

Connecting the Dots: California MTSS and School Counseling

California's Multi-Tiered System of Support (CA MTSS) is a comprehensive framework that aligns academic, behavioral, social and emotional learning, and mental health supports in a fully integrated system of support for the benefit of all students. CA MTSS offers the potential to create needed systematic change through intentional design and redesign of services and supports to quickly identify and match to the needs of all students.



The evidence-based domains and features of the California MTSS framework provide opportunities for LEAs to strengthen school, family, and community partnerships while developing the whole child in the most inclusive, equitable learning environment thus closing the equity gaps for all students.

School Counselor Role in MTSS

School counselors are key to the successful implementation of MTSS (ASCA, 2018). They collaborate with stakeholders to plan, implement, evaluate, and improve school counseling supports at the Tier 1 (universal), Tier 2 (supplemental), and Tier 3 (intensified) levels. “While MTSS is focused on two areas (academic and behavioral), school counselors focus on three domains: academic, college/career, and social-emotional development” (Hatch, Triplett, Duarte, & Gomez, 2019). To align MTSS with the work of school counselors, a Multi-Tiered, Multi-Domain System of Supports (MTMDSS) can be utilized (see image).

Much like MTSS, the MTMDSS model organizes student instruction and intervention services into three tiers with the domains of academic, college/career, and social-emotional development. MTMDSS organizes a continuum of universal instruction, supplemental supports, and intensified interventions to meet students’ needs with the following goals: 1) ensuring all students receive developmentally appropriate instruction; 2) maximizing student achievement; and 3) increasing the social and behavioral competencies of students. School counselors use equitable, evidence-based practices, whole system engagement, and data-driven planning to align school counseling supports to the district's LCAP goals and school-level priorities.

For further study, please refer to these resources videos:

- Video: [MTSS Counselor Introduction](#) [5:42]
- Video: [Multi-Tiered System of Supports and the School Counselor](#) [2:53]
- Video: [Integrated Educational Framework](#) [1:19]
- Video: [Inclusive Policy Structure and Practice](#) [1:53]
- Video: [Family and Community Engagement](#) [2:03]
- Video: [Administrative Leadership](#) [2:18]



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TIER 3: Intensified Support

(for a FEW students)

Intensified school counseling interventions are designed to address emergency/crisis response events, or student needs that have not been met through Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports.

- These interventions are provided on a limited basis and, if unresolved, lead to referrals to outside services.
- This process involves short-term consultation and collaboration among teachers, families, support staff, administrators, and school counselors until the concern is resolved and/or referral to appropriate outside services can be identified and implemented.

TIER 2: Supplemental Support

(for SOME students)

Targeted, data-driven school counseling interventions are designed for students who: 1) exhibit barriers to learning; 2) are struggling to achieve academic success; and/or 3) are identified as deserving of additional supports due to equity/access barriers (i.e. foster youth, dual-language learners, etc.).

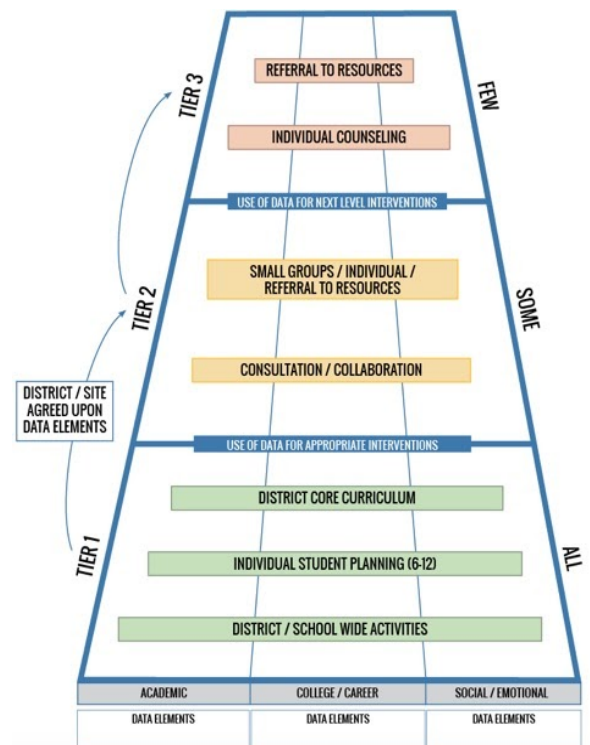
- Students are identified by pre-scheduled and predetermined data screening elements, such as attendance, behavior, achievement, and/or equity and access barriers.
- Tier 2 includes short term progress monitoring and collaboration among teachers, families, and the school counselor, until improvement and/or referral to appropriate services can be found and implemented.

TIER 1: Universal Support

(for ALL students)

The universal school counseling program includes the delivery of Tier 1 activities and services that all students receive from the school counselor, including:

- **Classroom instruction** across the three domains, that are standards aligned and competency-based, developmental in nature, preventative and proactive in design, and comprehensive in scope.
- **Individual student planning** (grades 6-12), which supports students in developing annual written plans to meet their secondary and post-secondary goals.
- **School-wide programs and activities**, which serve as extension opportunities for learning that build on classroom instruction. *Programs* tend to be ongoing throughout the school year and more systemic in nature (i.e. school-wide behavior expectations, transition programs, attendance programs), whereas *activities* are confined to a period of time (i.e. Mix It Up Day, Kindness Week, College Kick-Off Day).



3-Minute Animated Video:
vimeo.com/304246315

MTMDSS Planning Guide:
bit.ly/mtmdssplanning

Sources:

- American School Counselor Association (ASCA). (2018). The school counselor and multitiered system of supports. Position Statement. Retrieved from https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/PositionStatements/PS_MTSS.pdf
- Hatch, T., Triplett, W., Duarte, D., & Gomez, V. (2019). Hatching results for secondary school counseling: Implementing core curriculum, individual student planning, and other tier 1 activities. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin