

REALTIME FILE

University of South Florida
PROBLEM SOLVING/RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION PROJECT
PLANNING FOR THE 2020-20201 SCHOOL YEAR: PART B
July 9, 2020

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>> BETH HARDCASTLE: Good afternoon. Welcome to another special webinar that the Florida PS/Rtl has been hosting and facilitating since schools changed their approach back in March. This one is Part 2 of a series that we started at the end of May. We had our Part A portion of this planning for the new school year. So, we've developed some additional content to include in this webinar.

Just a reminder. If you have not already responded to the poll questions there in the middle of the page, if you would take a few minutes. You can listen through your Adobe only. Just mute your speakers and feel free to communicate with us have I -- via the chat pod.

You can also participate via Adobe but also call into the conference line, the 800 number there at the bottom of that teeny, tiny little slide, along with a pass code. If you do that, you have the opportunity to talk with us and share your comments or questions.

So, you've got two choices I'm assuming most of you have already decided how you're going to participate with us today.

The objectives for today are a bit different. For one thing, while most of these webinars have been what we call a facilitated conversation, we've changed the format a bit for this webinar so that it's going to be more content-driven, exploring how schools are going to be approaching the new school year.

The webinar today is going to include information and take into account the executive order that I'm sure has many of you scrambling a bit. Jose is going to talk with us more about

that and implications when it comes to MTSS.

We will be particularly focusing on the importance of Tier 1 in an effort to address learning gaps as students do return to the new school year, and also give consideration to the role of Tier 2 and Tier 3.

So, again, if you are connected through both Adobe and its conference line and would like to participate, use the raised hand feature. So, if you look at the top of your page, the little guy or girl who has their arm up, you click on the down arrow and you've got the opportunity to put your hand up just like I did. If you would like to practice with that, you are welcome to if you are on the phone and want to be able to use the phone line to communicate.

Thank you, Riva.

If you're using Adobe only, please mute your speaker is and, again, use the chat box.

If you have any resources you would like to share with those who are on the call today, please e-mail those to Kelly Justice, justice@usf.edu.

We have closed captioning being provided at the very bottom left of your screen. Just a reminder, as with the others, this session is being recorded. The link will be shared to you within the next couple of days, and you will be free to share that link with others.

So, again, our focus today is planning for the new year with MTSS at Tier 1, 2, 3, as well as the importance of leadership when it comes to that Tiered System of Support and with the variables associated with the new school year.

I'm really pleased to be able to introduce our presenter today, Dr. Jose Castillo, our Project Director for the PS/Rtl project, and he will be sharing information with you, taking your questions, and addressing your comments.

I'm turning it over to you.

>> DR. JOSE CASTILLO: All right. I'm here. I want to thank you for being here. We especially want to thank you for being here today because you didn't take Doc Brown's advice here on the left. You're like me; you're still here and trying to make sense out of everything that's going on with the pandemic, what does it mean for school in the fall and what it means -- how we use our Multi-Tiered System of Supports to try to respond to -- a word you're probably tired of hearing now but -- this unprecedented series of events. But we have to be there for our children and our youth.

Again, thank you for being here. Thank you all for being the leaders that ignored Doc Brown's advice and have stayed in 2020 to deal with these issues.

>> [Laughter]

>> DR. JOSE CASTILLO: So, Beth mentioned the governor's Executive Order and the guidance that came from the DOE earlier this week. I did want to go over it a little bit with you all.

Specifically -- I'm not going to read the entire Executive Order to you all nor the guidance but we pulled out some things relevant to the purpose of this webinar, which is really leveraging or planning with MTSS in mind when we return -- for our return in August so that we can have the most effective responses to the situation as possible.

As you all are likely aware -- for those who choose to come to attend in our brick and mortar physical schools -- mortgage physical schools and we will need to as schools provide the full panoply of services.

For us and our project, and really schools in Florida what that really means to us is that that's our MTSS. That's how we organize our assessment, our instruction, our intervention to make sure that we provide the level of support needed to be successful.

So, through the FDOE guidance, we did pull out a couple of particular quotes we wanted to make sure we were able to discuss today with you all.

The first one being this Executive Order goes on to say that robust progress monitoring must be extended to all students in the same district or public charter school. And the key phrase for us, tiered support must be provided to all students who are not making adequate progress.

And I'll be honest with you all. When I first -- not because I disagree. Obviously I am a huge MTSS proponent. It's my job. It's my livelihood and I believe in it. But because in the last few months I've just really been -- from talking to people. My wife is a reading coach in a local school district. So, I've watched a lot of what she's had to do to adapt to this crisis. And then my son is also in a public school, and I've watched him try to figure out how to do virtual learning or distance learning. It's really fundamentally what we are dealing with, since March, a fundamental Tier 1, universally Tier 1 issue. Meaning that -- I'm sure some students thrive during distance learning. I can tell you my son was not one of them. He is much better in a traditional pick and mortar setting with people with more patience than me in instructing him. To thrive and grow in that environment.

Regardless of whether you have thrived or didn't do as well, what we know is that it represents a universal and fundamental disruption of our educational experience that we need to have a Tier 1 response when we come back to school, and we need to plan for that Tier 1 response because there are going to be learning gaps, learning to what would have occurred that didn't occur for our students, that will impacts students in ways we have never had to deal with before. And so, that mindset of being back and think become what do we do with Tier 1 is critical.

But, the more I thought about this statement, the more I honestly was comfortable. Because that language of progress monitoring also relates to Tier 1. We monitor progress at Tier 1. And that language of students who are not making adequate progress I think allows us to see how students respond to this fundamental Tier 1 approach which we need to have. Which I'm going to unpack in a little bit when we get to some subsequent slides here.

In addition to wrestling that one, the other quote I wanted to pull out was the "School districts must immediately begin working with IED teams to identify students who may have regressed during school closures. School districts must ensure that IED teams determine needed services, including compensatory services, IED teams must follow a student-centered approach with a commitment to ensure that the individual needs of each child are met."

I'm sure we all believe in and know our students with disabilities need that individualized attention. But, again, I've seen that we're going to talk through -- that I'm hoping we will talk through today is the idea that our students with disabilities, yes, they need individualized attention, but the specially designed instruction that they get occurs within the context for our students, or should anyway, within our general-Ed classrooms and is only as good as our strong Tier 1 approach to instruction.

So, even thinking about this particular quote, my mind goes back to how do we make sure that we're creating an overall environment for our students?

[Audio dropping]

All of that was hopefully conveying my transition from, oh, Lord, how are we going to do a more calm state and a more problem-solving and planning or oriented-state? I can see how we're able to respond with MTSS in mind or respond in that way so that we can meet students where they come back to us at but also adjust what we need to do because of this

fundamental Tier 1 disruption that we've had.

So, Beth and I, our goal [audio dropping] that we might be able to help you all look like baby Yoda and stay in that sphere in terms of your well-being. At least that's our hope for you all.

So, in case you haven't heard it already because I've not been subtle, have said it about three, four times, we have to respond to this situation not just with intervention and compensatory education in mind but really with the logic of MTSS in mind if we're going to be making sure that we're able to provide the supports that our children and families are going to need and the supports that our educators are going to need as we return.

Really, again, for us, that starts, of course, with Tier 1 and making sure that that is as robust and as effective as possible. And that has always been our message, those of you who have worked with us know that. But it's particularly important right now for all the reasons I've already said. I'm going to try not to repeat myself again in terms of what folks are going to need given the interruption to learning.

One of the questions might seem like minor distinctions, but I think they're really big ones. In this instance and from my perspective -- [audio drop]

The likelihood that we're going to have lots of students who have not had the opportunity because of schools' closures and then shifting to distance learning, to be ready for their next grade level and to hit the ground running is increased substantially.

I think in using language that communicates that we really are -- opportunities for all of our students as opposed to learning helps to shift the conversation in the narrative to conversations around how do we adapt what we need to do with our Tier 1 instruction and assessment as part of Tier 1 to inform it so that we are responding to those opportunity gaps appropriately and doing everything we can to help address what our students missed and to build off of the strength that they're also going to demonstrate and the variables in between there from our students.

>> BETH HARDCASTLE: Jose?

>> DR. JOSE CASTILLO: Yes?

>> BETH HARDCASTLE: Back to the way you were differentiating between a learning gap and an opportunity gap, because in my -- people planning for the new school year, part of that planning is how do they address some of those inequities that have existed, related to either lack of technology or lack of internet access in some homes and for some families and students. Some were kept working or work even more.

And then even inequities to teachers and staff and their familiarity with and their skill level with and their feeling comfortable with delivering instruction through distance learning methods. So, I think that fits in terms of an opportunity gap.

>> DR. JOSE CASTILLO: Yeah. I appreciate that, Beth. Again, the minor language difference sometimes can be overlooked. But I think -- the more people are almost always wanting to do what they think is right but to help them see in this instance that -- focusing on a robust Tier 1 response. I think the better off we're going to be and the more we're going to be able to provide those interventions and revisit the needs of our students that are part and parcel of a good functioning MTSS to begin with but are also included in the language and the guidance of the Executive Order.

>> BETH HARDCASTLE: Right. Ok. Good.

>> DR. JOSE CASTILLO: So, a little bit more concretely when we're talking about a robust planning force when talk about schools re-opening with MTSS in mind. We maybe have to

think about a little bit constantly message and reinforcing the intentionality and the patience that's going to be needed as we return from this substantial disruption and try to establish some sense of a new normalcy.

And again, that's not just for our students. Although we know many of them have been impacted. Beth gave some good examples. But so have our teachers. So, has everybody else in the building. -- business as usual as if nothing has happened will set us up for a less than effective response to say the least.

So, things like making sure that we really work to establish instructional routines and expectations, we know that that's an important part of the first few weeks of school at a minimum. In a typical school year. But given the physical distancing guidelines that districts will adopt and choose how to implement, given -- forget about the summer -- there's going to be a need to re-establish, and establish some new -- in this COVID environment. If we try to rush pass in order to get to standards instruction and intervention, we're viewing that during the first couple of weeks, don't get me wrong, but -- educators and students more rest than normal -- how we behave together in a classroom environment.

We also need to think about, intentionally, how we use our assessments. Yeah, absolutely, Beth. Our assessments, we have our screeners to see how students are doing in terms of -- and we have our formative assessments. -- to all students to find out where they are relative to the standards. Again, that's part of our way of work within an MTSS and teaching at the Tier 1 level. But the intentionality here needs to be, I think, focused on how we use this data and information to really see what gaps exist or what opportunity gaps create a lack of knowledge and skills relative to certain standards.

[Audio dropping]

That we cannot make the assumption of students walking in, knowing and doing what they are typically able to do. And also it's going to require, I think, some patience and discipline based on how we use these things to respond in a Tier 1 way, through things like reteaching differentiation, extending learning, as well as leveraging our UDL principles that I'll talk about more here in a second. Intervening with large numbers of students that are maybe struggling with demonstrating the same knowledge and skills. Because if we do that, we're already going to take a system with finite resources, you know, people, materials, and time, and we're going to tax it more than it is already going to be because of the changes that have to happen with COVID, the stress that's already going to be there. I think we as leaders can really message that taking the time to stay focused on Tier 1 and monitor how students respond -- the more we can do that the better off our teachers are going to be.

In terms of the leveraging UDL principles, you know, how do we use what we learned from distance learning? Certainly there were things I'm sure we all tried that didn't go well in our districts. -- to provide equity and access and opportunity for not just our students with disabilities but for all students to access grade-level content. Maybe while we're working on intervention or remediating skill deficits so we don't accidentally do our students a disservice focusing so much on what they don't have that we forget to make sure that they have access to the grade-level content that they need.

So, the progress monitoring language, Tier 1, --

[Please stand by for captions.]

I'll pause a minute or two just to see if anybody puts anything in the chat box if they want to ask or raise.

>> Yeah, we've got somebody typing, Jose.

While she's typing, I was getting ready to put it in the chat box but I'll just say it. As you were talking, I think that was a good reminder that the stronger our Tier 1 is, the better it makes things for our sub-group populations, our students with disabilities, our students who are receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 support.

>> DR. JOSE CASTILLO: Thank you, Beth.

And Veronica put our first question in there. How will we account for Tier 1 differences if districts utilize various learning options such as face-to-face instruction, virtual learning, etc.?

I invite my colleagues to jump in here. But Veronica, I think that's an excellent question. When I said earlier, jokingly that I'm using a word you're all probably tired of hearing, "Unprecedented," I did use it because I think that we're all wrestling with how to do that now.

Historically we had, if it was a virtual school, charter schools, private schools, brick-and-mortar or public schools. I think what's happened now has forced us to really step back and to take a look and potentially reconceptualize what it means to provide Tier 1 instruction. And that's something that I know we're work on and are hoping to be able to provide some guidance about how that might be done. In fact, Beth is going share some resources or announce some resource that are coming that are related to the question that you asked that we're waiting for approval on.

But I'd be lying, Veronica, if I told you that I had a research-based or evidence-based way to say that here's exactly how schools should address face-to-face versus virtual learning and how to equate, like, Tier 1 across those things. It's going involve some conversations among districts and leadership, and then with school leaders, around our students who are here face-to-face what is our Tier 1 instruction for those that are taking a virtual or distance learning option? What are we giving them? And then how do we begin to officer who is responding and who is not and layer on additional supports?

At least for this year we'll have to see what requirements come down the pike and how those options change through the this year and into next year.

So, Veronica, I know that's not a concrete answer. But it's probably the most honest answer and best answer I can give you right now.

So, Charles said, if we're looking at focusing Tier 1, what happens when parents request evaluations? If we are thinking it's a lack of opportunity rather than an LD issue. Charles, that's an excellent question. And that's part of the reason, honestly, that I think Monica, the ex-bureau chief who stepped down to take another position in the school district, she started talking to us about making sure we're ready to have these conversations with you all. Because those questions are being asked nationally. And I know she had talked with her state-level special education counterparts and their departments of education along with lawyers and advocacy groups.

What she communicated and what my take on all of this is it -- is, if we're really purposeful and strategic about that Tier 1 response, because it's often going to be an opportunity gap that occurred for your question, that's going to, you know, help with a lot of the issues we're going to see. Because our students if we're strategic and patient enough, will start to respond, at least many of them. And those that don't, we can get them to look at how we layer on more intensive service and then potentially whether an evaluation might be needed.

But I don't think that that in and of itself would be sufficient. Because we're going to have what you talked about, parent requests or advocates, you know who might get involved if they see parents talk to them about their perspectives of things that are happen organize not happening for their students -- happening or not happening for their students.

The other part she talked about and that I completely agree with is the need to communicate, how we're responding in schools in districts, and what it means to really respond robustly with what we're doing for all students. Because the lawyers that have talked on some of the webinars, as well as some of the advocacy groups that spoke, and all of that earlier on when this crisis first started, universally they seemed to say that oftentimes when there's problems, it comes down to a miscommunication or lack of communication.

And so, I'm not sitting here trying to be all sunshine and rainbow and say that that's going to work in every single instance. But I think if we have that focus and response, if we communicate that to not only our educators but to our families in terms of how we're positioning ourselves to return and establish a solid instructional response, and taking time to figure out where students are, and then differentiating based on how -- on what they need, then I think that will help many people understand. And those that don't, I think it comes down a leadership question of how do you respond.

We do have the responsibility for child find still, absolutely. And I have a slide in a little bit that I'll try not to steal the thunder from too much. But we also know that there are rule-outs for LD that we need to make sure are not a better explanation for a student's underachievement.

And to me, it's going to be really hard to rule out the attendance and/or exposure to appropriate instruction right now just because of everything that's happened in the last few months.

If the student was receiving more intensive intervention and there were questions about whether an evaluation should occur before the pandemic, switch to distance learning, that's one thing. If this is a student that had not been on anybody's radar, then at least initially without compelling evidence to me it would be hard to legally meet those rule-out requirements, frankly.

So, that's not to say you can't do it. And as Beth put in there, you know, David Wheeler talked about eligibility and thinking about it in a distance learning environment. But I do think we need to be judicious with those types of abouts. -- of requests so, again it's not this straight forward here's exactly what I would do answer, Charles, but it's the best thinking I can do right now with where we're at as a state and the nation and trying to figure out how we're going to return to school in August.

All right. I'm going to go ahead and move forward to talk about a couple of other things. Please go ahead and put more questions or comments in the chat box as I'm going here. I'm happy to stop and address those along the way.

So, leadership is always important. We know that. But given the types of questions that Veronica and Charles raised here in the chat box, I think they are evidence of how it's important -- how important it's going to be now more than ever.

We know it takes leadership to help our educators and our families both understand and participate and use our MTSS well to meet the needs of our students and to make sure as many as possible are making those learning gains and responding to good instruction and intervention. But, again, if we choose to embrace this notion of a robust Tier 1 response, people are going to be pressured; whether it's because of the types of questions Charles mentioned or because we see these areas where there are gaps or opportunities in learning that were lost or not present. And we're going to feel pressure to want to make sure that we do everything we can to meet their needs.

It will take, both on our part, remembering ourselves but communicating with our school

leaders and with our teachers and setting up the structures to help them to do this. Like how we use our staff meetings, how we use our PLCs, grade-level meetings, and so on to really have a laser-like and sustained focus on looking at the streaming and the formative assessments and adjusting our typical instructional routines and delivery of content to make sure that we're addressing the reality of what has walked in the door given this crisis and not what we typically do.

And part of what we'll often do is right away start identifying students who need more intensive supports and referring them either to a problem-solving team or to a standard protocol type of intervention for students with similar needs.

And again, we'll need do those things. But I certainly question whether we want to do those things immediately or whether we want to take our time and energy in really establishing not only the instruction that has to happen but in every way that we communicate, in every structure or set of meetings that we have set up, making sure that we remain focused on this issue right now. Because it's going to require our focus to do it well and to make sure that our children and our youth have the best opportunity to make up for those learning opportunities that were lost.

>> BETH HARDCASTLE: Jose?

>> DR. JOSE CASTILLO: Yes.

>> BETH HARDCASTLE: So, I'm wondering. Even though we may need to wait a bit to see what we need to be doing to meet the needs of some of the kids who are returning, I'm wondering if a leadership stabbed point -- standpoint and infrastructure and communication, etc., how flexible schools can be and how they are using their staff.

You know if schools have to re-open, it's not to say that every kid is going to be in a classroom every day. And so if some kids are only in class two or three days a week, then how are teachers going to be used to make sure that all of the kids are getting what they need?

And I even go back to Veronica's question about ensuring a Tier 1 that's as consistent as possible. And I'm just thinking, you know, teachers have strengths and weaknesses, too. And if there are teachers in a school who absolutely knocked it out of the park in delivering distance learning, can they still be utilized in that setting since distance learning will still be taking place? Versus other teachers who may be much more comfortable in the face-to-face classrooms.

So, I'm just wondering what kind of thinking and decisions will go into the utilization of staff and their skill sets.

>> DR. JOSE CASTILLO: Yeah. I mean, theoretically what you said makes sense to me in terms of having your teachers, your educators, your core personnel playing to their strengths and making sure that we're creative and strategic in how we utilize our staff to maximize the effectiveness of our, you know, Tier 1 or core response to this.

I said theoretically, though, because, you know, I'm certainly not in a position to know what decisions superintendents and school boards and other leaders involved in those discussions are making around how they're going to adhere to the executive order but also their local context.

And we certainly don't speak to the DOE when it comes to how they are interpreting or addressing some of the statutory and rule requirements around who can teach what kids when. So, those are conversations that I'm sure are going on. I know I've been witness to some of them. And that I certainly would encourage you all to ask folks in your district, and when you have opportunities to speak with folks, you know, in the DOE, about how they're

interpreting some of these and what guidance they are going to give.

So, I think that those are going to be things that we figure out as we get into the school year, which is not that far from starting, as you all are aware.

So, related to leadership. And leadership is certainly needed to address what Beth just raised along with other implementation issues. I know you all are leaders and you know the things that are on this slide. I only included them because I think that with all of the plans that are required, you know, documentation, the data that need to be submitted and all of that, we all feel pressure and often are pulled into those, like, technical things that we have to do that are needed and are important but are always fighting this internal battle to make sure we're out with our folks and leading these efforts by doing things like having a clear vision with a sense of urgency for what we are trying to accomplish, making sure we're focusing on our staff having what they need because they're the ones who are doing the work, leveraging those relationships that we created and developed so that we all know that we tend to respond and do things for people we trust and with people we trust than when there isn't that kind of trust and shared relationship.

So, yes, the questions you are asking are really good questions. I wish I had concrete, clear answers but that's why we know good leaders engage in expert problem-solving. And we're going to have to help our schools and districts do that. And it's going to take using some of our maybe special development and learning time, professional learning time, to help our folks learn new skills that they need to learn in this new environment and use the data in a way to make sure we're adjusting what we need to do to match what strengths and needs our students are walking in the door with.

But really for me that staying focused and having a clear vision for how we're going to respond and that sense of urgency for doing it and maintaining focus on is where we as leaders can really make or break how we respond to this crisis in the context of MTSS.

So, that's kind of my -- both my hope and challenge, hope for you and challenge you, would be to really embrace this opportunity. Because I think we're the ones that know often in our districts the most about MTSS and how to think about it in a three-tiered way and not just a process that our students go through when we think they may have a disability or need more intensive interventions. So, if we're not out there leading that and following these principles, you know, I wonder who will. So, that's why I wanted to make sure I spent the time to talk to you about stuff that I know you all know, but I think it's more important than ever.

So, the last couple of things and then we'll pause to see what questions folks have about everything.

As I said before, purposely spent a whole lot of time talking about and then repeating myself talking about Tier 1. I figured I was preaching to the choir, Charles. Thank you.

So, preaching to the choir about Tier 1, it is important. You need to do it. That doesn't mean we can completely stop thinking about Tier 2 and 3. And I certainly did not want to communicate that. It just can't be where we go to right away.

So, as we're thinking about our Tier 2 and Tier 3 parts of our MTSS, some things to be thinking about collaborating and planning for and communicating with your school districts and peers are that we're certainly going to have some students who are receiving more intensive services already and may have been since we switched to distance learning. We need to assess as part of that robust Tier 1 response, understand where they're at, but potentially go a little bit deeper. And not just pick up where we left off, necessarily, assuming that there was a stop in those more intensive interventions, but figure out how to build upon where we were,

where the students currently are at, and start to reinstate those more intensive supports as we learn more about where students are at currently and our capacity to deliver those services.

At least initially I would recommend being judicious in identifying those students who need more intensive services for all the reasons I said already. I try not to repeat that rationale again.

And then rather than, you know -- unless there's a really intensive need that's evident, relying more on how students respond to our Tier 1 response I think can help us given these unique circumstances which students are going to need those more intensive supports.

And number one, I think it makes sense because we need some time to address the learning opportunities that were missed. But I think it also makes sense from an us as educators' standpoint and not break our educators and our system by overwhelming it with trying to intervene away all of those missed learning opportunities. Because we just can't do it.

And I think that if we communicated and approach it that way, it's a defensible strategy, certainly conceptually but also from like a legal kind of standpoint.

And I certainly, for the reasons I talked about when responding to Charles' question, being judicious when referring, you know, new students that weren't on our radar previously for Special-Ed, particularly for particular learning disabilities. I'm saying this tongue-in-cheek and preaching to the choir but there's no evidence that exists that a pandemic causes specific learning disabilities. And given everything that's happened, I think you need to make sure you do your due diligence in ruling out things like attendance, making sure students were exposed to appropriate instruction, before we get to the point where we're ready to say a student may have specific learning disabilities. Because we know there are going to be lots of students that look like they don't have knowledge and skills they need as a result of what has happened. And there will be from our educators, from our schooling and probably even from our district folks -- because I think their hearts are in the right place -- probably a push in some instances to evaluate students. We've got to stop and think and have those courageous conversations.

And our problem-solving process is really positioned to help us do that as we get further into the school year. If we're doing that process well, it has mechanic niches not only identifying the gaps between expectations and current performance, but why our students aren't there and we shouldn't just be looking at student-centered issues and what they might be miss organize skill deficits they may have. But we also are supposed to be looking at, whenever we do problem-solving, the instructional environment, the curriculum, what's happened in the environment. And, again, this pandemic and how we've responded for every one of our students has changed that instructional environment, their home environment, and we need to do our due diligence in addressing those things and in it ruling them out if what we're considering is going for an evaluation.

And then, of course, we intervene based on what we learn from problem analysis and look at how they respond. And how they respond, you know, dictates whether we have been successful, whether we look at more intensive interventions, or whether we need to start thinking about an evaluation to bring in additional expertise to figure out what's going on and provide supports that a student may need that are specially designed for them.

So, this graphic just repeats what I said earlier in response to Charles' question. Basically, we know there are four prongs or ideas of things that we need to do well when we're engaged in evaluation for a specific learning disability. And two of them involve how they respond to instruction intervention. And then ruling out other factors that might better explain the underachievement. And I just don't think in most cases for new students that come up, at

least initially, that we can do either of those right now given what's happened. In most cases. I don't want to say that universally.

And so we've got to take the time to see how they respond to instruction intervention as they're coming back, and to investigate using that problem-solving process what might explain what's going on with any students that are receiving more intensive service and may potentially be considered for a comprehensive evaluation.

And paying particular attention, right now, to those issues of attendance and access to instruction given the pandemic as well as making sure they received appropriate instruction given the variability we know happened and how our schools and teachers within schools were able to adapt and provide distance learning in the last few months.

So, with that being said, I'll let Beth talk about some upcoming resources in a minute but I want to pause one more time and see if there are any other questions, comments, or concerns that folks want to voice and have a little discussion in our last five or six minutes.

>> BETH HARDCASTLE: I guess I have a question to the group, those of us, or those who are participating with us today. And that is, we're talk about planning for the new year with MTSS in mind. I think within our project. And I think it's ok to say this. Once the pandemic hit, we've been extremely busy and being asked to do a lot of things by a lot of different people as schools and districts not really struggled but are trying to figure things out.

And so my question for the group is -- a colleague and I -- what she said to me was a good question for district folks. Thought implementing MTSS was difficult before all of this, and now you add varieties and delivery methods, platforms, and everything else. So, I'm curious as to -- do they see how their Tiered System of Support becomes even more important and in ways that it needs to be adjusted now that we're in this new situation? Just curious.

Jose, while some folks are responding to that, I'll talk about these upcoming resources.

>> DR. JOSE CASTILLO: Go ahead.

>> BETH HARDCASTLE: So, we are in the process, or members of our project are in the process, of developing an online module that's kind of an extension of what Jose has done today. It also brings in the perspective of some district folks who will be a part of that module. So, we're waiting on approval for dissemination of that.

In the meantime, members of our project are working on three different documents. These documents will be available online initially. There's one on tiered instruction and intervention, another one on the problem-solving process, and the third one on data and evaluation. The tiered instruction and intervention has been sent to DOE for approval. The problem-solving document is in the hands of our leadership right now. And then it will be sent to DOE. And then the third one that will be disseminated is that data evaluation document.

So, all of those, including the module, are chock full of resources and link to resources respective to not just distance learning -- we've tried to approach these from the standpoint of whether you're in a face-to-face setting, distance learning setting, virtual school setting, or some blended approach. We've tried to include information that would be applicable across all of those learning environments.

So, those will be made available. Eventually the documents will also be put in an interactive online format. But initially they will be available to you as an electronic document that you can link or download.

All right, Jose. We've got some comments.

>> DR. JOSE CASTILLO: Yes. I think Charles mentioned that Tier 2 and 3 is more difficult or providing when Tier 1 is not as strong. Absolutely. And, again, I think this pandemic we know

has exacerbated inequities that exist in education and people's access and opportunities. It's certainly going to be evident when we return whether students return physically or through some type of distance learning. -- learning mechanism. All the more reason that anything we can do to work with our school and district colleagues to really stay focused on trying to have that robust Tier 1 response, the better off we're going to be when it does come to providing those more intensive supports.

Which relates to I think something Shelley Dickinson raised. It's going to be challenging to provide those more intensive instructional supports when using the CDC guidelines. And that makes perfect sense to me. Again thinking about concepts and the framework, I really do believe that we can still apply it and do it well and meet the needs of manufacture our students. -- many of our students. I am not pretending we have all the answers of exactly how do you it -- how you do it given both the disruption, against learning that I've talked about ad nauseam here but also all of the logistical issues like following CDC guidelines, wearing masks and other things that we absolutely are going to have to do because it's the right thing.

We're hoping to be able to provide supports through virtual medium and to districts individually to help you figure out if problem-solving these things as you're planning and certainly as you get into doing them as the school year starts.

And we hope to be able to share with some of you all as well and continue to be able to connect you.

>> BETH HARDCASTLE: Ok. Lisa, is there some way we can move the camera screen off of the questions? Can I just move it?

>> I don't think they can see it. It's just on our end.

>> BETH HARDCASTLE: Oh. [Laughter] Never mind.

So, we've got three poll questions for you to respond to in way of an evaluation of this session. Your input and your evaluation of the work and the support that our project provides is extremely important to us. That's why we ask for it all the time. So, we appreciate you taking a second to complete those questions.

And then also your quantitative -- qualitative feedback is important to us as well. And so, we welcome any additional comments you'd like to make, any suggestions for upcoming sessions.

I had thought at one time that the session that we had planned for two weeks from now might be the last. But I've been given a hint that these and DOE may want us to continue some of these as we move into the new school year. So, we always welcome your input and support into the topics that we're selecting.

So, I will give you guys a second to do that.

Again, the pdf of the PowerPoint is available in the share pod as well as that Executive Order.

So, we appreciate your responses to the evaluation questions. Please stay healthy. Please stay safe. Please let us know how we can continue to support you.

I hope if you haven't already, that some of you got a little bit of a vacation or a break before the new school year starts.

Thank you all so much. Thank you for at decisional comments you have put in the chat box. Those will be made available to you as well as the closed captioning script.

Thanks all.

>> DR. JOSE CASTILLO: Thank you all. Appreciate your time.