

2019 MTSS Infrastructure Webinar

[00:00:00] Hello and welcome to the MTSS Infrastructure webinar. This webinar is being hosted by Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students at the Georgia Department of Education. This webinar is appropriate for both district and school level personnel and whenever possible we highly recommend that you watch this webinar with MTSS teams so you can have rich discussion around the infrastructure in your setting.

[00:00:29] In this webinar, we'll be talking about a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) framework. We will take some time to review that framework, in general, and then we'll dive specifically into the essential component of infrastructure. We'll talk about the nine sub-components of infrastructure. And there will be some time, as well, to review the infrastructure section in the Fidelity of Implementation Rubric so that you can self assess your level of implementation and identify some next steps for your district or school.

[00:01:00] At the end of this webinar, participants will (1) be able to discuss reasons why infrastructure is a critical component of MTSS, (2) have a greater understanding of the nine sub-components of infrastructure, (3) be able to determine common barriers to MTSS implementation, (4) have tips and tools to strengthen and refine the infrastructure in your setting, (5) have time to self-assess your district and/or school on the infrastructure component using the Fidelity of Implementation Rubric and (6) identify some next steps in your MTSS implementation plan.

[00:01:39] Before we talk specifically about infrastructure, look at the green circle in this graphic. Screening, Progress Monitoring, Data-based Decision Making, Multi-Level Prevention and Infrastructure - our five essential components in the MTSS framework - are integrated into Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement (which is the graphic you see on the right-hand side of the slide). Of the 5 essential components - screening, progress monitoring, Data-based Decision Making, Multi-level Prevention System and infrastructure - we'll be talking about Infrastructure in this webinar. The 5 essential components of our MTSS framework are embedded in all five systems of Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement - Coherent Instruction, Professional Capacity, Supportive Learning Environment, Family and Community Engagement, and Effective

Leadership. The 5 essential components of MTSS, also support Georgia's continuous improvement [problem-solving] process (which can be seen in the green arrows that surround the orange circle in Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement - the graphic on the right-hand side of the slide). For example, screening, one of the components of MTSS, is one of the ways that we identify our needs, one of the steps in Georgia's continuous improvement process. Progress monitoring, another essential component of MTSS, is one of the ways that we examine progress, which is another step in Georgia's problem-solving process. So our MTSS framework, which includes five essential components, really is embedded and integrated into Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement. And of course, the integration of the MTSS framework into Georgia's System of Continuous Improvement allows us to support the needs of the whole child - which is what all of this work is about.

[00:02:51] So here is Georgia's MTSS graphic. Georgia's graphic, which includes the five essential components, is aligned to the national MTSS framework/graphic. Look at the graphic on the slide and specifically, the rings at the top of the graphic. Notice the purple circle on the far left - Screening. On the far right, you'll see a purple circle with Progress Monitoring. At the bottom of the rings, you see Multi-level Prevention System. In the center of the rings you'll see Data-based Decision Making. The three outer components - Screening, Progress Monitoring and Multi-level Prevention System - require and are necessary parts of Data-based Decision Making and that's why you see arrows travelling in both directions. Should you have Screening, Progress Monitoring, and a Multi-level Prevention System in place but you don't have Data-based Decision Making in place, then technically, MTSS is not being fully implemented. Data-based Decision Making is a critical component. Within the rings at the top of the graphic, you'll notice an inner gray ring. In this inner gray ring, you'll see the phrase culturally responsive which means that the screening tools, progress monitoring tools, even our core instruction and interventions and our data-based decision making protocols, should be culturally responsive. Each component should take into consideration the students and families that we serve. In that same ring - the inner gray ring - you'll see the phrase evidence-based. Each of the components [the process, the tools we use, the type of instruction etc.] must be evidence-based. If we implement all these components in a cohesive model of MTSS, we expect student outcomes to be improved, which is seen in the darker gray outer ring. At the base of the rings, is Infrastructure, which is what we are focusing on during this webinar. Georgia added the essential component of district

and school infrastructure. Again, there are nine sub-components of Infrastructure, which I will go into, but Infrastructure is really the foundation of this framework. It's very hard to implement the other essential components if you don't have the infrastructure in place to support it. So that's why we are going to spend some time on that [Infrastructure] today.

[00:04:46] So briefly I'd like you to take a moment to read the national definition. You're welcome to pause the webinar and do that. This is the definition that Georgia has adopted for MTSS.

[00:05:02] Once you've read the definition, go ahead and pause the webinar. Talk for about 30 seconds with your team about the definition. What do you notice in the definition? What jumps out at you as critical components of the definition? Hopefully, you have taken a few minutes to read and discuss the definition with your team. One of the things that may have jumped out at you [for example] may include: This is a school-wide Multi-level Prevention System. The word prevention is really critical. This is not a pre-referral process for special education but rather it is a prevention system that is multi-level. Another word or phrase that may have caught your attention is the integration of assessment and intervention within a school-wide system.

[00:05:52] So here's what I'd like you to do. Now that we've looked at the framework itself and you've had a moment to discuss the definition with your team, go ahead and pause the webinar again. For just a minute or two, have a conversation with the person next to you or with your team as a whole. Knowing what you know about MTSS so far, how does your role support the MTSS framework? So whatever work you're currently doing, whatever position you are currently in, how do you support the MTSS framework? Pause the webinar and take a minute or two to discuss that question.

[00:06:30] So we know what MTSS is. We've looked at the definition. We've looked at the framework and the five essential components. You discussed how your role fits into it. So what's the big deal about it [MTSS]? Why should this really matter? Well, it turns out that when a tiered system of supports is implemented with fidelity and fidelity is a keyword, it really really works. MTSS has a huge effect size. In fact, the latest research shows that the effect sizes is 1.29 - which is very large. We can expect and we see improved outcomes in decreased expulsion, behavior referrals, and suspension rates. We see academic improvement that is sustained over time. We see an increase in on-

time graduation and we also see positive effects on the system as a whole. So systems that are implementing MTSS with fidelity, actually see an increase in their instructional and planning time. They actually use their resources and staff more efficiently. We see a decrease in inappropriate referrals to special education and placement rates. We see a reduction in the amount of time that students receive special education services and we also see a reduction in student grade retention.

[00:07:42] So in a nutshell what is MTSS. Well, it's a framework. It's not a program or a curriculum or a one-size-fits-all prescription. It's a framework. It's got five essential components, which we've looked at. It's data driven and that's absolutely critical. It includes a team approach, meaning it must be collaborative. There's no way that one person can do this work alone. MTSS, very importantly, supports all kids in learning. It's about every single student in your district or your school. It's not just for certain groups of students. And really MTSS is considered best practice for teaching and learning.

[00:08:24] Now we get a good number of questions about MTSS, RTI, SST - how they fit together, how they're different. So we want to take some time to really look at how MTSS, RTI and SST align. Look at the graphic on the left hand side of the slide, you'll see that MTSS, or multi-tiered system of support, is the umbrella. And underneath the MTSS umbrella, we have things like PBIS, or Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports. PBIS is a tiered system of supports, specifically for behavior, which we know, of course, impacts academics as well. Response to Intervention (RTI) is a process - it's one process within MTSS. So it [RTI] fits underneath that umbrella. Same with our students support team or SST. That's a team that follows a process and is one piece of MTSS. So it falls under the MTSS umbrella. Things like student mental health or wraparound services would also fall under a tiered system of supports. Depending on the needs of our students and communities, those supports [supports to address student mental health or provide wrap around services] could be tiered to meet each individual student or each individual's families need. So those would also fall under the umbrella of MTSS. And of course, this is not a comprehensive list. There are likely other supports and services in your district or school that would fit under the umbrella of MTSS. Another way to see the relationship between MTSS, SST and RTI is to do the following: (1) take your arms and join your hands over your head to make a big circle. This circle represents MTSS. It's a system. Right? It's a big overarching framework. (2) Now take your pointer finger and your thumb and touch them together to make a small

circle. This smaller circle represents RTI or SST. This smaller circle represents one process or one team that fits within the larger circle, or larger system or larger framework of MTSS.

[00:10:25] So here you see definitions of MTSS, Response to Intervention or RTI and Student Support Team or SST. And the question I pose is "Are these terms synonymous?" And without even reading the definitions, just based on what we discussed in the previous slide, you should understand that these [terms] are not the same. They're certainly related and they support one another, but they are not the same thing. So MTSS is a system, you see that in bold, it is a system or framework that integrates assessment and intervention within a school-wide, multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and reduce behavioral problems. And, just as we said earlier when we looked at the definition, it also promotes systems alignment to increase efficiency and effectiveness of resources. RTI is a process. So again picture that umbrella or the big circle you made with your arms and the little circle you made with your fingers. RTI is one process that fits within MTSS and it's a process in which schools identify students who are at risk for poor learning outcomes. They monitor their progress. They provide evidence-based interventions and they adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness. And they can also identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities through this process. And our Student Support Team (SST) is an interdisciplinary team or group. They also use a systematic process to address learning and/or behavior problems for students, K-12, in a school. And remember, SST is unique to Georgia. So are these three terms synonymous? No, they're not the same thing but they certainly play together. MTSS is the system or the umbrella under which the process of RTI and the Student Support Team sit.

[00:12:18] So in a nutshell, RTI and SST are still both part of the MTSS framework. I also want to remind you - we won't spend time on it today during this webinar- but Georgia's pyramid, Georgia's Multi-level Prevention System pyramid, is now composed of only three tiers. RTI is one process and it's embedded in the essential components of MTSS. Under the MTSS framework, SST will be initiated at Tier 3.

[00:12:54] So now that we've taken some time to review the MTSS framework, and look at the differences and similarities between MTSS, RTI and SST, let's jump into infrastructure, which really is the topic, we want to discuss today.

[00:13:11] So the essential component of Infrastructure refers to the knowledge, resources and organizational structures necessary to operationalize the components of the framework into a unified system to meet the established goals. Infrastructure is the way that we operationalize the essential components. We have the essential components of MTSS [and] infrastructure is the foundational piece that lets us actually do them. So there are nine sub-components, which you see listed on the screen, and we will spend time going through each one of these in this webinar. You'll notice that four of the sub-components are highlighted in green or are bolded and in green font. You see - Leadership, Professional Learning, Family and Community Engagement and Effective Teaming. Those four are highlighted because Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students or MTSS in Georgia is emphasizing or focusing on these particular sub-components of infrastructure. It doesn't mean that the other sub-components are not equally important or they don't exist. These are the four that Georgia is currently focusing on.

[00:14:17] So let's look at each of the nine sub-components - starting with prevention focus. So we know that MTSS is a multi-level framework that is aimed at improving outcomes for all students. And one of the ways that we keep prevention as our focus is by providing immediate support to students who are at risk for poor learning and/or behavior outcome. We do this to prevent the need for more intensive supports or interventions or services later down the road. And again remember MTSS is not a gateway to special education. The data that we gather by implementing the system might assist us in making special education decisions. But MTSS is not a pre-referral process. We're all about prevention - getting kids what they need in an immediate and timely manner to hopefully prevent the need for more intensive supports down the road.

[00:15:10] The second sub-component of infrastructure is district and school leadership. So we want to make sure that our leadership, at all levels, are communicating a mission and vision to staff that ensures effective implementation of the framework. So leaders, of this work, paint a picture of what the mission and vision will be and communicate the mission and vision to get everyone on the same page. Leaders proactively support and

ensure that the other sub-components of infrastructure are in place. Oftentimes it's the leaders, at the district or school level, who have the final say and input on things like schedules, allocation of resources, professional learning or how teaming occurs. So we need to make sure that our leaders are really being proactive about supporting the nine sub-components to ensure effective MTSS implementation. We want leaders to analyze their data so they can remove barriers at the district and school level and ensure equity at all levels of the system. And then of course we want our leaders to be implementing a problem solving model to support continuous school and district improvement.

[00:16:17] The next sub-component of infrastructure is professional learning. So within MTSS, professional development or professional learning is institutionalized and structured. We want to make sure that there are opportunities for our teachers and for our leaders to continuously examine, reflect upon, and improve their instructional practice, their data-based decision making, and their actual delivery of interventions. And of course we want to make sure that our professional learning is ongoing and that it follows the coaching cycle. We don't have a one-time training, send everyone off to try to implement and never follow back-up. We use the coaching cycle to ensure that what teachers and leaders learn actually translates into practice and changes behavior.

[00:17:11] Here are some considerations for professional learning (PL). Of course, the needs of every district and school will be different. But when thinking about implementation of MTSS and the essential component of Infrastructure, you may need to provide professional learning to implement and sustain MTSS. Right? Getting that buy-in to the What and the Why of MTSS. And making sure everyone - from your teachers, to your leaders, to your parents - have a common understanding and support of your MTSS framework. You might need some professional learning around Instructional Practice - perhaps PL around practices that are culturally and linguistically responsiveness or high leverage practices, especially if Tier 1 is a focus of yours. Perhaps, your district or schools need PL around evidence-based practices and/or evidence-based interventions to address content specific or age specific needs. You may need some professional learning in terms of instructional supports to address the needs of specific groups of students like students with disabilities, English learners, or gifted and talented students. There might need to be some professional learning around Data-based Decision Making. It could be on DBI, data-based individualization, which is the process that we use when we're talking about students receiving Tier 3 support.

You might need to have some professional learning around effective teaming and what that looks like in your setting to achieve your desired outcomes. There may be some need for PL around the delivery of the interventions, themselves. Perhaps you're trying to put in place some social/emotional or behavioral support. There might even be some PL around that. Or again, that coaching cycle we talked about. The coaching and technical assistance that helps transition our knowledge to our practice, so we actually change our behavior as educators.

[00:18:52] The next sub-component of infrastructure is schedules. We want to make sure that school-wide schedules are aligned to support multiple levels of intervention based on the needs of our student. Our schedule should reflect what our students need. That also means that teachers are given time to plan and implement effective instruction and evidence-based practices across all three tiers. We want to make sure that we have time reserved and protected to implement professional learning communities, PLCs, that support analyzing data and discussing the needs of all students. Because remember MTSS is about all kids. And of course, we want to make sure we have time built into our schedule - we have additional time built into our schedule for the interventions themselves. Students are not missing core instruction/primary tier prevention to receive intervention.

[00:19:48] The next sub-component is resources. When we talk about resources, we're really talking about things like time, personnel and funding. We want to make sure that those things are adequately and equitably allocated to support MTSS implementation. So when we think about how we're allocating our time, "Are we making sure that we have adequate and equitable access to professional learning opportunities at the district and school level? Are we giving adequate time to implement the interventions and have those conversations around Data-based Decision Making? Do we have personnel in place, personnel that we need, in order to implement a multi tiered system of supports with fidelity? In terms of funding, Do we have what we need to buy things like universal screening tools or buy the actual interventions or the progress monitoring tools? Is the data system that we're using comprehensive, efficient, and user-friendly so that we can make decisions at all levels of the system? And then, this is a big one, in terms of resources, Do we have written procedures and protocols in place such as procedures and protocols for administering assessments? How we operate our system? Do we have our practice, our procedures or our protocols written down so that we are

consistent? Are our procedures or protocols implemented with fidelity every single time? Do we have written procedures and protocols that guide our data-based decision making process? And again, are applying our decision making rules, e.g. rules about cut scores or things like that, each and every time.

[00:21:19] The next sub-component infrastructure is family and community engagement. So we want to make sure, when implementing MTSS, that we have shared a description of our framework with our families and community. We want to make sure that parents understand what MTSS is and their role in MTSS. We want to have a coherent mechanism in place to update families on the progress of their child if their child is receiving secondary or tertiary level interventions. We want parents to be involved. Right? We want families to be involved during decision making about interventions and the progress their child is making with intervention. We want to support student success by having effective collaboration and having a welcoming and culturally and linguistically responsive environment. We've talked a couple of times about the importance of being culturally and linguistically responsive but [ask yourselves] is what we're doing reflective of the needs of our families, our students, and our communities? And I want to point out [to you] that we have specific strategies around family and community engagement, as it pertains to MTSS, on our web page. You can get to our web page at www.gadoe.org/MTSS. From our web page, you can download our family and community engagement fact sheet, which list specific strategies for engaging families and communities in this work.

[00:22:42] The next sub-component is communication with and involvement of all staff. So have we provided our staff with a description of our implementation plan for MTSS and those written protocols and procedures for how we make decisions with our data. Do we have a system in place to make sure that all staff stay informed? Do we have structured time for teacher teams to collaborate frequently and regularly? And this one is tricky, but important - do we have a communication loop in place to monitor the extent to which the intervention is helping the student transfer the skills that they have learned [during intervention] to other formats and contexts. So when a child is receiving intervention in a setting outside or perhaps in the general education setting - do we know whether or not the skills that they're learning from the intervention, are actually helping them access or participate in the core curriculum/core instruction? Do we have a mechanism in place to know if that is happening?

[00:23:45] The next sub-component of infrastructure is effective teaming. We want to have diverse school and district level teams. We want to have leadership represented on the district and school level team. We want to have processes to make sure that our teams meet regularly. Our team members know what their purpose is and that everyone has a voice. We want to have structures and written processes in place to guide how we, as a team, make decisions with our data. We want to make sure we have created a system of aligned teams so that we can streamline communication from the district level down to the student level and back. And we want to use or adapt tools we already have in place to standardized meeting procedures. In other words, we don't need to start something totally different. Let's take a look at what we already have in place and make it work for us in terms of effective teaming in MTSS.

[00:24:41] The last sub-component of infrastructure is cultural and linguistic responsiveness. And there are really two pieces to this: (1) we want our staff to be able to articulate the information and factors that they consider when adopting or choosing culturally and linguistically relevant instructional practices, assessments, and interventions. And (2) do staff implement instructional practices, assessments, and interventions in a manner that is culturally and linguistically responsive to the needs of their students and families. So are we considering cultural and linguistic needs when we both adopt and when we implement?

[00:25:24] So what I would like for you to do now is actually take a minute to pull up the Fidelity of Implementation Rubric. On the slide, you see the steps listed and I'll show you how to do it in just a minute. Step one: go to www.gadoe.org/MTSS and scroll down the web page (about the middle of the page) to Georgia's MTSS Implementation Step-by-Step Guidance. If you're currently working with or watching this webinar with a school MTSS team, you will want to pull up the School Fidelity of Implementation Rubric. If you're watching this webinar with a district level team or you're a district leader, you'll want to pull up the District Fidelity of Implementation Rubric. And when you click on the link, the Rubric should open automatically. So let me take a minute to show you how - to demonstrate how to get there.

[00:26:18] [On the screen is a new tab in Chrome and the trainer has positioned the pointer in the navigation bar (where you type URLs)] So here, I'm going to go ahead and

type into my internet browser, toolbar or search bar - www.gadoe.org/MTSS. This will take me straight to the MTSS web page. On our web page, you can see all of our resources that are readily available to you. I know that most of you have been on this web page before. On this web page, you can find our contact information and view a great little video about MTSS in Georgia. You can join our network of professionals, by clicking "register". (Find register under the video in the sentence, "Please join our network of professionals by clicking register".) By registering, you will ensure that you will receive our e-mails or registration links and things like that. Our newsletters are posted. Keep scrolling down the page until you see Georgia's MTSS Implementation Step-by-Step Guidance. Under that header, you will see the School Fidelity of Implementation Rubric and the District Fidelity of Implementation Rubric. In just a moment, I'm going to ask you to pause the webinar and pull up whichever Rubric applies to you. Again if you're watching with a school team, go ahead and pull up the school rubric. If you're watching the webinar with the district team, go ahead and pull up the district rubric.

[00:27:30] Let me give you instructions for this reflection activity so you can pause the webinar and complete the activity with your team. First, you'll want to pull up the Rubric that we just talked about. And then, using that Rubric, I want you to flip to the section in the Rubric on Infrastructure. You should see the nine sub-components of Infrastructure. Next, I want you to self assess where you are at as a school or district. Look at all nine sub-components and see where you land [select a rating that best describes your district or school]. Once you've done that [selected a rating that best describes your district or school], we want you to identify three next steps that would align with the rating you selected on the Rubric. So there's two pieces to this - once you've pulled up that Rubric, you're going to go through each of the nine sub-components of infrastructure and assess your school or district's level of implementation. And then you'll identify three next steps that would help you move the work forward. What would be logical next steps for you to work on in terms of infrastructure and MTSS implementation. So go ahead and pause the webinar, pull up that Rubric, self assess and write down your three next steps. Hopefully you've had an opportunity to complete that self reflection activity or that self-assessment activity and identify next steps for your school or district.

[00:28:47] As we wrap up this webinar, we want to leave you with this final thought. Read this quote. "You can't build a great building on a weak foundation. You must have a solid foundation, if you're going to have a strong superstructure." And the question is, How does this quote relate to the sub-component of infrastructure in MTSS? As we discussed, at the beginning of the webinar, infrastructure is the foundation for all the other components of MTSS. It's very hard to implement Screening, Progress Monitoring, a Multi-level Prevention System, and Data-based Decision Making with fidelity, if you don't have a solid foundation. You need things like leadership, schedules, teaming and professional learning to be in place to support implementation of Screening, Progress Monitoring, Data-based Decision Making and Multi-level Prevention. Infrastructure is the foundation and it needs to be strong in order to have successful MTSS implementation.

[00:29:46] So these were the learning outcomes and hopefully, after this webinar, you are able to discuss why infrastructure matters. You have a greater understanding of the nine sub-components of Infrastructure. Hopefully, you've been able to identify some of the common implementation barriers in your school or district. You have learned some tips and received tools to strengthen your school or district infrastructure based on the self assessment you completed with the Fidelity of Implementation Rubric and the identified next steps.

[00:30:11] We would love for you to take a moment to evaluate this webinar. As many of you know we collect training data because we are funded by the State Personnel Development Grant. We have outside evaluators who check-in on how we're doing and make sure that the services and supports we provide to you are of very high quality. To complete the training evaluation, you can either scan the QR code that's on the slide with your phone or you can type in the link that you see at the bottom of the slide. The training evaluation is digital and very brief. We would really appreciate you taking the time to complete the training evaluation for us.

[00:30:44] If you need more information or want to contact us, you can get to our web site by typing into your navigation bar, www.gadoe.org/TieredSystemofSupports or www.gadoe.org/MTSS. You'll find lots of the things we talked about during this webinar. And this webinar will be posted on that web page with all of our fact sheets or our one-pagers for each of the essential components. We've also posted all of our professional

learning units, which have been designed around the essential components. All of the presentations and resources you find on our web page are available for your use and at no cost. From our web site, you can subscribe to our newsletter or find links to register for any training that we have upcoming. Our web site is a great resource for you. There's a wealth of information on it and we hope that you will use it.

[00:31:32] We would also love for you to connect with us. We are on Twitter and we've got a YouTube channel, where we post videos. You can get to our YouTube channel by using the QR code on the slide at the bottom on the right-hand side. This QR code, the QR code on the slide at the top of the page on the left-hand side, will take you directly to the MTSS web page, the web page I showed you earlier and on this web page, you can sign up to join Georgia's network of MTSS professionals. By signing up, it will ensure that you are included in our email distribution list. You'll receive things like our newsletter. You'll receive first notice when we set up a registration link for an upcoming training event. It's a great way to stay tapped into what's going on with MTSS in Georgia.

[00:32:08] If you have any questions after this webinar, you can get our contact information from the web site that I just showed you. And if you're a school or district that's currently in one of our MTSS cohorts, you know that you can always reach out directly to your regional coach. Please know, you can reach out to any of us and we would be happy to assist you in whatever way we can. We're really committed to providing universal support for MTSS implementation to the entire state of Georgia. So please don't hesitate to reach out if we can ever assist you.

[00:32:42] I thank you for your time in watching this webinar. And again if you have any questions please don't hesitate to reach out to us.