

**We work to provide equitable learning opportunities and support for all learners.
ALL of our students are ALL of our students, ALL of the time.**



CSD MTSS Guide 2023



PURPOSE

The CSD MTSS Committee met throughout the second semester of the 2022-2023 school year to unpack and expand our understanding of MTSS. The following pages demonstrate our understanding and work with MTSS as applicable to the Colchester school district. We offer this as a guide to buildings to support district-wide understanding and common implementation. The VTmtss field guide (released in 2019) is a 100+ page guide that may be useful to schools in CSD. As is typical in Colchester, we have worked to create our own understanding. This guide represents that work.

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SECTION I. THE WHY- BELIEFS AND PRINCIPLES GUIDING CSD WORK: WHY MTSS?

“Vermont’s 2014 Education Quality Standards (often referred to as EQS) articulate a strong vision for improving educational opportunities and urgently advancing equity for all students in every school district. The VTmtss Framework is a systemic approach to decision-making for excellence and equity within a culture of continuous improvement that focuses on successful outcomes for all students. The EQS tells us that educational systems in our state must ‘ensure that all students in Vermont public schools are afforded educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality, and enable them to achieve or exceed the standards approved by the State Board of Education’”

(VTmtss Field Guide 2019).

A Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) in the Colchester School District: (committee resources: VSA, Title 16-Tiers of Support, 2015; Education Quality Standards 2121.5-Tiers of Support; Revised AOE Field Guide for VTmtss 2019; ACT 173-passed in 2018)

- ★ An educational framework that supports a focus, among both general and special educators, on mitigating academic, social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties and improving learning for all students through increasingly differentiated and intensified assessment, instruction and intervention. This includes UDL, layers of support, a focus on data-driven decision making, tiers and systems such as EST.
- ★ The framework includes collaboration and systems planning as essential components for all learners.
- ★ In addition, a robust CSD MTSS will meet the requirements of ACT 173 which states that schools will:
 - Enhance effectiveness, availability, and equity of services provided to all students who require additional support in VT schools.
 - Ensure tier 1 core instruction meets the needs of most students.
 - Assure additional instructional time outside of core instruction is aligned to core instruction and that it is supplemental.
 - Create and strengthen a systems-wide approach to positive student behaviors. ○Assure students with intensive needs receive instruction from trained experts.

Belief Statements

The CSD MTSS committee believes the following statements best capture Colchester. As schools work to further develop their MTSS these statements should guide the work:

- ★ All students can learn.
- ★ Looking at our data matters.
- ★ CSD educators care and will work to increase achievement for all of our learners.
- ★ We all have different knowledge about MTSS.
- ★ Each CSD building is in a different spot with their MTSS work and knowledge.
- ★ Improving our collective MTSS knowledge and systems will continue for many years.

CSD Goals

The Colchester School District will work to align with the following goal statements:

- ★ We aim to create a well-defined, comprehensive assessment system that clearly aligns intervention and instruction and is focused on improving learning for all students.
- ★ The Colchester School District and its buildings recognize the need and desire to be more intentional in the use of data; the committee recommends using data to improve teaching and learning.

CSD Guiding Principles

The CSD MTSS committee believes the following statements best capture our beliefs in Colchester. (please note the VTmtss Field Guide offers ten statements; we believe these eight self-written statements best capture our beliefs in Colchester). As schools work to further develop their MTSS these principles should guide the work.

Principle 1: All Students

CSD believes that all students can learn and deserve rich opportunities to do so in a caring learning environment.

Principle 2: Primary Instruction

CSD believes in varied and respectful primary/universal, high quality, grade level instruction for all learners with supported and targeted instruction.

Principle 3: Assessment

CSD believes in a balanced assessment system which includes practice, feedback and assessment loops which inform teaching and learning at a systems and classroom level.

Principle 4: Collaboration

CSD believes in the value of collaboration and collaborative planning time among educators and across teams, and systems that strive to build positive relationships with students, community, caregivers and educators.

Principle 5: EST

CSD believes in the thoughtful use of support and expertise to meet student needs, through a well-defined process that is responsive, on-going, and monitored. This may be through a building's Educational Support System, and documentation of learning and assessment that is easily accessible to all stakeholders.

Principle 6: Professional Learning

CSD believes in ongoing professional learning that addresses the needs of our school, is driven by teacher input, and recognizes student needs to improve learning.

Principle 7: Data

CSD believes in data-informed instruction and decision making that is timely, ongoing, balanced, and improves outcomes for students.

Principle 8: Equity

CSD believes that equity is a critical aspect of learning that is culturally responsive, meets student needs, and includes student voice.

Implementation of CSD principles

The following recommendations are offered as schools work to implement the CSD principles: (please see the VTmtss self assessment for the source of most of this work)

- ★ Design systems and supports so that ALL students have access to grade level/course standards.
- ★ Work to ensure that all students are able to access universal/primary instruction.
- ★ Create scheduling systems which ensure equity of support.
- ★ Examine the connections between all levels of MTSS and make connections to the Continuous Improvement Plan, district goals and needs-based professional development.
- ★ Use formative assessment to drive intervention.
- ★ Design class size and schedule and balance needs to best maximize individualization for students.
- ★ Ensure the use of data teams in all CSD buildings.
- ★ Increase common planning time for teachers.
- ★ Allow time to collaborate with special education teachers and general educators on common curriculum.
- ★ Grow family involvement throughout the district.
- ★ Grow systems in CSD that allow for calibration of district data.

Components of MTSS

The following components of MTSS work together; they are focused on continuous growth and equitable outcomes of students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning outcomes.

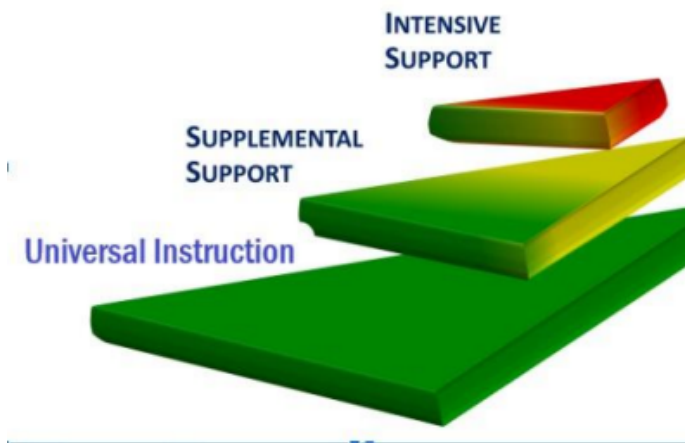
- ★ A comprehensive and systemic approach to rigorous and equitable learning.
- ★ Collective, focused, and effective collaborative work on rigorous and equitable learning.
- ★ High-quality instruction and support for all students.
- ★ A balanced and comprehensive system of assessment that includes screening, formative, summative, and diagnostic assessment that examines students' learning growth and needs toward rigorous and equitable learning outcomes.
- ★ A system of professional learning focused on building a shared expertise within and across each component for successful learning.

These components work together to provide successful academic, behavioral, and social emotional learning for ALL students.

Section II: THE WHAT-INTERVENTIONS AND LAYERS OF SUPPORT:

Intervention and Layers of Support

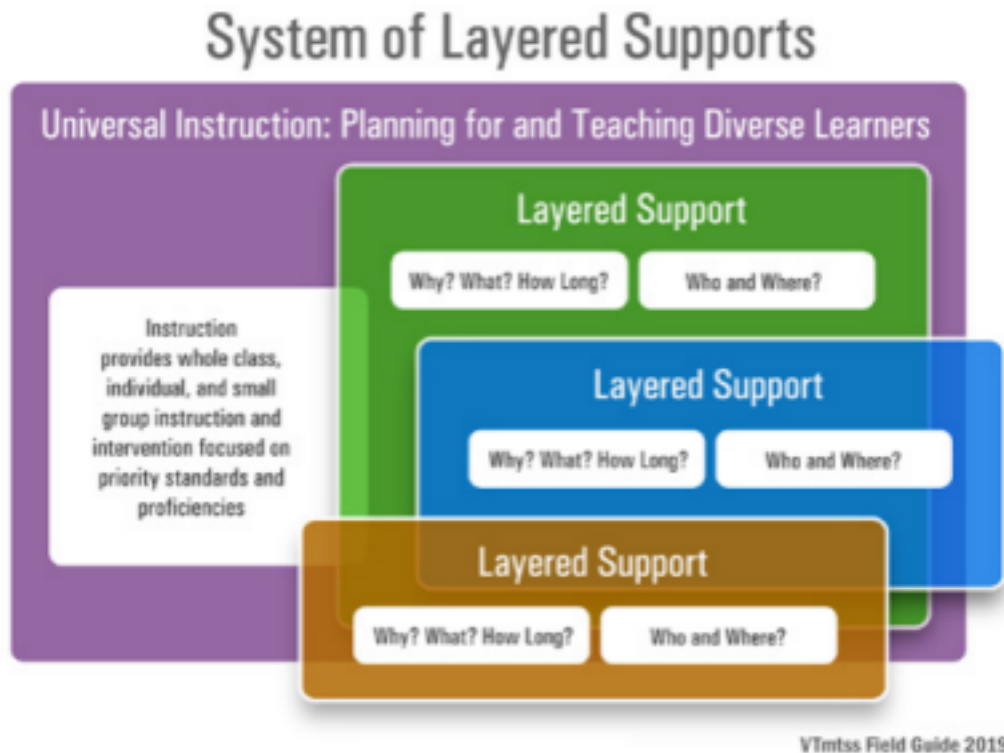
The following graphic and accompanying description is shown to depict the model of MTSS we are working toward in Colchester School District.



Many education models have a triangle/pyramid or use language from an RTI (response to intervention) model (tiers). They all start with the idea that work is foundational and support is given to all, some, or a few students. This graphic is intentionally turned to show the layering of instructional support that MTSS asks us to implement. We start with this bottom layer of differentiated universal instruction for all students. This is the foundational layer and should produce good outcomes for the majority of students. No amount of intervention for individual students is going to produce the outcomes that improving universal instruction will. That is our foundation and it should be really strong. It should meet the needs, without any additional intervention, of about 80% of students. This allows supplemental and intensive instruction/support to do the job of closing gaps for the 20% that require it.

Supplemental and intensive interventions are layered on top of universal instruction and may address academic, behavioral, or social-emotional needs. Students that require interventions continue to receive universal instruction with their connected interventions; interventions do not supplant or replace universal instruction. Students who require more support than is provided by supplemental interventions should receive intensive interventions. Any students, not just those with disabilities, should receive interventions; they are based on student need.

Another graphic that appears in the VTmtss Field Guide is below. This graphic demonstrates how multiple supports may be layered for individual students. It shows that most students will receive support within the delivery of universal instruction. The VTmtss Field Guide defines intervention as “instruction that supplements and intensifies classroom curriculum/instruction to meet student needs.”



An additional graphic demonstrates that layers of support happen within the classroom.

Layer 1 is referred to as universal because it applies to every student. This layer is important in strengthening school climate, relationships and classroom instruction. Examples of layer 1 supports are:

- ★ High-quality core instruction
- ★ Social emotional learning embedded into curriculum and assessment
- ★ A positive school climate

Layer 2 is a targeted additional intervention that is delivered to students not responding to layer 1 support. Layer 2 supports are often provided in small group instruction. Typically 20% of students need this level of support. Need is determined by the use of data and then teams are monitoring for improvement.

Layer 3 is intensive additional instruction that is delivered to students not responding to layers 1 and 2 supports. Layer 3 supports are often individualized with increased focus and frequency than layers 1 and 2. Typically 5% of students need this level of support. Need is determined by the use of data showing lack of progress from layers 1 and 2 instruction and supports. At times, layer 3 support and instruction may be initiated to help a student in an acute crisis for a short amount of time.

Section III: THE HOW-IMPLEMENTATION- THEORY/BELIEFS TO PRACTICAL ACTION

In taking action toward implementing MTSS, the district and each school will self-assess, identify areas of strengths and needs, and prioritize work. This will strengthen systems of collaboration, high-quality instruction and intervention, balanced and comprehensive assessment, and expertise that works individually and collectively towards successful learning outcomes for ALL students.

Implementation Steps

District and school-based teams will work to implement MTSS by examining and strengthening outcomes and systems of support in order to improve academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning for ALL students. District and schools will:

Self-Assess

- ★ Share information with school staff, district and school-based teams.
- ★ Conduct a self-assessment of MTSS using the VTmtss self-assessment tool.
- ★ Review district and school academic, behavioral, and social-emotional assessment results to understand the learning outcomes and achievement gaps.
- ★ Review systems for each component of MTSS.

Identify Strengths and Needs

- ★ Identify areas of strengths and needs from academic, behavioral and social-emotional learning outcomes, focusing on increasing achievement and improving achievement gaps. ★ Identify areas of strengths and needs of the components of MTSS, within and across components. ★ Identify areas of strengths and needs layered supports in order to provide equitable learning opportunities and outcomes.
- ★ Celebrate areas of strength!

Review and Prioritize

- ★ Review district and school input from self-assessment, assessment, and areas of strengths and needs.
- ★ Align school needs to high-priority areas of district needs and action plan.
- ★ Prioritize areas of need in order to focus on high-priority areas to build a collective focus. ★ Strengthen systems that will improve academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning and support for ALL students.
- ★ Review high-impact, evidence-based practices to meet areas of need.
- ★ Develop school-based action plans to focus efforts to improve learning outcomes and achievement gaps.

Revise and Implement

- ★ Revise systems, based on prioritized areas of need and high-impact, evidence-based practices, to strengthen learning and systems of support.
- ★ Implement prioritized plans.
- ★ Continuously monitor academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning. outcomes and needs
- ★ Celebrate growth and success!