

RTI vs. MTSS

While many states still view multitiered systems of support, or MTSS, as synonymous with RTI, the former term is increasingly being used to describe the umbrella under which all academic, behavioral, and social-emotional intervention efforts fall. RTI is more commonly viewed as simply the model for academic interventions. Use this chart to differentiate RTI and MTSS.

Subject	RTI	MTSS
Legislation	The IDEA revised the identification process by turning the focus away from the severe discrepancy model and encouraging states and school districts to take advantage of a growing body of scientific research that supports methods, such as RTI, that more accurately distinguish between children who truly have SLD from those whose learning difficulties could be resolved with scientifically based, general education interventions. 71 Fed. Reg. 46,647 (2006).	The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 , Pub. L. No. 114-95, which reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, suggests that LEAs that receive federal financial assistance under Title II of the ESSA may use those funds to develop and implement their tiered intervention programs. According to ESSA, the term "multi-tier system of supports" means "a comprehensive continuum of evidence-based, systemic practices to support a rapid response to students' needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based instructional decisionmaking." Pub. L. No. 114-95, Sec. 8002(33).
Structure	Three or four intervention tiers, typically for academics, that run parallel to a framework of positive behavior interventions and supports for students.	A fluid continuum of integrated supports that encompasses RTI, PBIS, and other interventions for students, teachers, families, and the community. The foundation of the model is implementation science, which looks at what hinders and helps the successful implementation of interventions.
Emphasis	Mitigate academic challenges and accurately identify students with disabilities.	Prioritize prevention by promoting a positive school climate and heading off learning obstacles before they affect students or the adults around them.
Key components	1. Universal screening.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and teaming at all levels.

	<p>2. Continuous progress monitoring.</p> <p>3. Continuum of evidence-based interventions.</p> <p>4. Data-based decision-making and problem-solving.</p> <p>5. Implementation fidelity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of collaborative problem-solving. • Integrated assessment and data-collection systems to inform all decisions. • Positive school climate. • Family, parent, and community engagement. • Evidence-based instructional practices.
Data-based decision-making	The focus is primarily on how a student responds to standards-based instruction and intervention. Teams use the data to figure out if the student is gifted and/or needs special ed.	Multiple stakeholders look at district-level, school-level, grade-level, classroom-level, and individual student-level data to determine needed student interventions for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional issues, as well as needed changes to improve equity, inclusion, and cultural responsiveness.
Family and community involvement	Communicate and collaborate with families to improve and celebrate students' progress and success.	Ensure family and community partnerships are equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive, and use a continuum of layered supports to improve relationships, engagement, and skills of stakeholders.
Professional development	Offer tiered coaching to teachers who are showing difficulties in delivering interventions with fidelity to students.	Offer a continuum of layered supports for professional development available to all educators, not just to those already demonstrating difficulty, so everyone can build capacity.

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