



ELIZABETH PUBLIC SCHOOLS MTSS HANDBOOK

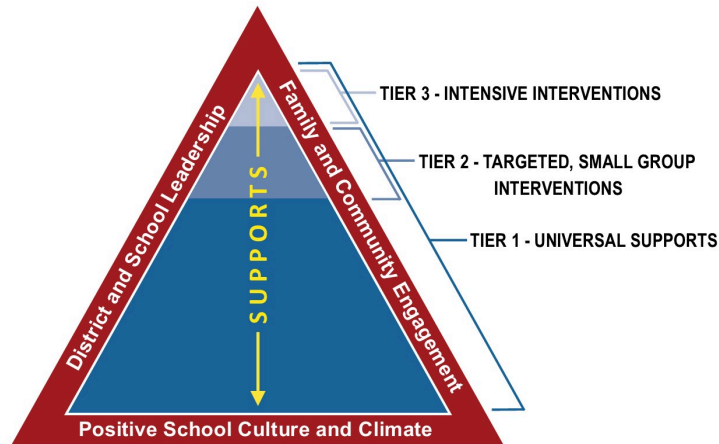


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Section 1: Introduction of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

What is the New Jersey Tiered System of Support?



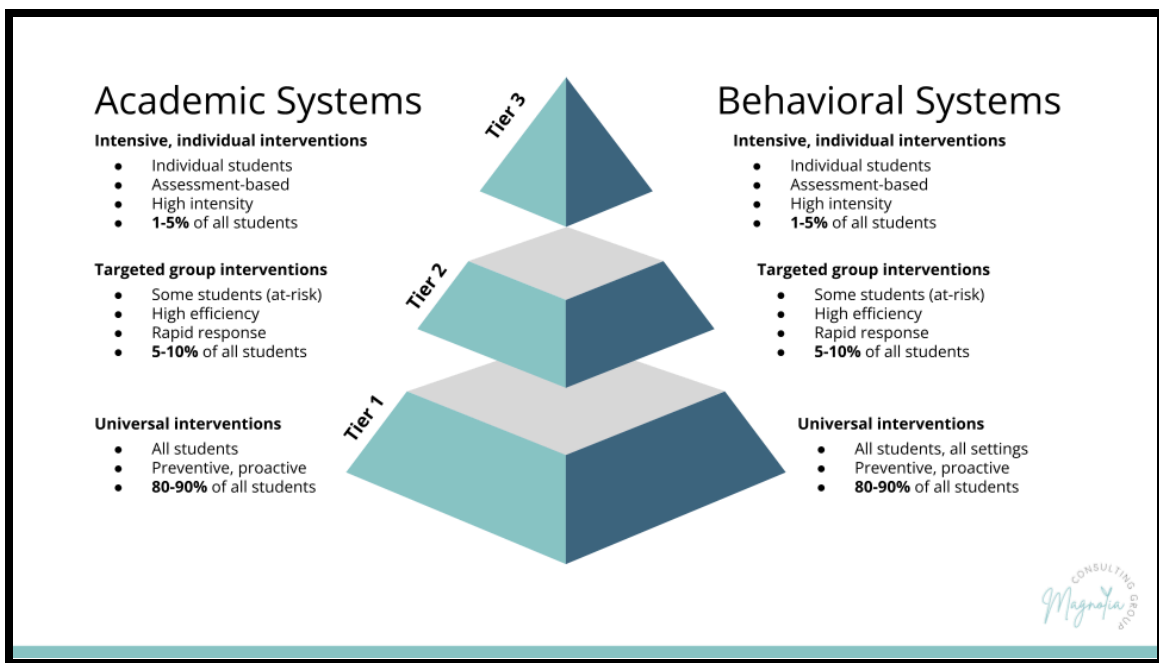
<https://www.nj.gov/education/njtss/>

The **New Jersey Tiered System of Support (NJTSS)** is an evidence-based framework for implementing academic and behavioral supports and interventions to improve achievement for ALL students.

The Elizabeth Public School District has developed a Tiered System of Support based on the state model.

These goals include:

- ▶ Identify students in need of additional support early
- ▶ Support teachers in identifying strengths and needs in a whole group, small group, and with individual students
- ▶ Reduce special education referrals
- ▶ Provide engaging instructional programs
- ▶ Establish baseline levels using assessments
- ▶ Promote greater parent understanding and participation in the Tiered System of Support process
- ▶ Narrow the achievement gap
- ▶ Promote a school culture and climate that is conducive to learning
- ▶ Emphasize proactive and culturally responsive practices that support positive behavior



The Tiers Defined:

Tier 1

- Provides high-quality learning environments, evidence-based curricular and instructional practices, and a continuum of supports and interventions.
- Includes planning for learner variability and differentiation.
- Instruction is delivered with fidelity.
- Flexibility in movement between the tiers.

Tier 2

- Provides supplemental support and interventions that are delivered in small groups and provided in either the general classroom or during an intervention period.
- Interventions include evidence-based instructional practices that increase in intensity, frequency, and duration based on the review of data during regular progress monitoring intervals.
- Continued participation in Tier 1 whole-group instruction.

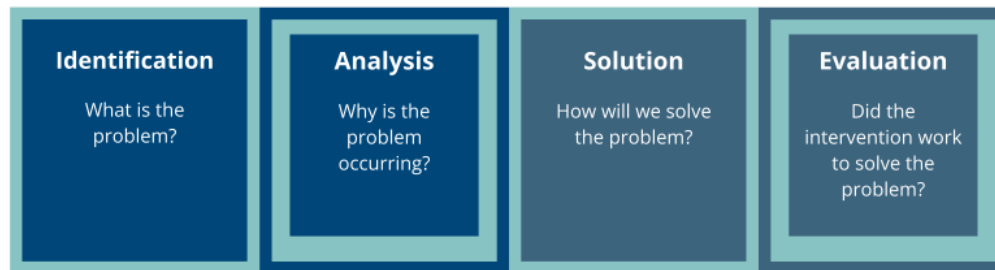
Tier 3

- Provides intensive support and interventions that may be delivered individually or in small groups, and are provided in or outside of the classroom.
- Intensive, sustained, individualized academic and behavioral supports are provided with fidelity.
- Frequent progress monitoring and data analysis.
- Continued participation in Tier 1, whole group instruction.

District Philosophy Statement

NJTSS Program Goal and Objectives

NJTSS is a data-based problem-solving process consisting of four components:



To support our overall objectives, the following steps have been outlined:

1. Provide high-quality instruction for all students in the general education classroom.
2. Ensure students participate in screeners to provide information about each student's learning and achievement.
3. Support educators to understand how to analyze student and programmatic data systematically.
4. Develop and maintain criteria to accurately identify struggling students.
5. Define and sort support programs into tiers based on the intensity of the intervention.
6. Provide targeted support for students for defined periods.
7. Monitor student progress to determine effectiveness throughout the school year.
8. Facilitate student movement throughout tiers based on the success or failure of each intervention.

The NJTSS model developed for the Elizabeth Public School District is based on core beliefs. By using NJTSS to identify and support students with learning and behavioral needs, we can ensure their success in the academic arena.

Core Beliefs

- We believe ALL students can learn and achieve at high levels regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, household income, or home language.
- We believe teachers make a positive difference in student achievement. Teachers will prepare ALL students for success in college, career, and our technological global society.
- We believe that effective leaders demonstrate unwavering commitment to high levels of achievement for ALL students.
- We believe that parents and caregivers are both valued partners and active participants in their children's learning. A shared sense of mutual responsibility for learning is the foundation for family involvement to ensure student success.

- We believe that every member of the Elizabeth Public Schools team has a responsibility to produce and support high levels of achievement for ALL students.

Our Vision

Elizabeth Public Schools will be one of the highest-performing urban school districts in the nation.

Our Promise

To provide an innovative and personalized learning environment that ensures that every child achieves excellence.

Our Goals

College preparedness, career readiness, and 'on-time' graduation for every child.

Core Components of NJTSS

Effective District and School Leadership	School leaders create a team and structure that communicates a vision of high academic, behavioral, and social-emotional goals.
Family and Community Engagement	Ongoing participation of family and community partners in the framework's design, implementation, and sustainability.
Positive School Culture and Climate	The school community emphasizes positive, proactive, and culturally responsive teaching practices. Physical, social, and emotional behaviors are addressed at the school and classroom level in a positive and culturally responsive manner.
High-Quality Learning Environments, Curricula, & Instructional Practices	Implementation of a three-tiered model of instruction and intervention, which includes assessment, data-based decision-making, and progress monitoring
Collaborative Problem Solving	Active, cooperative involvement of diverse school team members to study and address all students' academic, behavioral, and health needs.
Staff Professional Development and Supports	Team members' resources and high-quality coaching, training, model lessons, lesson studies, and other support are consistently provided throughout the school year.

Section 2: Overview of Program & Processes

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

The Elizabeth Public School District shall provide a program of multi-tiered systems of support for students experiencing health, behavioral, or academic difficulties. By doing so, we can help them function productively and develop positively in the classroom environment.

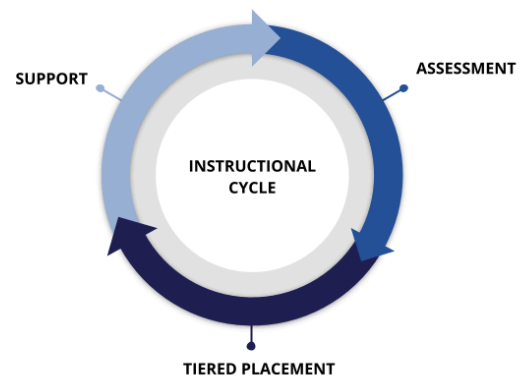
The NJTSS process consists of a referral by a parent/guardian or school staff member, data collection and analysis by a multi-disciplinary I&RS team, and the creation of an action plan. The action plan specifies interventions for improvement and outlines how improvement will be measured. A student remains in the action plan until marked progress occurs or a referral is made to the Child Study Team for an evaluation if warranted.

NJTSS Process Summary

Students are identified to receive Tier 1, 2, or 3 support based on assessments administered by classroom teachers. Assessments are administered three times a year, generally at the school year's beginning, middle, and end.

The majority of students, approximately 80%, require Tier 1 support to meet rigorous grade-level standards successfully. The progress of students placed in Tier 1 is monitored and reported through report cards.

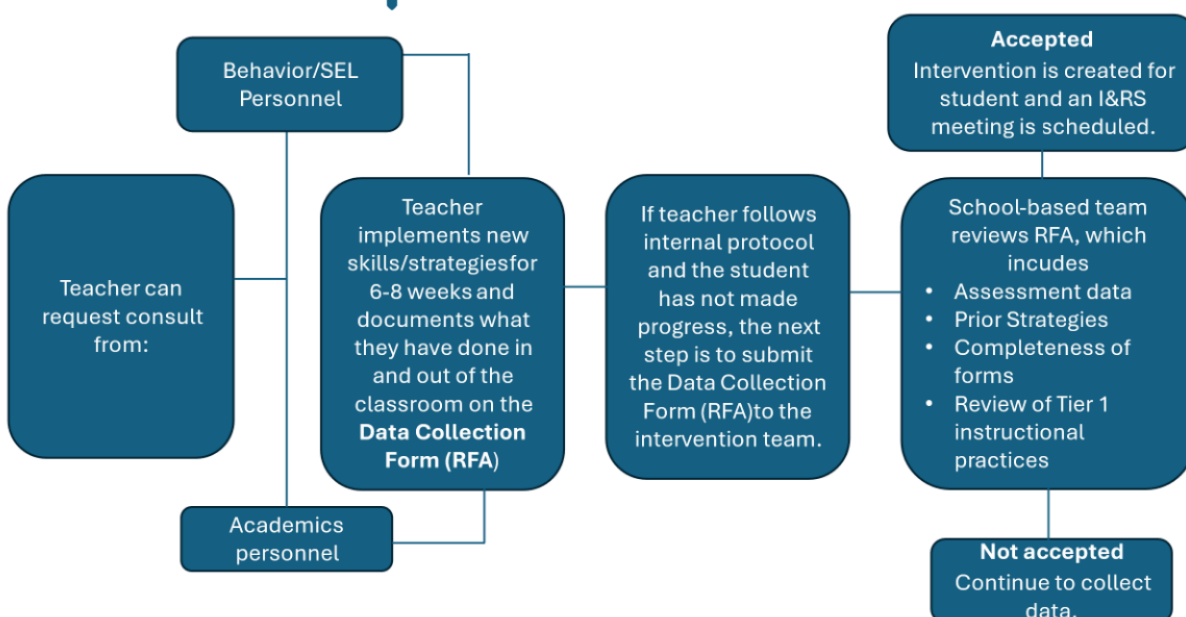
However, any teacher concerned about a student's progress within Tier 1 should use the appropriate progress monitoring tool to record the student's progress for at least 6 to 8 weeks. At that time, the concern may warrant an I&RS meeting to brainstorm the best way to support the student.



The students who score at or below the 20th percentile receive Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions. All students in these tiers will be progress monitored over 6-8 weeks. Progress monitoring data, work samples, and teacher input are reviewed and discussed regularly among all teachers working with the student to address the identified need. I&RS data team meetings will be held to assess student progress.

Students can move between intervention tiers based on performance within each intervention cycle. If progress is made, the student can continue with the current intervention until the end of the cycle. If progress is not made, the data team can add more support to meet the student's needs. The goal is to provide all students with the appropriate level/intensity of the most beneficial intervention. After each cycle, all tiered support groups will be reviewed and adjusted accordingly based on assessment and/or progress monitoring data. See the process chart below for additional information.

Request for Assistance



Intervention & Referral Services

The district is "...required to establish and implement a coordinated system in each school building for the planning and delivery of intervention and referral services that are designed to assist students who are experiencing learning, behavior, or health difficulties ...; and which are designed to: assist staff who have difficulties in addressing students' learning, behavior, or health needs." N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8.1

Therefore, an Intervention and Referral Services Team (I&RS) must be established in every school. The I&RS is a formal, school-based, collaborative problem-solving unit to assist teachers in generating intervention strategies to meet the needs of students who demonstrate evidence of learning, behavioral, and/or health difficulties. Within the Elizabeth Public Schools, the responsibility for ensuring a coordinated system of intervention and referral services falls with the school principal and the I&RS Team.

Functions of Intervention and Referral Services Teams

The functions of the Intervention and Referral Services Team in each school building shall be to:

1. Identify learning, behavioral, and/or health difficulties of students
2. Collect thorough information on the identified learning, behavioral, and/or health difficulties
3. Respond to completed data collection form (RFA) within 7-10 days
4. Develop and implement immediate action plans that provide for appropriate school or community interventions or referrals to school and community resources based on collected data and desired outcomes for the identified difficulties
5. Provide support, guidance, and professional development to school staff who identify learning, behavioral, and/or health difficulties

6. Involve parents/guardians actively in the development and implementation of Intervention and referral services action plans
 7. Coordinate the access to and delivery of school resources and services for achieving the outcomes identified in the action plans
 8. Coordinate the services of community-based social and health provider agencies and other community resources for achieving the outcomes identified in the action plans
 9. Maintain records of all requests for assistance and all intervention action plans within the RTI Direct system;
 10. Review and assess the effectiveness of the provisions of each intervention action Plan, at least every 6-8 weeks, to achieve the outcomes identified in that plan and modify each action plan appropriately to achieve outcomes; and
 11. Continually review the total I&RS action plans and interventions implemented to identify patterns, at a minimum, annually, to make recommendations to the principal and to collaboratively plan for improving school programs and services.
- I&RS Team.

The core multidisciplinary team consists of the building administrator (or designee), who is the chairperson, and three faculty members. The classroom teacher or other staff member requesting assistance serves as a member of the team. Community members may also be invited to participate in the I&RS meeting as deemed appropriate for community services and activities. In addition, the parent of a child experiencing difficulties will be notified and may be included in the committee problem-solving discussions. To ensure access and positive parental involvement on the committee, information regarding the I&RS and how to access the services should be available in the school's student handbook, distributed each September.

Pre-Intervention Activities

Pre-intervention activities are the informal strategies and interventions implemented in the classroom. All of the items below are documented before being presented to the I&RS Team.

Examples include but are not limited to the following:

1. Previous teaching strategies/interventions that have been employed (such as progress monitoring, word analysis, DRA results, behavior charts, etc.)
2. Teacher/Parent conferences, emails, and phone calls in which alternatives have been discussed
3. Teacher/Principal conferences regarding the problem and suggested solutions.
4. Medical screenings by the school nurse, and any other professionals who may have input related to the student
5. Consultation with the guidance counselor/school social worker, or teacher

Procedures for Accessing I&RS

Although a parent may request the Principal to convene an I&RS meeting to address concerns that have been identified, most requests for I&RS assistance will come from the classroom teacher. Early in the school year, the teacher will identify students demonstrating academic distress and/or at-risk behavior so that the I&RS can proactively assist before the student experiences failure.

If the parent and/or teacher do not note satisfactory progress, then the teacher, Principal, and/or parent will reconvene with the I&RS to increase the intensity of the intervention. Collaborative discussion should center on using the data collected to develop supplemental Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 instructional/behavioral interventions within the school to address the particular problem.

What is the Parent/Guardian Role?

Before meeting about your child, you will be notified that your child's learning needs are being discussed. The I&RS Team will invite you to participate and may request that you provide additional information that will help develop strategies to support your child's Learning.

(Elizabeth Public Schools, Administrative Regulation 20, File Code 6164.1)

Family Communication & Involvement Regarding NJTSS/I&RS

Elizabeth Public Schools believes that when families play a role in:

- Our district NJTSS/I&RS process is posted on the district website.
- Parents/guardians are informed of interventions delivered at Tier 2 and 3 and invited to join any relevant NJTSS/I&RS meetings.
- Parents/guardians are notified of student progress on interventions at regular intervals.
- If age-appropriate, students are a part of monitoring their progress.
- Parents/guardians/students are provided ways to support student intervention needs at home.

Section 3: Curriculum, Intervention, and Assessment

Overview of District Curriculum Approach



All curriculum and instructional plans focus on achieving the goals set by the district's strategic plan. Each content area's curriculum is aligned to and reflects the New Jersey Learning Standards, based on research about how children learn. Learning targets in each content area provide all students with the knowledge, skills, and academic experiences needed to meet or exceed the rigorous expectations. Teachers strive to learn about students' unique cultural experiences and employ teaching strategies that match the diverse learning styles of their students.

Various programs, resources, and instructional approaches are deployed to support the diverse needs of all students. Language arts literacy is essential for academic success and is the principal focus of instruction in the primary grades, providing a strong foundation to build upon in subsequent years. To that end, intervention programs and student support are a priority for our youngest learners. We ensure all students can read various grade-appropriate texts fluently before the beginning of third grade.

The district collects and analyzes student data to identify strengths and weaknesses of programs, our students, and our teachers at all levels. The cycle of data analysis, curriculum revision, and professional development to prepare staff to meet student needs is ongoing.



ELIZABETH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Students believe in themselves and act intentionally to build relationships, persist through obstacles, and activate their academic, social, emotional, and professional knowledge and skills to reach their potential.

1. Establish and maintain relational capacity with others.

2. Activate a physical and digital network of support for current and future success.

3. Seek cultural understanding or relates to people of diverse backgrounds.

1. Monitor progress toward long-term goals and aspirations.

2. Seek help and feedback when necessary.

3. Develop a strong student voice to self-advocate.

1. Create a strong sense of self-identity by connecting with one's emotions, thoughts, and values.

2. Develop and activate leadership traits and behaviors.

3. Think critically, behave safely, and participate responsibly in the digital world.

Students develop academic skills and can successfully complete rigorous college and career preparatory curriculum and experiences.

1. Communicate thoughts and ideas through the writing process.

2. Write as a tool to demonstrate learning and deepen understanding of content.

1. Use questioning to demonstrate critical thinking and clarify learning.

2. Conduct proficient, academic investigation through the research process.

1. Communicate clearly through effective speaking and active listening.

2. Work productively and effectively within groups in blended learning environments.

1. Manage materials using physical and digital organizational systems and routines.

2. Manage time to plan and prioritize appropriately.

3. Organize information and thinking.

1. Deepen understanding of a variety of texts by engaging in the critical reading process.

Students research opportunities, set goals, make choices that support their long-term aspirations, and successfully navigate to the next level.

1. Explore education and college path based on personal strengths, skills, and interests.

2. Explore college admission requirements, including financing, testing, and application.

3. Plan education and college path based on personal goals.

1. Build awareness of personal fit related to career readiness and selection.

2. Plan education and career path based on personal goals.

1. Develop personal financial literacy to make appropriate financial choices.

2. Develop a professional profile and monitor digital footprint.



Assessment

To identify strengths and weaknesses of curriculum, programs, students, and teachers at all levels, the district collects and analyzes student data continuously. Assessment tools, standardized tests, and curriculum-based measures work in tandem to evaluate student success and teacher effectiveness in supporting these goals. Interventionists use additional assessment tools when necessary to identify students areas of strength and weakness.

Multilingual Learners and NJTSS

When assessing and designing interventions within the New Jersey Tiered System of Supports (NJTSS), it is essential to address the unique language and academic needs of Multilingual Learners (MLLs). This process ensures staff can distinguish the difference between developing a second language and academic difficulties that may impact second language learning.

A comprehensive understanding of each ML can be achieved through multiple data sources, such as:

- Previous schooling information
- Classroom data and anecdotal notes
- Home interviews
- ACCESS for ELL scores
- School records

Additionally, language programs and services provided to MLs form an integral part of their Tier 1 instruction, ensuring foundational language and academic needs are addressed. Collaborative conversations involving bilingual and ESL staff are essential to create a holistic approach that supports both language development and academic success.

Special Education and NJTSS

Special education in Elizabeth Public Schools aims to provide tailored support and resources to students with diverse learning needs, ensuring equitable access to a quality education. This includes interventive, remedial, and compensatory education, as well as additional related services and supports as deemed appropriate by multidisciplinary teams working with the individual child. Within this framework, the New Jersey Tiered System of Supports (NJTSS) emerges as a comprehensive approach to identifying and addressing academic, behavioral, and social-emotional challenges encountered by students. NJTSS operates on a tiered intervention model, offering increasingly intensive support as needed, thereby promoting early intervention and prevention strategies. By integrating evidence-based practices, data-driven decision-making, and collaboration among educators, families, and community stakeholders, NJTSS fosters a responsive and inclusive educational environment where all students can thrive. Through its emphasis on proactive intervention and personalized support, NJTSS exemplifies a commitment to meeting the diverse needs of every learner, ultimately fostering academic success and holistic development.

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring is a key component of our instructional intervention program. Progress monitoring is used to monitor and assess students' performance over time, providing the opportunity to report student rates of improvement or responsiveness to the designed interventions. It also compares the efficacy of different forms of intervention or support put in place.

Assessment data is collected frequently and is used to inform the building-level NJTSS team when changes in the individual student plan may be needed. Progress is defined and determined based on student performance compared to benchmark indicators and is determined during the development of the student support plan.

According to [RTI 4 Success](#), if a student is making sufficient progress, the teacher will continue to implement the intervention for a suggested period. If a student is not achieving the expected learning rate, the team experiments with instructional components (frequency, duration, and intensity of interventions) to improve the learning rate.

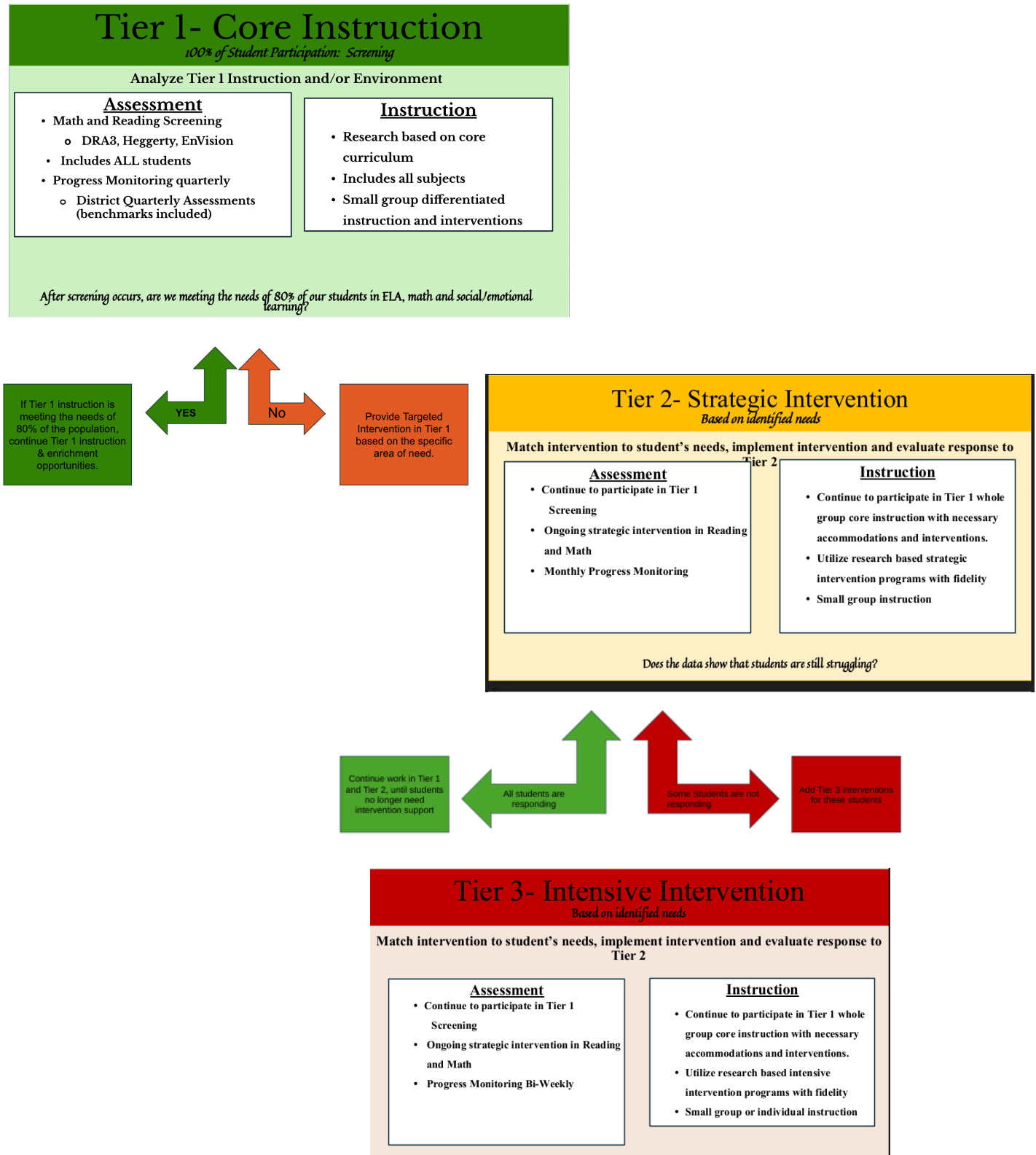
Elizabeth Public Schools Tools for Ongoing Assessment

Elizabeth Public Schools utilizes some of the following assessments to identify students needing intervention (English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Social Emotional) throughout the school year.

Assessment	Description
DRA3/EDL2	<p>DRA3 provides educators and their classrooms with a criterion-based, authentic benchmark/interim assessment evaluating student reading level and reading behaviors in Kindergarten through Grade 8. DRA3 determines independent or instructional levels of reading engagement, oral reading fluency, and reading comprehension. Administered in grades 1-8.</p> <p>DRA3 Developmental Reading Assessment, Third Edition</p>

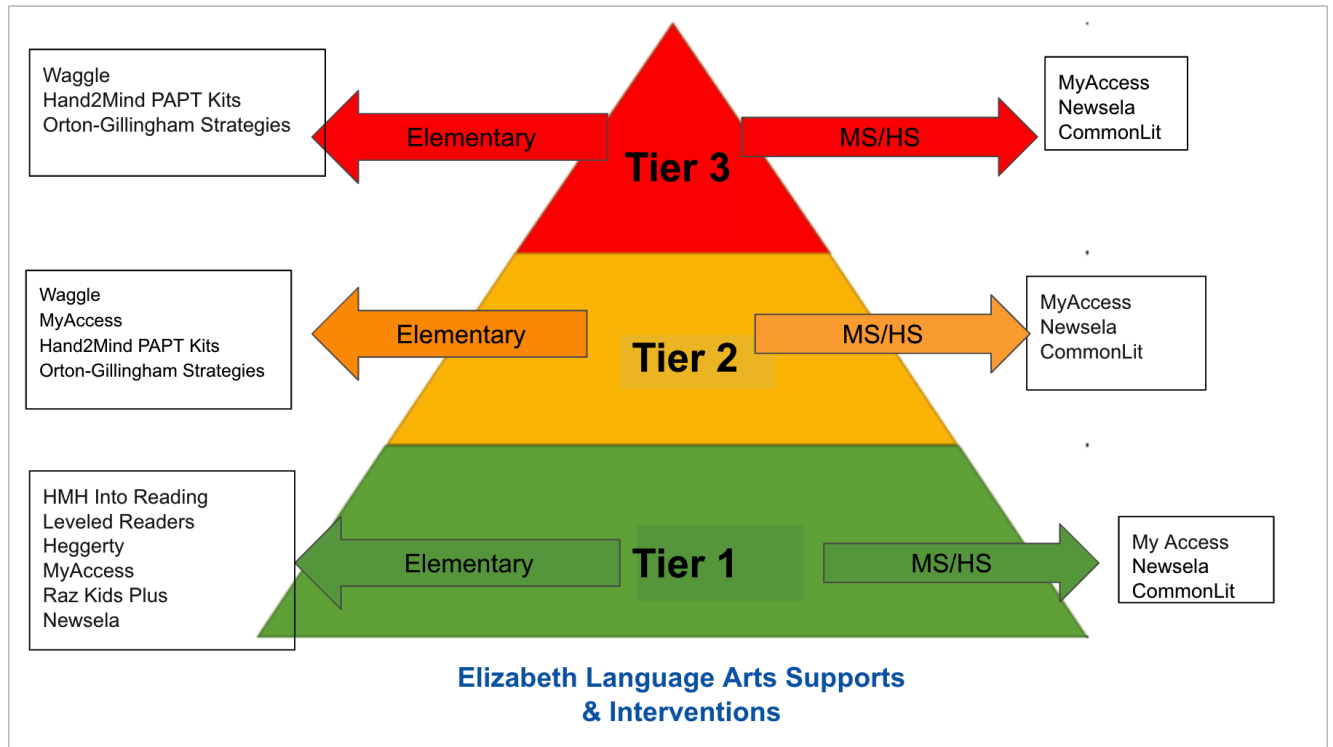
Benchmarks	Benchmark assessments are standardized tests administered periodically throughout an academic year to measure students' progress against predetermined benchmarks or standards. These assessments provide educators with data to evaluate the effectiveness of their instructional methods and to identify areas where students may need additional support. They serve as checkpoints to gauge students' mastery of essential skills and knowledge, informing instructional decisions and interventions.
Panorama	<p>Increase student achievement and well-being with Panorama's research-backed social-emotional learning survey.</p> <p>Social Emotional Learning Assessment Panorama Education</p>
Haggerty	<p>The Haggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum provides students with consistent and repeated instruction, and this transfers to developing a student's decoding and encoding skills. Administered in grades K and 1.</p> <p>Haggerty</p>
EnVision	Envision Mathematics uses a mix of formative, summative, performance-based, and diagnostic assessments to evaluate student understanding and guide instruction. These assessments focus on conceptual understanding, real-world problem-solving, and personalized feedback through adaptive technology.

Elizabeth Public School District NJTSS Intervention Process



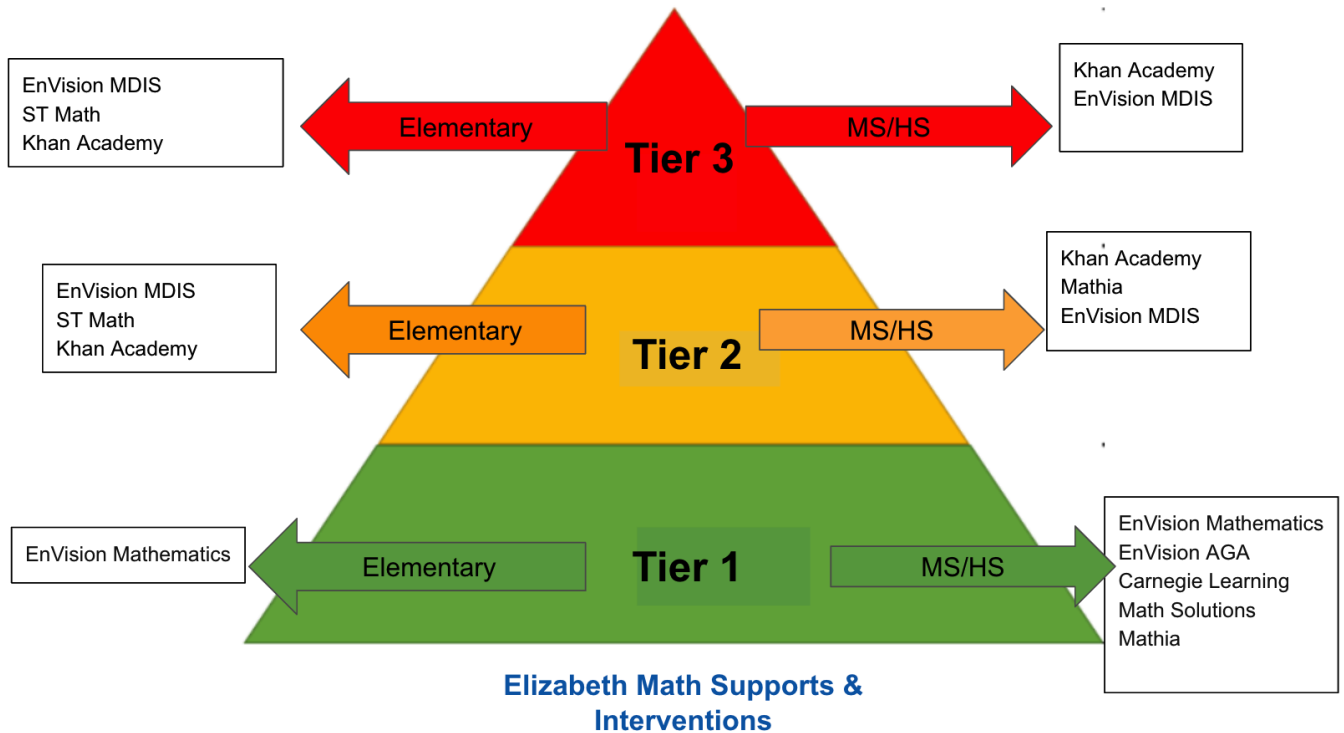
Language Arts Instructional Supports and Interventions

The following are some of the Language Arts instructional supports and interventions that are currently utilized throughout Elizabeth Public Schools.



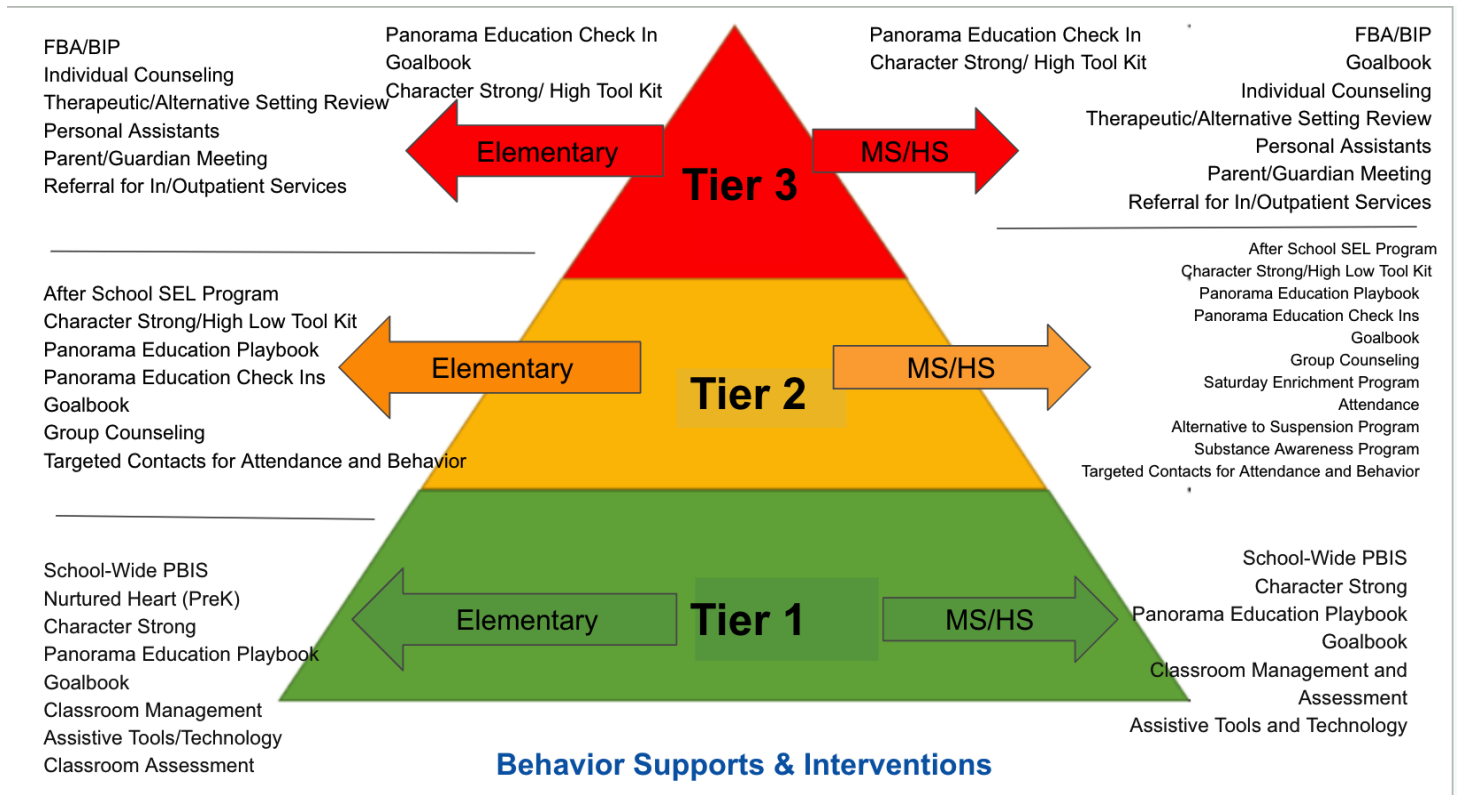
Math Supports and Interventions

The following is a list of some of the math instructional supports and interventions that are currently utilized throughout Elizabeth Public Schools.



Behavior Supports and Interventions

The following list is a list of some of the behavioral supports and interventions that are currently utilized throughout Elizabeth Public Schools.



Appendix A: Key Terminology

Accommodation

Manipulations in a student's environment that will remove or counter a barrier to their learning.

Culturally Responsive Instruction

Inclusive content covered in the curriculum reflects the diversity of society that is based on how students from diverse backgrounds see themselves and their experiences in the curriculum, their prior knowledge, including their culture and language, and the idea that culture is central to student learning because there is strong evidence that cultural practices shape thinking processes.

Data points

Refer to the assessment results gathered using an identified progress monitoring tool.

Differentiation

Additional or extended instruction based on assessment of the essential learning outcomes. Instruction considers learning style, intelligence, interest, goal setting, cultural responsiveness, and multiple approaches to teaching and assessing.

Duration

In NJTSS, this is used in terms of the number of weeks an intervention will continue.

Essential Outcome

An essential outcome is a measurable learning target that is essential for students to bring into their long-term memory. It is not negotiable as to whether or not the students know this concept or can do this skill; they are considered an essential part of student learning.

Fidelity

Refers to the extent to which a process and/or instruction are implemented as intended to maximize effectiveness. When checking for fidelity we ask if each identified component of the process and/or instruction is evident in the process or instruction, implemented in the manner specified, and implemented to the degree specified.

Formative Assessment

Refers to measures used before or during learning to inform instruction.

Frequency

In NJTSS, this is used in terms of intervention delivery regarding the number of days in a week and the time in a day an intervention is delivered.

Intensive Intervention

Refers to the systematic use of a technique, program, or practice designed to improve learning or performance in specific areas of student need, focusing on single or small numbers of discrete skills with substantial numbers of instructional minutes in addition to those provided to all students.

Intervention

Teach a new skill or never-acquired skill or challenge a student through critical thinking and problem-solving. Interventions include direct instruction as well as application and practice.

Interventionist

A licensed educator who can implement scientific, research-based, or evidence-based, intensive interventions with the referred student.

Modification

Changes in the curricular or behavioral expectations that are appropriate for a particular student's needs or abilities.

Normed Data

Refers to national norms that indicate grade-level expectations, ranges, or growth expectancies.

Progress Monitoring

A scientifically based practice that is used to assess students' academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class.

Tier 1 Progress Monitoring

Universal screening in reading, writing, math, and behavior. Administered and analyzed three times a year.

Tier 2 Progress Monitoring

Measures that indicate progress a student is making based on intervention delivery. Data is collected every three to six weeks during intervention delivery and up to a month after the conclusion of the intervention.

Tier 3 Progress Monitoring

Measures that indicate progress a student is making based on intervention delivery. Data is collected at least weekly using a valid assessment tool.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (NJTSS)

NJTSS is a process for achieving higher levels of academic and behavioral success for all students through high-quality instructional practice, continuous review of student progress (multiple measures), and collaboration

Strategies

In NJTSS, these are considered teacher approaches to instruction or the techniques we use to address attendance or behavioral needs. These typically support intervention delivery.

Tier 1

High-quality instruction and standardized behavioral expectations are provided to all students in the general education setting through the Common Core Curriculum. Tier 1 is also used to differentiate instruction through a culturally responsive lens, taking individual and/or group needs into account. Tier 1 includes the curriculum, programs, and services that are used with all students, with the expectation that 80% of all students will make adequate progress according to screening benchmark expectations.

Tier 2

Based on screening data, instructional team discussions, and identification of student intervention needs, teams develop intervention plans for small groups of students with similar needs. Interventions are then delivered in small group settings for 8-10 weeks.

Tier 3

A problem-solving, team approach through which students with significant needs are identified and measurable, targeted options are collaboratively planned and continuously reviewed to address student progress. The ratio of students to teachers is no more than 1:2 and interventions are typically delivered daily.