

MTSS Diamond Model – Quick Reference Guide

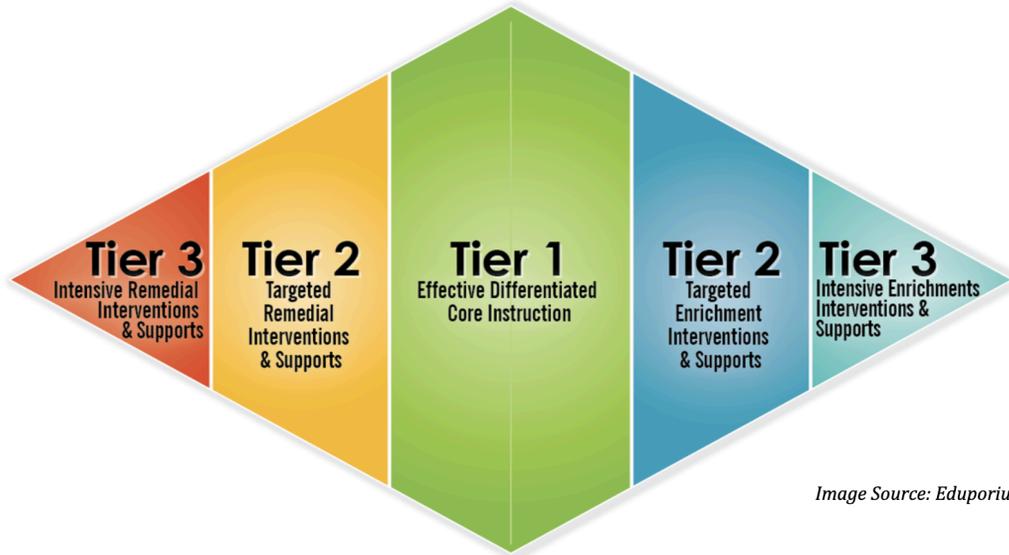


Image Source: Eduporium

MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) is a framework that integrates academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports for all students. Unlike older *triangle* models, the *diamond model* recognizes both intervention and extension needs to ensure that advanced learners (sometimes referred to as “gifted and talented learners”) also receive appropriate challenges. This model encourages educators to see MTSS as a dynamic, student-centered framework that values growth for every learner, whether that growth comes from closing gaps, extending learning, or both.

Key Takeaways for Educators:

- **Whole-Child Focus:** MTSS addresses academic, behavioral, and SEL needs in an integrated way.
- **Dual Purpose:** The diamond model supports both remediation *and* enrichment.
- **Fluid Movement:** Students can move between tiers as needs change—MTSS is not a one-way progression.
- **Tier 1 as the Anchor:** High-quality core instruction benefits all students and is the foundation for every other tier.
- **Equity and Access:** The model ensures that interventions and opportunities for acceleration are accessible to all learners, not just a select few.

- **Collaboration is Key:** Effective MTSS implementation requires coordination between general educators, specialists, administrators, and families.

The MTSS Diamond – Tier Overview

Tier	Focus	Who It Serves	Examples of Supports
Extension (Gifted/Talented)	Enrichment and acceleration	Students exceeding grade-level standards	Independent study projects, mentorship, advanced coursework, dual enrollment
Tier 3	Intensive, individualized intervention	~1–5% of students	1:1 reading intervention, behavioral wraparound services, functional behavior assessment
Tier 2	Targeted small-group support	~5–15% of students	Reading fluency groups, social skills instruction, targeted math workshops
Tier 1	Core, high-quality instruction for all	100% of students	UDL-based lessons, SEL curriculum, formative assessment, differentiation

MTSS in Action – Special Education Collaboration Tips

- **Tier 1:** Support general educators in embedding UDL strategies and proactive classroom management.
- **Tier 2:** Collaborate on intervention group design; share progress-monitoring tools.
- **Tier 3:** Participate in data review meetings to determine if intensive supports are reducing skill gaps or if a special education evaluation is warranted.

Why This Matters

- Ensures all students – including gifted learners – are challenged appropriately.

- Reduces over-identification for special education by providing robust Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports first.
- Creates a shared language between general education, special education, and administration.

Pro Tip for Educators

Keep a Tier Tracking Log: as illustrated in the example below, this Tier Tracking Log is a simple table noting which interventions or extensions each student is receiving and their progress over time. This promotes transparency and helps in data-based decision making.

Example Tier Tracking Log

Student Name	Grade	Subject Area	Current Tier	Intervention or Extension Strategy	Frequency	Progress Notes	Date Reviewed
Alex M.	4	Reading	Tier 2	Small group decoding support	3x/week	Improving fluency; accuracy still a focus	9/10/25
Jamie R.	7	Math	Tier 1	Enrichment project in algebra	Weekly	Highly engaged; needs more challenge in problem-solving	9/10/25
Samira L.	10	SEL	Tier 3	Individual counseling sessions	2x/week	Increased participation in class; self-advocacy improving	9/10/25