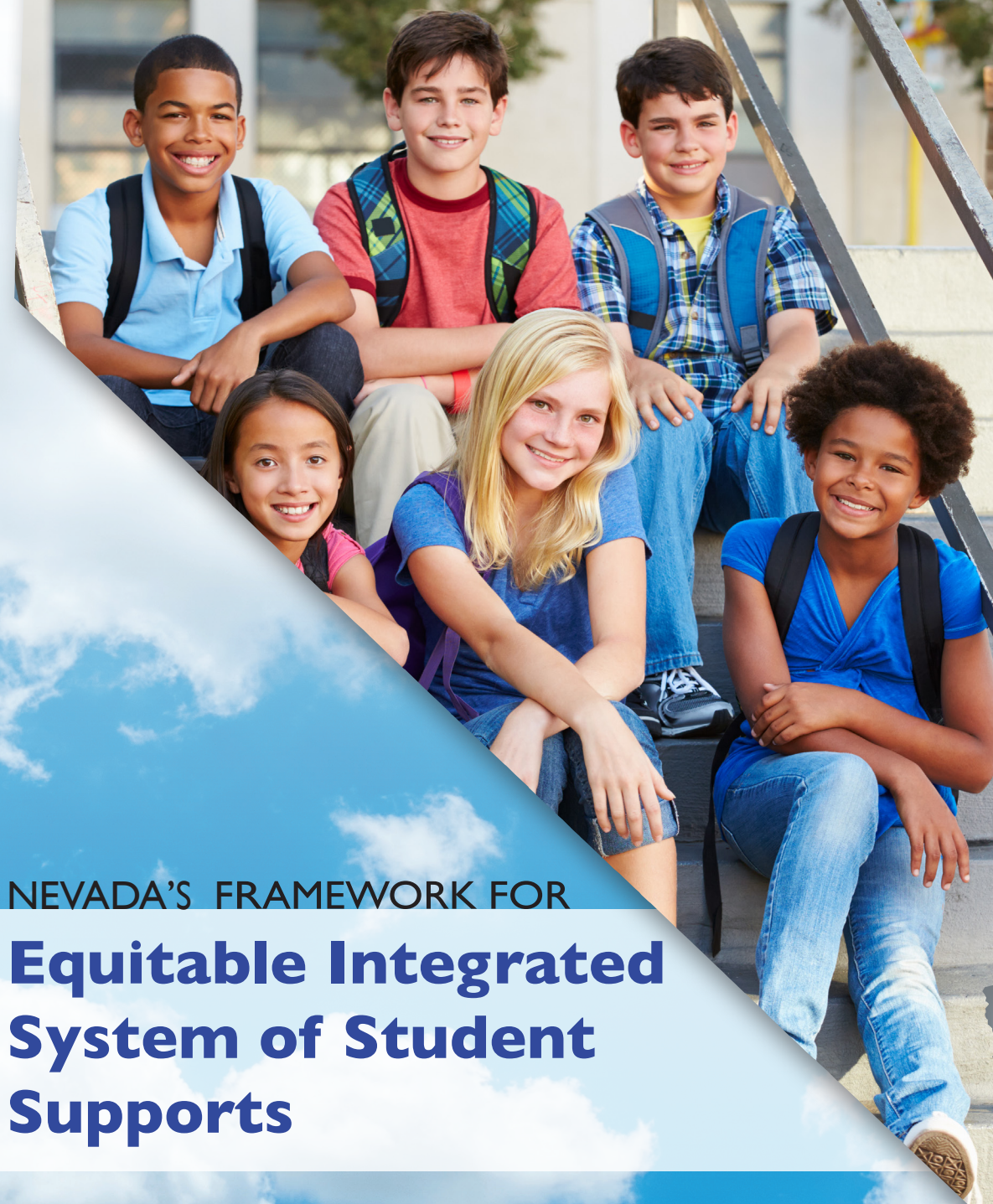Nevada Department of Education

Nevada Ready!

NEVADA'S FRAMEWORK FOR

Equitable Integrated System of Student Supports

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NEVADA'S FRAMEWORK FOR

Equitable Integrated System of Student Supports

Developed by
Nevada Department of Education

Nevada Department
of Education

Nevada Ready!

Nevada Department of Education
Steven Canavero, PhD,
Superintendent of Public Instruction

N Nevada PBIS Technical Assistance Center
College of Education
University of Nevada, Reno/0285
Reno, NV 89557-0502

December 1, 2018

Dear Educator:

Nevada is committed towards becoming the fastest improving state in the nation, and thanks to our district and school staff, we are already seeing progress in graduation rates, middle school math scores, and reading via our Read by Grade Three program. As we build towards our goal of excellence, we will continue to work towards the realization of our vision that every student in Nevada graduates from high school academically prepared and socially and emotionally competent.

The Nevada Department of Education will continue to work in collaboration with its students, parents, teachers, principals, district leaders, and universities to create safe, supportive schools where staff and students learn and thrive. This kind of systematic teamwork will continue, and it will draw upon what we have learned thus far. Implementing a statewide equitable and integrated multi-tiered system of supports will help address the unique needs and assets within each school community to foster greater educator and student success.

Our data also reveals that significant opportunity and achievement gaps persist between students of color and white students, native and non-native English-speaking students, and students with and without disabilities. NDE commits to an open and honest dialog around these systemic issues and to Equitable Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) as a way to begin to systematically address these disparities. MTSS helps schools and districts provide students with supports at increasing levels of intensity based on the students' responsiveness to instructional and behavioral interventions housed in safe and respectful learning environments.

Together, we will share in the benefits of an equitable, integrated statewide educational system that promotes excellence for all. Our commitment to applying equitable and integrated systems of support is one of the ways Nevada will ensure that every student graduates prepared for advanced education, meaningful work, and healthy relationships.

Sincerely,

Steve Canavero, PhD
SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Acknowledgments

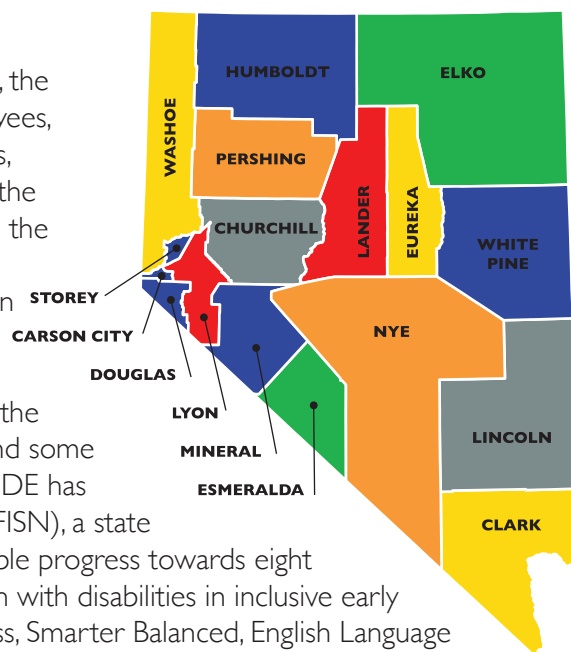*"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."*
– HELEN KELLER

The practice of shared teaming and collaboration does not stop at state borders but extends throughout the United States of America to bridge national gaps and strengthen educational systems. The intentionality of transparent, collective impact through a team approach creates greater opportunities to develop, implement, and sustain evidence-based practices that meet the holistic needs of all learners. The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) is grateful for the collaborative support and contributions of several institutions and organizations leading Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) research and policy. It is with gratitude that we absorb and build upon the masterful skills, social and resource-rich pools of MTSS drivers in PreK-12.

In addition to the invaluable contributions of the Nevada MTSS Exploration Team at the Department of Education, a coalition of NV stakeholders who have dedicated countless hours to MTSS in meetings, discussions, research, and development, we also want to acknowledge a few key drivers who inspired and guided the work of MTSS in Nevada. We thank Nevada's Governor Brian Sandoval and his administration, the Nevada Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Technical Assistance Center at the University of Nevada, Reno, Dr. Kent Mcintosh of the University of Oregon, and the Departments of Public Instruction in the states of Wisconsin, Washington, Florida, and Colorado for their research, progress, and leadership of effective statewide MTSS implementation. We truly appreciate and honor the efforts and contributions of all who have facilitated this work.

About the Department of Education

Nevada's Department of Education consists of the State Board, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, approximately 170 employees, and more than a dozen statutorily-created committees, councils, and commissions. The Superintendent is the executive head of the Department and works in partnership with the State Board on the development of regulations and policies governing P-12 public education. From the licensure of new educators to the adoption of academic content standards, to the reporting of school performance, and the administration of federal and state appropriations, the Department, directly and indirectly, impacts the achievement of the nearly half a million school-aged children and some 30,000 adults seeking high school equivalency education. The NDE has the aim of becoming the fastest improving state in the nation (FISN), a state goal measured by the accomplishment of specific and measurable progress towards eight goals: Graduation rates, ACT average composite scores, children with disabilities in inclusive early childhood programs, National Assessment of Education Progress, Smarter Balanced, English Language Proficiency Exam scores, quality rated early childhood, and career and technical education. Pursuant to an Executive Order issued by Governor Sandoval in 2013, the Department also shares educational responsibility with the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services for an estimated 180,000 children aged 0 to 4. The Department works in close coordination with local school districts, the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA), the Nevada System of Higher Education, and Regional Professional Development Programs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Nevada Legislature passed AB275 (2017) that formed the Nevada Integrated Student Supports (NISS). NISS is an equitable integrated Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), a framework that builds systems for strong, effective, and sustainable implementation of evidence-based practices to ensure Nevada's students receive the most impactful services, practices, and resources based upon responsiveness to effective instruction and intervention. In this system, high quality instruction, strategic use of data, and collaboration interact within a continuum of supports to facilitate student success. Schools provide various supports at differing levels of intensity to proactively and responsively meet the needs of the whole child. These include the knowledge, skills, and habits learners need for success beyond high school, including developmental, academic, behavioral, social, and emotional skills. Equitable and integrated MTSS helps states and districts organize resources aligned with academic standards and behavioral expectations to help students achieve success.

An effective MTSS improvement framework of academic, behavioral, social and emotional supports will provide equitable success for everyone. The framework derives from the integration of two well researched approaches: academic response to intervention (RTI) and school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) (Sugai & Horner, 2009), and uses high quality evidence-based instruction, data, intervention, collaboration, and assessment practices. For the purposes of this document, MTSS refers to the, "Integration of a number of multiple-tiered systems into one coherent, combined system meant to address multiple domains or content areas in education," (McIntosh & Goodman, 2017). The use of MTSS in Nevada will better organize and align service goals, personnel, and resources with academic standards and behavioral expectations to help all students achieve success.

TYPES OF SYSTEMIC FRAMEWORKS
- Response to Intervention (RTI)
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
- Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF)

PRACTICES, SUPPORTS, AND PROGRAMS IN FRAMEWORKS
- Effective Teaching and Classroom Management
- Character Counts / Developmental Assets
- Instructional Consultation Model
- School Based Mental Health Services
- Restorative Practices
- Trauma Responsiveness and Informed Practices
- Evidence Based Practices to Improve Academic Achievement
- School-wide Reward Systems of Behavioral Expectations and Acknowledgements
- Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches (Kaurez & Coffaman) (B-3)
- Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (SEAD) / Social-Emotional Learning Programs

Nevada's Puzzle Pieces

Why this Work is Important

The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) has expanded its commitment to equity and focused efforts on culturally responsive practices that work. The puzzle pieces above have shown evidence of improving climate, reducing discipline, and improving academic achievement in our Nevada schools. Types of MTSS (PBIS; RTI) decrease suspensions and office discipline referrals, increase academic achievement, and improve organizational health. Using MTSS, educational leaders can better achieve effective school leadership, provide effective and inclusive instruction, improve social, emotional, and academic programming, increase attendance, provide cohesive professional development, and establish Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III levels of support. By evaluating and analyzing student progress through ongoing universal screening and progress monitoring, educators are able to improve student performance through proactive problem-solving, planning, and data based decision-making while also preserving resources for students who need targeted and intensive instruction and intervention.

Purpose of this Document

This document does not set out to recommend what interventions and practices districts and charters should use; instead, it sets forth a more developed vision of an integrated and coherent framework of academic, behavioral, social, and emotional supports for staff and students resulting in a single delivery system of interventions. This is in response to school staff, administrator, teachers, students, and parents feeling overwhelmed by a disjointed incoherent system of practices and interventions. The good news is that if a school or district is currently using RTI, PBIS, or MTSS they are well on their way to an equitable integrated multi-tiered system of supports. By setting up this single, overarching delivery system for Instruction and interventions, schools and districts are further enabled to engage in strategically plan for operationalizing the practice and interventions that best meet the needs of their staff and students. The NDE strives to mutually reinforce our district and schools current and future efforts to organize under an equitable integrated multi-tiered system of supports through a collective impact model.

Equity

Equity is the cornerstone of Nevada's foundation and vision for MTSS frameworks. The NDE describes educational equity as,
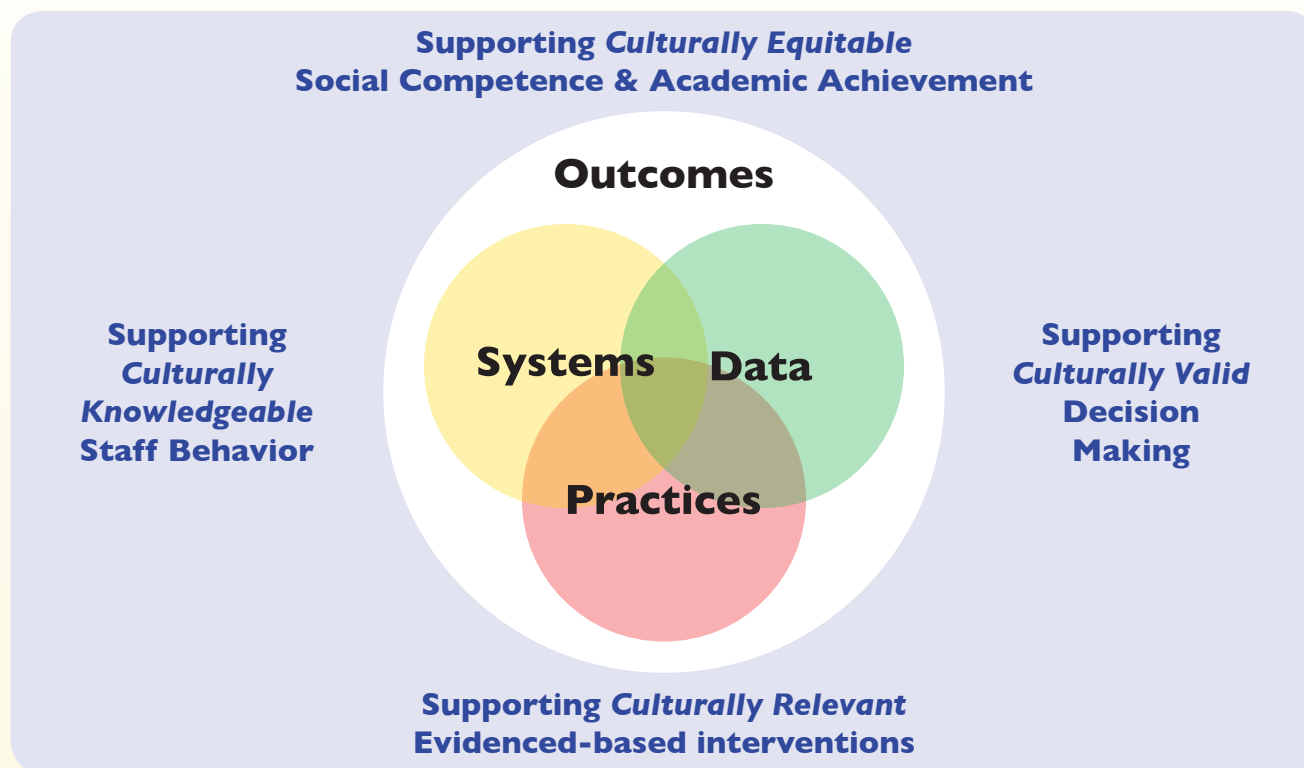
"Every student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, despite race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, family background, or family income" Aspen Institute, 2017."

Nevada's education system's chronic underperformance and persistent achievement gaps requires a fundamental change. In fact, change is already underway with the passage of close to two dozen new education programs and initiatives during the 2015 Legislative Session. Still the disparate impact on our state's most historically underserved students cannot be ignored and bold action must be taken to ensure that all our students have access to a great education.

Equity-centered foundations to Nevada's systems will ensure continual improvement of policies, practices, and resource allocations to reach every student and support all adults. It is the goal of the NDE to support school districts to use an equity-centered lens to frame efforts that reach every student and support every adult throughout the State's educational system. By putting equitable student access to appropriate educational services at the center, Nevada works towards a world in which all people, especially youth, have the opportunity to attain the skills needed to succeed.

Nevada's Vision of Integrated Student Supports

MTSS has been implemented at the State, district, school, and classroom levels (Freeman, Sugai, Simonsen, & Everett, 2017). In order to ensure effective and efficient systems from the macro (state) to the micro (classroom) levels, district and school capacity should be encouraged. Therefore, within each of the three tiers of MTSS, four critical elements should be examined from these various perspectives: data, systems, practices, and outcomes. The following section shares Nevada's vision for an integrated system of support.

**Supporting *Culturally Equitable*
Social Competence & Academic Achievement**

Outcomes

**Supporting
*Culturally
Knowledgeable*
Staff Behavior**

Systems **Data**

Practices

**Supporting
Culturally Valid
Decision
Making**

**Supporting *Culturally Relevant*
Evidenced-based interventions**

State Level

MTSS from a State perspective includes understanding the unit of focus. Students are the unit of impact, schools are the unit of intervention, and districts are the unit of implementation (Horner & Sugai, 2015). From this standpoint, the leadership at the State level can and should model and inform mechanisms for building both state and district capacity for supporting the sustained and broad-scale implementation of the MTSS framework in Nevada schools.

The state can implement integrated student support systems to collaborate and share resources to achieve shared goals. By using an MTSS framework, NDE can reinforce its current practices with braided funding, cross-discipline cooperation, standard messaging, data sharing, and progress monitoring. This continuous communication and teamwork will accelerate NDE achievements while reducing duplicative efforts. Outcomes at the State level include improvement in both academic and behavior outcomes for all students as well as improve systems and practices at both the state and local levels.

The objective of an integrated MTSS framework is the improvement in both academic and behavior outcomes for all students. Data provide the means for which to make data-based decisions and the outcomes assist in identifying the necessary data sources that will allow for measuring progress on the above-identified outcomes. Decisions should be informed by specific data sources, (such as universal screeners, office discipline referrals, academic assessments) to support data-based decision making. Importance is also placed on the fidelity of implementation as well as leadership capacity (Freeman et al., 2017).

Data is collected and analyzed for the following purposes (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016):

1. Fidelity assessments (i.e., are we implementing what is intended to be implemented?)
2. Screening (i.e., who requires supplementary supports?)
3. Diagnostics (i.e., identifying precise supports)
4. Monitoring progress (i.e., are we seeing desired changes for students?)
5. Measuring outcomes (i.e., improvement in academic and behavior outcomes)

The State provides access to quality professional development, resources, technical assistance, and coaching to district personnel on the critical elements of an integrated MTSS framework (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016). The focus is on building a sustainable infrastructure and external supports statewide and promoting communication and alignment across and within the system (Freeman et al., 2017).

District Level

Districts are the unit of implementation for the MTSS framework (Horner & Sugai, 2015). "District supports can be considered as the systemwide organizational environment that enhances or inhibits practice implementation over time" (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016, p. 204). Thus, districts should focus on the specific needs and contextual variables necessary for effective and efficient MTSS framework across the district, schools, and teachers. Outcomes at the district level include improvement in both academic and behavior outcomes for all students as well as improved systems and practices.

Decisions should be informed by specific data indicators and through local district plans with objectives related to the improvement in both academic and behavior outcomes for all students. Data provide the means for which to make data-based decisions and the outcomes assist in identifying the necessary data sources that will allow for measuring progress on the above-identified outcomes. Districts collect and analyze data for the purposes of assessing fidelity, screening, diagnostics, monitoring progress, and measuring outcomes within the MTSS process.

The following examples are a list of data indicators:

- Disproportionality
- Discipline
- School Climate
- Academic Performance, Growth and Achievement
- Graduation
- Teacher Retention
- Implementation Fidelity

The district provides political and administrative support, quality professional development, resources, and coaching to school-based personnel on the critical elements of an integrated MTSS framework. The district plays a role in the selection of practices; however, the focus shifts to building capacity allowing greater support and resources to reinforce current practices.

School Level

Schools are the unit of intervention (Horner & Sugai, 2015). The integrated MTSS provides a framework for delivering instruction on social and academic competence within the school.

The school identifies outcome(s) that are measurable, observable, specific, achievable and culturally equitable across the school population supporting both social competence and academic achievement (Simonsen & Myers, 2015).

Decisions should be informed by specific data indicators recommended by the district priorities and informed through school improvement plans with objectives related to continuous improvement in both academic and behavior outcomes for all students. Data provide the means for which to make data-based decisions and the outcomes assist in identifying the necessary data sources that will allow for measuring progress on the above-identified outcomes. Schools collect and analyze data for the purposes of assessing fidelity, screening, diagnostics, monitoring progress, and measuring outcomes within the MTSS process.

The following are a list of example data sources:

- Universal Screeners (academic and behavioral)
- Attendance
- Office Discipline Referrals
- MAPS Scores
- Brigance Screen III (0-5 and Kindergarten)
- Credit Accrual Disproportionality
- GPA
- Disproportionality

data sources

At this level, the focus of school leadership is in creating systems that support staff behavior (Simonsen & Myers, 2015). Systems at the school level include:

- Team: A group of individuals representative of the school population that meet monthly and provide guidance and oversight for the initial and sustained implementation of the integrated MTSS model (McIntosh & Goodman, 2015).
- Data Management System: data reports can be generated and reviewed at each team meeting.
- Staff Training: each staff member should be trained in the core components of the integrated MTSS model.
- Staff Coaching: Ongoing progress monitoring and assistance is provided to staff by other staff or administrators.

Practices in the integrated MTSS model support student behavior. The school utilizes evidence-based practices for both academic and social-emotional skills across all tiers and are based on identified individual school needs. Universal practices (also known as Tier 1) are selected to increase success for students across the academic content areas. Tier 2 supports are strategic interventions that are supplemental to the Tier 1 instruction and supports. These interventions are selected based on identified students' needs (standards-based or skill deficit areas). Tier 3 supports are intensive student supports based on individual student needs.

Classroom Level

Educators have the unique opportunity of using the integrated MTSS framework within their own classrooms to implement positive and proactive systems and practices to promote student success. Their primary role is the effective delivery of evidence-based practices for high quality instruction and effective classroom management to support academic and social-emotional competence of all students in a safe and respectful learning environment.

Outcomes within the classroom context can be described as what the educator hopes to accomplish professionally or strives to achieve for students. More specifically, the teacher can target specific areas they would like to see improved for professional growth. Additionally, specific areas of student growth can also be targeted, such as academic skills and social-emotional competence.

Data within the classroom environment is collected for a variety of purposes. These may include classroom behavior data, classroom environment data (e.g., ECERS3; CLASS), academic assessments, and progress monitoring (Simonsen & Myers, 2015).

Effectively implementing the core components of an integrated MTSS model will take a multi-tiered support framework as well. All teachers within a building should receive Tier 1 professional development on the delivery of high-quality instruction, data collection, and outcomes. For teachers that continue to struggle and have minor issues, Tier 2 supports should be considered. For teachers that have chronic issues with classroom instruction and management, individualized Tier 3 supports may be required. For a more detailed explanation on how to support teachers with a multi-tiered support framework refer to Simonsen and Myers (2015).

Nevada's MTSS Core-Elements

The foundational components of an equitable multi-tiered system of support in Nevada includes seven interdependent core-elements. The coherent implementation of these core-elements determines the effectiveness and sustainability of the support system. A strong and reliable commitment from state, district, school, and community stakeholders is necessary to ensure supports are provided throughout each grade, content team, and classroom.

The following section will begin by describing equity, the system's cornerstone, before describing each of the seven core-elements. The order of each core-element does not reflect priority of importance since all core-elements are equally essential to a success and sustainability of a multi-tiered system of support framework.

EQUITY

- High Quality Instruction & Social, Emotional, Academic Development
- Teaming with Shared Decision-making & Leadership
- Problem Solving Models & Data-based Decisions
- Systemic Implementation & Progress Monitoring
- Tiered Continuum of Supports
- Regular Screening
- Evidence-based Interventions & Improvement

Teaming with Shared Decision-Making & Leadership

A sustainable system of supports relies on diverse and complementing stakeholders whose collaborative efforts help coordinate meaningful training, coaching, resources, and evaluation that support MTSS development, implementation, and sustainability. Teaming includes a wide array of stakeholders including, but not limited to, district and state leaders, board members, policy makers, school administrators, teachers, school social workers, school counselors, school psychologists, parents, students, and community stakeholders. By working together and holding each other accountable, these collaborative team networks can move faster toward a shared goal of achieving success for every learner.

Teaming is the intentional and strategic grouping of complementary people or groups who meet regularly with shared goals, that allow for the design, maintenance, and continual improvement of MTSS implementation and progress monitoring. Teaming empowers collaborators to collect and apply evidence to their evidence-based decisions, design, implement, and sustainability plans with clear and consistent expectations, language, and practices throughout all tiers of support. This collective-impact approach also creates more inclusive opportunities to develop culturally-responsive practices that have incorporated diverse stakeholder perspectives and needs, especially of those who have been historically marginalized. Finally, teaming increases communication amongst stakeholders to help reduce duplicative services while maximizing use of available resources and human capital to expand the reach and impact of each participating stakeholder.

Teams are charged with the responsibility to promote a clear and realistic vision of success for all, while upholding a commitment toward that vision across the state, district, school, and community. Team members model cultural competence and inclusive shared decision-making skills, they lead courageous conversations around equity issues, and advocate for equity throughout their daily lives and work. It is important to note that teams are their own diverse and organic ecosystem, presupposing the need for time, training, coaching, and leadership to ensure their collaboration practices are also sustainable and founded on culturally competent practices.

Problem Solving Models & Data-Based Decisions

Using a problem-solving model with data-based decision-making processes allow stakeholders across all system levels to best match instruction and supports with student need. This use of data is perhaps one of the most critical features within systems of multi-tiered supports. Often times, data are collected for reporting purposes and may be aggregated and discussed at the end of each school year, but in an MTSS model, data are collected for ongoing progress monitoring and should be looked at daily, weekly, monthly, or as needed throughout the year by the team. Moreover, collected data is also used to measure the fidelity of implementation as well as the impact of the system on student outcomes. Data helps teams identify and clarify specific problems as well as modify practices or systems for targeted Interventions and supports.

Teams use this evidence-based practice to successfully improve learner outcomes beyond instruction into all key system practices, including family and community engagement as well as practices for allocating resources, developing policies, and providing ample training and coaching. Lastly, Nevada educational leaders use these evidence-based problem-solving and decision-making practices to support accountability measures, structures, and tools that ensure consistent delivery with fidelity and opportunity for flexibility and evaluation.

Collect Data → Measure Implementation Fidelity → Monitor Impact Outcomes → Identify Problems → Modify Practices

Systemic Implementation & Progress Monitoring

Quality systematic implementation and frequent progress monitoring allows stakeholders across the system to frequently gather academic and behavioral data over time to better meet the needs of every learner through aligned policies, programs, practices, and roles coordinated into an interdependent process. This proactive approach provides the most effective instruction and supports, helping ensure equitable access, opportunity, and care across the system.

As teams oversee and sustain systemic implementation, they focus on a clear, shared vision of success while evaluating current and new initiatives to leverage implementation science principles and create best practices. These teams develop implementation drivers to establish needed infrastructure to improve and sustain new and existing instructional and behavioral supports. Developing and coordinating systems takes time and a commitment to continual progress monitoring. Progress monitoring data and processes are critical to gauge responsiveness to supports or identify and plan for additional challenges. Teams reviewing progress-monitoring data, which include learners and their families, must consider whether learners are making adequate progress with provided interventions and supports or whether changes are needed.

Additionally, systemic implementation and progress monitoring help teams take inventory of all system practices to identify duplicative efforts of multiple similar program initiatives that address a singular need. Systematic implementation processes can help identify how they overlap and how they can integrate to reduce duplicative expenditures while achieving the same, or more desirable outcome. For example, if the initiative is the integration of behavioral, mental health, and academic supports, an increasingly popular preventative and responsive MTSS approach in today's culture, the process would allow teams to strategically plan systematic implementation of multi-tiered levels of support instead of using typical "siloed" approaches. The team approach would address a shared goal from a variety of resources, a diversified pool of human capital, and more funding avenues. Given that academic and behavioral practices share many common features and theories, their integration is likely to make outcomes more effective across both domains (McIntosh & Goodman, 2017), while the paralleling efforts may save stakeholders significant amounts of time and resources.

Tiered Continuum of Supports

Culturally and developmentally appropriate practices from universal to targeted to intensive, provide proactive and responsive support designed to match all learners' developmental, academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs. This equitable approach allows NDE to serve all learners while engaging staff, families, and the community in the selection and implementation of the multi-tiered levels of supports.

Three tiers of differentiated support were initially adapted from the public health model, wherein all members of society have access to certain prevention components (Tier 1), some members of society have more selected or targeted needs for supports (Tier 2), and a few members within a population may have indicated or intensive needs (Tier 3). From a public health lens, imagine the example of influenza, or the flu. All individuals (Tier 1) are encouraged to prevent the flu through universal hygiene practices, such as hand washing. Some people may be immunocompromised and/or at higher risk for the catching the flu (Tier 2) and may be encouraged to get a flu vaccine; however, they still engage in the universal practices of hand washing. For those that have caught the flu (Tier 3), universal hand washing is still encouraged to prevent its transmission, but those individuals may be treated with bed-rest, fever-reducers or hospitalization (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016).

In terms of education, though optional, many schools have developed a three-level system of supports that reflects as such:

All students (Tier 1) should receive high-quality instruction in academic and social and emotional skills as well as behavioral expectations. When implemented with ample intensity and fidelity, it is anticipated that at least 80% of learners in this tier have developmental, academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs met through the universal level of support. Then some students may be identified to be at risk for negative social outcomes or falling behind academically, therefore requiring additional interventions and supports in academics and/or behavior (Tier 2). This tier is intended for short-term intervention, where 5-15% of learners access this level of support in addition to the universal level, to target learners' specific skill needs. Finally, students who have received support at Tiers 1 and 2 and are still being identified with significant challenges in behavior or academics may warrant more individualized or intensive instructions in behavior or academics (Tier 3). Only 1-5% of learners need access to this level of support.

It is important to note that a diagnosed disability does not indicate the tier of support a student will need, but rather it is imperative to engage in identification of educational needs and progress monitoring to identify whether or not that student is being successful with the practices at a given tier. As students progress through the tiered support levels, they still have full access to all supports provided in previous tiers. MTSS teams should frequently review multiple forms of data to identify the type and intensity of support each student needs throughout their academic pathway to adjust intervention and instructional practices accordingly to best respond to learner needs.

Regular Screening

By conducting regular universal screening or benchmarking with quick, low-cost, repeatable data collection and assessment of academic and behavioral skills, Nevada educators can better identify Tier 1 instructional needs and prevent problems and barriers before academic, physical, emotional, economic, or legal complications arise. This process empowers educational leaders to proactively match supports to learners' needs by reviewing academic, behavioral, social, and emotional data. Aggregating data helps teams gauge the impact of supports and disaggregated data helps teams identify areas of inequity. Teams can then have courageous conversations on universal-level adjustments based on the data and made through problem-solving processes. Regular screening will also help identify learners who may benefit from support beyond the universal tiered support. For example, some learners who exceed academic benchmarks, may still need additional support around behavioral, social, or emotional areas, which once identified, can be provided by teams who match the need(s) to the most appropriate support.

Evidence-based Interventions & Improvement

Equitable multi-level systems of supports are driven by the strategic use of data for evidence-based approaches to instruction and interventions as well as continuous improvement. Evidence-based approaches proven to be effective through scientifically-based research studies are essential for schools, districts, and state agencies to use when determining which interventions or practices to implement. Using national registries for evidence-based practices can introduce successful practices that have been implemented long-term and in which context the practices are most effective. For example, certain practices that work in an urban setting may not be effective for a small rural setting, so it is important to consider demographics and cultural relevancy when selecting practices.

Continuous improvement is also dependent on strategic use of data and evidence-based approaches to ensure ongoing growth of a framework, process, or program. All stakeholders must make a commitment to continual professional development, reflection, flexibility, and adaptation. Teams use both evidence-based interventions and implementation data to make informed decisions for planning, implementing, and leading all learners to college and career readiness.

Implementation science guides Nevada teams when using evidence-based interventions and practices to continually link staff knowledge, attitudes, and practices to intervention impact on learner outcomes. To ensure interventions and practices are implemented with fidelity, many Nevada school districts utilize assessments such as the District Capacity Assessment (DCA), Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI), and the Schoolwide Implementation Review (SIR) to facilitate team's professional development, resource allocation, and continual improvement through action planning.

It is important to note that Nevada's ability to select evidence-based interventions and improvement in partnership with data-driven decision making and problem solving, depends on the presence of facilitative conditions supported by all levels of the system (State; District; School; Staff' Student; Parent/Family; Community). Schools and districts need to ensure that these members have the knowledge and skills to select, interpret, and implement interventions that meet their needs. This environment is most effective when it is support-driven, versus compliance-driven; establishing an academic community built on trust and transparency that fosters enthusiasm for a collective and intentional systems change.

High Quality Instruction

Nevada supports universal high-quality instruction that combines academic, behavioral, social, & emotional teaching by effective teachers and teaching practices. High-quality instruction includes curricula, differentiated teaching practices, ongoing professional development and inclusive learning environments. High-quality instruction starts with identifying needs, values, and expectations valued by the community that lead to college, career, and community readiness. Nevada educators use rigorous and relevant curriculum aligned to these values and standards to develop learners' academic, behavioral, social, and emotional knowledge, skills, and habits.

Evidence-based and culturally responsive teaching practices help develop and deliver high-quality instruction in safe, respectful, and well-managed classrooms designed to maximize learner outcomes independent of their individual needs or goals. High-quality teachers and their practices encourage learners to feel supported, valued, and proud to be themselves. Demonstrating this, Nevada uses a MTSS framework approach with its state endorsement for teacher licensure focused on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (SEAD), aimed to empower teachers, school social workers, school counselors, staff, and administrators to deliver high-quality instruction for every student. This instruction is grounded in high-quality self-awareness and care, social awareness and intercultural communication, and integrative social, emotional, and academic practices to use with team, students, families, and communities. Teachers use this multidimensional knowledge and skill to design and deliver high-quality instruction aimed to help learners achieve personal, academic, and professional success.

Furthermore, the importance of aligning high-quality early learning environments and instruction for 0-PreK and K-3, helps reinforce ongoing high-quality learning for all students as they progress through Nevada's system. The state of Nevada is dedicated to developmentally appropriate practices by incorporating integrated instructional methods across all developmental domains; physical development, cognitive and executive functioning, social and emotional development, and language and literacy development. In teams across all levels and domains of the system, teachers are supported through training, coaching, and data support to deliver high-quality instruction that regularly tracks effectiveness of their practices including action planning for continuous improvement.

Conclusion

We here in Nevada will continue reinforcing sustainable and equitable integrated systems of support as educators dedicate their work to ensuring every learner graduates college, career, and community ready. Through a MTSS team approach, we strive to eliminate demographics as performance predictors and believe that all learners are capable of fulfilling this expectation. Through an integrated MTSS framework, Nevada schools and districts can better reduce barriers and duplicative services to increase instructional capacity and efficient services, thus, improving student outcomes in safe and equitable educational environments that provide needed resources at students' particular time of need.

For more information about this document, contact Christy McGill, Director of the Office of Safe and Respectful Learning Environments at cmcgill@doe.nv.gov.

Glossary

Equity: That every student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, despite race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, family background, or family income (Aspen Institute, 2017).

Fastest Improving State in the Nation (FISN): A state goal measured by the accomplishment of specific and measurable progress goals.

Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF): A structure and process to integrate Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and School Mental Health within school systems.

Intervention: Targeted instruction and services that are supplemental to standard core instruction.

Local Education Agency (LEA): A commonly used synonym for a school district, an entity that operates local public primary and secondary schools in the United States.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS): An integrated improvement framework of academic, behavioral, social and emotional supports providing equitable success for everyone.

Nevada Integrated Student Supports (NISS): An equitable integrated Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), a framework that builds systems for strong, effective, and sustainable implementation of evidence-based practices to ensure Nevada's students receive the most impactful services, practices, and resources based upon responsiveness to effective instruction and intervention.

NV Multi-Tiered System of Support Team: A cross-discipline team that explores how MTSS can embed into existing NDE systems and meetings to reduce duplicative functions and increase system effectiveness.

Positive Behavioral Support (PBS): An evidence-based practice that strives to prevent challenging behavior by increasing independence, promotion positive environments, and enhancing quality of life.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS): The application of PBS at a systems level. PBIS is a framework or approach for assisting school personnel in adopting and organizing evidence-based behavioral interventions into an integrated continuum that enhances academic and social behavior outcomes for all students.

Response to Intervention (RTI): Academic RTI is a preventative systems approach to improving schoolwide and individual achievement through high-quality universal instruction and additional tiered supports provided in response to student need.

Restorative Justice Practices: Policy related to methods that build student capacity to follow rules, designed to address offending and inappropriate behavior by emphasizing repairing harm done to relationships or people, over and above the need for assigning blame and dispensing punishment. Examples of practices include written apologies, reflection statements, and corrective action planning. A restorative approach in a school shifts the emphasis from managing behavior to focusing on the building, nurturing, and repairing of relationships (Hopkins, 2003, p. 3, National Centre for Restorative Approaches in Youth Settings).

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): The process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2018).

Social-Emotional Interventions: Actions or practices that reinforce social, emotional, and academic development competencies.

Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (SEAD): A term adopted by the Nevada Department of Education to describe a set of competencies (e.g., self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making), that foster a life-long comprehensive process of acquiring and effectively applying knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish/maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions that support success in school and in life (Adopted from CASEL and Aspen Institute).

State Education Agency (SEA): A commonly used synonym for the State Department of Education, an entity that operates statewide public primary and secondary educational systems in the United States.

Teaming: The intentional and strategic grouping of complementary people or groups who meet regularly with shared goals, that allow for the design, maintenance, and continual improvement of MTSS implementation and progress monitoring.

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The Nevada Department of Education has many collaborative partners and supporters who have dedicated great effort and significant contributions to the shared hope and vision of equitable education. The images below represent these steadfast champions who we are proud to continue collaborative MTSS practices with.

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