- Emails
- Parent-teacher organizations
- Curriculum nights
- Presentations at parent-teacher organization meetings
- School community councils
- "Special persons" days
- Annual field days

- Weekly or monthly folders sent home
- Parent newsletters
- Flyers and handouts posted in public areas
- Phone calls or text messages
- Homework hotlines
- School website
- Weekly or monthly calendars
- Open houses
- Parent workshops

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Resources to Support Communication With Caregivers

- Sample caregiver notification letters and checklists https://meadowscenter.org/resource/parent-notification-checklists-and-sample-letters
- Sample caregiver booklet (in English and Spanish) related to MTSS
  - https://meadowscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Parent_Booklet_20151.pdf
  - https://meadowscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/SPANISH_Parent_Booklet_pf.pdf

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MTSS and Caregiver Communication: Your Implementation

- How do you communicate with caregivers about your MTSS model and how it affects students' instructional programs?

- Do you provide caregivers with clear explanations of all aspects of your campus's MTSS framework?

- How are students' data shared with caregivers?

- Do caregivers receive regular updates about individual students' instructional programs?

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MTSS and Caregiver Communication: Changes to Consider

- Do you need to create materials, websites, etc. that clearly explain all aspects of your campus's MTSS framework?

- What kinds of training are needed to help the faculty and staff understand how to communicate with caregivers about your MTSS framework, students' data, and instruction?

- Do you need to restructure caregiver communication processes to ensure that they receive clear, timely information about their child's performance and progress? If so, how?

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Conclusion: Your To-Do List

- Differentiate MTSS from tutoring.
- Clearly define the relationship between MTSS and special education.
- Plan parent and caregiver communication related to MTSS.

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