

Bridging PBIS and MTSS

New initiatives and educational acronyms can trigger fear in some educators. However, when you take a deeper look at the initiatives, you can find more similarities than differences, just packaged in a different way.

For example, the California Department of Education (CDE) has defined Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) as a framework designed to help educators work together through a problem solving model to provide an equitable education, support the achievement in Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and integrate Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI²) practices in schools; in a systematic way that addresses the needs of ALL students, aligns the entire system of initiatives, supports, and resources; while implementing continuous improvement processes in all levels of the system.

Some of the key components listed are as follows:

- High-quality, differentiated classroom instruction
- Systematic and sustainable changes
- Integrated data system
- Positive behavioral support

So how do we do this in our schools? Where do we start? How do we strengthen our implementation of existing systems to address all of these components? This requires intentional focus on both the academic and behavior systems in schools.

Here are our top 3 suggestions on how to begin to bridge Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) the Champion Model and MTSS:

Assess your current state

Most decisions within the MTSS framework are made by teams (site leadership teams, student support teams, or grade-level teams). To assess your current state and to ensure coherence throughout your system, work with a wide representation of staff/team members in your school across multiple grade levels using the following process: Ask each of the selected team members to list all initiatives/interventions in each tier provided for both the academic and behavior systems in your school. *Note:* this also includes Special Education, Gifted/Gate, and English Language Development, etc. After the list is created, answer the following questions as a team for each item listed:

Who? (Criteria to get in, which students are served?)

What? (What happens during the initiative/intervention?)

How? (Who is delivering the initiative/intervention? How often?)

Measured? (How is the initiative/intervention monitored for effectiveness/fidelity? How often?)

When staff can clearly articulate the response to these four questions within each initiative/intervention in all three tiers, then your school will be on the right track for creating systems that will sustain and align to MTSS. This process will inform the system to where adequate training/support is needed, as well as

where to continue to refine and enhance based on ongoing monitoring of implementation with the use of accurate data. See an example below that highlights one initiative/intervention in each tier of a behavior system. (*Note:* this isn't a comprehensive list of initiatives/interventions, but merely an example of one within each tier).

Tier 1: Teaching Behavior Expectations and Rules

Who? All staff and students.

What? Provide opportunities throughout the school year to learn appropriate behaviors aligned with school expectations and rules (teach wrong way and right way in each setting).

How? Passport behavior teaching day twice a year (beginning of the year and middle of the year). Additionally, booster sessions for hot spot areas that need re-teaching throughout the school year.

Measured? Walkthrough scores twice a year and school-wide major incident referrals by location reviewed at least monthly.

Tier 2: Check-In Check-Out (CICO)

Who? Students identified who meet CICO criteria (e.g., 3 or more repeated minor classroom referrals for disruption, teacher input, parent input, or administrator input). CICO coordinator/lead and teachers with students on CICO.

What? CICO – Tier 2 intervention for students demonstrating repeated minor behaviors disrupting their learning on an ongoing basis. Opportunity for additional structure and positive interactions.

How? Daily check-in and check-out with CICO designee and ratings throughout the day for appropriate behaviors in the classroom and non-classroom settings by teacher(s). Weekly behavior lessons to help student learn the skills needed to meet CICO goals. At least 6-8 weeks of intervention implemented with fidelity.

Measured? CICO SMART goals (evaluated for CICO effectiveness: group and individual effectiveness). Review data daily and weekly with students, review data twice a month as a PBIS Tier 2 team (*Note:* Some PBIS teams also have a subgroup of the team focused on meeting more often to progress monitor Tier 2 interventions). Decide as a team every 6-8 weeks if student(s) will continue to participate in CICO, exit from CICO, or require a different intervention.

Tier 3: Structured Day Schedule

Who? Student not responding to Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions (e.g., at least one major incident a day that requires 2-3 adults to help stabilize). Administrator, staff and teachers involved with implementing the structured day schedule with fidelity.

What? Structured Day Schedule: special schedule developed to meet the individual needs of the student throughout the school day academically and behaviorally.

How? Staff designated to supervise and work with student during their designated time throughout the day. All involved communicate (amongst the team and with the

student) daily. Student receives daily lessons and/or intentional pre-corrections for how to demonstrate appropriate behaviors to meet individual goals.

Measured? Monitored by individualized academic and behavior SMART goals daily. The structured day schedule is progress monitored and adjusted as needed by PBIS Tier 3 team (*Note: Some PBIS teams also have a subgroup of the team focused on meeting more often to progress monitor Tier 3 interventions*) that meets to review at least weekly. Administrator monitors and takes daily pulse and ensures fidelity of the schedule. Decide as a team every 10 days of implementation with fidelity if student will continue on the schedule or need additional supports.

Use the PBIS Tier One Handbook to establish an effective school-wide behavior system at your school

The PBIS Champion Model is a framework for creating a comprehensive systems approach for the design and delivery of PBIS within a school. This action-oriented framework provides *quality criteria* and *how-to steps* for developing, implementing, monitoring, and sustaining each level of the system: Bronze (Tier 1), Silver (Tier 2), and Gold (Tier 3). Each tier in the system consists of three categories:

- Category A—Markers
- Category B—Characteristics
- Category C—Academic and Behavioral Goals and the Work of the PBIS Team

Each category is composed of quality criteria and a set of defined actions. *The PBIS Tier One Handbook* is designed to help your school team design an effective behavior system aligned with MTSS key components.

Create an action plan addressing top action priorities based on data and a problem solving model

After you have assessed your current state, it is important for your team to identify your top action priorities and begin implementation. See an action plan template from the *PBIS Tier One Handbook* as a guide to help your team organize deepening the implementation of each initiative/intervention offered at your school. Make sure to monitor the action plan on a regular basis.

It is suggested that school-wide initiatives/interventions are monitored on a monthly basis, targeted initiatives/interventions are monitored bi-weekly, and individualized general/special education initiatives/interventions are monitored on a daily or weekly basis based on the intensity of the supports. Having a system in place to review data (academic/behavior) will help meet the MTSS integrated data system key component.



Action	Timeline (month/ year to start action)	Person(s) Responsible	Evidence	Target Completion Date (month/ year)	Actual Completion Date (month/ year)
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					



Creating a behavior system aligned with MTSS is going to take time and hard work. The work is also never done; it will require ongoing effort based on the needs of your school. In order for this type of systematic framework to be successful, implementation and nurturing of the academic/behavior systems in the school needs to be a top priority. Academic and behavior systems are very connected; you can't focus on one and not the other. Therefore, the bridging of MTSS and PBIS can only help your system to support ALL students.