

Implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

Priority 1	Ensuring Equity and Excellence	Short Initiative:	All students in APS will be supported in their schools by an active multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). MTSS will be coordinated and effective so that students have rigorous learning opportunities coupled with the right supports and resources.
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Overarching Goal

What is the outcome that this initiative seeks to achieve in five years?	<p>Every student in APS in need of support beyond Tier 1 will have access to a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) in which they experience strong core instruction and receive the “right” intervention program, at the “right” juncture, with a highly trained educator, for the “right” duration of time. “Right” will be defined as what the student needs, as defined by the student’s teachers and service providers, families, and the student themselves whenever possible. Those supports will be monitored, adjusted, and communicated effectively.</p> <p>An effective MTSS will be in place and functioning well so that all graduates will be prepared to achieve their choices of post-secondary education, career, and community contribution. The components of MTSS will be operating effectively in each school. Every student in APS has equitable access to “a comprehensive continuum of evidence-based, systematic practices to support a rapid response to students’ needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based instructional decision making.” (ESSA, 2015).</p> <p>This should also lead to reduced behavioral and special education referrals; increases in social emotional well-being, increased student sense of belonging, and increased graduation rate, among other metrics.</p>
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**Responsible
Department**

Deputy Superintendent of Teaching and Learning and Assistant Superintendent of Student Services

Summary

A summary of what we are trying to accomplish and why

Currently, APS schools have a large number of student support practices and resources. A multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) organizes those supports and the work of adults around students, coordinating adult work so that student needs are identified and met with the correct academic or social-emotional resource that fits the precise case.

APS will develop a comprehensive, consistent, clear, and well-communicated MTSS. This framework is designed to meet the needs of all students by ensuring that schools make evidence-driven decisions, monitor progress and usefulness of supports for students, and use evidence-based supports and strategies with appropriate – and if necessary, increasing – intensity to sustain student growth. MTSS is not just a list of structured interventions, but rather a cohesive system for the procedures and resources in a school to fit together to ensure a high quality education for all students. Benefits of an effective MTSS include:

- Consistent structures and effective implementation across schools.
- Increased achievement of students who have IEPs, and students in other focal groups as defined by this plan.
- Increased academic and other opportunities for historically marginalized students specifically, and all students generally (i.e. multilingual learners, BIPOC, students with learning differences or disabilities, neurodivergent learners, children who have experienced trauma or adverse experiences).
- Provision of precise supports to students in the areas they most need them narrows opportunity and achievement gaps.
- Ability for all students who need it to receive needed evidence-based intervention while ensuring access to aligned Tier 1 (core instruction) programming.
- Provision of enrichment and challenge to students in academic domains where they demonstrate proficiency.

In an effective MTSS, universal supports such as high quality, universally designed, culturally sustaining, and evidence-based curriculum, instruction, and assessments are provided for all students. Movement amongst the three tiers is fluid and is supported by data from universal screeners, diagnostic assessments, progress monitoring, and how a student responds to one level of intervention. Any and all students should have access to support when they need them.

Because the introduction of MTSS is complex and time intensive, this initiative will need a paced, five-year rollout. Steps will include an initial round of resource mapping, data collection, and training, followed by training and implementation over several years. This will require a dedicated cross-district team to execute.

Initial efforts will include:

- Conduct resource mapping of interventions for elementary, middle, and high school
- Inventory and evaluate assessment tools
- Design systems for analyzing/decision-making teams
- Attend to hiring, staffing, and training
- Implementation of supportive schedules that provide space for intervention while protecting student access to rigorous grade-level or higher instruction
- Development of a system for understanding, allocating and assessing the impact of resources across individual schools
- Development of a comprehensive action plan

The resources that will need first to be mapped and then to be developed will be:

- Instructional vision and practices (aligned to initiative 1.1)
- Core and supplementary curriculum
- Social-emotional supports and services
- School schedules that give students time for intervention or enrichment and that give teacher teams the chance to meet (for instructional work, student support work, etc)
- Access to interventions and supports
- Access to enrichment and additional opportunities
- Presence and capacity of specific teams and student support procedures

The comprehensive action planning needs to address the following areas of practice:

- Student, family, and community engagement
- Core Instruction
- Screening and eligibility
- Equitable access to interventions across schools.
- School structures and schedules
- Three tiers of intensity for instruction, intervention, and supports
- Staff recruitment, selection, onboarding, assignment, and retention
- Staff engagement and professional development
- Progress monitoring and evaluation

Major Milestones

These are the highest priority, most meaningful deliverables, and actions we must achieve to successfully arrive at the desired outcome from our current state.

Financial Impact provides amounts for the community to use as estimates in understanding the cost of undertaking these crucial initiatives. Figures represent the estimated amount that this work would cost in a given year. Annual budgets will implement this plan, which will at times lead to other services being changed and eliminated as we develop aligned budgets that account for the initiatives in this plan.

Major Milestones	<u>Year 1:</u> <u>2023-24</u>	<u>Year 2:</u> <u>2024-25</u>	<u>Year 3:</u> <u>2025-26</u>	<u>Year 4:</u> <u>2026-27</u>	<u>Year 5:</u> <u>2027-28</u>
Develop comprehensive implementation plan paced for cohorts of schools	Establish and empower district -wide team to audit existing resources and develop comprehensive implementation plan with paced deliverables for cohorts of schools in subsequent years. This team will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit resource maps at each school; • Study MTSS and attend professional learning provided by DESE; • Identify and visit/interview peer districts with effective MTSS; • Develop a staffing model for all APS schools at all levels, aligned with MTSS framework; • Implement with pilot cohort 1 				
	Implementation plan is published and communicated broadly; more schools begin implementation in a cohort model; all schools implement intervention block or similar scheduling model. Staffing model is used to inform budgeting decisions. Professional development continues in alignment with 2.2 Implement with cohort 3, deepen with cohort 1-2 Deepen with cohort 1-3				
Financial Impact	\$125,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
To Fund	District team	PD to implement	PD to implement	PD to implement	PD to implement

	stipends and for meetings for audits and planning and for outside specialists to enhance or introduce supports	and fund WIN block and overall MTSS (C1)	and fund WIN block and overall MTSS (C1-2)	and fund WIN block and overall MTSS (C1-3)	and fund WIN block and overall MTSS
Communicate broadly with public and faculties to message MTSS	Develop communication plans and expectations as part of development of comprehensive MTSS; use feedback from families in empathy interviews and focus groups to understand expectations regarding communication.		Implement communications expectations and gather feedback from families Broadly communicate MTSS plan and framework with community	Continue to implement and refine communications plan based on feedback.	
	<i>*Communications include website materials and resources/expectations for school communications with parents related to MTSS, as well as communication to faculty across the district.</i>				
Financial Impact	TBD				
To Fund	TBD: Costs associated with this portion of the plan are represented elsewhere; we will use the Panorama Culture and Climate surveys to ask targeted questions about the effectiveness of intervention services (Initiative 4.3). The Director of Communications and Family Engagement will partner with the Deputy and Assistant Superintendents to engage families in forums and empathy interviews and to craft communications (Initiative 4.2).				

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Key Metrics

These are metrics that can serve as strong indicators of performance and are directly representative of successful execution of the initiative.

Outcome metrics are the indicators that will be tracked whereas targets are the specific benchmarks to be achieved by specific deadlines.

Major Milestones	<u>Year 1:</u> <u>2023-24</u>	<u>Year 2:</u> <u>2024-25</u>	<u>Year 3:</u> <u>2025-26</u>	<u>Year 4:</u> <u>2026-27</u>	<u>Year 5:</u> <u>2027-28</u>
Outcome Metric 1	<p>For the academic achievement of students, specifically students with IEPs, students of color, multilingual learners (MLs), and students from low-income households, close the gap relative to their peers over 5 years, as measured by assessed subjects on state assessments such as MCAS and local assessments such as common curriculum assessments, benchmark assessments, or performance tasks. These groups are referred to as focal groups.</p> <p>The Arlington Public Schools' true goal is to <u>eliminate</u> opportunity and achievement gaps for all groups of students who experience them. We acknowledge that this takes time and considerable resources, and is impacted by factors both within and outside the control of the public school system. These metrics reflect our commitment to transforming the Arlington Public Schools into a system that eliminates opportunity gaps, thereby allowing all students to thrive, while pacing benchmarks to reflect ambitious and attainable progress .</p>				
Annual Benchmark	<p>Close gaps for focal groups compared to peers by 3 percentage points annually across subject areas. Close gaps for for focal groups compared to peers by 4 percentage points annually for focus disciplinary areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA Grades 3-5 and Grade 10, • Math Grades 6-8 and Grade 10, • Science Grade 8 <p>Maintain Student Growth Percentiles for focal groups and peers above 50% each year, with focal groups growing at a faster rate than peers to accelerate achievement.</p>				
Outcome Metric 2	<p>Administrators, teachers, and instructional staff are trained (years 2-3) in the MTSS and instructional vision and report comfort and understanding of the vision (years 3-5), as measured by targeted questions on annual climate and culture surveys.</p>				

Annual Benchmark	50%	75%	95%	95%	95%
Outcome Metric 3	Systematic observations at each school show execution of key components of the MTSS across classrooms, using a specific, consistent instrument that reflects the vision.				
Annual Benchmark	Tools and procedures will be established.	TBD: Increase in implementation of instructional strategies aligned with district vision, as measured and tracked by established observation tools.			
Outcome Metric 4	Each time a student fails a semester or is flagged for attendance [needs specific trigger], they have an assigned and tracked intervention/support implemented within two weeks.				
Annual Benchmark	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Outcome Metric 5	All schools have supports and interventions in place to meet 100% of needs identified during assessment, in accordance with the implementation plan developed in year 1.				
Annual Benchmark	NA (Assessment done during year 1)	All cohort 1 schools meet 100% of criteria	All cohort 1-2 schools meet 100% of criteria	All cohort 1-3 schools meet 100% of criteria	All schools meet 100% of criteria