

RIVERSIDE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT 96

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MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Martha Ryan-Toye and District 96 Board of Education
From: Nora Geraghty, Director of Special Education and Student Services, and
Dr. Angela Dolezal, Director of Teaching and Learning
Date: October 2, 2025
RE: District Initiative for a Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

This memo provides an update on the district's strategic initiative to refine and improve the implementation of a comprehensive, consistent, district-wide Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL). Our goal is to continue to work toward a proactive and preventative framework that supports the whole child, ensuring every student has the social and emotional skills necessary to thrive academically and personally.

Defining MTSS

A Multi-Tiered System of Support is a framework that integrates data and instruction to support students' academic and social-emotional needs. It is organized into three tiers of support:

- **Tier 1:** Universal, high-quality instruction and support for all students within their classrooms and the school environment. This is generally sufficient for approximately 80% of students.
- **Tier 2:** Targeted, small-group interventions for students requiring additional support, which can be classroom-based or supported by additional staff. This is typically a population of approximately 15% of a school community.
- **Tier 3:** Intensive, individualized interventions for students with the most significant needs. This generally represents approximately 5% of a given school community.

We are intentionally modeling our more clearly defined SEL MTSS procedures upon our existing, successful Academic MTSS framework in the district. This integrated approach is strategic, promoting efficiency by using familiar processes, fostering a holistic view of student needs, reinforcing shared ownership of student success among all staff, and enhancing our data-driven decision-making capabilities.

Current District-Wide Actions

Our district team, led by the Director of Teaching and Learning, the Director of Special Education and Student Services, and the Student Intervention and Support Coordinator, is currently engaged in

foundational work across three key areas to ensure a successful implementation:

1. **Comprehensive Needs Analysis:** To ensure our efforts are properly targeted, we are conducting a thorough needs analysis. This process involves reviewing existing data (attendance, behavior referrals, climate surveys), gathering new feedback from staff about their understanding and use of current referral practices, and inventorying current MTSS and SEL practices across the district, which currently vary in some respects between buildings. This includes participating in Data review days across the buildings, working with school staff to understand their buildings' referral processes and existing problem-solving team processes, and understanding how staff currently access support for students.
2. **Consistent Data Review Procedures:** We are establishing standardized protocols for how all schools will collect, review, and act upon SEL-related data. This includes identifying key data points for review, creating a more uniform meeting protocol for school-based MTSS teams, and continuing a district-wide calendar for data meetings. This systematic approach ensures equity and allows us to continue to move from being reactive to proactive in addressing student needs. It will also allow for consistent understanding across buildings of a standardized process.
3. **Development of a Tiered Intervention Menu of supports** The foundation of a strong MTSS is the universal support provided to all students. We are developing an updated menu of evidence-based, practical Tier 1 strategies that all teachers can use in their classrooms. This menu includes techniques for building positive relationships, explicitly teaching social skills and emotional regulation, creating calm and predictable classroom routines, and providing positive feedback.

Next Steps: Development of Consistent Practices and Planning for Professional Learning

To support our educators in this work, our immediate next step is to identify and implement consistent practices across buildings for tracking, identifying, and supporting students who are demonstrating ongoing need. Additionally, District Leadership will incorporate specific training for teachers on classroom strategies for continuing to support Tier 1 practices as well as classroom-based Tier 2 strategies. This learning will focus on understanding the functions of student behavior, implementing proactive classroom management strategies, applying the Tier 1 intervention menu, and using data to respond effectively to student needs.

Our ultimate goal is to build on our efforts to equip every teacher with the skills and confidence to support the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of their students, thereby creating learning environments where all children can be successful. This work must be grounded in a good understanding of the current needs and current practices, and that audit and needs assessment work is ongoing.