Multi-Tiered System of Supports: A Quick Guide

Purpose

Who is this document for?

This document is for school and regional/board staff as well as community partners.

What is this document for?

This document is a companion document to the Inclusive Education Policy and provides a description of the components of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). Parents, guardians, families and the broader community, as key partners in education, may also use this document to reflect on how to best support equitable student well-being and achievement.

Overview

The commitment to ensuring a high quality, culturally and linguistically responsive and equitable education for all students is reflected in the guiding principles of Nova Scotia's Inclusive Education Policy and in the implementation of MTSS. MTSS is an integrated school-wide approach (universal, focused, intensive) which provides a structure for effective instruction, assessment, and support for all students. It requires the collaboration and coordinated efforts of students, teachers, support staff, educational leaders, families, guardians, parents and community partners in providing appropriate programs, settings, supports, and services.

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports recognizes the inherent worth of all students and empowers parents. It is supported by shared leadership and effective ongoing professional learning. It is inclusive of all students in our classrooms, schools, and communities.
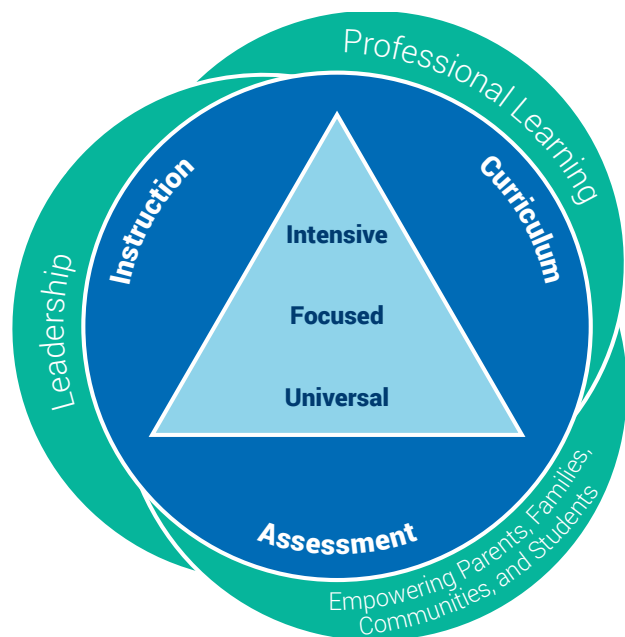
Tiers in MTSS refer to services and supports provided to students. It is inappropriate to refer to students as Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3 students.

Email: ie_mtss@gnspes.ca | https://sites.google.com/gnspes.ca/inclusiveeducation-mtss-ns/

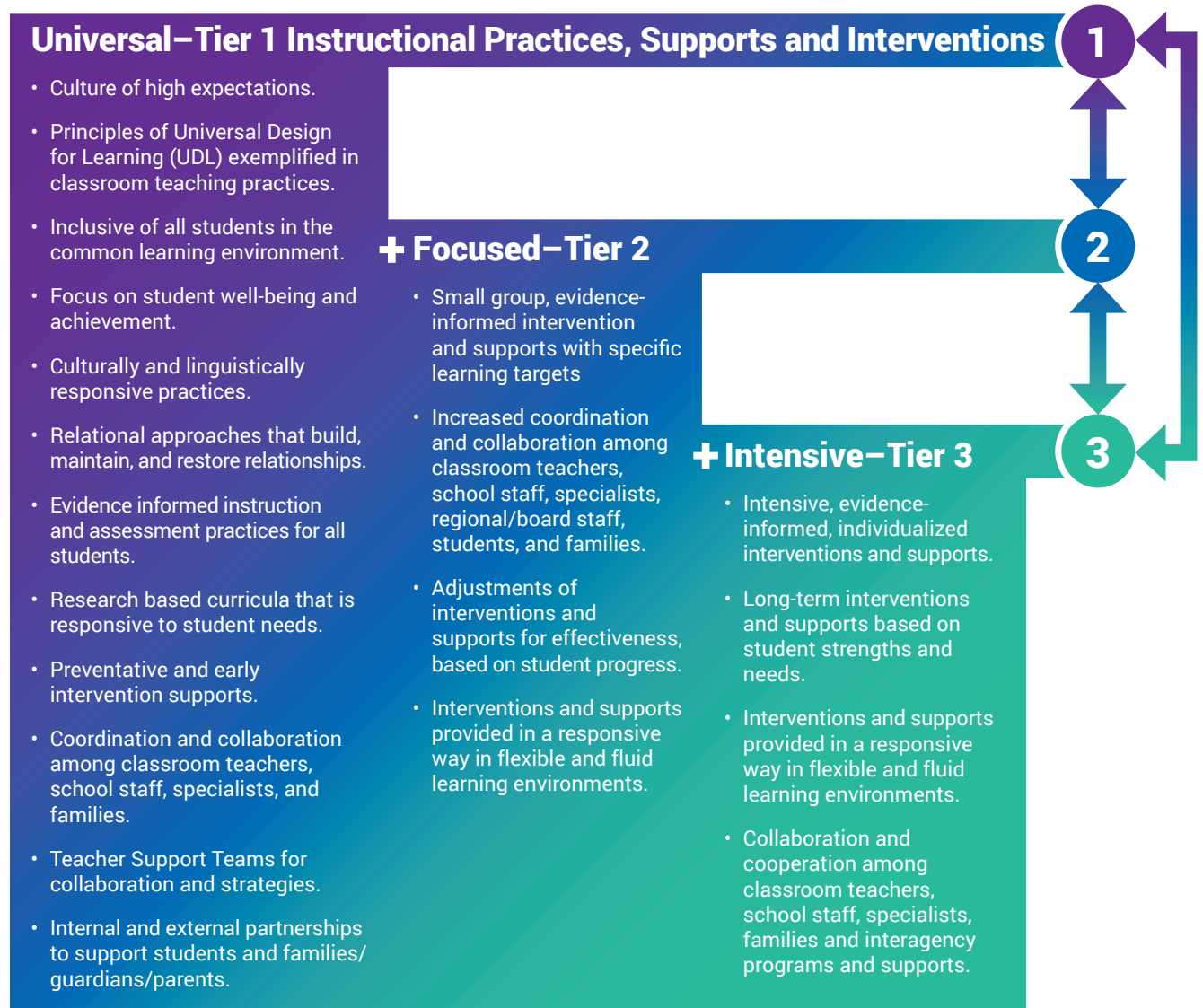**Multi-Tiered System of Supports are Student-centered.**
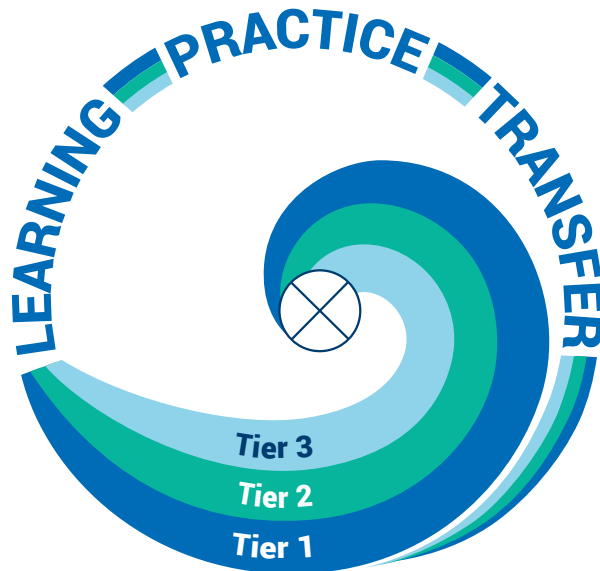
At the center of this visual tool is a symbol used in Mi'kmaq education that focuses on the whole learner and supports the balance of all aspects significant for the well-being and achievement of all students.

Learning, practice, and transfer to mobilize competencies and skills to new contexts is supported by a multi-tiered system of supports commited to:

- Equity

- Culturally and linguistically responsive leadership, teaching, assessment, instruction, service delivery and supports

- Collaborative professionalism, decision making and a shared vision

- Evidence-informed instructional and assessment practices that support the well-being and learning of all.

- Restorative and Relational practices

- Planning and decision-making led by families

- Research-based development and implementation of curricula

- Leadership focused on well-being and achievement of students

- High leverage teaching practices

- Student-centered professional learning opportunities for staff

- Structured opportunities for teachers to collaborate, co-plan and co-teach

- Ongoing adjustments of planned interventions and supports for effectiveness

- Flexible interventions and supports and resources matched to student strengths, challenges and interests

- Identification and elimination of systemic barriers to well-being and achievement

- Community involvement and engagement

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Throughout Tiers 1, 2 and 3, instructional practices, supports, and interventions are flexible, responsive, and matched to students' strengths, interests, and challenges relative to well-being and achievement. Universal–Tier 1 interventions and supports form the foundation for Tiers 2 and 3 and continue to be critical components as Tier 2 and 3 interventions and supports are being developed and implemented.

Universal–Tier 1 Instructional Practices, Supports and Interventions — 1

- Culture of high expectations.
- Principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) exemplified in classroom teaching practices.
- Inclusive of all students in the common learning environment.
- Focus on student well-being and achievement.
- Culturally and linguistically responsive practices.
- Relational approaches that build, maintain, and restore relationships.
- Evidence informed instruction and assessment practices for all students.
- Research based curricula that is responsive to student needs.
- Preventative and early intervention supports.
- Coordination and collaboration among classroom teachers, school staff, specialists, and families.
- Teacher Support Teams for collaboration and strategies.
- Internal and external partnerships to support students and families/guardians/parents.

+ Focused–Tier 2 — 2

- Small group, evidence-informed intervention and supports with specific learning targets
- Increased coordination and collaboration among classroom teachers, school staff, specialists, regional/board staff, students, and families.
- Adjustments of interventions and supports for effectiveness, based on student progress.
- Interventions and supports provided in a responsive way in flexible and fluid learning environments.

+ Intensive–Tier 3 — 3

- Intensive, evidence-informed, individualized interventions and supports.
- Long-term interventions and supports based on student strengths and needs.
- Interventions and supports provided in a responsive way in flexible and fluid learning environments.
- Collaboration and cooperation among classroom teachers, school staff, specialists, families and interagency programs and supports.

What is the process for creating an effective system of supports?

MTSS begins with asking questions and engaging in discussions about student well-being and achievement. Educators actively engage to empower parents, guardians and families to inform their understanding and guide decisions around programming and supports. Interventions and supports, as well as program planning, are identified through a collaborative, culturally and linguistically responsive process. The process is used to determine how to successfully raise the bar and eliminate the achievement gap for all students.
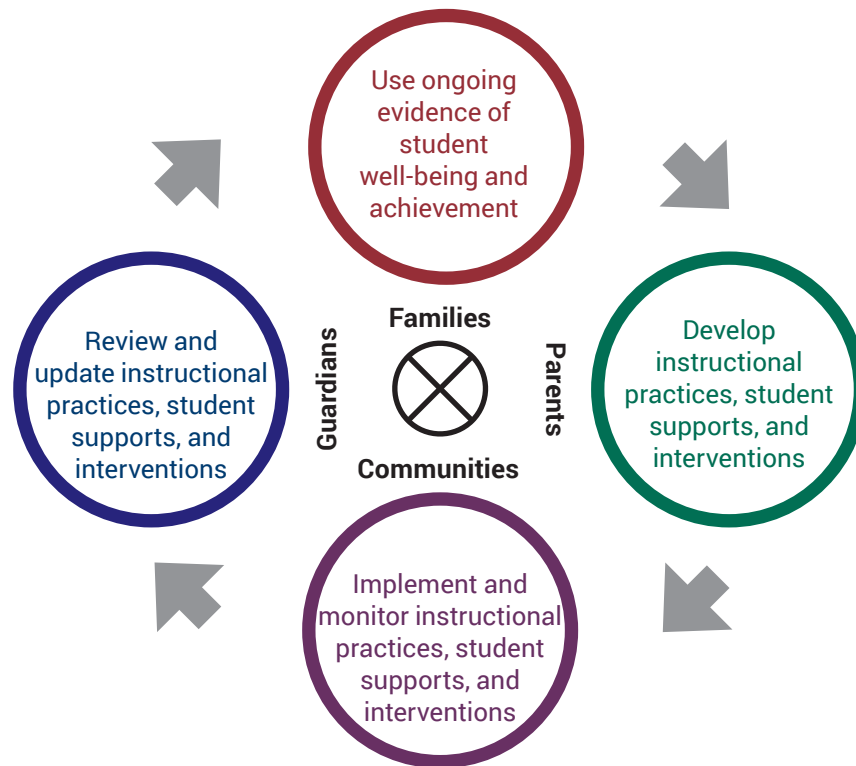
All partners should consider:

1. How will we engage parents, guardians and families to inform our understanding of student well-being and achievement?

2. How will we determine a student's well-being and achievement?

3. How do we examine a student's well-being and achievement from a culturally responsive lens?

4. How will we identify and eliminate barriers to well-being and achievement?

5. What evidence-informed practices would meet the student's needs?

6. How will we know if interventions or supports are needed?

7. With whom will we collaborate in order to implement an intervention or support?

8. What evidence will we collect to know if interventions or supports are responsive?

9. How can we use evidence to refine or adjust interventions and supports as needed?

10. How can we apply what was learned through this process to improve our practices for the success of all students?