GCED

Goodhue County Education District

MTSS Manual

2017-18

This manual is a resource for all staff members' working on MTSS in our member districts:

- Cannon Falls Independent School District #252
- Goodhue Independent School District #253
- Kenyon Wanamingo Independent School District #2172
- Lake City Independent School District #813
- Red Wing Independent School District #256
- Zumbrota Mazeppa Independent School District #2805

Table of Contents

Introduction

The Goodhue County Education District (GCED) is proud to serve its six member districts.

All of our member districts take pride in the services and supports they provide for their students. Each district is dedicated to the important work they do. GCED supports member districts' work using a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to meet the needs of all students. In Spring 2014 the GCED Superintendents Council and the School Board charged GCED with full implementation of MTSS including supporting Tier 1 Instruction so that all students receive the support when they need it in order to be successful with academic and social behaviors in the school environment.

> **Tier 1** is the universal instruction and practices provided for all students in order to make annual growth. Tier 1 instruction is designed and intended to meet students needs so that at least 80% of the student population meets proficiency with only Tier 1 support.

> **Tier 2** is for supplemental, targeted instruction provided to the students for whom Tier 1 instruction was not effective for meaningful educational progress. Tier 2 includes standard intervention programs or interventions designed through the problem solving process.

> **Tier 3** is where intensive instruction is provided for students for whom Tier 1 and Tier 2 services are not effective to drive meaningful educational progress. Tier 3 *may* include special education, but it is not synonymous with special education. Some students may need Tier 3 support but do not have a disability or an IEP.

WHY do this work? This system sets us up for "leading educational excellence and equity. Every day for every one" (MDE, 2015). Using data allows us to improve at each organizational level; it allows us to measure the effectiveness of our systematic work. This system allows us to:

District Level **Focus on K-12 Vision and Goals**
Identify K-12 Curriculum gaps
Monitor achievement of groups/subgroups of students
Direct funds to systems/programs that are working
District support change
Accountability to the community
Create buy-in from all stakeholders

School Level **Identify gaps in curriculum, support systems, instructional practices**
Measure effectiveness of programs and practices
Student involvement monitoring success/pride
Better meet the needs of students

Focus on transitions in and out of school

Teacher/Student Level   **Focus on specific skill attainment/Standards-based reporting**
Identify gaps in curriculum and instructions
Closely monitor student growth
Monitor effectiveness of curriculum/supplemental programming
Inform instruction and pacing of instruction

Many thanks to GCED and member district staff members that have worked on MTSS implementation in Goodhue County the past several years. Significant work from these team members have led us here. This manual is reflective of their past and their present work as we move forward with full implementation.

MTSS Functional Model

Multi-Tiered System of Support
Functional Model
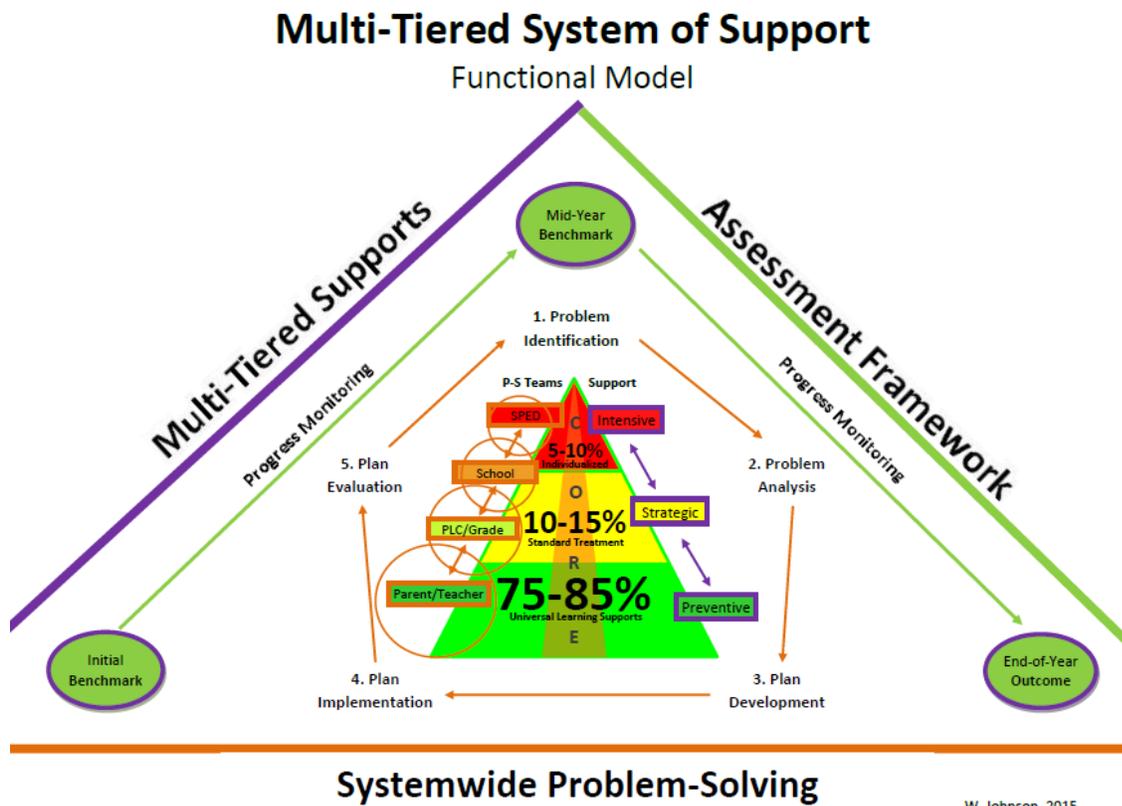
MTSS = Multi-Tiered System of Supports

A Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) is a *framework* of instructional design aimed to support all students in making progress towards and exceeding mastery of grade-level content standards.

GCED's functional model of our MTSS includes three essential elements:

1. **Assessment Framework**
2. **Multi-Tiered Supports**
3. **Systemwide Problem-Solving**

In an MTSS framework, instructional supports are differentiated by levels of support to accelerate growth for students who lag behind their peers, as well as those exceeding grade-level expectations. A school-wide, multi-level instructional system for preventing school failure includes screening, progress monitoring, and data-based decision making for instruction and movement within the multi-level system. (MDE, 2015)

What does that *really* mean? It means that we are building **a system that ensures students receive the help they need when they need it**: *ONE* system of multiple supports – in academics and behavior.

MTSS means that…
- **Students** have the support they need when they need it:
  - First and foremost - all of our students have access to high-quality instruction in the classroom, including instructional and behavioral supports for all students to reach proficiency.
  - Secondly, targeted, specific prevention/remediation interventions are provided for students whose academic achievement or behaviors lag behind the norm for their grade level.
  - Thirdly, for students not responding to Tier 1 and 2 interventions, more intensive, individualized interventions will be offered.

- **Staff members** problem solve with student data to inform their instruction:
  - Universal Screenings in Reading/Math are taken three times a year.
    - Based on the data results, staff members will offer necessary interventions for specific students.
    - They will then progress monitor throughout the intervention(s) and respond accordingly.
  - Formative Assessment Process
    - Teachers continually assess students to know what they know and what they still need to know. This data is used to inform teachers' instruction to best facilitate the learning for all.

This is all essential work because in education, our work is focused on four essential questions; our response to these questions is all a part of our MTSS.

1. What do we want our students to know?
   Question 1 involves our state and national standards. It is our job as educators to break down the standards to the most essential standards we want our students to learn. From there, we need to examine specific learning targets for our students. We have effective universal instruction for all of our students.

2. How will we know if they know it?
   As educators we need to regularly assess our students to know if they have learned the necessary target. For math and reading, we screen all K - 10 students three times a year.

3. How will we respond it they do not know it?
   If we learn that students do not know the intended learning target we provide a strategic intervention and monitor students' progress. The data from the progress monitoring will

inform us if the intervention is working or not. If not working after 7 weeks, we problem solve as a team and look at the next intervention to try. This is all in addition to the core instruction that the students already receive with their peers.

4. How will we respond if they already know it?
   Students that already know the material are ready to move on. This data helps inform the teacher that these students are ready for enrichment lessons.

The bottom line….our system needs to allow for the continual process of assessing our students, which provides student data. Our teachers then need to respond to that data to ensure that students receive the targeted, specific help they need **when** they need it.

Assessment Framework

Member Districts universally benchmark students in grades K - 8 for reading and math using Fastbridge assessments. Specific assessments per grade level are identified on the [GCED Assessment Framework, found on our website](#).   [Assessment windows can also be found on the GCED website](#).

Data Protocols
- GCED will draft Assessment Calendar in spring for the following school year with principals' and superintendents' input.
- The [GCED Assessment Calendar](#) can be found on the GCED website.
- All K - 8 students will participate in universal benchmarking.
- Districts may opt to use a SWAT team approach or classroom teachers to administer the assessments.
- Grade level reps will maintain records.
- School level leadership teams will bring grade level data to grade level teams where it will be used for problem solving.
- Progress monitoring should occur for all students not making grade level targets.
- Grade level teams will summarize fall to spring growth data, which should be used to plan for fall intervention needs.

District Level   Monitor data quarterly
- Identify students on track to pass MCA state assessment
- Measure impact of interventions/programs
- Monitor number of students needing additional support
- Monitor resource allocations
- Monitor behavior climate of the school

Monitor data at the end of a marking period
- Monitor effectiveness of support systems
- Monitor loss of instructional time
- Monitor types of absences

Monitor Yearly
- Measure impact that the system has on percent proficiency levels

School Level   Monitor data quarterly
- Track grade levels proficiency rates from year to year
- Identify number of students on track to pass MCA state assessment
- Measure impact of interventions/programs
- Monitor number of students needing additional support
- Monitor PBIS programming to improve school climate

Monitor data at the end of a marking period
- Monitor effectiveness of support systems
- Monitor loss of instructional time

Monitor Yearly
- Compare proficiency rates to the state level

Teacher/Student Level

Monitor data quarterly
- Monitor student growth
- Identify instructional grouping for specific skills
- Progress monitor students involved in interventions

Monitor data at the end of a marking period
- Monitor specific students to measure the impact of the additional support that is provided
- Monitor students' progress
- Monitor loss of instructional time
- Identify students' strengths and weaknesses
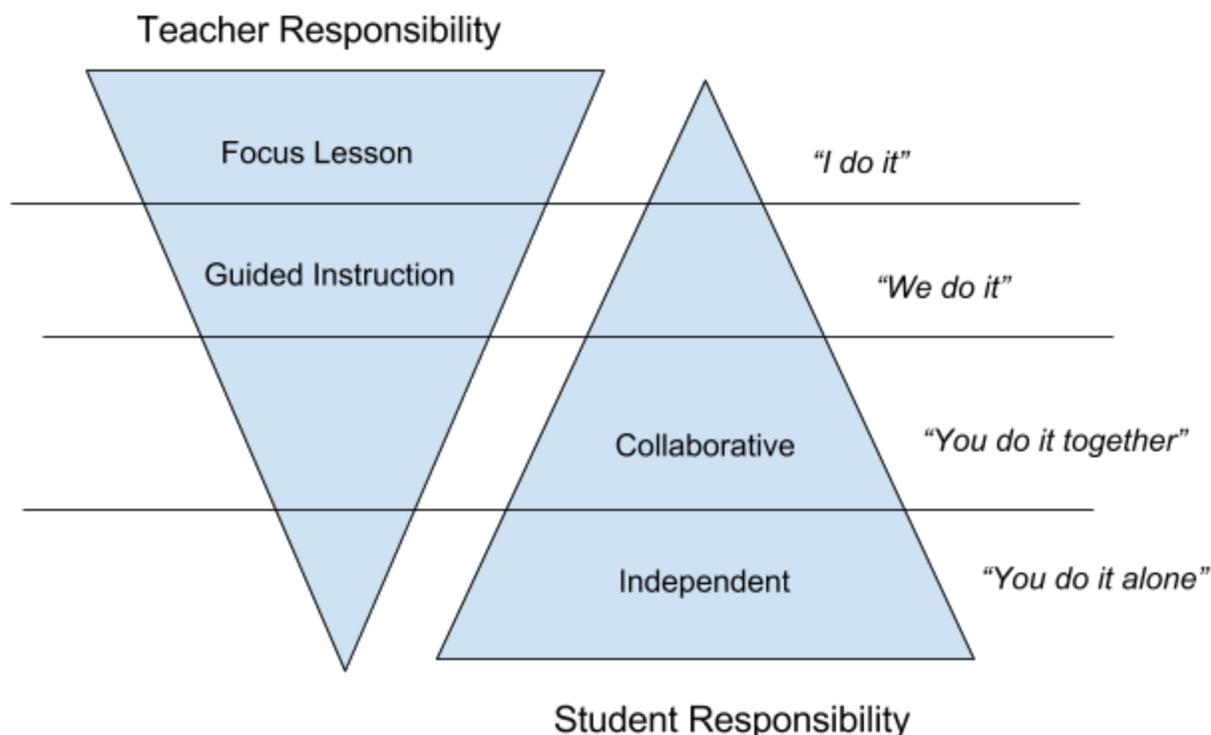- Identify students in need of additional academic support

Multi-Tiers of Support

Tier 1 Universal Learning Support

Definition of Tier 1: Universal learning supports and interventions that are preventive; they are intended to support student learning to make annual growth and prevent need for more intensive supports.

In the first Tier of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports, *all* students have access to universal learning supports to support a year's growth in a year's time.

- Tier 1 instruction is delivered to all learners in a school building for academic and social/emotional/behavioral skills.
- The ultimate goal of core instruction is that students can independently apply content, ideas, skills and strategies in various situations.
- Differentiated instruction and universal designs for learning are essential to ensure students access the content and that they make annual growth.
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn. More information is also available at http://www.udlcenter.org/.
- Tier 1 learning should be grounded in scientific research and educators need to ensure that the curriculum is implemented with fidelity.
- Each member district uses their own standards-based curriculum resources and instructional practices model, which should be connected with their Teacher Development and Evaluation Plan. Whether a district uses Marzano's Teaching Map, Danielson's or other researchers' work, effective core instruction focuses on student learning. Learning is a process and occurs through interactions with others. A gradual release model allows for teachers to guide students learning; a simplified example follows.

Teacher Responsibility

Focus Lesson — "I do it"

Guided Instruction — "We do it"

Collaborative — "You do it together"

Independent — "You do it alone"

Student Responsibility

Fisher, 2008

Tier 2 Strategic Standard Intervention

Definition of Tier 2: These are strategic supports using standard treatments to accelerate learning to decrease discrepancies between expectations and performance.

- A goal of Tier 2 is to meet the needs of an additional 15% of the student population.
- Included on a district's continuum of support is Tier 2 core and supplemental program focused on targeted area of need based on assessment data.
- Supplemental instruction provides additional time; instruction is more intensive and explicit with ongoing progress monitoring.
- It is important to note that Tier 2 supplemental instruction is in addition to the universal instruction in Tier 1.
- Tier 2 decisions, including intervention design, come from problem solving; see more under schoolwide problem solving including using the RIOT/ICEL matrix as a guide.
- Grade level teams are responsible for design, delivery, and monitoring of Tier 2 instruction; they meet regularly to review the progress of students.
- Individual student notes regarding intervention support are kept in student files.

Tier 3 Strategic Individualized Intervention Supports

Definition of Tier 3: These are intensive supports using individualized supports to accelerate learning to decrease discrepancies between expectations and performance.

- The intensity level of assessment is increased for Tier 3. Progress monitoring is generally collected and reviewed weekly.
- Just as with Tier 2, Tier 3 individualized intervention support is in addition to Tier 1 universal instruction.
- Tier 3 instruction is more precisely targeted at the right level with more guided practice and high rigor.
- We can estimate to see 5% to 10% of students in a building needing the intensity of Tier 3 instruction.

INTERVENTION PROCESS

The steps in the MTSS Intervention Process are to be followed by all GCED member districts and their staff as they work to support the learning needs of all students. Data collection is vital; districts need to identify who (from general education) in the district is responsible for the data collection on universal benchmarks (instructional coach, data person, interventionist, etc.).

REFERRAL

The referral process begins with a teacher referral, parent referral, or universal screening data. Multiple sources of data are required; referrals are not based on a test score. **Parents must be notified** when a student starts an intervention. See parent MTSS informational and notification sheet (under Resources) that schools can copy to school letterhead and add a notification that their child has been referred for intervention help.

INTERVENTION DESIGN

All interventions are designed to meet the needs of the particular student(s) in order to improve the student rate of learning. On the GCED website there are a variety of standard treatment literacy and math interventions listed. Ultimately it is important that the interventions are designed by problem solving teams based on the specific data.
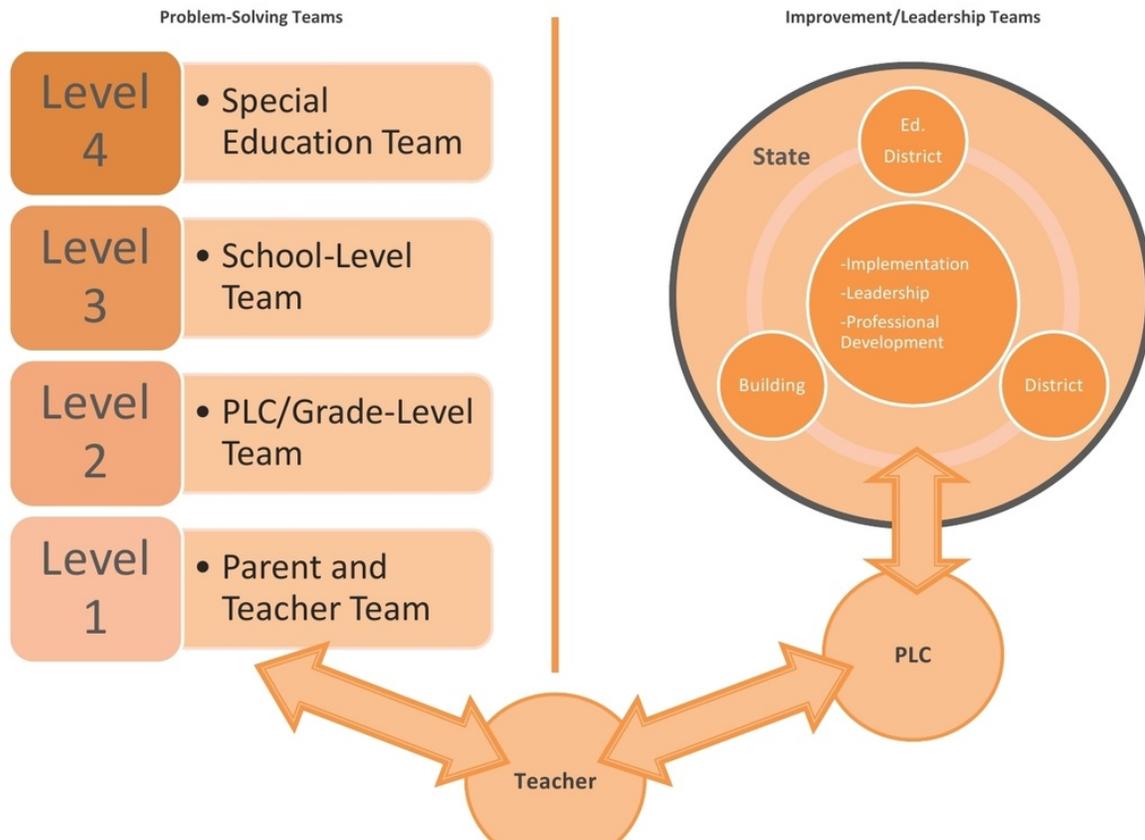
Following the problem solving process is essential prior to selecting/designing an intervention.

Schoolwide Problem Solving

PROBLEM SOLVING

[Problem solving teams](#) are necessary at four levels in a school:

Level 1	Student/Parent/Teacher Team
Level 2	PLC/Grade Level Team
Level 3	School Level Team
Level 4	Special Education Team

Student/Parent and Teacher (Problem solving begins at the first and most basic level.)

1. [Teacher reviews student's cumulative file.](#)
2. [Teacher interviews student](#).
3. [Teacher interviews parent](#).

Based on data, teacher problem solves and provides student support in the classroom. The teacher should document classroom interventions. If further learning support is needed for student, the teacher completes an intervention referral form to take to the grade level team.

Grade Level Team/PLCs (Professional Learning Communities)

1. All grade level teams are expected to review the fall, winter, and spring benchmark data from their district's assessment system(s). *Districts need to determine the general education individuals that will prepare for and facilitate these meetings (facilitator) and the individual that will take and maintain notes (note taker).*
2. Team information should include progress monitoring, screening and benchmark data. Teams need to ask/discuss:
   - What are you seeing? What is the problem? What is the discrepancy?
   - How does this individual student compare to other students in our group?
   - Is this a first best instruction issue? Do we have a large group of students that are not "making it"? *This is an essential question.* This is not to point fingers at people, but rather to look at our system. Using MTSS 80% of students should be successful making annual growth and achieving proficiency with grade level targets.
3. Grade level teams maintain a spreadsheet for student/intervention documentation at the grade level.

School Level Problem Solving Team

A schoolwide problem solving team is needed to support the academic and behavioral progress of groups and individual students.

- The school level problem solving team should be representative of the overall building.
- The building principal is an essential member of this team in order to:
  - Serve as instructional leader of the school.
  - Allocate resources to meet students' needs.
  - Establish and support data-based problem solving as the norm for the building.
- The school psychologist serves as this team's facilitator to ensure integrity.
- The school needs to determine who will serve as this team's record keeper. This person makes certain that the problem solving documentation is completed for each student, with team decisions documented.

Problem Solving Model

Problem solving is both an organizational system and a *process* for decision-making.

GCED supports and uses a 5-step problem solving model. In each of the steps, educators respond to specific questions that lead to solutions for the identified problem(s). These steps/questions work for grade-level teams and schoolwide level teams for general education and special education concerns.

Step	Question
#1 - Problem Identification	*What is the discrepancy between what is expected and what is occurring?*
#2 - Problem Analysis	*Why is the problem occurring?*
#3 - Plan Development	*What is the goal?* *What is the intervention plan to meet the goal?* *How will progress towards the goal be monitored?*
#4 - Plan Implementation	*How will intervention integrity be ensured?*
#5 - Plan Evaluation	*Was the intervention plan effective?*
5 Step Model (Bransford & Stein, 1984) cited by Burns & Gibbons (2012) with questions for specific steps from MN Response to Intervention Center.	

- The first level of problem solving occurs between the teacher and parent focused on the individual learner.
- The second level of problem solving occurs at the classwide or grade level PLC.
- The third level of problem solving occurs at the schoolwide team - building leadership team for example.
- Problem solving teams are not new, but need to be used. Hartmann and Faye (1996) found that "research indicates that 85% of students served by problem-solving teams do not need further evaluation for special education."
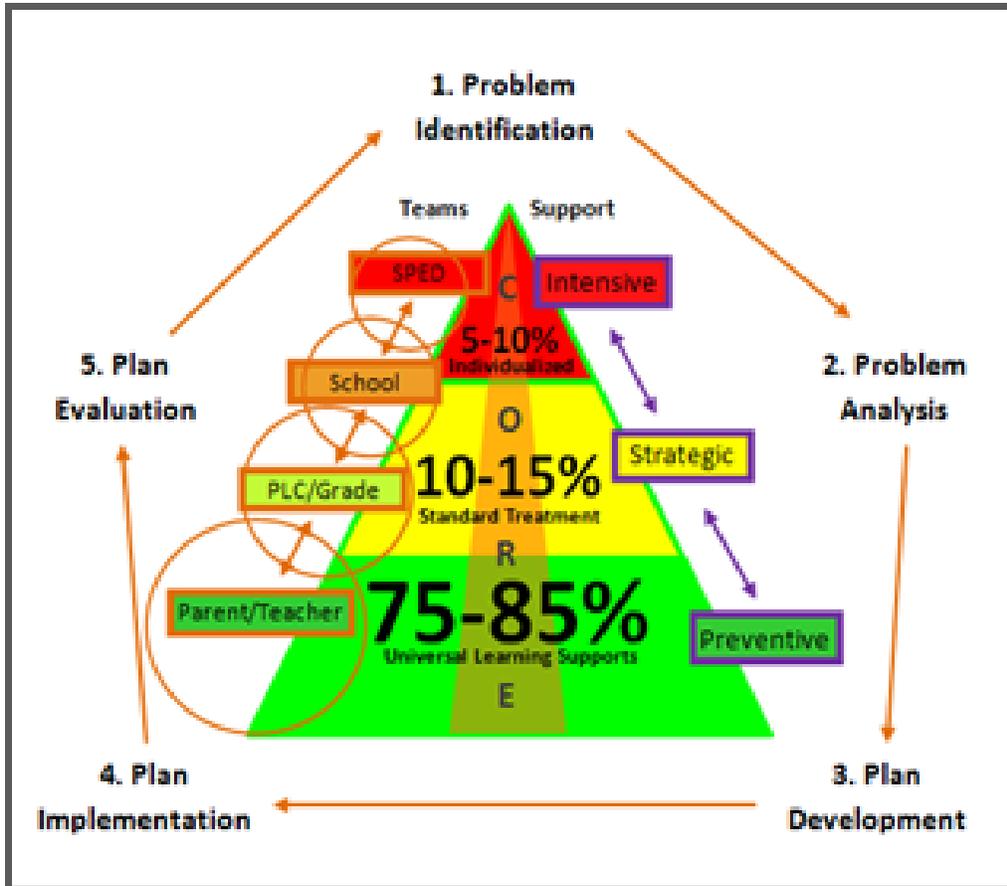
District Guiding Process/Routines

Each district has a process to review data from school assessments within your Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Information revealed through this regular process should change instruction to best fit our students' needs. Each district is expected to work toward these procedures while establishing good routines within their school and PLCs.

1. **Benchmarks** are given in all districts a minimum of 3 times a year (Aimsweb, FAST, STAR, etc.)
   a. Baseline Data
   b. Snapshot which gives us growth over time
2. **Summative** - Monthly Data Review (Chapter Tests, Semester Exams, etc.)
   a. Outcomes - Standard Mastery
   b. Evaluates curriculum and instruction
   c. Grade impact - show us what you know
3. **Formative** - Daily (Progress monitoring, checkpoints, exit tickets, daily assignments, thumbs up and down, etc.)
   a. Informs teacher of instruction
   b. Demonstrates student progression

c. Guides interventions

GCED supports using the [RIOT/ICEL Matrix](#) for problem solving, beginning with problem identification.

The RIOT/ICEL Matrix is a guide for problem analysis in order to evaluate underlying causes of a problem and to validate hypotheses.

Problem Solving Step 1: Problem Identification

In order to identify the problem it is necessary to examine data; the RIOT acronym helps us remember the potential data sources we have to help:

Review of records

 Interviews of teachers, students, and parents

Observations conducted directly

Test data

Data is reviewed and a prioritized problem is identified and defined. The definition is written as a discrepancy statement comparing current student behavior with current expected behavior.

a. Elementary Example
   i.   Unacceptable: *Student has a reading problem.*
   ii. Acceptable: *Student is reading at a rate of 18 correct words per minute in comparison to her peers and the 2nd grade expectation of 43 correct words per minute at this time of the year.*
b. Secondary Example
   i.   Unacceptable: *Student's math ability is awful. He's lazy.*
   ii. Acceptable: *Student's overall math achievement level is at the 22nd percentile, as measured by the fall screening. The student's standardized test performance places them at the 6th grade level as a 10th grade student.*

Problem Solving Step 2: Problem Analysis

In step 2, the team develops a hypothesis about *why* the problem is occurring. The team's mindset here should be that the student difficulty is a mismatch between the student need and the resources being provided. This is instead of the team presupposing that the student difficulty is the result of inalterable student characteristics.

The team considers a variety of hypotheses using the RIOT data they have. The hypothesis should be considered across four domains with the acronym ICEL:

Key Domains of Learning		
I	**Instruction**	Instruction is how the curriculum is taught and can vary in many ways including: level of instruction, rate of instruction, and presentation of instruction.
C	**Curriculum**	Curriculum refers to what is taught (standards). Curriculum would include scope, sequencing, pacing, materials, rigor, format, relevance.
E	**Environment**	The environment is where the instruction takes place. Variables in the environment include classroom expectations, beliefs/attitudes, peers, school culture, facilities, class size, attendance/tardies, management.
L	**Learner**	The learner is who is being taught. This is the last domain that is considered and is only addressed when the curriculum and instruction are found to be appropriate and when the environment is found to be accommodating. Variables of the learner include motivation, prerequisite skills, organization/study habits, abilities, impairments, and history of instruction.

- Selected hypothesis statements as the basis for intervention design should be supported by converging qualitative and quantitative data.
- To create a hypothesis statement, teams begin with their discrepancy statement developed in Step 1, add the word "because" and add a causal statement that is supported by the available data.
  - For an elementary example: *The 2nd grade student is currently reading grade-level passages at a rate of 18 correct words per minute while the expectation for 2nd grade students at this time of year is a rate of 43 correct words per minute* **because** *the student needs more instruction in phonics and decoding strategies to accurately and efficiently read words in connected text.*
  - For a secondary example: *The 10th grade student ….Student's overall math achievement level is at the 22nd percentile, as measured by the fall screening. The student's standardized test performance places them at the 6th grade level as a 10th grade student. According to the fall screening, the student needs to significantly increase their skill in Algebra - including Functions, Equivalent Expressions, and Equations and Inequalities. The student currently has domain scores in Algebra ranging from 15 to 20, with mastery measured as a domain*

> *score of 100 **because** the student needs more instruction and practice in foundation algebra skills in order to apply more complete algebra thinking to various mathematical situations, problems, and models.*
>   ○
- The team completes documentation including all hypotheses that were considered with available data that supports or disputes the hypothesis, and the single hypothesis that the the team ultimately selected for instructional planning.

Problem Solving Step 3: Plan Development

- Once the team has developed a hypothesis on the cause of the problem, the team needs to develop a plan to intervene.

- **Step 1**, the team needs to write a goal that is specific and measurable, including a timeline for reaching the goal. The team also creates a graph representing the discrepancy and growth needed. The line on the graph that connects baseline data to the goal data point defines the desired rate of progress for the student, or the aim-line. Evaluation of intervention outcomes is based in large part on whether student progress follows the aim-line on the graph. *Remember, the greater the student discrepancy, the greater the rate of progress will be needed to close the gap.*

- **Step 2**, the team is ready to develop a plan for intervention. The team answers the following in order to develop the intervention plan:
  1. What is the intervention?
     Needs to be: realistic, research-based, linked to the previous problem-solving steps, focused on alterable factors (ICEL). It also needs to include an explicit description of the plan and materials needed.
  2. Who will implement the intervention?
  3. Where will the intervention occur?
  4. When will the intervention occur?
  5. How often will the intervention occur?
     [Standard Treatment Protocols](#) (STPs) or individually designed interventions are used. Students identified by grade level teams for standard treatment protocol interventions may not have individual problem identification and problem analysis documentation forms completed, rather the standard treatment protocol form describes decisions made in these steps for the group of participants as well as the standard intervention plan. See Appendix D for additional STPs documentation.
- **Step 3**, the team needs to determine how the student's progress will be monitored. Teams match the data collection plan to what was used to set the goal.

Problem Solving Step 4: Plan Implementation

An important and yet often overlooked step is to ensure that the plan is implemented with fidelity. Teams need to ensure that the person identified to deliver the intervention(s) has been properly trained and is actually carrying out the plan.

Teams provide documentation of the plan implementation step through the use of the problem solving plan implementation form. Note that teams are asked to document their agreement that an observation confirmed fidelity of intervention implementation on at least one occasion, and also to document any concerns for dosage of the intervention students received due to attendance or participation concerns.

Problem Solving Step 5: Plan Evaluation

During this final step, problem solving teams evaluate the intervention plan:

- review the student graph.
- complete the graph with progress monitoring data collected as planned.
- determine if the current discrepancy between what is expected and what is occurring for a student is smaller, the same as, or greater than the original discrepancy that was identified at the start of the process.
- may consider how to fade an intervention for a student who has experienced success or how to continue an intervention for a student who is making excellent progress but who has not yet met grade level expectations.
- re-visit the original hypothesis, when a student is not making anticipated progress, to see if a different hypothesis better accounts for the problem. Or, teams may feel that the hypothesis is correct, but the specific intervention plan would be more successful if changes to the plan were made.
- cycle back through this five-step process as many times as necessary to meet student needs.

Problem-Solving Focus in the Three Tiers			
	Problem-Solving Focus	**Relevant Assessment Data**	**Criteria**
Tier 1	Compare the skill level of the class to desired outcomes	General outcome measure (GOM); e.g.,	Comparison to national norms or

	(problem identification).	oral reading fluency; ORF).	empirically derived criteria.
Tier 2	Identify individual students who are discrepant from desired outcomes. Identify category of difficulty (e.g., phonics versus fluency, problem analysis).	GOM (e.g., ORF) and subskill mastery measure (SSM; e.g., nonsense word fluency, phoneme segmentation fluency).	Normative comparison (e.g. lowest quartile) for GOM and fluency criteria for SSM. Dual discrepancy.
Tier 3	Identify functional cause of difficulty (problem analysis).	GOM and SSM.	Monitor progress with aimline and three-point comparisons, assess skills with mastery criteria. Dual discrepancy.

(Burns & Gibbons, 2012. P. 45)

Alternative Learning Centers

All students are covered under MTSS including students attending an Alternative Learning Center. Refer to the GCED Alternative Learning Handbook for students transitioning to and ALC.

English Language Learners

All students are covered under MTSS including students that are English Language Learners. .Refer to the [GCED EL Handbook](#).

Special Education

All students are covered under MTSS including students being served with an IEP. See your district's Assistant Director of Special Education of Special Education Coordinator; they will refer to the GCED TSES Manual.

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Appendixes

Appendix A: Term Definitions

- **Alternative Core Program:** This refers to a comprehensive program used for teaching the core curriculum which is different from the standard core program used by classroom or content teachers. (see *program*)
- **Basic Skills:** These are the skills of literacy, mathematics, and behavior (this is only a generic list of categories). Basic skills are necessary for students to access content covered by the entire general education curriculum, and these are the skills typically targeted in Tier 2 or 3 interventions, but they may not be exclusive targets, particularly in higher grade-levels. At middle and secondary school levels, coordination of Tier 2 and 3 interventions that target higher intensity basic skill problems would typically be the responsibility of the school-level team. (also see *content-area*)
- **Category of the Problem:** Group interventions at Tier 2 generally target prioritized student problems. The interventions are intended to target the category of the problem, such as reading fluency or comprehension. This is because data analysis at Tier 2 is typically less in-depth than Tier 3. Both general outcome measures and mastery measures should be used to identify the category of support.
- **Causal Variable:** Individualized interventions at Tier 3 target the hypothesized causal variable that is malleable and related to the problem. In-depth problem analysis includes the generation of hypotheses and confirming hypotheses to create an intervention. Teams continue to prioritize problems. This level of analysis requires more data and typically requires practitioners with expertise in additional assessment techniques to collect some of the data.
- **Content-Area (or Subject-Area Content):** These are the subjects that provide content covered by the entire general education curriculum which expand on the basic skills of literacy, mathematics and behavior (this is only a generic list of the basic skill categories). Middle and secondary schools require additional consideration for the application of supports in all subject-areas. This is not because elementary grades do not teach subject-area content, but it is because these higher grades departmentalize subject-areas and teachers. At all grade-levels, Tier 1 supports are provided universally across all subject-areas. When students struggle with subject-areas, Tier 1 supports are used to intervene and support annual growth in the core specific to the subject-area. At the higher grades, Tier 2 targeted interventions are a blend of subject-area content and basic skills. This allows subject-area teachers to provide the initial levels of support; additional resources may also be used. Also, due to departmentalized subjects and scheduling unique to the higher grades, coordination of Tier 2 and 3 interventions that target higher intensity basic skill problems would typically be the responsibility of the school-level team.
- **Core (or Core Curriculum):** The standards or behavior expectations that **all** students are expected to learn. Support at each tier level is aligned to the core.
- **Core Instruction:** Commonly identified as Tier 1 instruction, core instruction is the high-quality instruction that each student receives in order to meet grade-level standards

or expectations. The objective of core instruction is that all students achieve one year's growth in one year's time. This growth is expected to be achieved through universal learning supports. Students with significant achievement discrepancies may be provided core instruction in coordination with more restrictive services, such as a continuum of alternative instructional placement.

- **Core Program:** This refers to a comprehensive program used for teaching the core curriculum. (see *program*)
- **Data-Based Individualization:** It is an ongoing process for individualizing and intensifying interventions through a systematic use of assessment data, validated interventions, and research-based adaptation strategies. Intervention programs or strategies are used as a "platform" to make adjustments based on on-going progress monitoring and diagnostic assessment data. The individualization of the intervention is therefore continually aligned to the student's need.
- **Double Dose:** This is when instruction/intervention is provided twice during a school day.
- **Educational Decisions** about intensity and the likely duration of interventions are based on individual student response to instruction across multiple tiers of intervention. Decisions about the necessity of more intense interventions, including eligibility for special education and/or exit from special education or other services, are informed by data on learning rate and level.
- **Extended Intervention:** These are interventions that last for 15-20 weeks or 75 sessions-100 sessions. This definition is not intended to be a maximum length. An intervention should continue for as long as it is needed and resources are available. Students with significant discrepancies may require multiple years of intervention.
- **Flexible Grouping:** Students are grouped and regrouped based on instructional needs.
- **Formal Intervention:** The intervention is documented using standardized forms following a systematic structure providing a description of the problem-solving process and explicit intervention procedures. Tier 2 and 3 interventions are formally documented.
- **High Quality Instruction/Intervention** is defined as instruction or intervention matched to student need that has been demonstrated through scientific research and practice to produce high learning rates for most students. Individual responses to even the best instruction/intervention are variable. Selection and implementation of scientifically based instruction/intervention markedly increases the probability of, but does not guarantee positive individual response. Therefore, individual response is assessed using MTSS and modifications to instruction/intervention or goals are made depending on results with individual students.
- **High Responders:** These students are making adequate growth toward grade-level expectations.
- **Individualized:** Supports are tailored to a student's needs based on in-depth analysis which are frequently adjusted/adapted based on the students. Adjustments/adaptations are routinely made based on formative assessment data to target the causal variable. Individualized supports typically require practitioners with specialized expertise in assessment and intervention.

- **Informal Intervention:** The intervention is documented in a non-standardized way. Tier 1 interventions are typically informal.
- **Instructional Time:** Time is an important consideration for increasing intensity. When considering increasing instructional time, teams usually focus on additional time by increasing the frequency, length, and/or duration. However, the purpose of allocating additional time is to truly increase engaged time with relevant instruction. Therefore, teams should not only consider quantitative aspects of instructional time, but the relevance of instruction, engagement of the learner, and instructional events (contrasted by time spent on non-instructional events, such as transitions or finding materials).
- **Instructional-Level Problem:** This occurs when resources are restricted and inefficiently used to support student learning within a grade-level or classroom. This is expected when more than 15-25% of students require more intensive supports to meet expectations.
- **Intensity/Intensifying:** Supports are intensified by altering various components. The components build on the term "supplemental". These supports are correctly targeted and supportive (cognitively and emotionally), and provide appropriate level of challenge, more explicit instruction, more systematic instruction, more modeling, more review, more opportunities to respond, more immediate and specific feedback, more instructional time, and reduced group sizes.
- **Intensive (or Intensive Supports):** While each tier across the continuum of supports becomes more intensive, intensive supports target the most intensive problems. A greater amount of resources are needed at this level because supports are individualized and the discrepancy of the problem is greater.
- **Intervention:** These are prescribed procedures of supplemental and intensified supports that are based on student needs identified through a systematic problem-solving process and monitored to determine student response. An intervention is intended to accelerate student learning toward grade-level expectations; it is distinct from core instruction provided with universal learning supports.
- **Intervention Adjustment/Adaptation:** These are routinely made instructional adjustments to align support to student needs. A framework may be developed to systematically make adjustments which focuses on a small number of variables to simplify the decision-making process. Adjustments are more routinely made for individualized supports but occasional adjustment may occur with standard treatments. Adjustments include the following: (a) frequency of formative assessments to identify skill deficits and determine mastery of skills; (b) regrouping of students based on instructional needs identified from assessment data; (c) progression of learning, such as repetition, acceleration, and/or review; (d) and additional adjusting of alterable factors in the learning process both quantitatively (e.g., group size, skill level, session length, session frequency, etc.) and qualitatively (e.g., , instructional delivery, feedback, type of error correction, etc.).
- **Intervention Cycling:** Students may enter and exit interventions repeatedly moving up and down the continuum of support. These students may or may not have a disability. These students may require additional cycles to overcome problems. As long as learning

is appropriately supported and supports are sustainable, a special education evaluation may not be necessary and supports should continue to be provided.

- **Learning Rate and Level of Performance** are the primary sources of information used in ongoing decision making. Learning rate refers to a student's individual growth in achievement or behavior competencies over time. Level of performance refers to a student's relative standing on some dimension of achievement/performance compared to expected performance (either criterion- or norm-referenced). Learning rates and levels of performance vary significantly across students. Most students with achievement or behavioral challenges respond positively to explicit and intense instruction/interventions. Decisions about the use of more or less intense interventions are made using information on learning rate and level. More intense interventions may occur in general education classrooms or pull-out programs supported by general, compensatory or special education funding.
- **Low Responders:** These students are not making adequate growth toward grade-level expectations.
- **Minimum Intervention Length:** A minimum intervention length for Tier 2 interventions is typically 8-12 weeks. This length is directly tied to data collection practices. One variation of this minimum may come from each state's special education requirements, such as a minimum of 7 weeks.
- **Nonresponders:** These students are not making minimum growth rate targets.
- **Parent Involvement across Tiers:** Communication with parents or family should occur at each tier. Involvement and collaboration is increased as students move across the continuum. Assessment data, such as screening results and progress monitoring graphs, should be a part of school procedures and communicated to parents or family; a Tennessen warning should be provided about data collection procedures that are a part of intervention plans. Parents or family are, also, notified of how assessments are used to determine instruction or intervention as opposed to evaluation for special education eligibility, how tiered services differ from special education, their rights to request a special education evaluation, and intervention decision-making rules, intervention plan guidelines, and conditions for a special education evaluation. Consent for initial interventions or assessment is not required; it is best to communicate with parents and get permission for individual assessments (non-special education). Implied consent is acceptable, such as awareness of school procedures or a note sent home; once a disability is suspected, formal special education procedures are required, including written consent for evaluation. Also, special education evaluation teams may consider tutoring at home as an intervention if it meets established requirements.
- **Preventive:** These supports are aimed at reducing student need for more intensive supports which require a greater amount of resources. In models designed primarily to prevent learning disabilities, each tier level is described as preventive; however, the conversations in these models seem too focused on special education and providing more intensive supports versus system improvement and supporting all students' learning.

- **Problem-Solving Approach:** Interventions are tailored for an individual student's academic or behavior need. GCED uses the five step problem-solving approach: problem identification, problem analysis, plan development, plan implementation, and plan evaluation. These interventions may be based on standard treatment protocols but are individualized for a student's needs.
- **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs):** A PLC is an infrastructure, or a way of working together that results in continuous improvement. A PLC model requires that the school staff work on collective inquiry with a focus on 3 main ideas:
  - Focus on learning, rather than teaching
  - Work collaboratively
  - Hold ourselves accountable for results...we are data-driven.
- **Program:** This refers to the combination of the content and teaching procedures.
- **Scientifically Research Based Instruction/Interventions (SRBI):** These are supports that meet federal guidelines of being scientifically research based. Scientifically based research involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs; federal guidelines further define the term. When SRBI is unavailable, research informed (2nd best option) and reasoned judgment verified by a pilot and action research (3rd best option) may be used. Implementation of these supports occurs through an on-going improvement process within a multi-tiered system. They are necessary to provide high-quality Tier 1 support, and all students require sufficient access to high quality instruction and opportunities to perform at grade-level standards.
- **Standard Treatment Protocol Approach:** This approach uses specific protocols that are intended to support targeted academic or behavior needs. They are used for a group of students with similar needs and reduce paperwork. Also, because they are not individualized, they can be created prior to the school year. Teams should occasionally evaluate the protocols and make improvements when necessary. In some cases, the protocol may include a set duration for the intervention to occur.
- **Strategic:** These more intensive supports are strategically provided to groups of students by targeting the category of the problem. Strategic use of supports requires awareness of how to use resources efficiently within a system.
- **Strategy:** Describes an instructional or behavioral practice. For example, repeated reading is an instructional strategy. While the term "strategy" may be used interchangeably with an intervention, an intervention is a prescribed set of procedures. (see *intervention*)
- **Supplemental:** Something more is provided to students to meet expectations. Providing supplemental supports in addition to core instruction is necessary to intensify supports and accelerate student learning. Supplemental supports are more explicit, more intensive, more supportive, and include more progress monitoring than with core instruction.
- **System-Level Problem:** This occurs when resources are restricted and inefficiently used to support student learning within a school or district. This is expected when more than 15-25% of students require more intensive supports to meet expectations.

- **Tier 1:** Universal learning supports and interventions that are preventive; they are intended to support student learning to make annual growth and prevent need for more intensive supports.
- **Tier 2:** These are strategic supports using standard treatments to accelerate learning to decrease discrepancies between expectations and performance.
- **Tier 3:** These are intensive supports using individualized supports to accelerate learning to decrease discrepancies between expectations and performance.
- **Transition:** Movement along the continuum of support is bidirectional. While movement is typically sequential to ensure resources are efficiently allocated, there is no requirement. For example, students may go directly to Tier 3 when problems indicate a need. Also, the use of interventions may not be used to deny the right to a special education evaluation.
- **Universal Learning Supports:** These are the supports provided to all students to promote annual growth and prevent more intensive academic and behavior supports from being necessary. High-quality, universally designed, differentiated instruction is expected to support all students at Tier 1. All students require sufficient access to high quality instruction and opportunities to perform at grade-level standards.

Appendix B: Universal Design for Learning

What is UDL?

Universal Design for Learning or UDL is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn.

UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone--not a single, one-size-fits-all solution but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs.

Why is UDL necessary?

Individuals bring a huge variety of skills, needs, and interests to learning. Neuroscience reveals that these differences are as varied and unique as our DNA or fingerprints. Three primary brain networks come into play:

Recognition Networks	Strategic Networks	Affective Networks
The "**what**" of learning	The "**how**" of learning	The "**why**" of learning
How we gather facts and categorize what we see, hear, and read. Identifying letters, words, or an author's style are recognition tasks.	Planning and performing tasks. How we organize and express our ideas. Writing an essay or solving a math problem are strategic tasks.	How learners get engaged and stay motivated. How they are challenged, excited, or interested. These are affective dimensions.
Present information and content in different ways.	Differentiate the ways that students can express what they know.	Stimulate interest and motivation for learning.
Resource Help: http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udlguidelines/principle1	Resource Help: http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udlguidelines/principle2	Resource Help: http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udlguidelines/principle3

Source: http://www.udlcenter.org/

Universal Design for Learning, continued

1.   **What- Recognition Networks-Present information and content in different ways.**

Multiple Means of Representation: (a) Present information with different modalities, (b) Present information with multiple representations.

a.   Options for perception. Ensure **key information** is equally available to all learners: (a) different modalities, (b) flexible formats (e.g., enlarged text, audio with volume control).

b.   Options for language, mathematical expressions, and symbols. Provide different forms of **representation**. Inequalities arise when information is presented to all learners through a single form. Words, graphics, symbols may carry very different meanings for learners.

c.   Options for comprehension. Proper design and presentation of information provides the scaffolds necessary to ensure that all learners can transform **accessible information into useable knowledge**.

Summary: Key information is equally **delivered** with scaffolds as necessary using different forms of representation to ensure all learners can transform accessible information into useable knowledge.

2.   **How-Strategic Networks-Differentiate the ways that students can express what they know.**

Multiple Means of Action and Expression: (a) Environment navigation, (b) Express knowledge.

a.   Options for Physical Action. Provide an environment, curricular materials, and activities that provide individuals with impairments an **alternative means to navigate, interact, and respond**, including a seamless interface with common assistive technologies.

b.   Options for Expression and Communication. Curricula should offer **alternatives in the degrees of freedom and provide alternate media for expression**, including a flexible and accessible toolkit, to allow the learner to express knowledge, ideas, and concepts in the learning environment.

c.   Options for Executive Functions. Providing scaffolds for lower level skills so they require less executive processing or providing scaffolds **for higher level executive skills** and strategies, that is goal setting, planning and strategy development, management of information and resources, and progress monitoring with feedback, so that they are more effective and developed are two approaches to expanding executive capacity.

Summary: Students are provided alternative means to navigate, interact, and respond to **tasks** that offer alternatives in degrees of freedom, provide alternate media for expression, and scaffolds to support higher level executive functioning.

3.   Why-Affective Networks- Stimulate interest and motivation.

Multiple Means of Engagement

a.   Provide Options for Recruiting Interest. Information that is not attended to, that does not **engage learners' cognition**, is in fact inaccessible; therefore, it is important to have alternative ways to recruit learner interest, ways that reflect the important inter-and intra-individual differences amongst learners.

b.   Provide Options for Sustaining Effort and Persistence. The *external environment* must provide options that can **support and sustain the effort and concentration** of learners who differ in initial motivation, self-regulation skills, etc.

c.   Provide Options for Self-Regulation. The learner must develop *intrinsic* abilities to regulate – to strategically **modulate one's emotional reactions or states** in order to be more effective at coping and engaging with the environment – their own emotions and motivations.

Summary: Information must be **engaged** by an interested and motivated learner who has developed intrinsic abilities to self- regulate their own emotions and states or receives external environmental support which sustains their effort and concentration.

Appendix C: Student Intervention Referral Form

This form is to be completed by the general education teacher and/or other appointed person from the grade level team and taken to the school level problem solving team. The same form is used for academic and behavioral referrals. This form should become a part of the student's file.

Student Name   _____

Referring Teacher Name   _____

Date of Referral   _____

Parent(s) Name   _____

Parent contact(s)   _____

Student DOB _____ Gender _____ Grade _____ Primary Language _____

Health Concerns (Vision/Hearing) _____

Attendance Concerns   _____

Current Services   _____

Assessment Data *(Fill in below or attach CBM data, progress monitoring and/or other information you have available.)*

Define the area of concern, including data. Explain the discrepancy between what is expected and student's performance.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Describe the behavior; be specific. *(Academics - Content area? Behavior - What, When, How, How Often?)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

Describe what you want the student to be able to do:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Additional Information from Parent(s) and Others:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Classroom Tier 1 Interventions that have been implemented:

Intervention	Dates Tried	Result

Appendix D: Standard Treatment Protocol Documentation

Form

http://gced.k12.mn.us/uploads/4/9/2/3/49230501/standard_treatment_protocol_form.pdf

Example

http://gced.k12.mn.us/uploads/4/9/2/3/49230501/standard_treatment_protocol__example.pdf

Standard Treatment Protocol Cheat Sheet

http://gced.k12.mn.us/uploads/4/9/2/3/49230501/standard_treatment_protocol_cheat_sheet.pdf

Intervention Fidelity Checklist Example

http://gced.k12.mn.us/uploads/4/9/2/3/49230501/example_intervention_integrity_checkscript.pdf