

Realities: Multi Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

MTSS is a systematic approach to helping all students learn. It is a system of prevention and intervention for all students. Simply put, MTSS is a continuum of increasingly intense research-based interventions provided to students that respond to their academic and/or behavioral needs. KNEA believes if MTSS is going to be implemented by a district, the staff must be prepared and supported. This means high-quality preparation, and ongoing professional development with support from the district. KNEA is dedicated to provide teachers the support they need to make public schools great for every child.

Time issues must be addressed in a meaningful way by the staff with consideration for the contract. Critical to success will be the honest communication of time requirements to all involved.

Reality # 1 :

MTSS is not a program and it is not just for special education.

MTSS is research-based and scientifically validated. It is NOT an intervention program, and it is not for special education students. It is the practice of using student performance and other data to guide instructional and intervention decisions.

Reality #2 :

MTSS is about academics and behavior.

MTSS is all about academics and it is appropriate for all age levels, pre-school through grade 12.

Reality #3 :

MTSS is a comprehensive service delivery system.

Some think the major focus of MTSS is to reduce the number of students in special education through pre-referral activities. MTSS is not limited to special education pre-referral activities. The focus is to provide high-quality instruction/intervention matched to student needs.

Reality #4 :

MTSS data can be used as one source of the identification criteria for special education.

Using MTSS does not eliminate the need to do further assessment to identify students with disabilities, including learning disabilities.

Reality #5 :

MTSS or RTI? Different states use different terms to describe prevention & intervention systems.

In Kansas, we use the term MTSS. RTI (Response to Intervention) is the term that is used nationally. It was coined by the U. S. Department of Education because it was a new initiative in the 2004 IDEA Reauthorization.

Reality #6 :

KNEA has resources!

The best information comes from those who want you to succeed! Listen first to those who have implemented MTSS and check with KNEA. KNEA wants you to have the best information and research as you learn about MTSS.

Reality #7 :

Tier 3, or the last tier, is the most intensive instruction. It's not just for special education. The third tiered model instruction may or may not be given in a special education setting.

Reality #8 :

The model implemented is up to each state.

Many states use the three-tier model. Some states use more than three tiers. The experts say to do what works best for you and your students.

Reality #9:

There is no specific time limit for the interventions used in MTSS.

Some are concerned that the MTSS framework will not work for the special education identification process because of time line issues. The key is whether the student is making progress. The Special Education process begins with the referral. There is no time limit for intervention.

Reality #10 :

MTSS implementation can occur by honoring the systems change process.

The systems change process involves work. Change requires time for the staff to meet together and time for quality professional development. Change can/will involve the bargaining process.