

# MTSS Overview

## What is MTSS?

Multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) is an integrated framework for the systemic alignment of evidence-based prevention and intervention practices to support all the needs of all students. MTSS encompasses academic, behavioral, and mental health/wellness supports for all learners. It can be considered the umbrella for other support systems, such as data-based individualization (DBI), response to intervention (RTI), positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS), and school mental health (SMH).

Students in general education and those receiving special education and related services can participate in MTSS. **MTSS is not used to delay or deny a child’s right to an initial evaluation for special education and related services.**

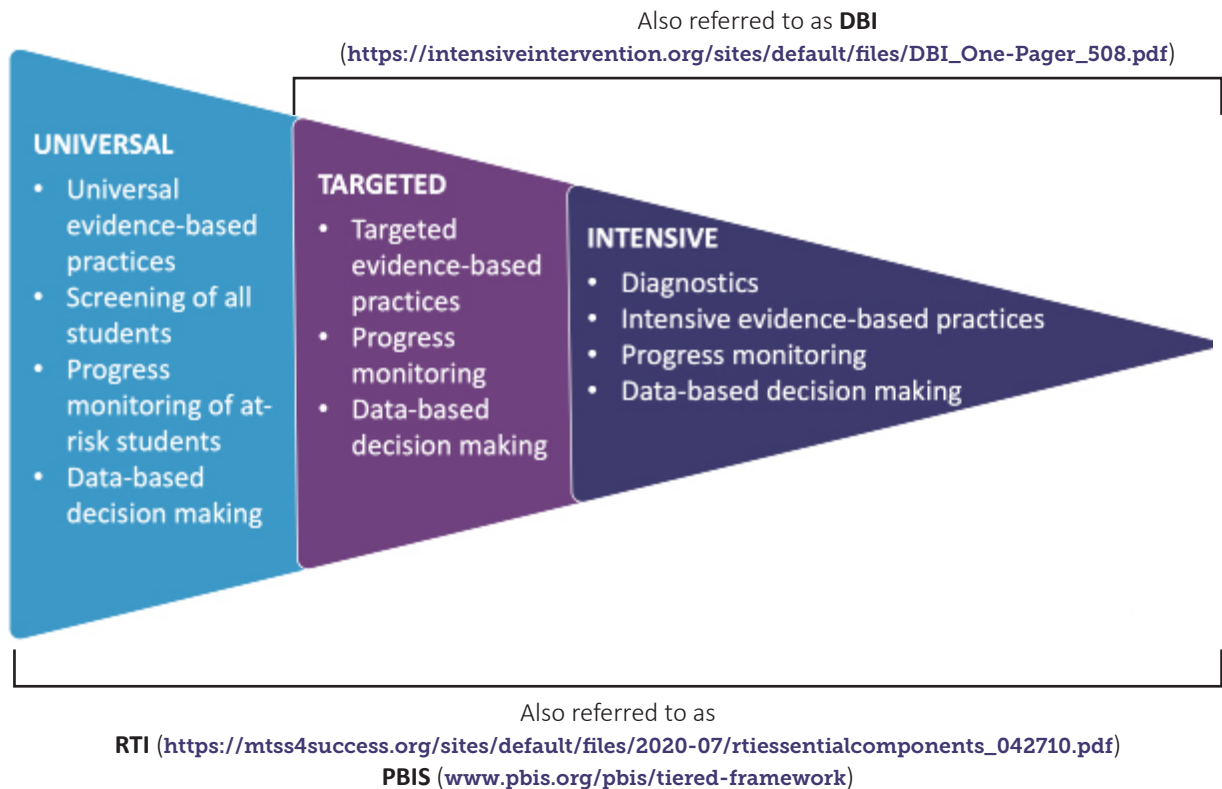
A primary component of MTSS is using assessment data to drive differentiated instruction and decision making for all students. Through MTSS, schools identify students in need of additional support and provide these students with evidence-based intervention to reduce academic and nonacademic gaps.

MTSS promotes collaboration among teachers—both general education and special education—and support specialists. MTSS also helps schools effectively communicate student progress to caregivers.

Senate Bill 11 and House Bill 18, passed in 2019, require schools to address the mental health and wellness of students. To meet this challenge, MTSS provides an intentional and systematic approach for meeting students’ holistic needs.

Figure 1 shows the connections among the MTSS tiers. MTSS may also be referred to by several different names.

Figure 1: MTSS Components and Other Support Systems

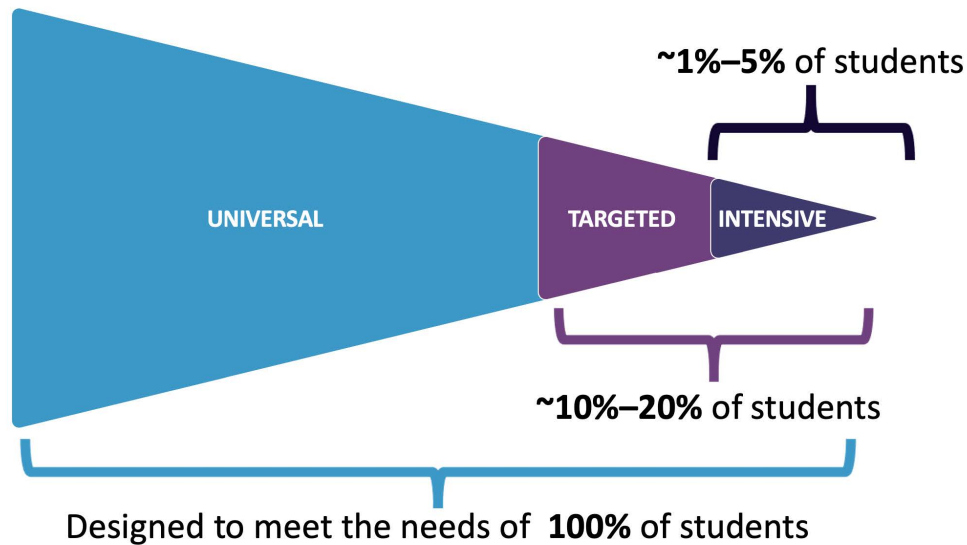


Using assessment data is key to driving differentiated instruction and decision making.

## MTSS Model

The most common MTSS model includes three levels, or tiers: universal, targeted, and intensive. Figure 2 shows the proportion of students who should receive each type of intervention in a well-functioning system.

Figure 2: The MTSS Tiers



**Universal intervention**, also referred to as Tier 1 or primary prevention, is a systematic approach for supporting **all students** schoolwide. Universal intervention occurs in the general education classroom and settings and is designed for all students to participate. It includes evidence-based practices, high-quality instructional materials, differentiation, scaffolded instruction, and universal design for learning. Universal intervention alone meets the needs of **about 80% of a school's population** in both academic and nonacademic areas.

**Targeted intervention**, often referred to as Tier 2 or secondary prevention, is designed for students experiencing difficulty in academic or nonacademic areas. Targeted intervention can occur in many different settings—inside or outside of the general education classroom—with small groups of students. Students receiving targeted intervention should continue to receive universal intervention.

Typically, **about 10%–20% of students** require targeted intervention. This is a small percentage of students in a school. If many students need targeted intervention, the school needs to evaluate its universal intervention.

**Intensive intervention**, often called Tier 3 or tertiary prevention, is designed for students who demonstrate inadequate response to universal and targeted intervention. Intensive intervention may occur within or outside of special education. Schools have different ways of conceptualizing and implementing intensive intervention.

A much smaller number of students—typically **about 5% or less**—require intensive intervention.

MTSS involves universal intervention for **all**, targeted intervention for **some**, and intensive intervention for a **small number** of students.

For more resources and information about MTSS,  
visit [spedsupport.tea.texas.gov](https://spedsupport.tea.texas.gov).

