



Multi-Tiered Systems of Support in SPS: Update

May 18, 2026

Agenda

1. Understanding MTSS
2. SPS Partnership with Boston Children's Hospital
3. MTSS Work This Year
4. Next Steps and Future Planning

An art classroom filled with students working at easels. A teacher stands at the front, holding a string. The room is decorated with various posters and artwork. The word "Overview" is overlaid in the center.

Overview

Vision

We envision a student-centered learning community where every student – honoring their unique strengths and background – is empowered to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally through tailored supports and equitable access to opportunity.

[\(SPS Strategic Plan\)](#)



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Vision

Our MTSS should be grounded in our Vision for Excellent Instruction

EXCELLENT INSTRUCTION IN SPS

ESTD.  1852



POSITIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

- Whole child, asset-based mindset
- Strong, trusting relationships between teachers, students, and families
- Culturally and linguistically responsive practices
- Principles of restorative justice
- High expectations for all students communicated explicitly and implicitly
- Internalized routines and procedures



STUDENT-FOCUSED PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Continuous Improvement Cycles (PDSA)
- Rigorous student tasks that require content knowledge and critical thinking
- Clear content and language objectives with aligned success criteria and exemplars
- Students' funds of knowledge connect to learning
- Application of learning to new, real-world contexts
- Intentional use of data and formative assessments to inform instructional decisions



ACCESS TO GRADE LEVEL STANDARDS FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Universal Design for Learning
- Precise language and content-specific vocabulary
- Intentional flexible grouping that includes whole group, small group, partners, etc.
- Differentiation based on student need (ex: content, process, product, choice)
- Strategic scaffolds that support deeper learning
- Frequent, specific feedback for students to deepen understanding



STUDENT AGENCY AND ENGAGEMENT

- Students as active learners
- Teachers as facilitators of learning
- Student voice and choice
- Student discourse and classroom discussion
- Student self-assessment
- Teachers guide students to refine or extend thinking through productive struggle
- Students engage in collaborative and independent learning

High Quality, Evidence-Based Curricula & Equitable Access to Academic and Social-Emotional Resources, Supports, and Opportunities for All Students

The background image shows a school courtyard. In the foreground, there is a paved area with several bicycles parked in a rack. A chain-link fence runs across the middle ground. Behind the fence, there are several multi-story brick buildings with many windows. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

What is MTSS?

Background on MTSS in SPS

- Our Strategic Plan focused on MTSS improvements
- “Several attempts to improve MTSS that sputtered, likely due to Capacity.” (R. Berretta, 2024)
- In School Year 2024 - 2025, our then Superintendent Fellow, Bobby Berretta, focused his strategic project on improving MTSS in SPS.
- As a result of Dr. Berretta’s work, SPS:
 - Codified best practices in our District Curriculum Adoption Plan,
 - Expanded access to instructional software to strengthen
 - **Refocused strength in x-block**

What is MTSS?

“MTSS is how we do school.
It’s the entire school system.”

- SPS Administrator

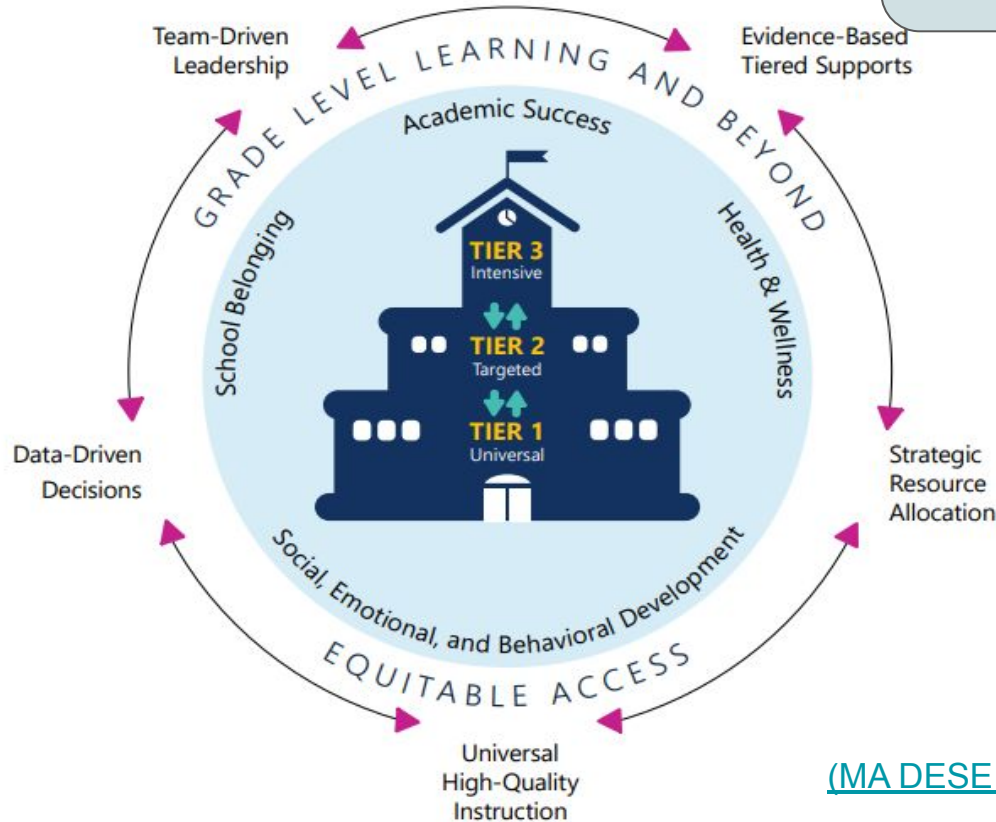
The phrase **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)** describes a framework used to implement model a **data-based, problem solving approach (the system)** to provide **academic and behavioral instruction and intervention (the supports)**. The integrated instruction and intervention is delivered to students in **varying intensities (the multiple tiers)** to meet the needs of all students to support student growth.

([SPS DCAP](#))

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[\(MA DESE MTSS Blueprint, 2025\)](#)

What is MTSS?

At SPS, we provide 3 “tiers” of support

Tier 1 (universal)

High-quality instruction and support provided to **all students**.

Tier 2 (targeted)

Additional **small-group support** for students who need extra help.

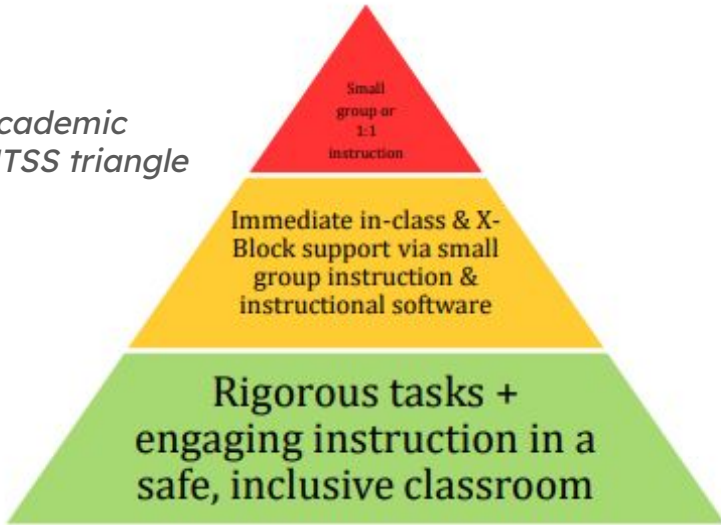
Tier 3 (intensive)

Small-group or individualized support for students with significant or ongoing needs.

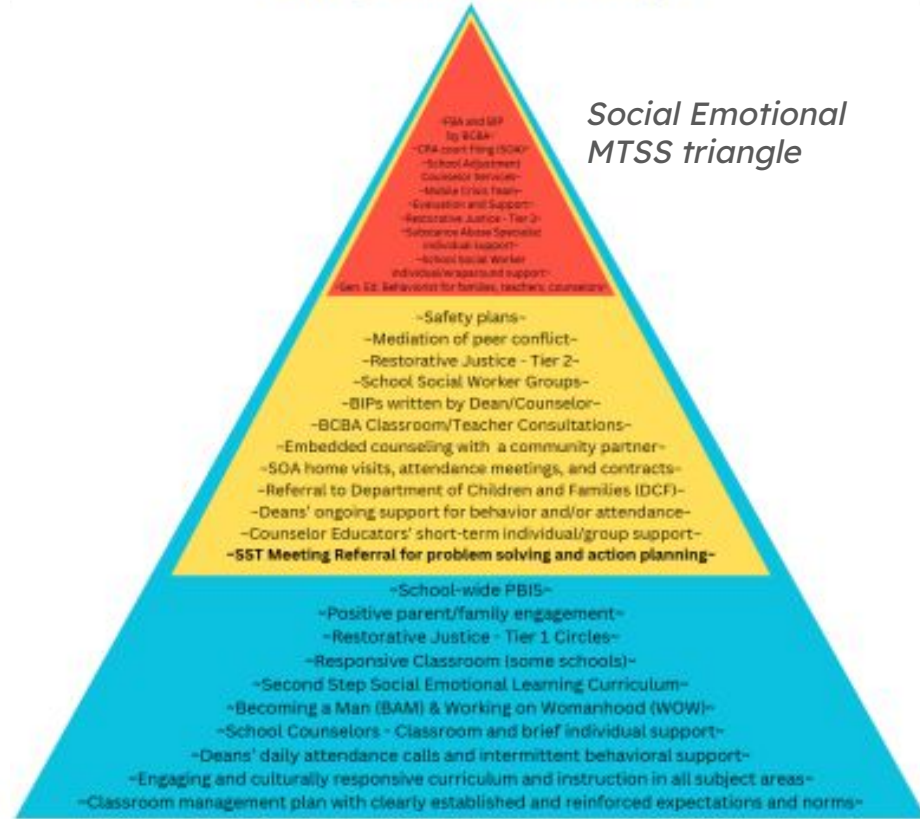
What is MTSS?

The tiers of MTSS are often visualized in a triangle form

*Academic
MTSS triangle*



*Social Emotional
MTSS triangle*



What does MTSS look like in action?

Tier 1 (universal)

Strong, high quality core curriculum and school-wide practices for both academics and social emotional learning (restorative justice, second step, responsive classroom, whole school PBIS systems, etc.)

Tier 2 (targeted)

Small groups of students led by teachers in the classroom and i-Ready personalized instruction

Tier 3 (intensive)

Small group or 1:1 intervention/ direct services led by staff with specialized training.

Select examples of what MTSS looks like in action. This list is not exhaustive.

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What does MTSS look like in action?

Data Driven Decision Making

Open Architects platform to analyze individual data (academic and social-emotional, quantitative and qualitative)

Screeners

ESI, PELI, DIBELS, Universal Screener for Number Sense, i-Ready

Team Meetings

Common Planning Time, Grade Level Meetings, Student Support Meetings (SST), Community Meetings (SHS), and Child Study Team - *more in two slides*

Select examples of structures that support the system. This list is not exhaustive.

Important Understandings

- **“Strong Tier 1, differentiated and designed for universal access, is the foundation of MTSS.** Tier 1 doesn’t mean that all students get the same experience. It does mean that all students have access to high-quality, grade-level learning.”
- MTSS is not a “gatekeeper” for Special Education services. By law....

Select examples of structures that support the system. This list is not exhaustive.



Words from a School Leader:
What is MTSS?

What is Child Study Team?

Child Study Team is a meeting, not whole MTSS process

Child Study Team (CST) is a team that regularly meets to discuss students who are in need of additional support, and discuss possible interventions to try.

- Once a student is initially discussed, there should be a second meeting scheduled for 6 - 8 weeks in the future to revisit the impact of the interventions that were put in place.
- Families and students should be informed and collaborators (e.g. family input forms, regular family communication, student contribution forms when appropriate).

What is Child Study Team?

Snapshots from the CST Rubric

Developed by Nate Harris and Katie Gately-Gehant

Domain	1 - Emerging	2 - Developing	3 - Established	Effective Teaming	Team members work in silos; minimal collaboration	Some collaboration, but roles and responsibilities unclear	Clear roles; members collaborate regularly to support student needs	High-functioning team; shared leadership, trust, and accountability embedded
Team Composition	Academic staff only	Academic staff with occasional support staff	Multidisciplinary (academic, school psych, clinician, SPED, related service providers)	Effective Teaming	Team members work in silos; minimal collaboration	Some collaboration, but roles and responsibilities unclear	Clear roles; members collaborate regularly to support student needs	High-functioning team; shared leadership, trust, and accountability embedded
				Reflective Prompt: How do we evaluate our teaming effectiveness throughout the year? How do we incorporate cases within CST?				
Strong Meeting Structure	Meetings are inconsistent; no clear agenda or norms	Some agenda use, but meetings often go off track; limited documentation	Meetings follow a set agenda; norms in place; outcomes documented	Data Use (Screening; Progress Monitoring)	Anecdotal, inconsistent progress monitoring	Some use of progress data but irregular	Data systematically collected and reviewed every meeting	Multiple data sources (academic, behavioral, SEL, attendance, Universal Screening data) integrated
				Reflective Prompt: Do our CST roles align with the broader MTSS team structures (1)?				
Strong Meeting Structure	Meetings are inconsistent; no clear agenda or norms	Some agenda use, but meetings often go off track; limited documentation	Meetings follow a set agenda; norms in place; outcomes documented	Family & Student Voice	Rarely included	Sometimes included, usually reactive	Included regularly and systematically	Embedded in process; family/student perspective shapes plan
				Reflective Prompt: Have we scheduled universal screening and progress monitoring dates?				
Reflective Prompt: Are CST meetings on the MTSS calendar with clear agendas and								
Reflective Prompt: How are family/student voices incorporated into CST?								



Words from a School Leader:
What is Child Study Team?

Somerville Public Schools Partnership with BCHNP

BCHNP's 3 Year Consultation Model

GOALS:

Strengthening Access to Behavioral Health Care

Strengthen access to behavioral health care for students by building school and district capacity, strengthening team structures, and developing referral pathways using a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) data-driven model.



Building Alignment Between School and Community Partners

Build alignment between school and community partners through collaboration and data-based decision making in order to improve student access to behavioral health services.

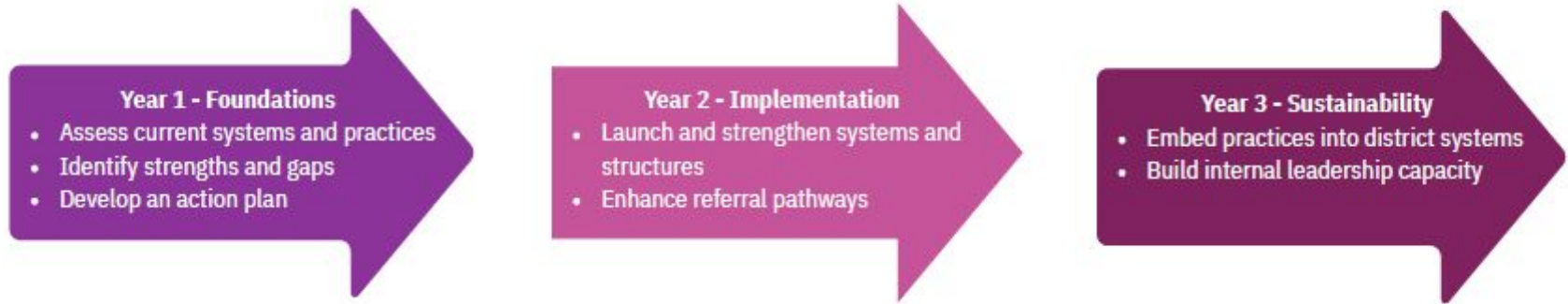


Centering Student and Family Voice

Support schools and districts in centering student and family voice as they learn, design, and engage with behavioral health services.



BCHNP's 3 Year Consultation Model



SY 2024-25

- Completed District & Building Assessments
- Identified need to Strengthen Tier 2 pathway
- Pilot Telehealth Partner

SY 2025-26

- **MTSS CST Teaming Structures Pilot**
- **SEB Universal Screener Pilot**
- **ID Service Gaps**
- **Strengthen Student Voice**

SY 2026-27

- District Wide Implementation of CST
- District Wide Implementation of Screener



MTSS Work This Year

CST Meeting Structures and Systems Development

Cohort Model for Phased Learning and Districtwide Implementation:

Cohort 1: Argenziano, Healey, WSNS (Fall 2025)

Cohort 2: Capuano, Winter Hill, Brown (Fall 2026)

Cohort 3: ESCS, Kennedy, SHS. NWFC (Spring 2027)

Progress:

- Established Teaming Structure for Whole Child Focus
- Standardizing Practices for District Wide Implementation

Universal Behavioral Health Screener Pilot

Overview: Identified 2 Screeners to pilot BESS & BIMAS with Cohort 1 Schools (Argenziano & Healey)

Goal: Pilot, evaluate, and scale up a valid, reliable, and equitable district-wide universal social emotional/behavioral health screener.

Progress:

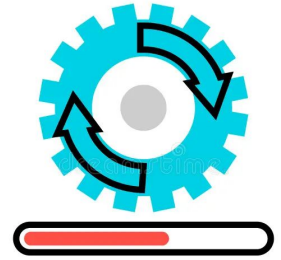
- Have screened 275 students
- Trained # staff in district
- Screened Students in 4 Buildings

Partnering with Student Services to Expand Access to Care and Strengthen Community Partnerships

Goal: Establish a high standard of care for mental health services by identifying gaps in services, strengthening community partnerships, and increasing access to care.

Progress:

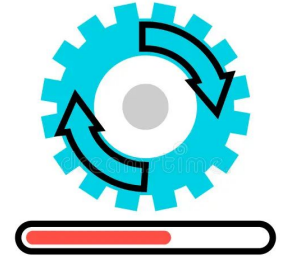
- Partnered with Student Services to evaluate telehealth providers and address mental health service gaps.
- Conducted Mental Health Needs Assessment with Student Support Teams across district to identify gaps in Mental Health Services to identify additional Community Partnerships



UPDATE

Centering Student & Family Voice

Goal: Center student and family voice in all aspects of design and improvement.



UPDATE

Progress:

- Collaborating with the Equity Department to better understand ways student voice is currently being elevated (SEAT).
- Developed Model for District Wide SEAT Committee to be implemented SY 26-27
- S.E.A.T committees to administer surveys in May 2026 to middle school & H.S.
- Students to evaluate mental health needs and satisfaction with existing services

A photograph of two students in a classroom. The student on the left is wearing a white hoodie and is looking down at something in their hands. The student on the right is wearing a light blue hoodie and is looking towards the camera while holding a large white sheet of paper. In the background, there is a poster for 'Healey HAWKS CLASSROOM' with the words 'SAFETY', 'OWNERSHIP', 'ACT RE', and 'RESPE' visible. There is also a globe on a shelf and a model of a building on the right.

Next Steps & Recommendations for SY 2026-27

Areas of Focus

“The district’s MTSS framework and intervention systems are clearly articulated in policy documents; however, implementation varies across schools, and interventions are not consistently used or understood districtwide.”

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Areas of Focus

Area of Opportunity	SPS Next Steps

- Strong infrastructure, working on consistent implementation
- Consistent family engagement practices and regular feedback
- [Continued Revision of DCAP](#)
- Centering student voice
- SEL screener
- Work will be continued under the responsibilities

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District Wide Implementation: 26-27 School Year

- District Wide Implementation of CST
 - Focus on Cohort 2 Fall 2026
 - Focus on Cohort 3 Spring 2027
- District Wide Implementation of Screener
 - School wide implementation in pilot schools
 - Pilot 2 grades in each of the remaining schools
- Establish Standard of Care
- Establish District SEAT Committee

Understand the difference between MTSS (curriculum, responsive classroom, rj, etc.)

Vs. CST – considering T2 and T3 interventions

Next step could potentially be sped

Glenda can help with the framing MTSS

Amy can help with the framing of CST

Interventions put in place

As we talk about different tiers of support... what

Amy had a handbook

Observations was good.

Strengthening the screeners

Diagram of AFA

CST is also really to support the staff members in thought partnership

Screeners are important

Referring after two rounds – however the fidelity of the intervention is important. No data

FAQs

What happens if a teacher doesn't refer?

At what point are families engaged?

What has already happened?

- “Conduct a district-wide assessment (R. Beretta’s work and Boston Children’s Partnership)
- DCAP will be revised this summer, and each summer going forward. Current committee working on this in DILT