

# Team Engagement

## Parent Involvement

Parent involvement in education has been widely reviewed and found to be highly linked to student learning and achievement. Reporting **data** to parents and involving them in decision making is critical for student success, and it is a requirement of both the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**. Schools must help facilitate parent understanding and involvement in this decision making.

Parental involvement is a key component for having an effective multi-tiered system of supports within a school. Schools need to include parent communication and input in all phases of the problem solving process. Some districts have reported benefitting from reviewing their current parent involvement policies to ensure that they are in line with IDEA and ESEA. Suggestions regarding what level of involvement and communication should take place during the problem solving process at each tier are provided in the following paragraphs and summarized on page 4 of this section, Parent Involvement within an MTSS.

Prior to the start of each school year, a plan should be developed for informing parents about using data-based problem solving within a multi-tiered system for supports. Districts and/or schools may wish to download or create parent handouts or brochures, such as Florida's Multi-Tiered System of Supports brochure for parents or parent video, which outlines what the multi-tiered system of supports looks like within their school. A description of data-based problem solving and the multi-tiered system of supports in place at a school should be included in the school's handbook. Student services personnel, such as a school psychologist, school social worker, or school counselor, can share additional information with parents as needed. Display boards, video clips, and PowerPoint presentations can be used to help describe these concepts and benefits to children at teacher-student orientation meetings. Additional resources that support parent engagement are available at Florida's Multi-Tiered System of Supports website at <http://www.florida-rti.org/>.

Different kinds of information should be shared with parents depending upon what level of **supports** are being provided to their child. Specific to Tier 1 instruction, **data** reflecting student progress within the core academic and/or behavioral curricula should be shared with parents of all students. During parent-teacher conferences, graphs of student progress should be provided with explanations regarding student performance. Strategies, materials, and technology tools for home instruction also should be shared. Also, parents may want to use a participation form to help them record notes during problem solving meetings. A Parent Participation Notes example is provided for you at [http://florida-rti.org/gtips/docs/Parent\\_Participation\\_Notes.pdf](http://florida-rti.org/gtips/docs/Parent_Participation_Notes.pdf).

Students receiving Tier 2 supplemental instruction, in addition to the core academic and behavioral curricula, must be progress monitored more frequently. Reports of student progress also must be shared with parents more frequently at this level. Obtaining parent input and engaging parents at this phase is critical for student success. Parents should be offered specific support regarding skills that need improvement. It might be helpful to provide the parent with written documentation of what data have been collected, the intervention plan(s) put in place to improve skills, and how the plan(s) are monitored. For students receiving additional support through tutoring, schools should make efforts to communicate with the parents/tutor to help

bridge the **understanding** of deficit skills and evidence based interventions that are being used to address the areas of concern. This helps to ensure that the supplemental intervention being provided is aligned with the core instruction and supports.

Students receiving Tier 3 intensive interventions for specific academic or behavioral skills are progress monitored most frequently. Parents should be invited to participate in the problem solving meetings to analyze their child’s progress (response to the Tier 3 interventions) and help make decisions about their instruction. Schools should encourage parents to document and share information about any services that are being provided outside of the school day. Parents should also be provided with detailed graphs and clear explanations of their child’s response to instruction/intervention over time. If the team involved in problem solving is considering the need for **evaluation** procedures to potentially access special education resources, parents also must be informed of their procedural due process rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

### **Parent Involvement within an MTSS**

Parent involvement is a key component for having an effective system of **supports** within a school. Schools need to include parent involvement and input in all steps of the **data**-based problem solving process. Schools and parents benefit when parents are routinely provided information about how they can be involved and participate in this process. The following is an example of what level of involvement and communication should take place respective to the level of tiered **instruction**.

#### **Tier 1**

**Activity:** Preparation for opening of school

**How to Involve Parents:**

- Develop a campaign to inform the public regarding data-based problem solving process within a multi-tiered system for supports.
- Include clear description of data-based problem solving process within a multi-tiered system for supports in school handbook (parent and/or student).

**Activity:** Initiation of school year

**How to Involve Parents:**

- Send parent brochure or handout home to all parents reviewing processes initiated within the system to address needs of all students.
- Disseminate information through conferences, websites, newsletters, and/or open houses to facilitate parents’ understanding of the problem solving process and its benefit to their student(s).
- Consider using resources, such as a PowerPoint, video, or a display board at an open house or student orientations.

**Activity:** Universal screenings

**How to Involve Parents**

- Provide data reflecting student progress within the core curriculum for all parents at their request.
- Conduct parent/teacher conference during which student data will be shared, and which strategies, materials, and technology tools for home instruction are offered.

**Tier 2**

**Activity:** Teams (content area, grade level, etc.) meet to identify students in need of targeted supports

**How to Involve Parents**

- Obtaining parent input is critical. Solicit input from parents when appropriate.

**Activity:** Documentation of progress

**How to Involve Parents**

- Continue to send home reports and continuous progress monitoring data reviewed by team.
- Involve parent in the intervention process. (Note: If we are teaching a targeted skill, the parent should know about this and be guided in helping the student at home to the extent the parent is willing and able.)
- Consider giving the parent the Parent Participation Notes (Appendix D) as a way of helping them understand and document what help their child will be getting.
- Consult with parent regarding any tutoring services the student may be receiving.

**Tier 3**

**Activity:** Team meets to review progress and make **instructional decisions**

**How to Involve Parents**

- Invite parents to participate in meetings and/or receive any of the data the team uses with a summary of the meeting in writing.
- Encourage the parent to use the Parent Participation Notes (Appendix D).

**Activity:** Decisions that result in a student spending more time in intensive instruction than typical **peers**

**How to Involve Parents**

- Continue to communicate with parents and present them information on intervention plans and progress monitoring.
- If a team is considering the need for an **evaluation**, communicate this need to the parents using the data collected during the intervention process and solicit consent from parents.

Download a copy of *Parent Involvement within an MTSS* at <http://florida-rti.org/gtips/docs/ParentInvolvement-MTSS.pdf>.

**Educator Involvement**

Effective **leadership** is a vital component for a school to be successful within a multi-tiered system. **Collaboration** among administrators, content area specialists, **data** specialists, and other school and district staff should represent instructionally relevant team membership. **Problem-solving teams** should be identified or created and used to problem solve at different levels (school level, grade level, class level, subgroup level, or student level) and may include various members, depending on the need. Though referred to with a wide variety of names, any team engaged in problem solving is considered a problem solving team. Level of expertise, skill, and knowledge will determine the members of these teams, rather than title. Additionally, members of the problem solving team will need to have a shared **consensus** regarding a clearly stated purpose of engaging in problem solving: to increase student learning, as is continually verified by students' positive response to the instruction/interventions being provided.

## Guiding Tools for Instructional Problem Solving — Revised (GTIPS-R)

The makeup of the team engaged in problem solving varies depending upon the purpose and level of the problem solving. Membership for effective problem solving at the school or grade level should include individuals who are knowledgeable about expected schoolwide (or grade level) academic and behavioral performance and **rate of progress**, and have an in-depth understanding of the specific challenges in the school. Members include, but are not limited to, administration, grade-level representation, **intervention** specialists (academic and behavioral), problem solving **facilitators**, intervention support personnel, parents, and data coaches.

Problem-solving teams at the individual student level should always include the parents of the student. Team members should be included according to their knowledge of the student, grade-level expectations, the problem-solving process, evidence based academic and behavioral interventions, progress monitoring, and diagnostic assessment to inform **instruction**. Members, who should be added depending on the student's needs, include:

- the school administrator
- a general education teacher
- a special education teacher
- someone knowledgeable in reading, math, and/or behavior
- student service representatives
- a problem solving facilitator
- a data coach

When forming team membership at all levels of the **framework**, consider the following example: If the student requires acceleration or enrichment in one or more areas in order to remain engaged in the curriculum, then the specialist for gifted learners is an important member of the problem-solving team. Administrators should consider all potential resources on staff, such as fine arts teachers, media specialists, etc. Depending on the nature of the problem, anyone the school employs may be identified as a valuable resource. Administrators should also consider existing teams, such as grade-level teams, that should engage in systematic problem solving at the Tier 1 and Tier 2 levels.

### **Responsibilities**

The general role of the problem solving team is to focus on improving academic and behavioral outcomes for students. In order to accomplish this task, the problem-solving team will need to have certain core responsibilities. An effective problem-solving team begins by reviewing student performance **data** (academic and/or behavioral) at the whole school, grade, class, and subgroup levels. When reviewing the data, it is important to identify any trends that may demonstrate an area of concern. Once an area is identified, the problem solving team develops hypotheses as to why the problem is occurring. Once a team has verified one or more hypotheses, an intervention plan will be created to improve the area of concern. It will be essential to consider the resources available at the school and how best to use them. The problem solving team will review the effectiveness of the intervention and **adjust** as needed. Refer to the section, Continuous Improvement: The Problem-Solving Process, for detailed descriptions of problem solving at each of the four steps in the process.

In order for meetings to be effective, problem solving teams should consider the frequency and duration of their meetings as well as the roles and procedures used during the meetings. For instance, a school-level problem solving team may not need to meet as frequently as a grade- or

individual-level team. It is also important to have a structured format that is consistently used during meetings to ensure that the time is spent efficiently. Problem-solving team meetings should conclude each occurrence with a written plan that outlines not only the intervention plan, including how progress and **fidelity** will be monitored, but also the on-going responsibilities of each of the team members. As many members of the team as possible should be proficient using the problem solving process so that the thinking process can be effectively facilitated.