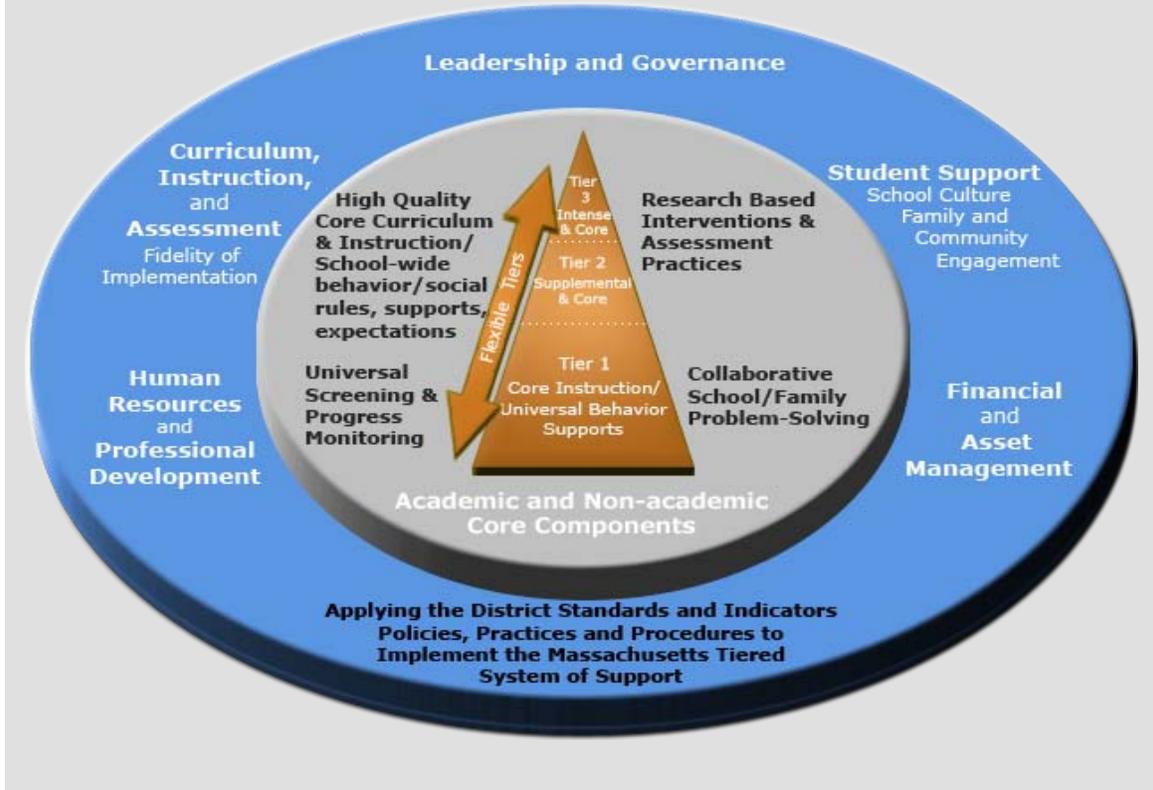


# The Massachusetts Tiered System of Support



## Chapter 1: Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Overview

Massachusetts has developed a blueprint outlining a single system of supports that is responsive to the academic and non-academic needs of all students. This blueprint, the Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (MTSS), provides a framework for school improvement that focuses on system structures and supports across the district, school, and classroom to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are academically advanced. It guides both the provision of high-quality core educational experiences in a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and academic and/or non-academic targeted interventions/supports for students who experience difficulties and for students who have already demonstrated mastery of the concept and skills being taught.

Schools and districts are encouraged to work toward an integrated approach to support students' academic and social-emotional competencies. All students receive academic instruction and behavioral supports that include differentiation and extension activities and are guided by the three [Universal Design for](#)



Learning principles (multiple means of representation, multiple means of action and expressions, and multiple means of engagement).

The MTSS blueprint describes the flexible tiers, academic and non-academic core components and school and district system of supports.

The flexible tiers represent a robust and responsive educational environment that provides students with a continuum of multiple supports to meet their needs. The tiers represent increasing intensity of academic and non-academic support and interventions. There is flexibility of the system and the programming to allow movement between the tiers (to both a more or less intensive type of support/intervention). To ensure that students eligible for special education services are able to access fully the system of tiered support, relevant information from their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) is to be incorporated into the design and implementation of instruction and assessments in all tiers.

The academic and non-academic core components of MTSS are:

- high-quality core curriculum and instruction implemented with fidelity; and
- research-based academic interventions and assessment practices; and
- research-based behavioral interventions and supports; and
- universal screening and progress-monitoring; and
- collaboration and communication between educators and parents.

The school and district system of supports align with the District Standards and Indicators and provide the structure needed to develop the policies, practices, and procedures to successfully implement MTSS.

The District Standards and Indicators are:

- Leadership and Governance
- Student Support (School Culture, Family and Community Engagement)
- Financial and Asset Management
- Human Resources and Professional Development
- Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (Fidelity of Implementation)

Developing this system of academic and non-academic support may represent a significant change for districts and schools—one that affects the entire school system and may require a long-term change process (of three or more years). Adhering to the blueprint is instrumental to the success of the tiered system of support.

