Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and Special Education

Tessie Rose Bailey, PhD, American Institutes for Research
Session Guidance

• If you have any technical issues or need assistance during the training, please email gamtss@doe.k12.ga.us and someone will assist you.

• Please make sure to mute yourself and turn off your camera once the session begins.

• Ask questions or make comments in the Chat.
Handouts

• MTSS and Special Education Handouts SELDA 2023
How To Turn On Live Captioning

Click on the **three dots** in your toolbar to see the meeting options.

**MS Teams App**

**Mobile Device**

**Browser View**

You may need to move the mouse to see the toolbar.
How To Turn On Live Captioning

Select "Turn on live captions" in the drop-down menu.

MS Teams App

Mobile Device

Browser View
Session Outcomes

At the end of the session, participants will be able to:

• Explain how special education can leverage MTSS to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities.

• Explain how data-based individualization (DBI) can be used to provide intensive intervention for students with severe and persistent reading difficulties at Tier 3 and support implementation of the SST.

• Demonstrate how DBI can also be used to design and implement specially designed instruction for eligible students.
Why We Do What We Do


• “To meet its substantive obligation under the IDEA, a school must offer an IEP reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child’s circumstances.” (emphasis added)
Did you know?

68%
Of SWDs spend 80% or more in the general education classroom

95%
Of SWDs spend some portion of their day in the general education classroom
There is no way a single system has all the time, all the knowledge, and all the skills to meet all the needs of every child in every school or district.

Buffman, Mattos, & Webber 2009

We need a sustainable ecosystem with capacity to develop and implement high-quality educational programming for students with disabilities. We NEED collective efficacy.
Remember

All students are general education students first.

Some students require special education and aids and services to access and benefit from general education similarly to their peers.
Setting the stage for ambitious growth

To effectively promote appropriately, ambitious growth for differently abled students, we must

• Maintain high expectations

• Articulate what we want the student to do (Teacher clarity = ES .75; learning goals = ES .68; appropriate challenging goals = ES .59)

• Know the child and their circumstances [PLAAFP Statement, IDEA Sec. 300.320 (a)(1); Endrew F., 2017]

• Know what knowledge, skills, and strategies the student needs to do to meet ambitious goals (focus of SDI!).

Hattie, 2017
Collective efficacy starts with the **right** questions!

- What do we want for our **students** and families?
- What is the **current reality** and who are the players?
- What do our **students and families need** to be successful?
- How can we **maximize our resources** to support students and families?
Development of high-quality educational programming

Implementation of high-quality educational programming

Improved access and outcomes - FAPE
IDEA FAPE Requirements

**Procedural**
In the development of an IEP, has the IEP team complied with the procedures set forth in IDEA? *(Rowley)*

**Substantive**
Is the IEP reasonably calculated to enable the child to make progress that is appropriate in light of the child’s circumstances? *(Endrew F.)*

**Implementation**
In implementing the IEP, were the instructional services and supports outlined in the IEP provided as agreed on during the IEP process?
Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance (PLAAFPs)

Monitoring Plan

Measurable Goals

Participation Outside Regular Education and in State and Districtwide Assessments

Statement of Special Education and Aids and Services

Date, Frequency, Duration and Location of Services
Program Development: Substantive

**PLAAFPs:**
Provide an assessment and data-driven baseline

**Measurable Goals:**
Connects to our PLAAFPs, SDI, and progress

**Monitoring Plan:**
Informs us if services are leading to progress or if changes are needed

**Specially designed instruction (SDI):**
Addresses unique needs and ensures access to and progress in the general curriculum
For PROGRESS, we need internally consistent IEPs that promote ambitious growth.
IEPs: Same Essential Ingredients but Individualized Based on Student Need
What good is a great IEP if it doesn’t guide implementation?
FAPE and Implementation: Breaking Down Findings from Case Law

- Fidelity of Implementation
- Capacity to Implement
Implementing High-Quality Educational Programming: Building a Sustainable Ecosystem Through MTSS
MTSS can support the implementation of a sustainable ecosystem necessary for the PROGRESS of students with IEPs.

- **Tier 1: Universal Level of Prevention**
  - SWDs, GT, ELs
  - Receive services at all levels, depending on need

- **Tier 2: Targeted Level of Prevention**

- **Tier 3: Intensive Level of Prevention**
Effective special education delivery leverages the data, instruction, infrastructure, and collective effect of MTSS.
How could MTSS support implementation of special education requirements for students not yet identified?

Child Find & Eligibility

• Assist in child find obligations (i.e., identify, locate, and evaluate) through MTSS screening/risk verification process [20 U.S.C. § 1412(a)(3)(A)].
• Ensure provision of Tier 3 intensive interventions to rule out lack of instruction [34 C.F.R. § 300.309(a)].
• Provide data to demonstrate “need” for special education [20 U.S.C. § 1401(3)(A)].
• Provide formal progress monitoring data that can be provided to parents [34 C.F.R. § 300.309(b)].
• Compare student performance to peers and understand any unique circumstances.
How could MTSS support implementation of special education requirements for eligible students?

### IEP Development & Implementation

- **Development of the IEP** [Sec. 300.320]
  - Provide objective, measurable data for how “the child’s disability affects the child’s involvement and progress in the general education curriculum” in the PLAAFP statement [Sec. 300.320(a)(1)(i)].
  - Set realistic, ambitious IEP goals “to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum” [Sec. 300.320(a)(2)(A)].
  - Develop “statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services” [Sec. 300.320(a)(4)].
  - Provide more accurate estimates of level of service needed to promote progress towards goals [Sec. 300.320(a)(7)].

- **Provide framework for efficient and effective implementation of IEP**
  - Support implementation of IEP goal monitoring plan [Sec. 300.320(a)(3)(i)].
  - Support service delivery and access to core programming in general education.
Specially designed instruction and related services

Tier 1: Universal Level of Prevention

Tier 2: Targeted Level of Prevention

Tier 3: Intensive Level of Prevention

Does the student need greater adaptation of the delivery of instruction?

SDI could be delivered in the child’s home, a hospital, an institution, or other unique setting.

All students still need access to general curriculum as appropriate for their needs.
SDI and MTSS

• Requires an evidence-based, iterative process that uses individual progress monitoring data to make decisions about instructional adaptations.

• Well-designed MTSS, includes the infrastructure for this process.
### Special Education Means Specially Designed Instruction

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<th>Elements of SDI</th>
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<td><strong>Who, where, and when</strong> the instruction is delivered</td>
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Sec. 300.39 Special education
Progress Monitoring: Informs Response to Special Education Instruction
SDI is not a program and cannot be purchased. However, some students’ SDI may be delivered using existing standardized, purchased programs within MTSS depending on individual needs.
Intensive Intervention at Tier 3: Supporting SDI and SST

- Data-based individualization (DBI) is an evidenced-based process for individualizing and intensifying interventions for students with severe and persistent learning and behavioral needs.

- The process integrates evidence-based intervention, assessment, and strategies.
MTSS is About Addressing the Whole Child. DBI is about addressing intensive needs.

Supports are tiered, NOT students.
What is DBI?

*Is...*

- Individualized based on student needs
- More intense, often with substantively different content AND pedagogy
- Involves more frequent and precise progress monitoring
- An approach that integrates academic and behavioral supports

*Is Not...*

- A single approach
- A manual
- A preset program/intervention
- More of the same Tier 1 instruction
- More of the same Tier 2 instruction
How can Tier 3 implementation support implementation of special education requirements?

When implemented as part of MTSS, DBI can help schools implement special education requirements within a comprehensive support system.

Referral & Eligibility Requirements

- Ensure provision of intensive interventions to rule out lack of instruction.
- Provide formal PM data that can be provided to parents.
- Compare student performance to peers.
- Provide evidence of need for SPED.

IEP Development & Implementation

- Provide data for PLAAFPS
- Set more realistic IEP PM goals
- Design specially designed instruction.
- Provide estimates of level of service needed.
- Monitor and report progress towards IEP goals.
Student Support Teams (SST): What is SST in Georgia?

- SST is an interdisciplinary group that uses a systematic process to address learning and/or behavior problems of students, K-12, in a school.

- The Student Support Team is a joint effort of regular education and special education to identify and plan alternative instructional strategies for children prior to or in lieu of a special education referral.

[160-4-2- (gadoe.org)]
What occurs when SST is utilized to support a student?

A systemic, collaborative, problem solving process is used to generate recommendations that are targeted to the student’s learning or behavior problem.

Recommendations, which include a specific academic and/or behavior plan, are documented in SST records and provided to the student’s teacher(s) and/or others to implement with the student.

The team then meets periodically to review the student’s progress monitoring data and determine the need for continuing, modifying, or conducting the intervention.

Microsoft Word – SST Revised October 5, 2000 (gadoe.org)
Georgia Board of Education Rule: Student Support Team Six Step Process

1. Identification of needs
2. Assessment, if necessary
3. Educational Plan
4. Implementation
5. Follow-up and support
6. Continuous monitoring and evaluation
Data-Based Individualization (DBI) process is embedded in Georgia’s SST Structure and Process

Data-Based Individualization (DBI) Process

- Identification of needs
- Assessment, if necessary
- Educational Plan
- Implementation
- Follow-up and support
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation
Design and delivery of specially designed instruction depends on an evidence-based, iterative process that uses ongoing, individualized data to make decisions about adaptations to instructional delivery, content, and methodology.
Introduction to the Five Steps of Data-Based Individualization
Laying the Foundation for DBI

• STEP 1: Start with a standardized instructional program with known evidence for addressing the identified need(s).
What does IDEA say about the statement of services and aids?

According to IDEA, Section 300.320 (a), each child’s IEP must contain the following:

“(4) A statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, to be provided to the child, or on behalf of the child, and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided to enable the child—...” [emphasis added]

IDEA, Sec. 300.320(a)(4)
We start with evidence-based, instructional practices that are FAIR.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feasible</th>
<th>Delivery is feasible given the child’s circumstances and school context.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acceptable</td>
<td>Acceptable for impacted stakeholders, including IEP team, teachers, student, and families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impactful</td>
<td>Evidence that it produced positive results on desired outcomes, strength of the effects, and amount of evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant</td>
<td>Research demonstrates impacts in similar setting and with children with similar characteristics (age/grade, cultural, needs, socioeconomic, unique circumstances).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Initial programming should include known evidenced-based practices for teaching SWDs based on needs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of SDI</th>
<th>What are example evidence-based examples across disability categories?</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Content**     | • Social behaviors, communication, or language skills  
                    • Five big ideas of reading (knowledge and strategies)  
                    • Cognitive and metacognitive strategies  
                    • Math language, math calculation, word problems, fractions, number sense  
                    • Functional life skills, vocational skills, or adapted physical ed  
                    • Handwriting, spelling, sentence construction, typing, and word processing |
| **Methodology** | • Systematic, explicit instruction delivered in small groups or 1:1; co-teaching  
                    • Timed activities to build fluency  
                    • Concrete and semi-concrete representations and number lines  
                    • Scaffolding, repeated reading, peer-assisted learning strategies  
                    • Use of instructional technology or computer-based teaching |
| **Delivery of Instruction** | • *Where*: Special classroom, general education classroom, communicate based  
                         • *Who*: Content or behavioral specialist, special education teacher, or related service provider  
                         • *When*: Providing 10-30 more practice opportunities distributed across the day; 30-45 minutes daily |
FAPE Depends on Fidelity

The effectiveness of SDI depends on the extent to which educators implement the SDI content, methodology, and delivery with fidelity.

https://intensiveintervention.org/resource/five-elements-fidelity
Differences Between SDI and Tiered Interventions

• **Timing**
  – “While an intervention may be delivered over the course of a few weeks, SDI is usually provided over the course of a school year.”

• **Depth**
  – Intervention’s delivery is designed for a certain level of frequency, duration, and intensity, but SDI is delivered above the levels at which the intervention was designed to be delivered.

• **Individualization**
  – “While an intervention may be delivered to a small group of students in accordance with how it was designed, SDI is delivered to meet the unique needs of one student”
  – “SDI should be directed towards an annual goal that is appropriate in light of a student’s individual circumstances.”

Laying the Foundation for Using DBI

STEP 2: Use the IEP to develop a progress monitoring plan for reporting progress and guiding instructional decision making.
Remember...

**Monitoring progress** is not the same as **progress monitoring.**

### Monitoring Progress
- Can occur daily
- Occurs during instruction
- Provides data for immediate, real-time instructional decisions
- Aligns with HLPs (e.g., interpreting student thinking)
- Often informal, unstandardized
- Used for ALL students
- Uses formative assessments, questioning, providing feedback, and similar strategies.

### Progress Monitoring
- Standardized delivery
- Requires valid and reliable tools
- Frequency depends on intensity of instruction
- Requires ongoing data (i.e., 4-6 data points) for valid interpretation
- Used for entitlement decisions
- Requires graphed data
- Used for students verified as at-risk (~20-25%)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Progress Monitor (PM) Testing Frequency</th>
<th><strong>Probable strength of PM data’s ability to reliably inform instruction and decision making</strong></th>
<th>R-CBM Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After 4 week period</td>
<td>After 6 week period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2x/week</td>
<td><strong>Good</strong></td>
<td><strong>Excellent</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x/week</td>
<td><strong>Fair</strong></td>
<td><strong>Fair</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every ~10 days</td>
<td><strong>Poor</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Every 2 weeks</td>
<td><strong>Poor</strong></td>
<td><strong>Poor</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Every 3 weeks</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td><strong>Poor</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Every 4+ weeks</td>
<td>Poor</td>
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(Ardoin, & Christ, 2009; Fuchs, & Stecker, 2003; Good, Simmons, & Kame'enui, 2001)
Many SWDs will respond to the initial delivery of high-quality SDI aligned to the needs resulting from the disability.
For some SWDs, the initial design of SDI will not be adequate.
STEP 3: Use informal diagnostic data to develop a **hypothesis** about WHY the student is not responding.
What should be considered when developing a hypothesis?

• Instructional Design (Content and Methodology)
• Intervention Delivery/Fidelity
• Learner Needs and Circumstances

• Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity Dimensions—Refining the Hypothesis
Elements of Fidelity

The effectiveness of SDI depends on the extent to which educators implement the selected adaptations for instructional content, methodology, and delivery with fidelity.

https://intensiveintervention.org/resource/five-elements-fidelity
Using Diagnostic Data to Develop Hypothesis to Guide Adaptations

• Teacher reviews classroom assessment data and conducts observations of her learning behavior. Behavior observations suggest that the student struggles to master skills as quickly as her same age peers and needs more practice opportunities than her peers.

• Hypothesis: If the student is provided additional opportunities of direct instruction, feedback, and practice on target skills, then he/she would move to mastery of these skills more quickly.

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Specially design the instruction to meet the unique needs...

STEP 4: Adapt the program content, methodology, or delivery to address the hypothesis.
Using Diagnostic Data to Develop Hypothesis to Guide Adaptations

Teacher reviews classroom assessment data and conducts observations of her learning behavior. Behavior observations suggest that the student struggles to master skills as quickly as her same age peers and needs more practice opportunities than her peers.

*Hypothesis:* If the student is provided additional opportunities of direct instruction, feedback, and practice on target skills, then he would move to mastery of these skills more quickly.

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Diagnostic data indicated the student has **difficulty applying decoding strategies to words with short and long vowels**, especially ‘i’ and ‘e’.

**Hypothesis:** If Kelsey is provided explicit instruction in decoding short and long vowels, **then** she will improve her decoding and oral reading fluency.

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Using Data to Intensify the Intervention

- Fidelity and observation data indicate that Kelsey is becoming more frustrated and less engaged in the intervention.

- Hypothesis: If Kelsey was more engaged and able to control her frustration, then she would benefit more from the academic instruction.

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STEP 5: Monitor the student’s response to the SDI (adaptations) through ongoing PM
Documenting progress resulting from adaptations

Initial SDI Phase Line

Additional Adaptions Phase Line
DBI is an ongoing process based on student responsiveness to the SDI.
The development of SDI is an ongoing process.
Tools to Facilitate Efficient and Timely Problem-Solving Meetings

- Facilitator Guides
- Participant Guides
- Note-Taking Resources

Visit [www.intensiveintervention.org](http://www.intensiveintervention.org) to access.
Candid Conversations: MTSS and Special Education
Free Tools and Resources to Support Teaming

- [https://intensiveintervention.org/implementation-intervention/data-teaming](https://intensiveintervention.org/implementation-intervention/data-teaming)
Introducing the PROGRESS Center

The PROGRESS Center provides information, resources, tools, and technical assistance services to support local educators in developing and implementing high-quality educational programs that enable children with disabilities to make progress and meet challenging goals, consistent with *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District* (2017).

**HOW WILL WE HELP IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES?**

- **Share current research, policies, guidance, success stories, and experiences from students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders.**
- **Partner with selected local educators to develop and implement high-quality educational programs.**
- **Provide tools, resources, and training materials for ALL educators, leaders, and families.**

Visit us at [www.promotingPROGRESS.org](http://www.promotingPROGRESS.org) to learn more!
Thank You!

Tessie Rose Bailey, PhD

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Director, PROGRESS Center (www.promotingPROGRESS.org)
Advisor, National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII; www.intensiveintervention.org)
Principal Consultant, National Center on Systemic Improvement (NCSI; https://ncsi.wested.org/)

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Session Feedback

Thank you for attending this session! Please take a moment to complete the training evaluation.
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MTSS Website: www.gadoe.org/mtss
How to Locate MTSS Professional Learning

Step 1

On the GaDOE Home page, click this banner.
How to Locate MTSS Professional Learning

Step 2

On the Professional Learning Opportunities page, click this red box.
How to Locate MTSS Professional Learning

Step 3

On the Professional Learning Events page, use these filters.

- **DOE Office:** Whole Child Supports and Strategic Partnerships
- **Topic:** MTSS
Join the GaDOE Community

An online platform developed to facilitate collaboration and our ongoing efforts to provide the services and supports necessary to ensure all students across Georgia have what they need to be successful. This is a place where GaDOE teams, school and district staff, RESAs, and other partners within the state can interact to share important information, discuss ongoing work, and share success stories across agencies.
Join Georgia’s MTSS Group

Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students – MTSS

Public • Group • Active 3 hours ago

+ Join Group
Engage with Us!

- Comment in the Feed.
- Reflect on a course or conference learning in the Discussion forum.
- Share resources (including photos and documents).
- Reply to a Discussion topic.
Online Modules

Access Georgia Learns through SLDS

Georgia’s MTSS Overview
Georgia’s MTSS: Progress Monitoring
Georgia’s MTSS Screening

Additional modules coming soon!
• Provides Resources for Teachers
• Promotes Teacher Voice and Professional Growth
• Helps Preserve and Protect Time
Instructional Support for New and Veteran Teachers

- Multiple Modalities of Support
- Teaching Expectations:
  - Podcast
  - Digital Learning Plans
  - Let's Learn GA Video
35,450+ Downloads

Checking In:
Getting to Know Each Individual Student

Featuring
Tabitha Purvis
5th Grade Math Teacher
Columbia County School District

Listen In During Your Commute

Highlight Reel

## Podcast Discussion Questions

### Guided Discussion Questions for Each Podcast Episode

1. **How can we include student voice and participation in the development of our classroom expectations?**

2. **What are some ways we can build in classroom routines to minimize disruptions? (e.g., hand signals, light signal for voice levels)**

3. **What are the key times during the school year when we need to schedule time to reteach the expectations?**
K-12 Digital Learning Plans


Over 400 Available!
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- PE & Health
- English Language Arts
- Science
- Social Studies
- Climate

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Nominate an Outstanding Teacher Today!

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