Middle school teacher and support staff perceptions of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) implementation: A case study in a suburban western Pennsylvania middle school

Presented by: Dr. Emily Mazzant

Dissertation Chairperson: Dr. Richael Barger-Anderson

April 13, 2021

Introduction and Study Background

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

COLLABORATION WITH PINE-RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

Introduction

Study Purpose and Significance

Existing Research

Research Questions

How do middle school teachers & staff perceive MTSS implementation?

How do these perceptions impact buy-in and level of understanding of staff?

In what ways do middle school teachers understand the MTSS framework?

District MTSS Implementation

- Overview of critical components of MTSS

  - School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS)
  - Social-Emotional Learning
  - Response to Intervention and transition to MTSS

- State and Federal Legislation related to MTSS
- Implementation Research and Rationale for MTSS
- District and Administrative Support related to MTSS effectiveness
- Comprehensive Systems
- MTSS Program Fidelity and Research-based Interventions
  - Secondary Level MTSS
- Teacher and Stakeholder input and perspectives on MTSS implementation

Review of Literature

Methodology

- **Interview Approach**

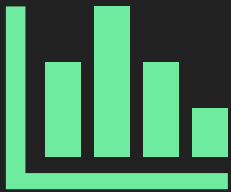- **Procedure and Data Collection**
  - **October 22nd-November 3rd**

- **Setting**

- **Credibility & Ethical Considerations**

Mazzant Open-Ended Interview Questions	Aligned to research question #
1. What does MTSS mean to you?	1, 3
2. What does the MTSS team(s) process look like at your school? What is its purpose?	1, 3
3. Who is responsible for MTSS in your school and what does this responsibility entail? How do you contribute to this implementation?	1, 2, 3
4. What is the purpose and operation of the MTSS team(s) within your school? Please discuss the building level and team level MTSS teams.	1, 3
5. What paperwork and/or documentation are required as a part of the MTSS process in your school? How would you describe this required documentation?	2
6. What reading and math interventions are implemented in your school? Describe how these are provided as a part of the tiered framework of MTSS.	3
7. Do you feel the MTSS framework is effective in your school building? In what ways is it effective or not effective?	2
8. How do you collaborate with parents and fellow colleagues regarding the implementation of MTSS?	2
9. In what ways are MTSS team meetings used to benefit students?	1
10. How do you feel about the success of the MTSS process within your school?	2
12. In what ways do you feel the MTSS process in your building can improve?	1, 2, 3

Participants

	Number Requested to Participate in Study	Number Participated in Study	Percentage of Participation out of total teachers	Percentage of participation out of total participants
General Education Teachers	24	11	44%	42%
Special Education Teachers	6	4	66.6%	15%
Special Area Teachers/ Off Team	25	3	12%	11.5%
Paraprofessionals	9	3	33.3%	11.5%
Other	6	5	83%	19%
Totals	70	26	37%	n/a

Results

MTSS Teacher Benchmarks

Breakdown of results

- Indicates surface level understanding

- Area of need: understanding of PBIS involvement in MTSS

MTSS Needs Assessment

Breakdown of results

- Strengths: structure, personnel, systems

- Areas of need: practice of MTSS; progress monitoring, problem solving & SEL screener and interventions

Interview Response Data Analysis Process

Interview Responses

Examples of Codes Identified (number of times code identified)

Support for all students (47)
Interventions and enrichment (27)
Meeting structure for team-based MTSS teams (19)
Everyone has responsibility for MTSS (27)
Forms for documentation (20)
Collaboration between teachers, administration, intervention specialist and counselors (25)
Specific classes and academic support identified as part of the system of support (8)
Varied responses in relation to effectiveness of MTSS (25)
Meetings were discussed as a part of the MTSS process (23)
Identifying student needs and collaborating to discuss how to address the needs (47)
Lack of communication with off-team teachers (17)

Categories of Identified Themes

Research Question 1:	Research Question 2:	Research Question 3:
• Support for all students and addressing individual student needs is a part of the MTSS process, as well as the need for all staff to be involved. • Communication with off-team teachers is insufficient	• All students, all staff, and collaboration between teams • Discussion of forms as a part of the MTSS process • Parental involvement was not discussed as a priority in responses	• All students, all staff, and collaboration between teams • Procedures and logistics are discussed in relation to MTSS rather than the day-to-day implementation through working with students

Research Question 1

How do middle school teachers & staff perceive MTSS implementation?

○ Support for all students and addressing individual student needs is a part of the MTSS process, as well as the need for all staff to be involved

○ Communication with off-team teachers is insufficient

Research Question 2

How do these perceptions impact buy-in and level of understanding of staff?

○ All students, all staff, and collaboration between teams

○ Discussion of forms as a part of the MTSS process

○ Parental involvement was not discussed as a priority in responses

Research Question 3

In what ways do middle school teachers understand the MTSS framework?

○ All students, all staff, and collaboration between teams

○ Procedures and logistics are discussed in relation to MTSS rather than the day-to-day implementation through working with students
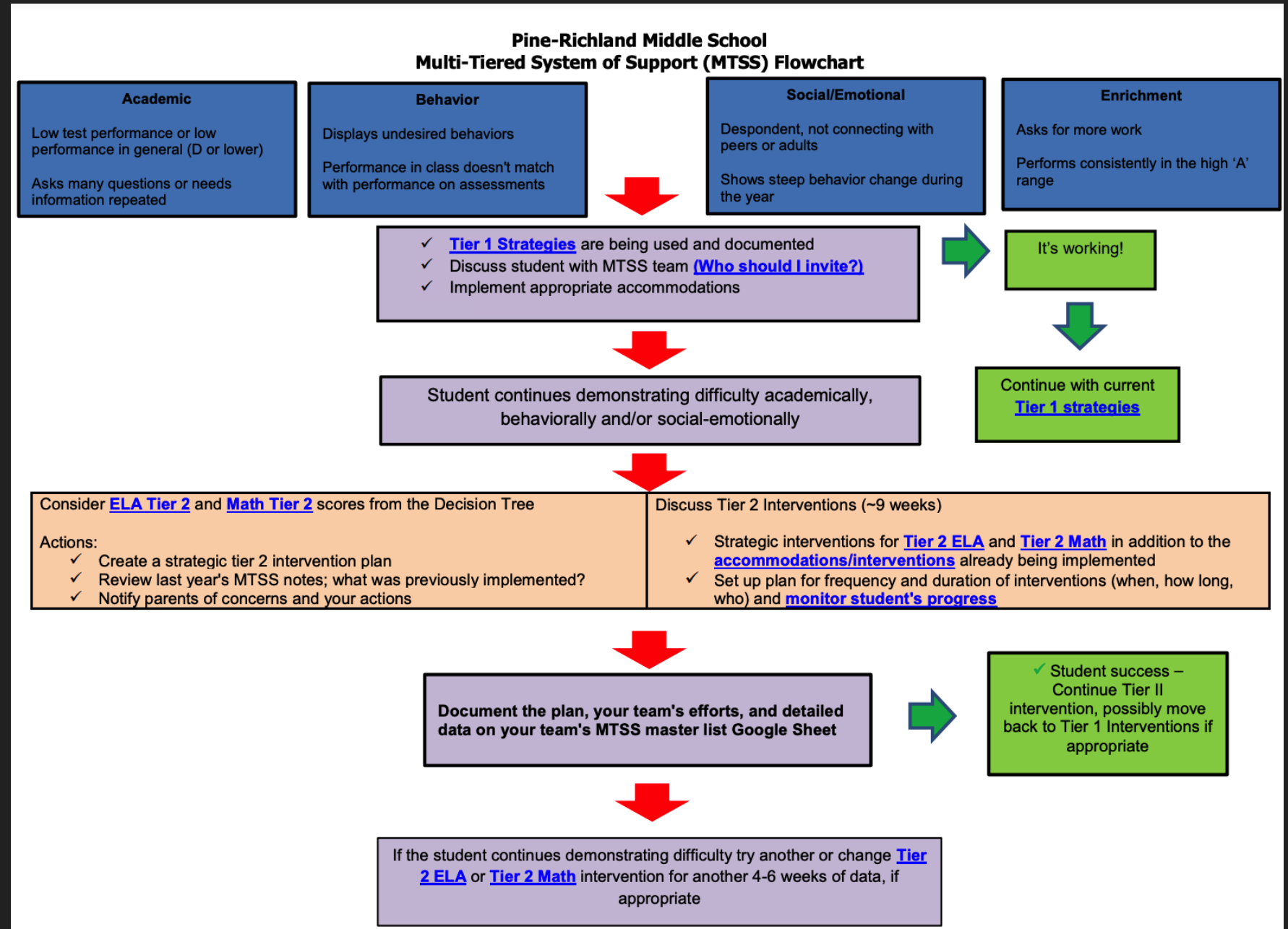
Thematic Analysis

Recommendations and Contributions

- Recommendations for future research and practice

- Contribution to the field of education

Provided to teams in January 2021:

Contribution to Pine-Richland Middle School

Pine-Richland Middle School
Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Flowchart

Academic	Behavior	Social/Emotional	Enrichment
Low test performance or low performance in general (D or lower) Asks many questions or needs information repeated	Displays undesired behaviors Performance in class doesn't match with performance on assessments	Despondent, not connecting with peers or adults Shows steep behavior change during the year	Asks for more work Performs consistently in the high 'A' range

- ✓ **Tier 1 Strategies** are being used and documented
- ✓ Discuss student with MTSS team **(Who should I invite?)**
- ✓ Implement appropriate accommodations

It's working!

Continue with current **Tier 1 strategies**

Student continues demonstrating difficulty academically, behaviorally and/or social-emotionally

Consider **ELA Tier 2** and **Math Tier 2** scores from the Decision Tree

Actions:
- ✓ Create a strategic tier 2 intervention plan
- ✓ Review last year's MTSS notes; what was previously implemented?
- ✓ Notify parents of concerns and your actions

Discuss Tier 2 Interventions (~9 weeks)
- ✓ Strategic interventions for **Tier 2 ELA** and **Tier 2 Math** in addition to the **accommodations/interventions** already being implemented
- ✓ Set up plan for frequency and duration of interventions (when, how long, who) and **monitor student's progress**

Document the plan, your team's efforts, and detailed data on your team's MTSS master list Google Sheet

✓ Student success – Continue Tier II intervention, possibly move back to Tier 1 Interventions if appropriate

If the student continues demonstrating difficulty try another or change **Tier 2 ELA** or **Tier 2 Math** intervention for another 4-6 weeks of data, if appropriate

Pine-Richland Middle School
Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Flowchart

Consider **Tier 3 ELA** and **Tier 3 Math** scores from the Decision Tree Actions: ✓ Review student's MTSS documentation ✓ Organize student information, intervention data, work samples ✓ Meet with MTSS team to discuss student progress	Discuss Tier 3 Interventions (~9 weeks) ✓ Discuss strategic interventions for **Tier 3 ELA** and **Tier 3 Math** in addition to the accommodations/interventions already being implemented ✓ Set up plan for frequency and duration of interventions (when, how long, who) and **monitor student's progress**

Document the plan, your team's efforts, and detailed data on your team's MTSS master list Google Sheet

✓ Student success – Continue Tier 3 intervention, possibly move back to Tier 2 interventions if appropriate

If the student continues demonstrating difficulty the MTSS team will discuss additional accommodations or discuss a referral for additional services, if appropriate

Thank you for listening!

O **Questions**