Application for Participation in Georgia MTSS

I. What is Georgia’s Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Georgia’s Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) 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 to 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. The Georgia 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. The Georgia 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.

The Georgia 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 MTSS will work with cohorts of local school districts to provide support in measurement and evaluation, professional learning, and technical assistance necessary to support Georgia MTSS implementation.
- 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 MTSS training. Georgia MTSS trainers will provide training, technical assistance and professional development toward implementing a personalized and sustainable Georgia MTSS.

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

Adapted from 2016 Kansas MTSS Integrated Framework Application and 2013 MiBLSI Application
March 2018
This application process is open and available for Georgia school districts to submit March 29, 2018. The Georgia MTSS Team will review applications and notify all districts that applied by May 31, 2018. If you have questions about the application or the status of your district’s application, please email Wina Low at wlow@doe.k12.ga.us.

III. Who Should Apply

The Georgia MTSS project is intended to support school districts in developing sustainable, local capacity to implement a Georgia MTSS. Georgia MTSS promotes a systemic implementation. Systemic implementation means that each district will decide which school levels to include in the three-phase, school wide process, including elementary, middle, and high school levels. Districts and schools adopting the Georgia MTSS framework share ownership with Georgia MTSS to ensure that implementation efforts are supported and sustained. Ultimately, the goal of Georgia MTSS is to support districts in implementing and sustaining a district wide integrated systemic approach to meet the needs of all students. In this first year, districts may select up to three (3) schools. The district will also decide which content area(s) to begin the process, assessing annually when the appropriate time is to add remaining content area(s).

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

a) Ability to communicate and validate their need of Georgia MTSS.

b) Fit of Georgia 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 if Georgia MTSS is implemented.

e) Capacity to implement Georgia MTSS.

f) Ability to sustain and refine Georgia MTSS.

IV. Application Timeline

Applications must be submitted via email or postal mail using the contact information at the end of this application. Visit http://gadoe.org/GAMTSSapplication2018 to download another copy of the Georgia MTSS application. Please email applications to Wina Low at wlow@doe.k12.ga.us.

March 30 - April 30, 2018 Application process open

May 2018 Applications submitted are reviewed; Interviews conducted

May 31, 2018 Districts notified

June & July 2018 Initial meetings and trainings with District Teams

Adapted from 2016 Kansas MTSS Integrated Framework Application and 2013 MiBLSI Application March 2018
V. Selection Process

In order for Georgia MTSS 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 first cohort of 6 districts will be selected from across Georgia. A panel will review the applications to identify and determine readiness of the first of three cohorts of districts to be selected to begin Phase One: Structuring during June of 2018.

VI. Benefits of Participation

Implementation of a Georgia MTSS will assist in developing a continuum of supports.

Improving efficiency:

- Creating a common vision within the school district that aligns the beliefs and practices needed to support a systemic Multi-Tiered system of supports to address the needs of all students.
- Assisting the school district in developing consensus and commitment from all stakeholders for the implementation of Georgia MTSS and creating efficiencies with regard to 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 buildings and grade levels across the district by reviewing district policies and formalizing expectations, instruction, policies, processes, and language.
- Focusing professional development to address data-based needs for the district.
- Networking opportunities across the state.

Improving effectiveness:

- Refining a set of evidence and research based practices and systems that can be generalized to support adoption and implementation of the new evidence-based and research-based practices as they become available.
- Developing a long term plan for supporting Georgia 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 MTSS implementation.

Sustainability and Refinement

Adapted from 2016 Kansas MTSS Integrated Framework Application and 2013 MiBLSI Application
March 2018
• 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, self-correcting feedback loop within the school district to support a framework of continuous improvement through data-based decision-making related to Georgia MTSS implementation.

VII. Requirements for Participation

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

School District:

Research shows systems change can take 3-5 years. Therefore, the appropriate buildings and programs within the district will commit to participate for a minimum of 3 consecutive years. The school district will spend the necessary time developing the infrastructures necessary to support the buildings and grade levels (Pre-K-12) in the district in future years. This includes building leadership teams (BLT) and the district leadership team (DLT) participating in appropriate training 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 the Georgia MTSS including: leadership, teaming, data-based decision-making, academic and behavioral supports, data-based problem solving, developing professional capacity, and engaging families and communities.

The school district and buildings will engage in coaching provided by Georgia MTSS. 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. Coaches will provide at least three coaching opportunities per month per school. Face-to-face coaching will occur on average, twice per month. Coaching will be supported by phone, email, and video conferencing to meet the immediate needs of 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 the Georgia 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 the Georgia MTSS project in the fall and spring of each academic year. Data will not be reported at the student level, but will be shared in an aggregate format with GaDOE as part of a compliance measure.

○ Phase One: Structuring

Adapted from 2016 Kansas MTSS Integrated Framework Application and 2013 MiBLSI Application
March 2018
• Building Leadership Teams (BLTs) and District Leadership Team (DLT) will collaborate to structure their multi-tiered system of supports in their respective buildings. BLTs will communicate with building staff in-between trainings in order to facilitate continued progress toward a Georgia MTSS. The DLT will meet between trainings in order to better align efforts among appropriate buildings related to the components below. Components include, but are not limited to:

Systemic Components

• Establish district and/or building Core Beliefs for Georgia MTSS
• Identify data sources and procedures for progress monitoring 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 of Georgia MTSS project staff.
• Identify a Building MTSS Coordinator for each participating building who will have dedicated time to manage and coach the Georgia MTSS process.
• Engage in data-based decision making and develop required structures and protocols, when necessary, according to current district, building, and classroom needs.
• Determine professional development needs to implement the Georgia 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 buildings.
• 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, Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.
• Seek out professional learning opportunities to build proficiency in usage of selected interventions.

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• Conduct appropriate universal screeners 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 MTSS procedures to determine appropriate interventions for individual students and/or supports for teachers.
• Monitor student, class, grade, building, and district progress as recommended by Georgia 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 a Georgia MTSS.
    • Provide ongoing support of implementation efforts by providing a vision, establishing a Georgia 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 of Georgia MTSS project staff.
    • Support the Building MTSS Coordinator with time to manage and coach the Georgia 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 MTSS project staff.
    • Establish a data sharing agreement with the Georgia Department of Education and the Georgia MTSS project to aid in designing and providing assistance to the district and schools, evaluating the Georgia MTSS project, and reporting on the progress of the effort. Any public reporting will be done across multiple districts without identification of districts, buildings, or students.
    • Protect school buildings from competing initiatives.

VIII. Professional Learning and Coaching

Professional learning and coaching are essential to successful implementation of GA MTSS and will be provided for multiple groups. Professional learning will be provided for district and building teams as well as administrators, teachers, and staff. In GA 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 Coaches will provide this support for the districts and schools.

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March 2018
The State MTSS 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 State MTSS Coach will provide support to the school teams, teachers, and staff. For participating schools, the State MTSS 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. Professional learning opportunities will be provided quarterly. The GA MTSS Overview and Core Professional Learning Modules are developed around the essential components for GA MTSS and include the following:

- Focusing on Leadership for GA MTSS
- Implementing Effective Teaming
- Employing Data-Based Decision-Making
- Employing Data-Based Problem Solving
- Providing Academic and Behavioral Interventions
- Developing Professional Capacity
- Engaging Families and Communities

IX. Potential Costs Associated with Implementation

Georgia MTSS is a technical assistance and professional development project funded through GA’s State Personnel Development Grant. Therefore, project funds are used to support Georgia MTSS created professional development and technical assistance activities and materials. This project is not intended to cover the costs associated with Georgia MTSS implementation. Consequently, applicants are strongly encouraged to leverage existing funding sources to offset implementation costs in order to develop, implement, and sustain local capacity for Georgia MTSS coordination, coaching, and evaluation, as well as to aid in purchasing any appropriate academic, social emotional and/or behavioral curricula.

As districts enter into this process in different spots along a readiness continuum, the following is a list of potential costs districts may incur because of structuring and implementing a Georgia 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.

- Universal screening tools for chosen content area(s)
- Evidence-based adoptions, addendums, and/or modifications to chosen content area(s)
- Professional development
- Potential substitute expense
X. GA MTSS Application to Participate

Complete the GA MTSS Application to Participate by answering the questions, agreeing to the commitments and participation requirements, and obtaining the appropriate signatures from the District Superintendent, Special Education Director, and participating School Principals.

If you have any questions regarding the application or submission process, please email them to wlow@doe.k12.ga.us. You may download a copy of the application at http://gadoe.org/GAMTSSApplication2018.

Electronically submit applications to wlow@doe.k12.ga.us.

You may also mail applications to:

GA MTSS

Attn: Wina Low, Program Manager, Senior

Special Education Services and Supports
Georgia Department of Education
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive SE
1870 Twin Towers East
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

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