Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Implementation Guide

3% to 5% of students → Tier III: Tertiary Level of Prevention – Intensive Intervention

SST →

15% of students → Tier II: Secondary Level of Prevention - Intervention

SWD, EL, Gifted

80% of students → Tier I: Primary Level of Prevention – Instruction/ Core Curriculum

Students receive services at all levels, depending on need.
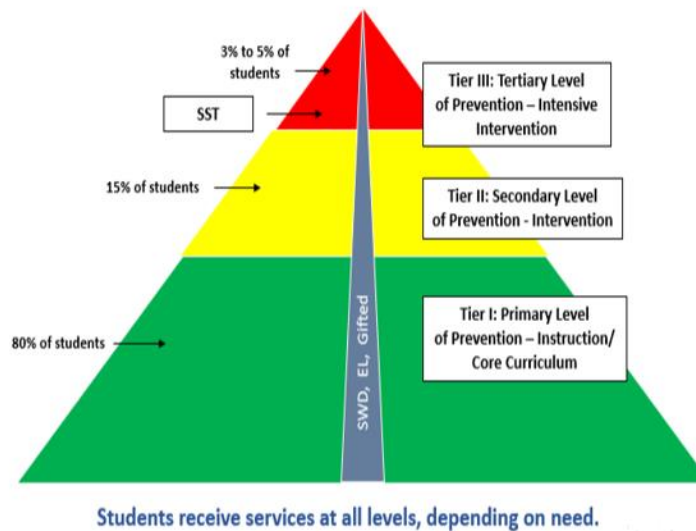
Forward

This manual is meant to serve as a practical guide for implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) with Response to Intervention (RTI) and their processes.

It is not intended to replace state law or supplant any federal or state laws, regulations, or requirements. In addition, nothing in this manual should be seen as having the force of law.

This manual should not be cited as law or as imposing any additional requirements or obligations outside the requirements of existing law. Dade County School System is required to adhere to the requirements of IDEA as codified in 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq., its regulations promulgated in 34 C.F.R Parts 300 and 301, and the rules of the State of Georgia promulgated by the State Board of Education. **Revised September 2023**

Infrastructure

Infrastructure is the organizational structure necessary to fully operate all components of Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students in a unified system to meet the established goals. Building the capacity to implement MTSS is crucial to being able to sustain the use of collaboration and data based decision making.

Key factors in capacity building include involving key people and leaders; building the school culture to support the practice; working to infuse collaborative inquiry into ongoing structures such as faculty meetings, curriculum committees, and PLCs; and making use of student data to inform actions and expectations for all staff.

In addition, the following components can support infrastructure in every school.

Leadership

Effective Teaming

Professional Learning

Family & Community Engagement

Dade County Schools MTSS Contacts

DCS System Contacts

Susan Reyes	Director of Special Programs
Chris Davis	Academics & Testing Coordinator

Elementary Schools

Davis Elementary	Jessica Howard, MTSS Coordinator
	Paige Kimball, SST Interventionist
Dade Elementary	Heath Johnson, MTSS Coordinator
	Ashlie Blalack, SST Interventionist

Middle School

Dade Middle	Michael Wilborn, MTSS Coordinator/SST Interventionist

High School

Dade County High	Vic Grider, MTSS Coordinator

<u>Data-Based Decision Making</u>

Data-Based Decision Making (DBDM) is a process for making informed decisions about instructional needs, the effectiveness of instruction, and level of intensity needed within a multi-level prevention system.

The data-based decision process consists of using data to identify needs of all students, selecting and implementing evidence-based practices and interventions, monitoring the progress of students' responsiveness to an intervention and making adjustments based on progress monitoring data, as needed.

At all levels and in all settings, the DBDM process incorporates at least the following four steps in a cyclical, recurring model to address prevention, early intervention, and intensive intervention:

Step 1: Problem Identification
What is the problem? How does the student's performance compare to benchmark level of performance and peers' level of performance?

Step 2: Problem Analysis
Why is the problem occurring? What would happen if_____ occurred? Can we validate our ideas?

Step 3: Intervention Design
What are we going to do about the problem? What will we teach? How will we teach it? Is instruction matched to the problem we identified?

Step 4: Response to Intervention
Is the instruction/intervention working? How do we know? Is academic and/or behavior performance improved? Are outcomes for all students equitable? Is the group's/student's response good, questionable, or poor? What are the next steps?

MTSS/SST teams are critical to the implementation of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports. MTSS teams in each school serve as the driving force for instructional decision making in the building.

Core Principles of Multi-Tiered System of Supports

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a "tiered system of supports that integrates assessment and intervention within a school-wide, multi-level prevention system to maximize

student achievement and reduce behavioral problems. MTSS promotes systems alignment to increase efficiency and effectiveness of resources" (Adopted from National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010).

The Five Essential Components of the MTSS framework
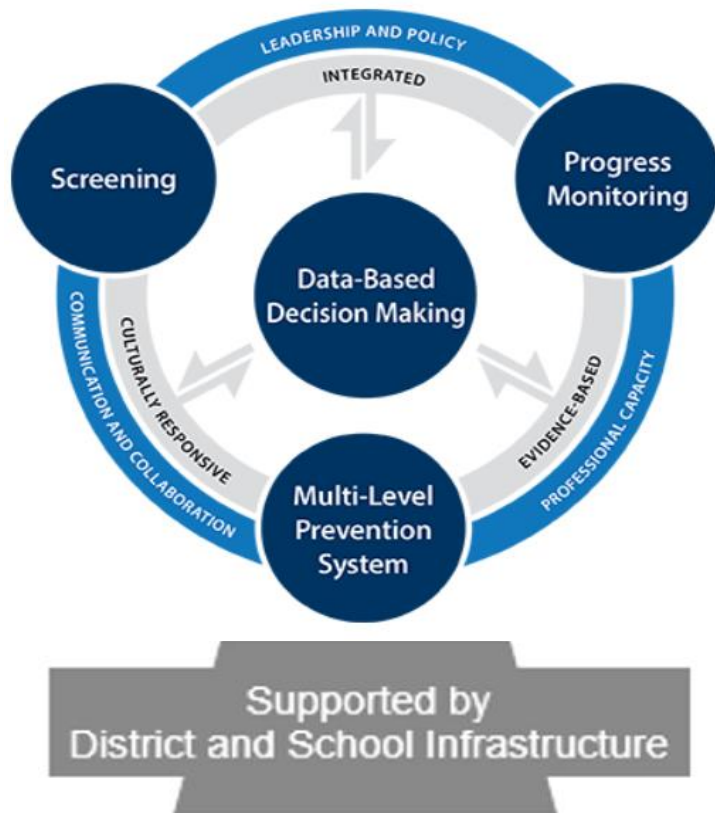
Screening

Progress Monitoring

Multi-Level Prevention System

Data Based Decision Making

Infrastructure

SCREENING

It is essential that district and school leadership have a universal screening system in place to accurately identify students in need of enrichment and acceleration and students at risk of poor learning outcomes or challenging behaviors.

PURPOSE	Identify students who are in need of enrichment/acceleration or who are at risk for poor learning and/or poor behavior outcomes and provide an indicator of system effectiveness.
FOCUS	ALL Students
TOOLS	Brief assessments that are valid and reliable and that demonstrate diagnostic accuracy for predicting learning potential or behavioral problems.
TIME FRAME	Administered more than one time per year (e.g., fall, winter, and spring)

UNIVERSAL SCREENING TOOL

Reading – NWEA MAP

Math – NWEA MAP

Social/Emotional Learning – Navigate360

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring tools should be valid, reliable, and evidence-based. Unlike universal screening, students are progress monitored at regular intervals based on the intensity of the tiered support provided. The data obtained from progress monitoring should help to determine if evidence-based instruction or interventions are meeting the needs of the whole child or if an adjustment is needed to boost student progress.

PURPOSE	Monitor students' response to secondary or tertiary instruction/intervention in order to estimate rates of improvement, identify students who are not demonstrating adequate progress, and compare the efficacy of different forms of academic and/or behavior instruction
FOCUS	Students identified who are in need of enrichment/acceleration or who are at risk for poor learning and behavioral outcomes
TOOLS	Brief assessments that are valid and reliable, and evidence-based (High schools may gather and use historical data in addition to other data sources.)
TIME FRAME	Administered at regular intervals (e.g., weekly, biweekly, or monthly)

Multi-Level Prevention System

A multi-level prevention system is a framework designed to provide support matched to student needs to maximize student achievement and reduce behavior concerns.

The framework focuses on the "what and how of instruction" and the provision of services and supports to students that meet their unique, whole-child needs.

Additionally, it includes three levels of intensity or prevention that includes high-quality core instruction, evidence-based practices and evidence-based interventions.

Tiers of Instruction:

- Are provided per each student's need
- Ensure that each student may master grade-level course standards and expectations
- Ensure that each student may progress successfully (on time, age appropriately) through PreK – 12 system

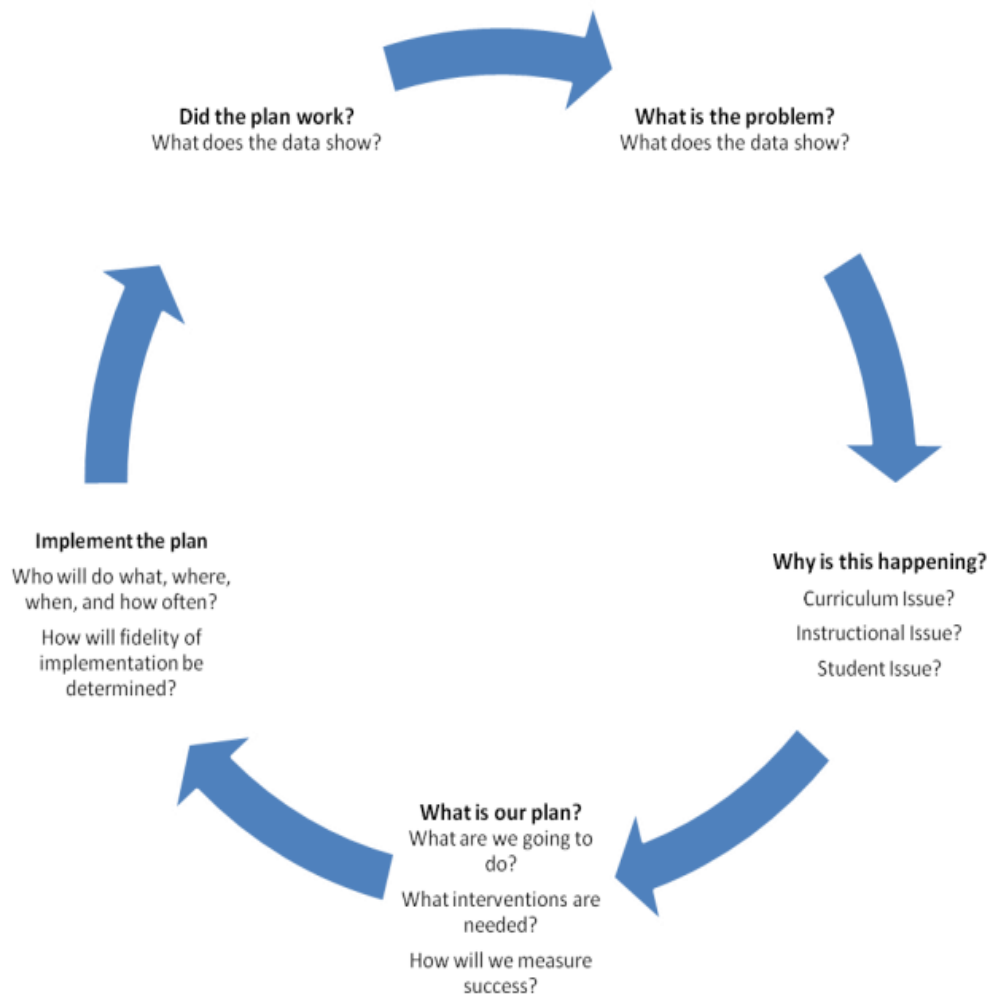**All students receive instruction within this tiered system:**

Tier 1: Primary Level of Prevention – Core (All students)

Tier 2: Secondary Level of Prevention – Supplemental (Some students)

Tier 3: Tertiary Level of Prevention – Intensive (Few students)

Problem Solving Model

The problem-solving model should occur at all tiers to ensure that educators are continuously using data to drive instructional decisions.

Did the plan work?
What does the data show?

What is the problem?
What does the data show?

Why is this happening?
Curriculum Issue?
Instructional Issue?
Student Issue?

What is our plan?
What are we going to do?
What interventions are needed?
How will we measure success?

Implement the plan
Who will do what, where, when, and how often?
How will fidelity of implementation be determined?

Tier 1: Core Support for All Students

Core instruction is provided to all students and is accessible and differentiated to support the full continuum of student needs.

Tier 1 is:

- Implemented through the district's core curriculum, researched based programs, and best practices, including High Leverage Practices (HLP's), aligned with state standards, and incorporates differentiated instruction.
- High quality teaching and school supports for positive behavior and academics that all students receive in all subjects and at all grade levels.
- Effective if approximately 75%-80% of students are successful because of core instruction, curriculum, and supports.

Tier 1 Data Collection Examples:
Benchmark Assessments
Universal Screening Tools
School-Wide Discipline Data

Tier 1 Core Intervention Examples:
Core Curriculum with Fidelity Differentiation
Positive Behavior Supports
School-Wide Behavior Plan

MTSS Process at Tier 1:
- Student is not "getting it"
- Provide DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION for 6-8 WEEKS
- Collect work samples
- Take baseline data
- If no progress, go to next step
- Tier 1 – collect data for 6-8 weeks using 2 data points

Remember when a Tier 1 problem is identified, it is important to first address the core instruction for academics or behavior. All students will benefit from improved Tier 1 strategies (e.g., highly effective teaching, strong and structured behavioral expectations. Far fewer students will need supplemental interventions if effective Tier 1 strategies are implemented.

Tier 2: Secondary Support for Some Students

The focus of the secondary level of prevention is on students identified through screening as underperforming or at risk for poor learning/behavior outcomes or those who are in need of acceleration/enrichment.

Consideration for Tier 2:
Notify school MTSS Coordinator who will contact parent and schedule meeting

Tier 2 is:

- Additional supplemental instruction/intervention that some students need to be successful with core grade-level expectations
- Secondary because these interventions address specific student problems
- Delivered in addition to core Tier 1 instruction
- Linked to core curriculum standards and expectations
- Problem-solved with decisions made in collaboration with MTSS Teams
- Progress monitored at least bi-weekly, and results are graphed
- Evaluated for effectiveness by the MTSS Team
- Documented in the records of the MTSS Team and presented to parent/guardian

Tier 2 Assessment Examples:
Common Assessments
School Assessments such as tardies, absences, suspensions
Observations
Data from differentiated instruction

Tier 2 Secondary Intervention Examples:
Additional minutes or smaller group for reading skills
MAP
Check In/Check Out

MTSS Process at Tier 2:

- Begin Tier 2 process in the GO MTSS platform in SLDS
- Provide research-based intervention 1-3 times per week for 6-8 weeks
- Record progress 1-2 times per month in the GO MTSS platform
- If making progress, continue interventions until no longer needed. Return to Tier 1
- If little to no progress, after review by MTSS Team and further intervention, move to Tier 3/SST

Tier 2 Intervention Portfolio & Review prior to Tier 3

- Update work samples – date and record progress in GO MTSS platform
- Review Tier 2 forms, sign and date
- Add copy of Tier 2 documents (see list below) to the documents tab in GO MTSS platform
- Turn in hard copies to the MTSS Coordinator
- MTSS Coordinator will review data, Tier 2 forms and advise on next steps
- Continue interventions and data collection
- MTSS Coordinator will compile SST Referral Packet and schedule SST meeting
  - Progress Monitoring data will be presented to parent/guardian

Tier 2 Documents (Scan together and title "Tier 2 Documents"

- Tier 2 Initial Parent Invitation
- Tier 2 Student Referral
- Background Information Form
- Hearing & Vision Screening Form
- Analyzed Work Sample
- Areas of Learning checklist
- Structured Classroom Observation
- 504 Plan, if applicable
- Conference Notes

Tier 3/SST: Intensive Support for a Few Students

The focus of the tertiary level of prevention is on students who have not responded to primary or secondary level intervention. The purpose of Tier 3 services is to help students overcome significant barriers to learning academic and/or behavior skills required for school success.

Tier 3/SST is:

- Based on students' response to evidence-based instruction and intervention in addition to the gap between student performance and expectation levels
- The results of evaluating existing data from Tier 1 and progress monitoring data from Tier 2 interventions to allow the MTSS Team to determine if Tier 3 is appropriate (Tier 1 and Tier 2 were implemented with fidelity and data indicates that a student is not closing the performance gap)
- Frequently (at least weekly) progress monitoring that includes visual representation (obtained from GO MTSS platform)
- A result of collaborative problem solving between parents, teachers, service providers and the student, if developmentally appropriate

Tier 3 Data Collection Examples:
Functional behavioral Analysis (FBA)
Progress Monitoring graphs Counseling

Tier 3 Intensive Intervention Examples:
Positive Behavior Intervention Plan
Increased Intensity of Tier 2
Intervention (e.g.,smaller group or individual, increased time)

MTSS Process at Tier 3
- Revise interventions and collect data weekly
- Return signed SST paperwork to school MTSS Coordinator
- Attend SST meeting with current work samples and data charts
- Revise interventions as needed
- Schedule and document SST review meetings
- Input progress-monitoring data into GO MTSS platform
- If adequate progress is made, return to Tier 2
- If little to no progress is evident, contact the school MTSS Coordinator and schedule meeting to discuss additional options

Tier 3/SST Process

Initial SST Meetings

1. Teacher provides completed Checklist with appropriate documents attached/uploaded into the documents tab in GO MTSS platform.
2. MTSS Coordinator provides MTSS Teacher Referral with expected due date within 3-5 school days.
3. MTSS Coordinator ensures that all Tier 2 and Tier 3 processes in GO MTSS platform are completed and documents are uploaded into the documents tab.
4. MTSS Coordinator will create Tier3/SST flag in Student Information System (Infinite Campus).
5. MTSS Coordinator will set up Initial SST Meeting and send Initial SST Invitation to appropriate team members (within 2 weeks).
6. MTSS Coordinator will upload meeting invitation with signatures into the documents tab in GO MTSS platform.

Who may attend SST meetings:

The SST committee shall include at a minimum the referring teacher the MTSS Coordinator and at least one of the following participants, as appropriate to the needs of the student:

1. Parent
2. Principal
3. General education teacher
4. Counselor
5. Interventionist
6. School Psychologist
7. Academic Coach
8. ELL Teacher
9. Educational Evaluator
10. Social Worker
11. Central Office Personnel
12. Section 504 Coordinator
13. Other Appropriate Personnel

*Parents/guardians shall be invited to participate in all meetings of their child's SST and in the development of interventions for their child. A parent does not have to give permission for a student to be in SST.

At the meeting:
1. Complete Meeting Summary page and upload information into the GO MTSS platform.
2. When the meeting is complete, all attendees will sign the Meeting Summary.
3. Complete SST Intervention Plan in GO MTSS Platform.
4. Schedule follow-up meeting for 6-8 weeks.
5. Provide copies of SST Intervention Plan and Meeting Summary to parents.
6. Provide copies of SST Intervention Plan to appropriate team members who will implement the plan.

SUBSEQUENT SST Meetings (RECONVENE)

1. Schedule subsequent SST meetings as needed and include appropriate team members.
2. Send *Reconvene SST Invitation* from GO MTSS platform.
3. Upload documents to the GO MTSS platform documents tab, including the signed notice.

At meeting:
1. Complete *Meeting Summary* and *Additional Notes* page.
2. *Data Chart* from GO MTSS platform should be provided by necessary teacher/staff, signed and dated by person(s) designated to carry out interventions.
3. When the meeting is complete, all attendees sign the meeting summary
   i. *Reminder*: **State Board of Education rule ensures that a minimum of 3 persons must be in attendance for an SST to be legal. One person should be a teacher.**
4. Complete *SST Intervention Plan* in GO MTSS platform.
5. Schedule follow-up meeting.
6. Provide copies of paperwork to parents and to appropriate team members who will implement the plan.

DISMISSAL FROM TIER 3

Holding an SST Meeting where Dismissal from Tier 3/SST is recommended:
1. At reconvene SST, when the decision to dismiss from Tier 3/SST is made, MTSS School Coordinator will complete the process in the GO MTSS platform.
2. MTSS Coordinator will indicate on Dismissal form if the student will be moved to Tier 2 or Tier 1.
3. A copy of the paperwork will be provided to the parent.
4. MTSS Coordinator will remove the SST flag in the SIS (Infinite Campus).
5. MTSS Coordinator will place a copy of the SST Dismissal paperwork in the student's cumulative file.

POSSIBLE IDEA REFERRAL

Holding an SST Meeting where a referral to IDEA may be made:

1. Prior to scheduling the SST meeting:
   a. Review progress-monitoring data with the Educational Evaluator (School Psychologist/Speech & Language Pathologist).
   b. Ensure that a minimum of 12 weeks of data has been collected.
   c. Schedule SST meeting with appropriate team members.
2. At the SST meeting:
   a. Follow typical SST meeting procedure.
   b. Discuss the specific and significant student concerns that support an IDEA evaluation decision.
   c. Provide the parent with a copy of the Parent Rights.
   d. Obtain written Consent to Evaluate from the parent/guardian.
   e. If Consent to Evaluate is not granted, the MTSS Coordinator will document in the SST file.
   f. Continue interventions.
3. If Consent to Evaluate is obtained, continue below:
4. MTSS Coordinator will complete a referral packet and deliver to the Director of Special Programs within 5 days of data of consent.
5. Continue interventions during the IDEA evaluation.
6. Student will be evaluated by appropriate Educational Evaluators based on area of suspected disability, and the team will assemble within 60 calendar days to review results.

Holding an SST Meeting ~ When a parent requests an IDEA Evaluation

When a parent/guardian requests an evaluation and a student is <u>NOT currently</u> in SST:

1. Parent/guardian must submit their request for evaluation IN WRITING.
2. MTSS Coordinator will set up an Initial SST Meeting in GO MTSS platform
3. The MTSS Coordinator will thoroughly explain the MTSS/SST process, including state guidelines regarding the need for data to support evaluation results, to the parent/guardian.
4. If the team determines that a complete evaluation is needed, the MTSS Coordinator will assemble a referral packet with all required paperwork.
5. The team develops an SST Intervention Plan addressing areas of need identified by school and/or parents and implements throughout evaluation process.

When a parent requests an evaluation and a student <u>IS currently </u>in SST: Parents must put their request for an evaluation IN WRITING.

1. MTSS Coordinator schedules an SST meeting and completes processes in GO MTSS platform.
2. MTSS Coordinator will assemble a Referral Packet and deliver to the Director of

Special Programs.
   3. Standard IDEA referral process is followed. The team will reconvene within 60 calendar days to review evaluation results.

Does Not Qualify (DNQ)
   1. Students who do not qualify for Special Education Services (either through an initial evaluation, re-evaluation, dismissal or revocation of services), shall remain in/return to the SST process.
   2. The committee should consider the need for a Section 504 plan, if appropriate, as well as determine appropriate tier in the pyramid of interventions, utilizing the most recent student data. Most recent GO IEP eligibility report should be uploaded to the documents tab in the GO MTSS platform as it provides valuable information and data regarding student strengths and needs.

PRIVATE PSYCHOLOGICAL REPORT
When a parent provides a Private Psychological Report to the School
   1. If provided to the student's teacher, immediately give a copy to the MTSS Coordinator for review by the School Psychologist.
   2. MTSS Coordinator will provide a copy to the Director of Special Programs and the 504 Coordinator.
   3. The MTSS Coordinator will schedule a Conference/SST meeting, and an action plan is developed that may include an intervention plan for the student.

Tier 1 Students: The MTSS Coordinator will place a copy of the report in the student's cumulative file.

Tier 2 or 3: The MTSS Coordinator will upload a copy of the report to the GO MTSS platform.

Requesting a Translator/Interpreter:

Email the MTSS/504 Coordinator to schedule this meeting. Please allow a **minimum** of **two weeks notice** when scheduling the meeting. If a translator cannot attend at the suggested time, alternate times may be suggested.

Referral Packet Contents

Tier 2/3 Forms are located under the RTI tab in Student Information System (Infinite Campus)

- Hearing and Vision Screening Form

- Background Information Form

- Physicians' Statement

- Areas of Learning Checklist

- Informal Skills Checklist

- Communication Checklist

- Speech and Language Referral Checklist

- Release of Information Form

- Structured Classroom Observation

- Analyzed Work Samples Form

Other information to include

- Universal Screener data

- Progress monitoring data from GO MTSS platform with minimum of 3 data points over a 12-week period

- Current report card/progress report

- Attendance report

- 504 Plan, if applicable

- Signed Parent Consent to Evaluate

SST Do's and Do Not's

Do:

- Invite the Parent and appropriate Team members
- Discuss student information in objective terms
- State areas of need in terms of skills deficits, not grade-level standards
- Brainstorm possible interventions BEFORE the meeting
- Develop goals based on all Team members' input

Do Not:

- Recommend screening, testing, or observing by an OT/PT, SLP or School Psychologist without FIRST inviting them and discussing the need with them prior to the meeting
- Make statements regarding personal opinion (I think/I feel) – ex: I think the student has ADHD; I think the student needs medication; I think the student needs to be in a special education class
- Use vague statements – Describe the student's skills in observable and measurable terms
- Bring data with the names of other students visible
- Discuss other students by name during the meeting
- Non-intervention examples: progress monitoring, screeners, special education, file review, parent contact

English Language Learners

ELL/ESOL students may not make progress toward acquisition of the standards at the same rate as their same-age peers. Appropriate ELL/ESOL services must be implemented; however, these students can be moved into Tier 2 or Tier 3 support following the Dade County Schools MTSS process.

HOME SCHOOL OR PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS
(Additional information may be found in the special education manual)

All referral requests must be made at the Dade County Schools Central Office through the Special Programs Department. The student must be a resident of Dade County, Georgia. A form letter will be sent to the parents with referral instructions (i.e. obtaining vision and hearing, completing referral information). Parent must return completed packet to the Director of Special Programs.

The Special Programs Office will distribute information packet to appropriate Educational Evaluator(s). The MTSS Coordinator will enter the student information in the GO MTSS platform as a non-enrolled student and contact the parent to schedule an initial SST meeting following established Tier 3/SST guidelines. The meeting participants should include, at minimum, the school MTSS Coordinator, Educational Evaluator, grade-level representative and the parent. The SST Team may determine that screenings are needed to establish area(s) of need. Written consent from the parent will be obtained before screenings can occur.

It is the responsibility of the parent to convey the RTI information to the private school. It is also the responsibility of the home/private school to implement interventions, collect data and complete checklists. The parent should bring the progress-monitoring data/checklists to the follow-up SST meeting for review. Failure to implement interventions and/or provide data will affect eligibility determination.

Once screenings are completed, the SST Team will reconvene to discuss results, review progress-monitoring data and make recommendations which may include continuing interventions, SST team monitoring or an IDEA referral for evaluation.

If an IDEA referral is made, the process will be followed as with enrolled students. Hearing and Vision screening should be done if it has not been done already. Once the evaluation has been completed, an eligibility committee will be convened to include the Educational Evaluator(s), MTSS Coordinator, Director of Special Programs, the Parent and a grade-level representative.

At this time Dade County Schools has determined that only Speech & Language Services will be provided in accordance with proportionate share guidelines. If the student is eligible for Speech & Language Impaired eligibility, an Individual Service Plan may be developed in the GO IEP platform.