

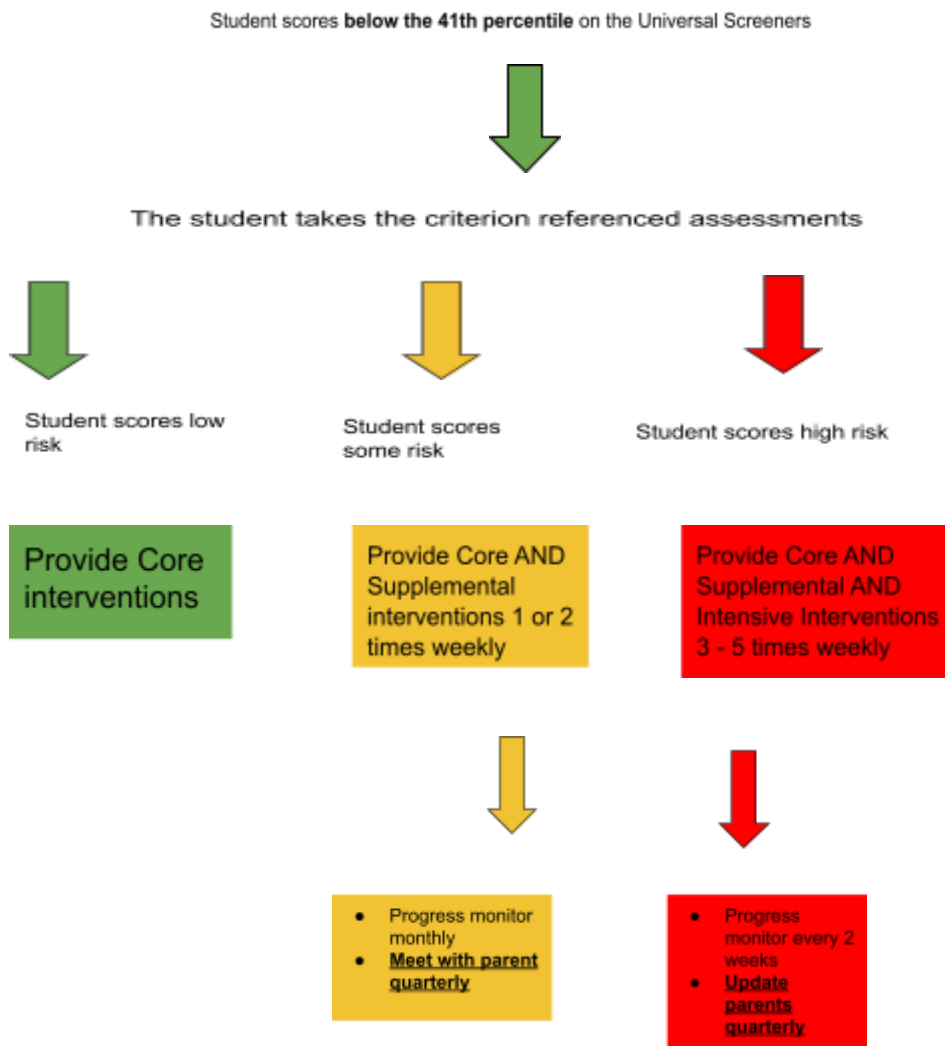


## MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT - INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

### WHAT IS MTSS?

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is a proactive approach schools use to help all students, including struggling learners. It is not a special kind of program or book. Many schools use this approach to make sure that every student has opportunities to learn and work on grade level. It is used most often in reading and math and may also be used to improve student behavior, social emotional well being and attendance. This process begins with high-quality instruction for all children in the general education classroom (Core). Struggling learners are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity (Supplemental or Intensive). Progress is closely monitored to ensure each student is responding to the interventions provided. The goal of MTSS is to help *all* students be successful.

MTSS FlowChart



- The **GREEN** pathway denotes the **Benchmark** (on grade-level) students who will receive high



quality Core curriculum and instruction in the general education classroom.

**Student score 41%ile or higher on the MAP Assessment**

**Student takes EasyCBM assessment and scores low risk**

**Continue Core (the same rich curriculum you are already providing)**

- The **YELLOW** pathway denotes the **Strategic Interventions** for students who need additional support to what they are receiving from the general curriculum.
- **Student score 40%ile or lower on the MAP Assessment**
- **Student takes EasyCBM assessment and scores some risk**
- **Inform parent**
- **Supplemental interventions in the classroom (small group, direct instruction, intervention matrix)**
- **Discuss at monthly MTSS loop level meetings; assessment and classroom activities shared at meeting, progress or lack of progress determines next steps**
  - **If meeting goals, maintain or reduce interventions**
  - **If not meeting goals, increase time, or frequency**
    - **Insufficient progress after at least 6 months consider Intensive Interventions**
    - **MAP scores below 10%ile, consider Intensive Interventions**
- **Information shared by teacher to parent quarterly, either verbally or in writing**

**Students can move back to Core instruction when they maintain MAP and classroom proficiency (over 41%ile) for at least 2 quarters.**

\* The problem-solving team must consider whether the student's lack of progress is the result of a suspected disability. If a disability is suspected, the student must be referred to the IEP Team and interventions must continue concurrently while the issue of a suspected disability is resolved.

\* A parent has the right to request, in writing, an evaluation for special education at any time. If the parent makes this request, the student must be referred to the IEP Team while interventions continue.

\* Parents must be notified, in writing, regarding the student's response to intervention at each level. The "Parent Notification of Intervention" must be used, and a copy retained in the student's cumulative file.

- The **RED** pathway denotes the **Intensive Interventions** for those students who have the greatest needs, including but not limited to those with IEPs.
- **Student score 40%ile or lower on the MAP Assessment and has not made progress with Supplemental Interventions**
- **Student takes EasyCBM assessment and scores high risk**
- **Inform parent**
- **Intensive interventions in small group outside of class (more direct instruction provided by specialist using researched based curriculum)**
- **Provide classroom and assessment notes to the loop level and MTSS Leadership teams for monthly review**
- **Information on progress shared by interventionist to parents quarterly in writing**

**Students can move back to Core instruction or Supplemental Interventions when they maintain MAP and classroom proficiency (over 41%ile) for at least 2 quarters.**

\*The problem-solving team must consider whether the student's lack of progress is the result of a suspected disability. If a disability is suspected, the student must be referred to the IEP Team and interventions must continue concurrently while the issue of a suspected disability is resolved.

\* A parent has the right to request, in writing, an evaluation for special education at any time. If the parent makes this request, the student must be referred to the IEP Team while interventions continue.



\* Parents must be notified, in writing, regarding the student's response to intervention at each level. The "Parent Notification of Intervention" must be used, and a copy retained in the student's cumulative file.

### Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

Student score 40%ile or lower on the MAP Assessment

Student takes EasyCBM assessment and scores high risk

Tier 3 interventions in small group outside of class (more direct instruction provided by specialist)

Continues to show no growth - referred for evaluation

OR

When a parent requests for a student to be evaluated, regardless of where they lie on the MTSS scale, they must be evaluated while ongoing monitoring by staff. Not all students who are referred become eligible.

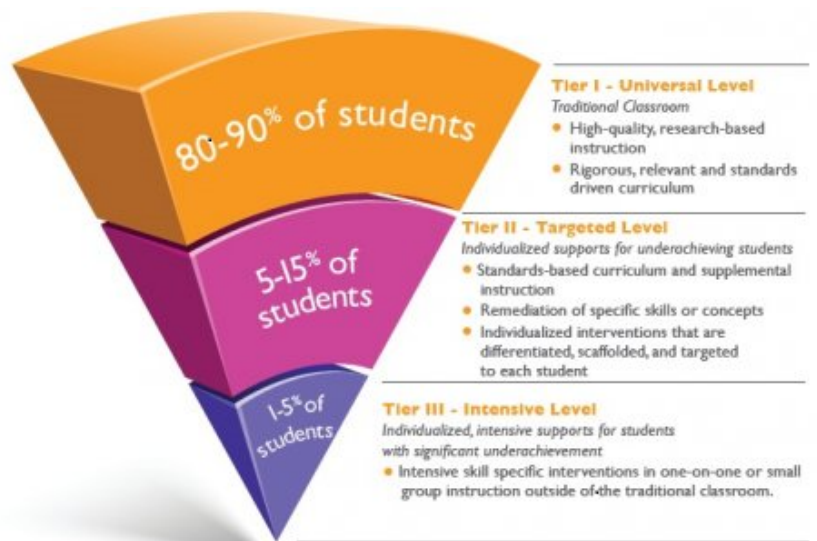
## IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

**Problem-Solving Team:** This term is an umbrella term often used to describe groups of individuals that meet to analyze data and determine solutions to problems. In an MTSS, there can be multiple problem-solving teams. Professional Learning Communities, Intervention Teams, and Student Support Teams are all examples of teams that generally meet to discuss school-wide areas of concern related to the environment, instruction and curriculum for all students or groups of students. Specialized teams, such as the IEP Team, are also problem-solving teams; however, its purpose is initiated for individual students who are suspected of a disability or who have already been identified with a disability and is coordinated according to the regulatory requirements of the IDEA.

**Individualized Education Program Team (IEP Team):** This is the problem-solving team to which a student is referred when a disability is suspected, or a parent requests a formal evaluation. This team will engage in the problem-solving necessary to determine if a formal evaluation for special education and related services will occur and ensure that the appropriate procedures and documentation are completed in compliance with federal regulations and state policies. The implementation of interventions prior to a referral to the IEP Team is not required if a disability has been suspected by the parent or school staff or a parent or teacher has requested a formal evaluation in writing. However, interventions may need to be implemented concurrently with the formal evaluation timeline in order to provide the IEP Team a required component of a comprehensive evaluation at the time eligibility for special education and related services will be determined.

## THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF MTSS

- **Universal Screening** - Universal screenings are assessments administered to all students to determine which students are at-risk of not meeting academic expectations. For IMS, these are our MAP assessments.





- **Progress Monitoring** - Progress monitoring is used to determine the effectiveness of instruction and/or interventions. For IMS, we will use EasyCBM.
- **The Multi-Tiered System of Support** - The Multi-Tiered System of Support includes three tiers, each reflect increasing intensity of interventions to meet individual student needs.
- **Data-Based Decision Making** -Island Montessori uses the problem-solving approach, which utilizes parent and staff members' input to identify students at-risk and develop highly individualized student plans for intervention. These plans are then monitored and evaluated by the team, which includes the teacher, parent, and MTSS Coordinator, to determine effectiveness and what steps need to be taken for further growth..

## **IMPORTANT PROCEDURES:**

### **Procedures for Problem-Solving Teams**

The problem-solving team should ask the following questions at each time progress monitoring data is discussed for groups of students :

- Has our problem-solving shifted from overall instruction, environment and curriculum for groups of students to individual, student-centered concerns?
- Are there any individual students that are consistently not making progress with interventions?
- Are there any individual students that are unlikely to achieve grade level standards by the end of the school year?
- Does the data indicate that the consistent lack of progress with intervention may be caused by a disability?
- Does the individual student's progress in the general curriculum have characteristics typically associated with a disability?

[ Depending on the cumulative responses to these questions, the problem-solving team may have a basis of suspecting a disability and if a disability is suspected, should refer to the IEP Team.]

### **Procedures for Communication with Parents**

- Parents must be notified, in writing, that their student requires intervention beyond Core
- The parent must be provided this information using the "Parent/Guardian Notification of Intervention". The required components from the EC Division template must be included in the parent letter if revised by the LEA.
- A copy of this notification(s) must be retained in the student's cumulative folder.
- A parent/guardian notification must be sent each time the intensity of intervention increases from core to supplemental and supplemental to intensive.
- A parent letter must also be sent each time the student successfully responds to intervention – intensive to supplemental and supplemental to core.
- While these written notifications are required at any time a change occurs, it is highly recommended that local leadership consider syncing these notifications with parent-teacher conference times,



progress reporting and/or report cards in order to consistently manage, supervise and ensure that this important parent communication is occurring.

### **Child Find Responsibilities (procedures)**

- If a parent verbally requests an evaluation (also known as a parent referral to special education); staff should advise the parent to make the request in writing and send to the principal/teacher/EC teacher [LEA may customize here consistent with local procedures] of the school.
  - Upon receipt, the principal [LEA to determine appropriate personnel] shall provide the request to EC personnel to schedule the IEP Team meeting to discuss the parent request. This begins the regulatory/procedural timeline associated with initial referrals/evaluations.

## **Parent Rights under IDEA**

### **MTSS and Child Find**

All school districts are legally obligated to “find” all children who may have a disability and, because of their disability, need special education services. In other words, schools cannot rely on parents or private psychologists, for instance, to tell them that a child needs help—schools have to affirmatively look for students who may have a disability and need special education. To use the more formal language of IDEA, all public schools must “identify, locate and evaluate” children who may need special education. (See, IDEA 34 CFR § 300.111) You may be wondering what “identify, locate and evaluate” means. That’s an excellent question because its meaning under the law has changed in recent years. It used to be—before IDEA was amended in 2004—that there was basically one way to evaluate children to help determine if he or she had a disability. That evaluation is often known as “a psycho-educational evaluation.” Since the changes made to IDEA in 2004 and to IDEA federal regulations in 2006, many school districts are choosing to identify children who may need special education by using a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). However, MTSS does not do away with a parent’s right to request a more traditional evaluation. As a parent, if your child is struggling in school and you believe he or she may have a disability such as a learning disability, you have the right to request a “full and individual” initial evaluation. (See, IDEA 34 CFR § 300.301)

### **Right to Request an Evaluation**

Every parent has the right to request a full and individual initial evaluation at any time to determine if their child has a disability and what that child’s educational needs are. (See, IDEA 34 CFR §300.301) This type of evaluation is typically administered by a public school psychologist and must include a variety of assessment tools, such as tests of academic achievement, behavior, mental health, communication and motor abilities. The child must be assessed in “all areas related to the suspected disability.” (See, IDEA 34 CFR § 300.304) As soon as you think your child may have a disability, be sure to request an evaluation. Your request should be made in writing.

Once the school has received your request for an evaluation, the school district must do one of two things:



If the school agrees that your child needs to be evaluated, they must get your written consent to do so. Once you provide your written consent—and only once you do so—the school district must complete the evaluation within 90 days. If you request an evaluation, but don't provide your informed written consent to conduct an evaluation, the 90 day timeline does not begin. (See, IDEA 34 CFR § 300.9)

OR

### What is psycho-educational testing?

Psycho-educational testing is a process which utilizes standardized tests and questionnaires in an effort to identify a student's strengths and weaknesses across many areas of functioning and attributes. These areas include but are not limited to the following:

- Cognitive Development
- Academic Achievement
- Adaptive Functioning
- Visual Perception
- Motor Coordination
- Visual-Motor Integration
- Behavior (e.g., Attention, Aggression, etc.)
- Emotion (e.g., Anxiety, Depression, etc.)

Psycho-educational testing is conducted on an individual basis, by a qualified examiner, in a controlled testing situation.

If the school disagrees with you regarding the need for an evaluation, the school district can refuse your request. In this case, the school must provide you with a written notice of its decision. Known as Prior Written Notice, this notice must include:

- A description of the action proposed or refused by the district
- An explanation of why the district proposes or refuses to take the action and a description of all student information used as a basis for the decision
- A statement that the parents have protection under the Procedural Safeguards of IDEA
- Sources for parents to contact or to obtain assistance in understanding the various provisions of their rights under IDEA
- A description of other options considered and the reason why those options were rejected
- A description of the factors that impacted the district's proposal or refusal



### What is informed consent?

Informed consent is a procedure to ensure that the parent:

- Has been fully informed of all information related to the proposed activity (in his native language, or other mode of communication)
- Understands and agrees in writing to carrying out the activity for which his consent is sought
- Understands that giving consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time
- Understands that revoking consent will not apply to an activity that has already occurred

Informed consent is required for an evaluation, a reevaluation and for the initial delivery of special education services.

If the school refuses to evaluate your child, do not take that lightly. If the school “suspects” your child may have a disability and needs special education, they are legally obligated to evaluate your child under the Child Find provision of IDEA. As noted above, a school can only refuse a parent’s request for an evaluation in writing. In other words, don’t let your request for an evaluation be denied verbally! You are entitled to receive Prior Written Notice giving you an explanation for their refusal to evaluate and what information they used as the basis for their decision. (See, IDEA 34 CFR § 300.503, 300.504)

Ask the school to state in writing why they do not “suspect” that your child may have a disability and need special education. (See, IDEA 34 CFR § 300.8) Stating that your child has not yet participated in or completed a school’s MTSS process is not a legally sound reason for a school to deny an evaluation. (See, IDEA 34 CFR § 300.301-300.111, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Memorandum, on pages 15-17)

Once you receive the school’s Prior Written Notice informing you of its refusal to evaluate your child, you have a right to file a due process complaint or a state complaint to your state’s



Department of Education. At the meeting when your evaluation is refused, ask for the forms required to submit due process and state complaints. You should also be able to find those forms at your state's Department of Education website. See the discussion below of recent legal cases to get an idea of how other parents' cases have proceeded.

Note: Parents can and often do choose to have their child evaluated privately, as opposed to asking the school to do an evaluation. If you choose to obtain a private evaluation, the school is not responsible for the cost of the evaluation. You can decide whether or not to share the results of a private evaluation with your child's school.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your child's teacher or Judie Strauss.

Judie Strauss  
EC/MTSS Coordinator  
Island Montessori School  
6339 Carolina Beach Rd.  
Wilmington, NC 28412  
(910) 795-4860 ext. 105