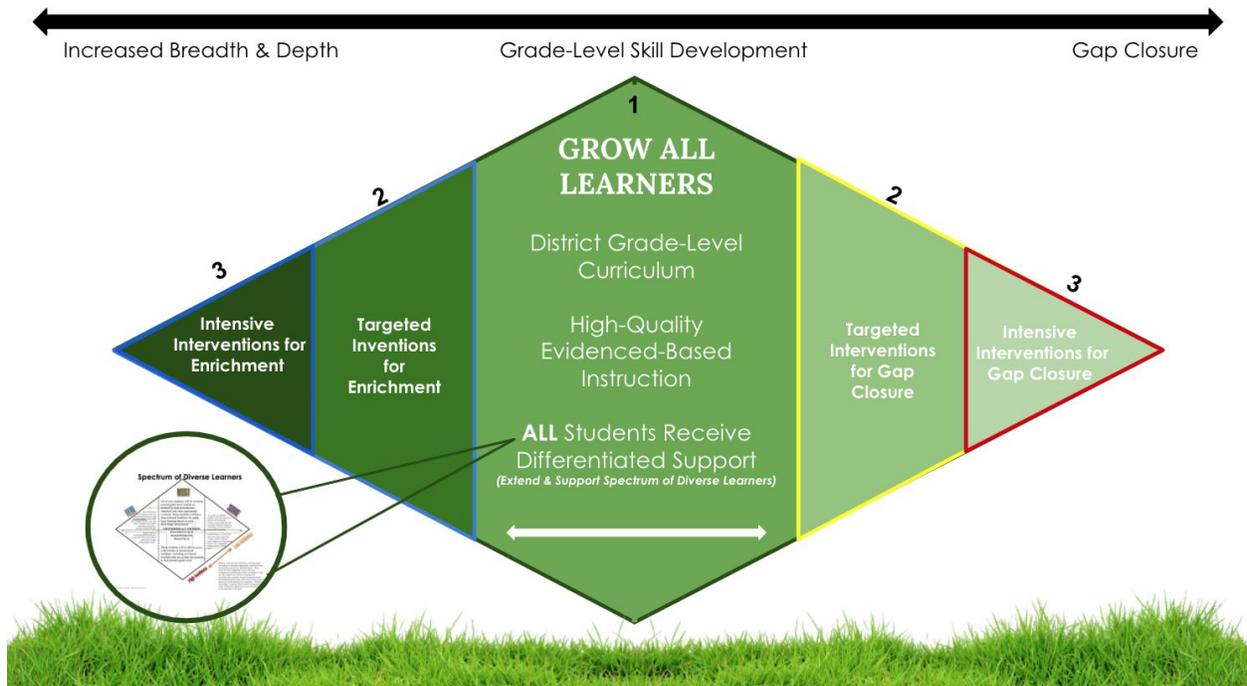


MTSS: Literacy Instruction for Gifted Learners

Simply put, MTSS is designed to match students' strengths and needs with evidence-based instructional approaches. A comprehensive approach to MTSS intentionally addresses the needs of ALL learners. This is inclusive of students who require additional time, support, practice, and more intense direct instruction as well as students who require additional challenges at a faster pace. When students with gifts and talents are left out of the MTSS framework, they may not make the academic gains they are capable of achieving. Thus, when we consider the needs of gifted and talented learners, we must reframe the standard protocol interventions so that they offer additional enrichment, challenge, and enhancement for learners with strengths in the targeted area. Additionally, for gifted and talented students with skill deficits, explicit, systematic, intensive support must be provided. It is imperative that we provide appropriate remediation for identified weaknesses and provide enrichment opportunities in areas of strength. Even among students identified as gifted, there is a tremendous range of performance levels. We must continually strive to support and stretch ALL learners at both ends.

The MTSS Framework



Overview

Tiered System of Interventions	Scaffolding support that includes differentiation in Tier 1, targeted support for strengths and weaknesses in Tier 2, and individualized support in Tier 3 (as needed).
Early Intervention	Providing early support to develop the potential of all learners with or without a label- with the recognition that it is essential for young gifted learners who are from culturally/linguistically diverse or economically disadvantaged families. Consider early entrance to kindergarten (when appropriate based on data).
Universal Screening	Establishing scores that indicate a need for differentiated intervention and enrichment (Students who score in the top 20-25% could warrant attention for enrichment through differentiation. Students who score in the top 5% or 10% of the class will likely need significantly more intensive enrichment opportunities).
Fidelity of Intervention	Reviewing and evaluating programs ensures that the student receives instruction tailored to his or her identified needs. Utilize student outcome data to demonstrate growth over time. (There is not a "one-size-fits-all" gifted program.)
Progress Monitoring	Document student progress and match the appropriate level of instruction to student's

	strengths, needs, pace of learning, and interests.
Professional Development	Provide specific strategies of differentiation, enrichment, and acceleration that are effective with gifted learners (e.g., curriculum compacting, acceleration, tiered lessons, etc.). Provide support for the implementation of NAGC Programming Standards (2019)
Collaborative Structure	Identify and serve high-achieving and twice-exceptional students in need of differentiated services through the collaboration of gifted, special, and general education teachers; allowing for integrated opportunities for remediation for twice-exceptional students
Parent Involvement	Collaborate with families to look at achievement levels and effectiveness of interventions; Utilize information from families about perceived strengths and areas of interest when planning for student outcomes.

Three Tiers for Enrichment

Tier 1	The general education teacher uses an evidence-based program with a focus on high-expectations for ALL learners. He/she uses dynamic assessments, including screeners, diagnostics, and progress-monitoring tools to get a clear picture of strengths and areas of need. The general education teacher uses the data to select and provide appropriate support and differentiation. For gifted learners, differentiation methods recommended by Kaplan, Tomlinson, Wormeli, and VanTassel-Baska may be helpful.
Tier 2	Tier 2 necessitates a collaborative approach based on strengths and needs determined by student data. More targeted learning opportunities are often provided in small groups in addition to (not in place of) Tier 1 instruction. Collaboration between the general and gifted education teachers is crucial. Students might receive additional enrichment and/or accelerative options within specific content areas, such as English Language Arts. Contracts and compacting may be employed to provide sufficiently challenging instruction in areas of strength. It is critical to prepare general education teachers to provide enrichment opportunities for gifted learners if there are no formal gifted services or certified personnel. Quality professional education centered on the academic and social-emotional needs of the gifted student is imperative.
Tier 3	Tier 3 provides more intense and individualized services to meet student needs. Once again, assessments are analyzed. For high-achieving students, perhaps additional assessments may be warranted, and nomination for formal identification may be considered. This level of instruction would be provided by a gifted intervention specialist, and formally identified students would receive more significant acceleration and/or gifted group activities. Other examples of Tier 3 services might include intensive acceleration (such as skipping a grade or subject acceleration), early Advanced Placement (AP) classes, mentorships, independent studies, remote learning opportunities, or early college classes.

Note: A child who scores in the 95th or 99th percentile on a standardized test has “topped out” of the test. The full range of that child’s knowledge and skills may not be known to the teacher based on that data alone because of the low ceiling. Similarly, a student who scores 100 on a curriculum-based measure or pretest, while clearly demonstrating mastery, still has not shown the fullness of their understanding and current achievement level. Additional assessments that are designed for an above-grade-level population may be utilized to get a clearer picture of a student’s current achievement level.

TIER 1 INDICATORS: QUALITY OF GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION FOR GIFTED LEARNERS

Universal Supports for All

Key Questions	Y/N	Evidence
1. Has the approach/program of instruction been identified?		
2. Is the identified program evidence-based and validated with diverse student populations that include gifted and talented learners?		
3. Do students receive direct, systematic, linguistically appropriate instruction of phonemic awareness, phonics, and reading fluency skills?		

4. Do students receive direct, systematic linguistically appropriate instruction for reading comprehension?		
5. Does the instruction provide explicit instruction and multiple opportunities for students to hear, speak, read, and write vocabulary in meaningful contexts?		
6. Has the framework of universal design for learning and differentiated instruction been implemented?		
7. Are differentiated learning materials that address diverse skill levels available for ALL students?		
8. Do learning materials and texts reflect inclusive environments, non-stereotypic images and diverse communities?		
9. Are culturally relevant practices implemented?		
10. Does the curriculum support and connect with students' prior knowledge while building new background knowledge?		
11. Does the teacher receive professional development opportunities to gain knowledge and skills to provide academic instruction and support to gifted and talented learners?		

Universal Environmental Considerations

Key Questions	Y/N	Evidence
1. Are school-wide behavior support processes implemented and monitored: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear expectations are posted and taught; - Clear acknowledgement system - Clear consequence system. 		
2. Does the school environment promote parent and family involvement?		
3. Is an effective, ongoing communication system with families in place (using home language in oral and/or written formats as needed)?		
4. Is linguistic diversity supported, for example, via presence of visuals, pictures, translations, interpreters and other English dialects and languages?		
5. Do school personnel recognize and understand how gifted characteristics can impact a range of student behaviors?		

6. Have guidelines, such as Ohio's Approved Assessments for Gifted Identification and district policies for gifted identification, been reviewed to guide assessment of the school setting?		
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Universal Assessment Considerations

Key Questions	Y/N	Evidence
1. Are universal screening data (e.g., quarterly assessments) collected and reviewed by a team that has knowledge and skills regarding the appropriate assessment of gifted and talented learners?		
2. Have universal screening data been analyzed to determine the achievement of subgroups with attention to disproportionality within the school, district, and state (e.g., English language learners, race, ethnicity, gender, SES, disability, gifted)?		
3. Are families informed of assessment results using language that is understandable, e.g., using translators and interpreters as needed?		

Observation Checklist for Instructional Strategies That Support Gifted and Talented Learners

Strategy/Practice	Degree Exhibited in Classroom Rate using 0-4 scale with 0= not observed; 4 = frequently observed	Evidence
Activate prior knowledge and build background knowledge (through the use of text sets, multiple genres, and the close reading of complex texts).	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Provide verbal support such as think alouds, modeling, narration, and expansion with attention to Webb's DOK or Bloom's during read-alouds, Socratic Circles, etc.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Provide visuals, models, nonlinguistic representations, and/or gestures to support abstract and complex concepts.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Facilitate discussions using leveled questions (Bloom's, DOK) and sentence frames (as needed to scaffold for accountable talk); Equip students to generate and answer questions.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Provide tiered vocabulary instruction (e.g., using the "Bookend Instructional Structure" for differentiation).	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Teach graphic organizers, have them	0 1 2 3 4 5	

readily available, and help students learn how to create their own organizers; Help students match organizers to specific purposes		
Explicitly teach note-taking and summarizing skills.		
Utilize curriculum compacting to release students from additional direct instruction and guided and independent practice on skills where they have shown mastery.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Provide a selection of advanced reading materials.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Facilitate collaborative learning (e.g., participation in seminar discussion with other students who are reading the same text; Collaborating on the same process, product, or content)	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Provide learning opportunities that allow students to explore their interests more in-depth (e.g., independent study, choice board, project-based learning)	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Provide direct instruction of needed skills while providing acceleration and enrichment, with emphasis on problem solving, reasoning, and critical thinking	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Utilize tiered assignments to provide the appropriate level of differentiation for all students (e.g., to provide assignments with more depth for gifted students)	0 1 2 3 4 5	

TIER 2 INDICATORS

Targeted Intervention and Enrichment for Individual and Small Group Support

Intervention Considerations	Y/N	Evidence
1. Are the Tier 2 interventions and enrichment opportunities provided in addition to Tier 1 universal supports for all?		
2. Are evidence-based intervention/enrichment lessons validated for use with gifted learners in order to address the student's specific needs?		
3. Does the intervention/enrichment plan correspond to a primary skill deficit area and/or strength including either or both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literacy skills (see Tier 1 key indicators) - English language development (listening/speaking/reading/writing) 		
4. Is instruction culturally and linguistically responsive to the student's needs? (Are the assessments culturally		

and linguistically responsive to the student's needs?)		
5. Is oral language proficiency development provided so that all students have opportunities to practice speaking standardized, academic English?		
6. Is identified intervention/enrichment implemented with procedural fidelity (e.g., with prescribed frequency, duration, and intensity)?		
7. Was the gifted learner's individual plan implemented and documented (e.g., WEP or WAP)?		

Assessment for Individual and Small Group Intervention and Enrichment

Intervention Considerations	Y/N	Evidence
1. Do the universal screening data correspond to and support areas of concern?		
2. Are screener/progress monitoring data (e.g., academic language) collected and reviewed periodically to assess a student's response to intervention?		
3. Do the universal screening data indicate a need for intervention or enrichment compared to age-appropriate local/state/national benchmarks?		
4. Are the data considered in the context of the gifted learner's area(s) of giftedness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Superior Cognitive; - Reading; - Math; - Creativity; - Visual/Performing Arts? 		
5. Do the universal screening data indicate a need for intervention or enrichment when compared to peers (e.g. peers with similar cultural experiences, languages, and/or socioeconomic backgrounds)?		

TIER 3 INDICATORS

Individualized, Intensive Intervention and Enrichment Support

Intervention Considerations	Y/N	Evidence
1. Does the intervention/enrichment team include individuals who are able to address issues relevant to the student's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WEP (gifted specialist); - Language (speech pathologist); 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culture/English Language Proficiency (EL specialist); - IEP (intervention specialist); - Classroom performance (regular education teacher); - ETR (school psychologist); - Gifted ID (gifted coordinator); - Whole child (parent)? 		
<p>2. Are the parents/guardians of the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involved as meaningful, respected partners; - Kept well-informed; - Provided with opportunities to receive information and communicate using the language/form that they understand? 		
<p>3. Is the intervention/enrichment process implemented using a problem-solving framework that includes the use of observable, measurable indicators to identify and discuss key concerns?</p>		
<p>4. Does the intervention/enrichment process develop an individualized plan for the gifted learner following a problem-solving framework that collects and analyzes multiple sources of data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Observations - Interviews/Interest Inventories - Curriculum-based Measures - Curriculum-based Assessments - Other Assessments (e.g., alternate, portfolio, performance, formative assessments) 		
<p>5. Do opportunities exist for intensive acceleration, such as skipping a grade, subject acceleration, early Advanced Placement (AP) classes, or early college classes? Are those decisions based on data?</p>		
<p>6. Is the individualized plan aligned with identified needs of the gifted learner?</p>		
<p>7. Is the intervention/enrichment implemented as part of the Tier 3 individualized plan appropriate for gifted learners, research-based, rigorous, and aligned with standards?</p>		
<p>8. Are the teachers/staff who implement the interventions/enrichment trained appropriately (e.g., to compact the curriculum) and follow any intended procedures with fidelity?</p>		
<p>9. Are the instructional supports/strategies and interventions/enrichment provided in</p>		

Tiers 1 and 2 continued, not dropped, as the Tier 3 individualized plan is implemented?		
10. Is the effectiveness of the plan evaluated using process monitoring and other data sources?		
11. Are assessments conducted in the L1/home language, if applicable?		

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