HARING CENTER
FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION



Inclusionary Practices and Systems:

MTSS TIER 1

WHAT IS MTSS TIER 1?

Multi-Tiered System of Support, MTSS, is a framework rooted in prevention, designed to support all students through layered levels of instruction and intervention. MTSS draws from a public health approach focused on prevention. In education, this means providing strong foundations for all students and then adding available additional support as and when needed for students (Sugai, G. et al 2019). MTSS includes 3 tiers which operate fluidly.

Tier 1 supports all students include universal design for learning (UDL), universal communication, data analysis protocols, and collaboration, prioritizing the focus of instructional practices on instruction and prevention. Additional Tier 2 supports available when and as needed for some students may include smaller groups for targeted intervention or acceleration. Tier 3 supports may include individualized positive behavior support plans. The more supports are in place in Tier 1 to support all students, the lessened support for Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports. Inclusive instructional practices must begin with building a strong foundation of universal support for all learners. This means strong Tier 1 instruction and social emotional learning.

WHY IS MTSS TIER 1 (UDL AND SEL) IMPORTANT?

When we focus on instruction for all and prevention, students' sense of belonging and well-being are nurtured. Additionally, students spend most of their school day accessing core instruction and access tier 2 and tier 3 support only as needed, which can vary throughout the year. Robust Tier 1 also utilizes educators' time and expertise efficiently. For example, teachers supporting within the context of general education classrooms versus siloed across several segregated settings. Therefore, creating belonging and membership for staff as well.

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES?

- Increase in student engagement
- Support cultivating a sense of belonging and membership for students

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- MTSS systems are clearly defined
- MTSS system is school-wide for all students

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AUBURN CASE STUDY: TERMINAL PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

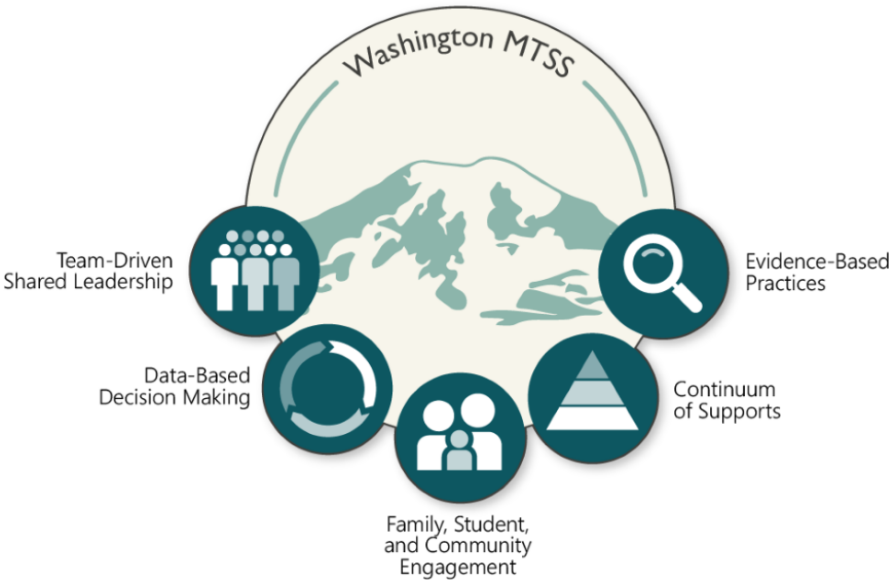
Auburn School District is a fast-growing medium sized suburban district approximately 35 miles outside Seattle. They serve a diverse population of learners including 44% of students living in multilingual households, 11% newcomers, and nearly 12% of students have IEPs. As a district, they have committed to proactive practices to build positive climate and culture to reduce restraint and eliminate isolation. Terminal Park Elementary School has spent several years dedicated to fostering strong tier 1 social emotional and behavior practices alongside the support of Belong Partners and Character Strong. They also have a dedicated tier 1 behavior team responsible for analyzing SWIS data and action planning.

Every morning, the 624 members of the Tiger student body gather in the gym for a morning meeting. Led by the principal, this is an opportunity to strengthen community, foster consistent messaging and set the tone for the day. This is also a chance to positively reinforce what is going well and to revisit areas for continued support based on school wide data. Schoolwide community meetings are also a time to practice learning important vocabulary and phrases in languages other than English spoken within the community. Students then return to their grade level classrooms where they also participate in a structured morning meeting.

These meetings afford students opportunities for their voices to be heard, participate in collective problem solving, and proactively learn and apply social emotional learning strategies. Additionally, school counselors and/or classroom teachers explicitly teach social emotional learning skills drawing from Positive Discipline and Second Step.

In addition to the schoolwide and classroom-based daily meetings and SEL lessons, all classrooms are equipped with a calming corner that includes sensory tools such as fidgets, cushions, and headphones. These designated spaces promote student- directed self-regulation and provide opportunities to practice skills taught during SEL lessons. Students are pre taught the expectations and features of the calming corner and then have access to the space throughout their day without needing to leave the classroom community.

With strong tier 1 systems and structures in place, Terminal Park is better suited to tailor tier 2 and 3 interventions that are responsive to student needs.



RESOURCES

1. OSPI Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
2. Sugai, George & Salle, Tamika & Everett, Susannah & Feinberg, Adam. (2019). Multi-Tiered Systems of Support. 10.4324/9781315144467-1.