



A Family Guide to Understanding Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students "Supporting the Whole Child"

Introduction:

Educators understand the importance of creating an environment of continuous learning in every classroom in Georgia. The state's focus is on prevention and using evidence-based practices to make decisions that support the unique needs of children. The process of identifying students who need support to improve learning and behavioral outcomes is called Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students (Georgia's MTSS). The framework has been nationally vetted and aligned with the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework.

What is Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students?

A tiered system of supports is being implemented statewide and has five essential components, including: Screening, Progress Monitoring, Multi-Level Prevention System, and Data-Based Decision Making. Georgia added Infrastructure as a fifth component to help districts and schools develop a systemic and preventive educational framework. The critical elements of Infrastructure are Leadership, Effective Teaming, Professional Learning, and Family & Community Engagement.

Why Does Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students MATTER?

When all the essential components are implemented as intended, results include sustained academic improvement, more efficient use of resources and staff, decreased inappropriate special education services, and a reduction in student grade retention. Schools and districts have also seen a drop in expulsions, behavioral referrals, and suspension rates.

What is Required to Improve Outcomes for Students?

- In order to be successful, everyone must be involved in the process (parents, teachers, administrators, community members etc.).
- The framework improves response times and helps educators rapidly respond to student needs.
- The framework aligns teams and school systems, helping to streamline information and resources necessary to improve student learning.
- Educators and families must work together to prevent poor outcomes for all students and ensure students have the tools to be successful.
- ALL students are screened to identify those who may be at risk for poor academic or behavioral outcomes.
- Progress monitoring provides information that allows teachers to better target student needs and appropriately match instruction, resources, and supports.
- Teams are focused on prevention to make decisions that ensure all students are continuing to improve.

How Can Parents and Students GET INVOLVED?

- *Frequently communicate with your child's teacher(s).*
- *Attend school functions such as parent-teacher conferences.*
- *Monitor and assist with your child's homework assignments.*
- *Find out what skills and knowledge your child is expected to learn.*
- *Ask school team members the following questions:*
 - *What are the targeted supports that my child's school is using if he/she is struggling in the classroom?*
 - *What are the formal guidelines my child's school is using to identify progress toward goals?*
 - *How will I be informed of the progress my child is making?*
 - *What happens if my child is not making progress?*

What if My Child is Recommended to Receive Additional Support?

- *Attend team meetings. Remember the importance of your voice in your child's education.*
- *Help plan interventions for academic and/or behavioral needs.*
- *Practice and reinforce any strategies or educational plans at home.*
- *Always ask questions when things are not clear.*

Where to Go for MORE INFORMATION:

Contact your child's teacher, the school principal, or visit the Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students website www.gadoe.org/TieredSystemofSupports or www.gadoe.org/MTSS.