

## MTSS Team Process - Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

### Edgewater Park Township School District

2025-2026

In April 2001, the State Board of Education adopted new rules to provide district boards of education with standards for the delivery of intervention and referral services (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7, Intervention and Referral Services\*). The requirements set forth in the regulations are intended to provide schools with direction in formulating coordinated services and team delivery systems to address the full range of student learning, behavior and health problems in the general education program. Under the new regulations, however, schools may also provide intervention and referral services for students who have been determined to be in need of special education programs and services.

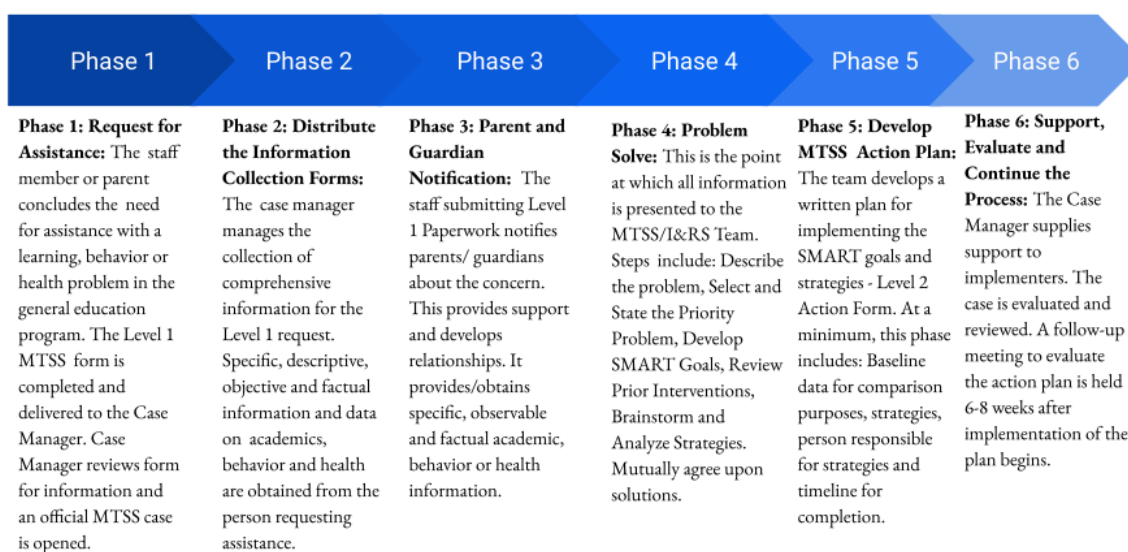
### Goals of MTSS:

- To identify students in need and then plan and provide appropriate interventions for those students within the general education setting
- To identify the responsibilities of building staff who participate in the planning and provision of intervention and referral services
- To actively involve parents/guardians in the development and implementation of MTSS plans to review and assess the effectiveness of the services provided in achieving the outcomes identified in the intervention plan
- Coordinate the services of community-based social and health agencies.

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## The MTSS Process

### A Proactive Process

Comprehensive and well-coordinated prevention and early intervention approaches have proved to be effective in enabling school communities to support successful academic, social, emotional, and behavioral development of students. Approximately five to twenty percent of students, however, will need more intensive interventions to decrease their high-risk behaviors. Many of these students can be detected and helped through the MTSS process. (NJDOE, <https://www.nj.gov/education/njtss/>)

### Intervention

Intervention is a proactive process that interrupts, alters or prevents the progression of a condition. The intervention process is comprised of all of the actions and steps a team takes to intercede to a problem. An intervention event is only one step in the process of intervening with and ameliorating an identified concern. **One of the keys to success for both MTSS team interventions and operations is the maintenance of an emphasis on the dynamics of the intervention process.** The MTSS model is specifically referred to as a process because it is a continuous operation.

### Goal of MTSS Team

Since the ultimate goal of every MTSS action plan is to maximize the chances for short-term success, as well as long term change of the individuals' involved, the team continues the MTSS process for each case, as necessary, to achieve the desired outcomes. A plan that does not achieve the intended results is not a failure, but provides additional information for team consideration, and it indicates that additional work must be done; this is the nature of the MTSS process.

### MTSS Team Members

- Case Manager, School Counselor, Principal, Administrator, Teachers, Additional School Personnel

### Helpful Tips for MTSS Teams

- The overall process for achieving success is cyclical.
- Team members should strategize towards creating incremental changes toward the desired objective.
- Teams should view each action plan as a work in progress, while attempting to achieve the best results with each strategy.

- Healthy teams remain positively challenged by each new opportunity to provide assistance for growth.

### **PHASES OF THE MTSS TEAM PROCESS**

Research indicates that change is most likely to occur when interventions are culturally appropriate, family-supported, individualized, coordinated and monitored. Interventions are more effective when they are designed and implemented consistently over time in cooperation with implementers (e.g., appropriate professionals) and the recipients of services (e.g., students, families). The phase of the MTSS process outlines steps for teams to observe and the procedures school staff and parents engage in once a request for assistance has been submitted to the MTSS team

**Phase 1: Request for Assistance**

**Phase 2: Information Collection**

**Phase 3: Parent/Guardian Notification**

**Phase 4: Problem Solving**

**Phase 5: Develop MTSS Action Plan**

**Phase 6: Support, Evaluate and Continue the Process**

#### **Phase 1: Request for Assistance**

**Problem Identification:** The overall process begins when a staff member or parent concludes that he or she needs assistance with a learning, behavior or health problem encountered in the general education program.

**Complete the Request for Assistance Form:** The involvement of the MTSS team only begins when a staff member completes and delivers the Level 1 MTSS form to the designated location. The Level 1 Form should state the reasons for the request, observed behaviors and all prior interventions for the concern. The form should be delivered to a designated Case Manager. Parents or concerned community members are also encouraged to request assistance from the MTSS team. It is made clear that requestors are partners with the team in the resolution of the identified concern(s).

**Review the Request for Assistance Form:** The assigned Grade Level Case Manager reviews the request for assistance form to make sure it is appropriate and manageable for the MTSS team. Forms

that are incomplete or include inappropriate information (i.e., subjective remarks, labels, diagnoses, judgments, generalizations, implied or nonobservable behaviors) are returned to the requestor to be either completed or revised. Supportive instructions for making the required changes should be provided in either verbal or written form.

**Role of Case Manager:** The case manager's role is not to mentor the student, but to facilitate the MTSS process, support the requestor and manage the paperwork for the case. The official MTSS case file, which is separate from, but part of the student's cumulative file, is opened upon assignment of the case coordinator. The file is stored in a locking file cabinet.

**Schedule MTSS Meetings:** At the same time, the Case Manager schedules the initial problem-solving meeting (approximately two weeks from receipt of the request) and the first follow-up meeting (approximately 6-8 weeks after the initial problem-solving meeting - following the first round of interventions.

### **Phase 2: Information Collection**

**Distribute the Information Collection Forms:** The first task of the case manager is to manage the collection of comprehensive information on the presenting problem. Only Specific, descriptive, objective and factual information and data on observable behaviors regarding academics, behavior and health are obtained from the person requesting assistance and other staff and community members, as appropriate, to formulate a complete picture of the problem and the context in which it occurs.

#### **Information to be collected includes:**

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|---|---|
| Student strengths.                            | Academic, discipline and health records/data. |
| Positive characteristics, skills and talents. | General school performance - Grades.          |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Successful experiences and interests.                             | Other behaviors of concern/Documented Discipline concerns. |
| Resources used to address the problem.                            | History of concerns.                                       |
| Information from family, friends and concerned community members. | Attempted strategies.                                      |

The collection of comprehensive information is essential for effective problem solving. Too often MTSS action plans fail because teams begin the problem-solving process before they have all of the necessary information and an understanding of the exact nature of the problem(s). Therefore, extreme care should be given to the information gathering phase of the MTSS process.

Allow one to two weeks for return of all of the information collection forms. If all of the information has been collected before the scheduled meeting, it can be helpful to notify team members that the information is in the official file and available at any time for their review. Information on file should remain confidential to all MTSS members.

### **Phase 3: Parent/Guardian Notification**

**Contact Parent/Guardian:** The teacher submitting Level 1 Paperwork notifies parents or guardians about the concern. **The purposes of the contact are as follows:** Provide support to the parents and develop a personal relationship. Provide and obtain specific, descriptive, observable and factual academic, behavior or health information. Provide specific and meaningful opportunities for participation in the MTSS process. Every attempt should be made to contact the parents/guardians - via phone call, email, letter, in person - before/after school.

In all cases, the individuals making contact with parents should document the interaction for the file. At a minimum, the following information should be recorded: 1) The date and time of the contact; 2)

Specific, descriptive, observable and factual academic, behavior and health information obtained; and

- 3) A brief statement of disposition or outcome of the contact. **It is important to remember that ultimately the reason for the intervention is to help students achieve and grow.**

#### **Phase 4: Problem Solve**

**Convene Problem-Solving Meeting:** The problem-solving phase is the point at which all information is presented. Prior to the meeting, the case manager is responsible for making sure all information has been collected to present at the meeting. All information is presented in a summative manner with all data available.

**Include the Person Requesting Assistance:** As a partner in the MTSS process, the person requesting assistance is always a participant in the problem-solving meeting case. While the case manager takes the lead in organizing and presenting the information, the requestor assists by either offering additional facts or clarifying information and concerns for team members. It is important to note that the MTSS team can continue to have a role to play with the person requesting assistance in situations where the case has been referred for evaluation of educational disabilities. Students who are being evaluated for special needs typically remain in their general education classroom of origin until the final results of the special education evaluation are complete and implemented. Therefore, the staff member requesting assistance often needs relief and support pending the outcome of the evaluation.

The MTSS team can play a crucial role in assisting the staff member during this time.

**Involve Parents/Guardians:** While parents may be included in the first problem-solving meeting, teams should consider the appropriateness of including parents in the initial meeting on a case-by-case basis. Whether or not parents are included in the first team meeting, provisions must be made to provide meaningful opportunities for parent involvement throughout the process. Some teams choose to invite parents to the school prior to the meeting for an interview and to review MTSS team purposes and practices, as well as after the meeting to review the status of the case. Parents may be re-contacted either before or after the meeting or the before or after the first contact with them to discuss

appropriate actions. Parents should be included as implementers of selected strategies contained in the MTSS action plan.

### **STEPS OF THE PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS**

Once all information has been obtained for a case, the team should be very businesslike in completing the steps of the problem-solving process within 30 to 45 minutes or less. The problem-solving model to analyze and strategize requests for assistance should incorporate the following basic steps, which are described below:

#### **Step 1: Describe the Problem**

The case manager presents the case information. Time can be saved and comprehension improved by presenting trends and a summary of the data. Presenting information in this manner facilitates problem solving by giving members a quick view of the substantiated, prevailing concerns.

#### **Step 2: Select and State the Priority Problem**

The aggregate information tends to provide insight into the nature of the problem. Based on an analysis of the information, the team agrees upon a clear statement of the basic issues or categories of problems (i.e., learning, behavior or health) to be addressed. The identification of categories for the presenting problem(s) can rule out other concerns and provide focus for the development of an objective, increase the effectiveness of team strategizing during the problem-solving process and provide clarity for monitoring progress. This is the stage where the team determines the primary issues to be addressed. In selecting the key behaviors, the team should consider what can and what must be changed.

#### **Step 3: Develop a Academic, Social/Emotional or Behavioral SMART Goal**

The objective is a short-term, achievable, observable and measurable description of the targeted behavioral outcome. The objective is stated in the positive and clearly indicates the desired behavior that everyone can see and document.

#### **Step 4: Review Prior Interventions**

Consider the effects of past efforts, reasons for successes and failures and benefits to the student and others involved for not changing. Sometimes past strategies were good ideas or had elements that were beneficial, but suffered from poor planning, lack of materials, resources and support or were implemented by the wrong individuals. A historical review informs the problem-solving process by helping the team to avoid past mistakes and/or identifying potentially helpful information or resources.

#### **Step 5: Brainstorm Solutions - Level 2 Strategies**

The facilitator moderates the brainstorming session, with the timekeeper providing assistance. The rules for brainstorming are as follows:

- 1. Set and adhere to a time limit.**
- 2. Identify as many ideas as possible.**
- 3. Post each idea for all to see.**
- 4. No discussion, evaluation or judgment of ideas.**
- 5. Creative and unique ideas are encouraged, in addition to the traditional.**
- 6. Build upon and/or modify posted ideas.**

#### **Step 6: Analyze and Evaluate Brainstormed Solutions**

This is the stage in which the brainstormed items are evaluated. Consider the general feasibility of brainstormed ideas: positive and negative consequences, strengths and concerns, benefits to the student and family, benefits to the person requesting assistance, success orientation and available resources.

#### **Step 7: Mutually Agree Upon a Solutions**



The solution can be one or more or a combination of the brainstormed ideas. The team's goal should be to reach decisions that best reflect the thinking of all group members. Consensus decision making is not a unanimous vote, a majority vote or everyone being totally satisfied. Consensus decision making is finding a solution that is acceptable enough that all members can support it; no member opposes it. Consensus requires active participation of all group members, skills in communication (i.e., listening, message sending, conflict resolution, discussion facilitation) and creative thinking and open-mindedness.

### **Phase 5: Develop MTSS Action Plan**

The team develops a written plan for implementing the consensus strategies identified in the problem solving phase of the process. This is the Level 2 Action Form. The plan should include, at a minimum, the following information:

- Student's name (if appropriate to the issue)
- Baseline data on the target behavior(s) for comparison purposes.
  - Date the request for assistance was made.
- Selected strategies for achieving the behavioral objective.
  - Date of the meeting.
  - Persons responsible for each strategy.
  - Names of all participants in the meeting.
  - Timelines for completion of each strategy.
- Anticipated academic or behavioral outcome (measurable and achievable).
  - Beginning, follow-up and ending dates for the plan.
    - Target behavior(s).
- Plans for supporting implementers and evaluating progress.

**Implement the Plan of Action:** The case manager oversees the timely implementation of the components of the action plan, the achievement of the objective(s) and the follow-up plan. In the event there are serious problems that have prevented implementation and have defied attempts at resolution; or when significant information has come to the team's attention that warrants action the case can be discussed before the next pre-scheduled meeting.

Parents are re-contacted to discuss the plan and to explain the strategies identified in the plan that parents can implement at home to reinforce the activities of the school and help achieve the measurable objective for the student established in the MTSS action plan.

### **Phase 6: Support, Evaluate and Continue the Process**

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.2(a)5, schools are responsible for providing "support, guidance, and professional development to school staff who identify learning, behavior, and health difficulties." Support for implementation should be a component of the MTSS action plan. Unless otherwise indicated in the plan, the case coordinator takes the lead in providing technical assistance to individuals responsible for implementing the plan.

**Provide Support to Implementers:** The case manager first touches base with teachers within one to two weeks of the scheduled beginning date of the plan. The assistance provided can take the form of conversations, checklists or other procedures that will ensure full implementation and an objective assessment of the MTSS action plan. Making timely contact with implementers can increase the chances for initiation of the plan and troubleshooting.

Make appropriate arrangements and coordinate essential logistics for ensuring that implementers have the necessary and sufficient knowledge and skills (e.g., training, texts, periodicals); access to applicable resources, both technical (e.g., equipment, materials) and human (e.g., pupil support or instructional staff, community agency staff); and support by the MTSS team and school administrator(s) to achieve the objective.

**Evaluate Progress:** The case manager collects data from implementers and/or records objective observations on progress toward achievement of the outcomes identified in the plan. The data is compared against the baseline data collected on the behavior of concern to provide an objective measure of success and to assist in decision making on the status of the current action plan.

**Review Case:** The case will be reviewed at follow up meeting to discuss progress and make decisions to either continue, modify or conclude any aspect of the intervention (e.g., desired outcomes, remedial strategies, support required for successful implementation, implementers of the plan, timeframe for the plan), based on achievement of the objective.

The follow-up meeting to evaluate the action plan, which is scheduled by the Case Manager at the beginning of the process, typically should occur 6-8 weeks after implementation of the plan begins. All individuals whose input is necessary to make determinations about the status of the plan are in attendance. The MTSS process continues as long as necessary in current and following grades. An MTSS action plan can last one week or for a student's entire school career, depending upon the documented needs.

### **TEAM MEETING AGENDAS**

The fixed and demanding school schedule makes precious the acquisition of team planning time. The nature and scope of the MTSS process requires efficiency and focus during valuable team meeting time. Therefore, team members should establish procedures and standards for ensuring productivity in all of their MTS activities. Tips for effective and efficient meetings are as follows:

1. Teams should not spend time discussing problems for which all data has not been received.
2. The team should be fully prepared and methodical as it problem solves to reach a consensus solution.
3. Teams should not discuss cases for which there already exists an MTSS action plan until the pre-scheduled follow-up meeting, unless the case coordinator or the requesting staff member

specifically requests that the case be considered as a formal agenda item for additional problem solving.

**Subject Topics for Full MTSS team meetings:**

1. Discuss strategies for effectively involving parents in the MTSS process.
2. Discuss strategies for team improvement
3. Team maintenance
4. Plan with other school staff
5. %oReview strategies for interventions.
6. Learn, review or practice new skills, strategies, information, statutes, regulations and policies and procedures.
7. Review or develop instructional and supportive materials.
8. Review school policies and practices of the mission of the MTSS program.