

# Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students

2019

*A Framework for Success*

**Georgia's  
MTSS**

## Application Description



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*"Educating Georgia's Future"*

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## Application for Participation in Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students

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

Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students (Georgia's MTSS framework) is a continuum of evidence-based, system-wide practices to support a rapid response to academic and behavioral needs, with frequent data-based monitoring for decision making to empower each Georgia student to achieve high standards.

Georgia's MTSS provides multi-phase training and ongoing support for refinement and sustainability purposes for districts to implement the integrated academic, behavior, and social framework. To achieve Georgia's MTSS, resources must be used effectively and efficiently to enable students to be successful. Georgia's MTSS does not automatically require additional resources or add on to existing practices. Instead, it involves evaluating current practices, identifying practices that yield evidence of effectiveness, addressing areas that are missing, and replacing ineffective or inefficient approaches with those that are supported by research. Georgia's MTSS becomes one of the primary guiding frameworks for a continuous, data based, school improvement process supporting academic, social emotional and behavioral achievement of all students to prepare them to be successful high school graduates.

Georgia's MTSS is funded through the State Personnel Development Grant and is designed as a multi-year project with cascading supports. Implementation will be supported by the state team, regional teams, district teams, school teams, students and their families.

#### Project Goals:

- Georgia's MTSS team will work with cohorts of local school districts to provide support in measurement and evaluation, professional learning, and technical assistance necessary to support implementation of the framework.
- Partnering school districts will have the necessary infrastructures and support personnel identified for successful building level implementation: identified MTSS Coordinator at the district/building level; other collaborative teams who meet on a regular and consistent basis to provide feedback to the Building-level Leadership Team (BLT); BLTs that provide feedback to the District-level Leadership Team (DLT) regarding implementation efforts; and effective and efficient data systems for collecting, storing, and analyzing data at all levels.

### II. Overview of Application for Participation

The purpose of this application process is to identify school districts that will participate in Georgia's MTSS training. Georgia's MTSS trainers will provide training, technical assistance and professional development toward implementing a sustainable tiered system of supports.

Selected school districts will be involved with Georgia's MTSS Trainers in a three-phase training and coaching process in order to develop and operationalize a plan to implement the framework.

This application process is open and available for Georgia school districts to submit no later than **February 28, 2019**. Georgia's MTSS Team will review applications and notify all districts submitting

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applications by April 1, 2019. If you have questions about the application or the status of your district’s application, please email Karen Suddeth [ksuddeth@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:ksuddeth@doe.k12.ga.us).

### III. Who Should Apply

This project is intended to support school districts in developing sustainable, local capacity to implement Georgia’s MTSS. The framework promotes a systemic implementation whereby each district will decide which school levels to include in the three-phase, schoolwide process, including elementary, middle, and high school levels. Ultimately, the goal of Georgia’s MTSS team is to support districts in implementing and sustaining a district wide integrated systemic approach to meet the needs of all students. Districts may select up to three (3) schools. The district will also decide which content, i.e., reading, math, or behavior, to begin the process, assessing annually when the appropriate time is to add remaining areas.

Once an applying school district has been selected for potential participation, Georgia’s MTSS project staff and representatives from the school district will work collaboratively to determine the district’s implementation readiness. This will be determined by the participating district’s and schools’:

- a) ability to communicate and validate their need of Georgia’s MTSS.
- b) compatibility of Georgia’s MTSS within their current initiatives, priorities, structures, supports, and parent values.
- c) resources available for training, staffing, technology supports, data systems, and administration.
- d) expected outcomes when Georgia’s MTSS is implemented.
- e) ability to build capacity to implement, refine, and sustain Georgia’s MTSS.

### IV. Application Timeline

Applications must be submitted via email or postal mail using the contact information at the end of the application. Visit <http://gadoe.org/GAMTSSApplication2019> to download a copy of Georgia’s MTSS application. Please email applications to [gamtss@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:gamtss@doe.k12.ga.us)

January 22 – February 28, 2019	Application process open; Awareness webinar available
March 2019	Applications submitted are reviewed; Interviews conducted
April 1, 2019	Districts notified
May 2019	Initial meetings and trainings with District Teams

### V. Selection Process

For Georgia’s MTSS team to meet its own organizational and grant goals, we are resolved to collaborate with districts committed to a continuous improvement framework in which problem solving and data-based decision making occurs in an ongoing way and across multiple levels of the education system. The second cohort of districts will be selected from across Georgia. A panel will review the applications to identify and determine readiness of districts.

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### **VI. Benefits of Participation**

Implementation of Georgia's MTSS will assist in developing a continuum of supports as well as overall district and school improvement.

#### **Improving Efficiency:**

- Creating a common vision within the school district that aligns the beliefs and practices needed for a systemic tiered system of supports that addresses the needs of all students.
- Assisting the school district in developing consensus and commitment from all stakeholders for the implementation of Georgia's MTSS and creating efficiencies regarding resource deployment (or allocation), priorities, and integration of services.
- Providing a continuum of implementation supports to school districts based on their needs.
- Enhancing continuity between schools and grade levels across the district by reviewing district policies and formalizing expectations and processes.
- Focusing professional development to address data-based needs for the district.
- Networking and professional learning opportunities across the state.

#### **Improving Effectiveness:**

- Implementing and refining a set of evidence and research-based practices and interventions.
- Developing a long-term plan for supporting Georgia's MTSS implementation in the school district that includes mechanisms to:
  - provide vision/direction for the practices.
  - allocate resources.
  - assist in developing capacity to support the implementation of practices.
  - support in the development of competencies necessary for implementation.
  - collect and analyze local data that measures the impact of implementation.
- Building the school district's capacity for leading, training, and coaching toward a sustainable framework of Georgia's MTSS implementation.

#### **Sustainability and Refinement**

- Developing infrastructures needed to support implementation efforts at appropriate levels of the system, such as school district leadership, school building leadership, and other school collaborative teams.
- Establishing an ongoing, problem-solving cycle within the school district to support a framework of continuous improvement through data-based decision making.

### **VII. Requirements for Participation**

The following are requirements for a partnership between the local school district and Georgia's MTSS project staff.

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### School District:

Research shows systems change can take 3-5 years. Therefore, the appropriate schools within the district will commit to participate for a minimum of 3 consecutive years. The school district will create or increase the infrastructures necessary to support the schools (PreK-12), build capacity, and develop sustainability. This includes building leadership teams (BLT) and the district leadership team (DLT) participating in appropriate training and coaching sessions. The number and type of trainings will be determined by needs assessments that take place during the implementation. Trainings will address the essential components of Georgia's MTSS including: Screening, Progress Monitoring, Multi-Level Prevention System, Data-Based Decision Making, and Infrastructure.

The district and schools will engage in coaching provided by Georgia's MTSS team. Coaching will be implemented in a variety of formats including: one-on-one, group, peer-to-peer, professional learning communities, and observation of MTSS practices. Coaching will be supported by onsite visits, phone, email, and video conferencing to meet the immediate needs of district and school personnel.

Additionally, the school district will submit all required data. These data include fidelity of implementation data and student outcome data including screening and progress monitoring data. Surveys, focus groups, and interviews will also be conducted to gather qualitative data on the effective practices for implementing MTSS.

Districts participating in Georgia's MTSS training will need to code their students with disabilities within the universal screening and progress monitoring data base system. Districts are asked to submit these data to Georgia's MTSS project in the fall and spring of each academic year. Data will not be reported at the student level; however, it will be shared in an aggregate format with the Georgia Department of Education as part of a compliance measure.

#### ○ **Phase One: Structuring**

- Building Leadership Teams (BLTs) and District Leadership Team (DLT) will collaborate to structure their multi-tiered system of supports in their respective schools. BLTs will communicate with school staff in-between trainings in order to facilitate continued progress toward Georgia's MTSS. The DLT will meet between trainings in order to better align efforts among appropriate schools related to the components below. Components include, but are not limited to:

#### **Systemic Components**

- Identify data sources and procedures for assessment including universal screening and progress monitoring tools
- Identify a district-level administrator as the district MTSS coordinator who will provide oversight for the coordination and communication with Georgia's MTSS project staff.
- Identify a MTSS coordinator for each participating school who will have dedicated time to manage and coach implementation of the framework.

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- Engage in data-based decision making and develop required structures and protocols, when necessary, according to current district, school, and classroom needs.
- Determine professional development needs to implement Georgia's MTSS.
- Determine family engagement and community involvement practices and establish a communication plan.

### **Tier 1 Components**

- Develop a curriculum protocol for chosen content area(s).
- Develop a daily school-wide schedule and yearly assessment schedule for selected schools.
- Obtain information from faculty and staff through school expectations surveys, focus groups, and interviews.

### **Tier 2 Components**

- Select Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions and supports in chosen content area(s).
- Create a master schedule that reflects time for interventions.
- Select progress monitoring tools.
- Determine informal and formal diagnostic tools.

Once Phase One tasks are completed, schools will move on to Phase Two: Implementation.

#### **○ Phase Two: Implementation**

- Use data to review and revise selection of Tier 1 instruction as well as Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.
- Seek out professional learning opportunities to build proficiency in usage of selected interventions.
- Conduct appropriate universal screeners two to three times per year for all students in a chosen content area(s) (potentially Pre-K through grade 12).
- Review data within chosen content area(s) according to Georgia's MTSS procedures to determine appropriate interventions for individual students and/or supports for teachers.
- Monitor student, class, grade, school, and district progress as recommended by Georgia's MTSS.
- Implement Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions and ensure intervention fidelity.
- Identify professional learning opportunities for the following year.
- Submit data according to established timelines

Once districts have completed Phase Two, they will move on to Phase Three: Sustain and Refine.

#### **○ Phase Three: Sustain and Refine**

In addition to reviewing Phase One activities and completing ongoing tasks outlined in Phase Two, districts will:

- Participate in trainings based on the continued needs regarding the implementation and sustainability of Georgia's MTSS.

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- Provide ongoing support of implementation efforts by providing a vision, establishing Georgia's MTSS as a priority, allocating resources, providing political support and visibility, and removing barriers to implementation.
- Support the district-level administrator as the district MTSS coordinator provides oversight for the coordination and communication with Georgia's MTSS project staff.
- Support the school MTSS coordinator with time to manage and coach Georgia's MTSS process.
- Agree to adhere to specified project timelines for developing coaching, training, technical assistance, and evaluation capacity that are jointly determined by the school district and Georgia's MTSS project staff.
- Establish a data sharing agreement with the Georgia Department of Education and Georgia's MTSS project for supporting the district and schools, evaluating Georgia's MTSS project, and reporting on the progress of the effort. Any public reporting will be done across multiple districts without identification of districts, schools, or students.
- Protect time for school staff and avoid competing initiatives.

### **VIII. Professional Learning and Coaching**

Professional learning and coaching are essential to successful implementation of Georgia's MTSS. Professional learning will be provided for district and school teams as well as administrators, teachers, and staff. In Georgia's MTSS, professional learning opportunities will be a combination of face-to-face and web-based trainings and will be complemented by follow-up technical assistance and coaching. State MTSS regional coaches will provide this support for the districts and schools.

The MTSS regional coach will assist district teams in using a problem-solving approach to make data-based decisions and help prioritize needs for effective implementation. In each participating district, the district MTSS coordinator and the MTSS regional coach will provide support to the school teams, teachers, and staff. For participating schools, the MTSS regional coach will focus coaching to facilitate capacity building throughout the school by supporting professional learning, leadership, problem-solving, content knowledge, and application of new processes and skills.

### **IX. Potential Costs Associated with Implementation**

Georgia's MTSS is a technical assistance and professional development project funded through Georgia's State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG). Therefore, project funds are used to support Georgia's MTSS created professional development and technical assistance activities and materials. This project is not intended to cover the costs associated with Georgia's MTSS implementation in districts and schools. Consequently, applicants are strongly encouraged to leverage existing funding sources to offset implementation costs as well as professional learning and travel expenditures. As districts enter this process in different positions along a readiness continuum, the following is a list of potential costs districts may incur because of structuring and implementing Georgia's MTSS framework. Many districts will already have some or all of these components in place prior to implementation and would therefore not consider them additional costs.

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- Assessment tools for universal screening and progress monitoring
- Evidence-based intervention materials, addendums, and/or modifications to already selected resources
- Professional development
- Potential substitute expense
- Potential travel expenditures

### X. Georgia MTSS Application to Participate

Complete the *Georgia MTSS Application to Participate* by answering the questions, agreeing to the commitments, assurances, and participation requirements. All signatures on the application are required.

If you have any questions regarding the application or submission process, please email them to [ksuddeth@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:ksuddeth@doe.k12.ga.us).

You may download a copy of the application at <http://gadoe.org/GAMTSSApplication2019>.

Electronically submit applications (pdf) to: [gamtss@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:gamtss@doe.k12.ga.us)

You may also mail applications to:

Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students

Attn: Karen Suddeth, Program Manager

Special Education Services and Supports

Georgia Department of Education

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