

Lakeland Joint School District #272

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“One District. One Mission. Every Student. Every Day.”

Multi Tiered Systems of Support Report

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Multi Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is a function of general education that supports students who are struggling with reading, writing, math, or behavior. It is a tiered approach and is traditionally broken down into the following:

“Tier 1” refers to the core content that is taught to all students universally.

“Tier 2” refers to supplemental support that *some students* may need in order to be able to access the core content.

“Tier 3” refers to more intensive support that is necessary for remediation to help a student either catch up to grade level or meet individual educational goals through an I-Plan.

A classroom teacher is responsible for Tiers 1 & 2, meaning that they deliver the core content to all students and can identify and support students who need more or slightly different instruction. Tier 3, since it is more intensive, usually involves more staff to either pull students out of class for support, or push into class to assist the teacher in differentiating instruction.

Some programs, like Title 1, may muddy the waters a bit because they might have the ability to serve some “tier 2” students out of class who only need supplemental support- but this is not the norm.

To say a school is an “MTSS School” or is “doing MTSS” is a bit of a misnomer, because the structured approach to organizing and implementing the varied instructional levels can look different in each building depending on staffing, resources and student needs. What being an “MTSS School” *should mean* is that there is a systematic approach to curriculum & assessment, identifying students in need of support, and meeting the needs of those students.

All Lakeland schools have systems of support in place for students who are struggling, but specifically what this looks like at each level can vary depending on the building.

Status of MTSS at Each Level:

- **Elementary:**
 - Lakeland elementary schools have fully embraced the MTSS way of thinking about instruction and supporting students. MTSS, as it is typically thought of, is most conducive in an elementary environment where students are, for the most part, with one teacher all day.
 - This looks like:
 - Teachers have clear, consistent core content that is taught, with assessments given as necessary to determine student progress. The goal is to have 75%-85% of students successful in Tier 1.
 - Teachers have materials to use, and capacity during the day to provide small group follow up instruction to students who need it, as determined by the assessments that are given periodically.
 - Schools have systems for pull-out support for students who need individualized curriculum or more intensive support than what can be provided in the classroom. Examples are Title I or flex groups based on skill.
- **Secondary:**
 - Secondary schools in general have a more difficult time following the traditional model of MTSS simply because students are not with one teacher all day. Teachers at this level are content focused, and students have a clearer benchmark to earn credit. This, combined with staffing, scheduling, and other challenges, makes it more complicated to follow the same model.
 - Usually, when secondary schools refer to an MTSS system, they are referring to systems of support they've custom fit for their buildings. For example, in Lakeland we have some schools who have created an "MTSS Coordinator", who takes the initiative to look at student performance measures and pull students to work on skills as they are able to. Another example is in one school we have designated sections of some core classes that are specifically designed for students who may need more support with the content. Both of these examples are highly variable building to building based on staffing needs.
 - At all levels, "tier 2" is possible by supporting students in the classroom. That said, the higher you go up in grade level, the bigger the "gaps" can be in students' learning.
- **Barriers We're Working Through:**
 - All eleven of our schools were impacted by the cuts made this school year in staffing, and some of the things that were previously possible were lost due to staffing decreases.
 - Elementary no longer has as many specialists per building- and those staff members were helping with interventions.
 - Secondary is most impacted by the overall decrease in staffing (combined with an increase in enrollment in many places). There is less capacity for

fewer teachers with more students to fit in concepts classes or other interventions.

- **What's Working Well:**

- We're patching the foundation to make it stronger. All of this goes back to some of my earlier reports on Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum (GVC). This is the focus of my work this year both with Elementary and Secondary. Having a GVC that is standards-based and consistent across the district, and *useful* assessments to accompany, are the foundation of any academic support for students.
- We're dialing in our assessments to ensure we're *not overtesting* and are *choosing assessments that result in better instructional focus*.

I'm always delighted to have a conversation with the board about teaching, learning and everything that goes into supporting students.

Respectfully,

Jake