

# **When Everyone is Thinking Alike, No One is Thinking**

## **Ten Multi-Tiered Practices that Explain Why Students Ain't Learning**

**Howard M. Knoff, Ph.D.**

President, Project ACHIEVE Educational Solutions

knoffprojectachieve@earthlink.net

[www.projectachieve.info](http://www.projectachieve.info)

501-312-1484

1

## **Howard M. Knoff, Ph.D. President, Project ACHIEVE Educational Solutions**

**49 Woodberry Road  
Little Rock, AR 72212**

E-mail: [knoffprojectachieve@earthlink.net](mailto:knoffprojectachieve@earthlink.net)

Phone: 501-312-1484

Websites: [www.projectachieve.info](http://www.projectachieve.info)

Blog: [www.projectachieve.info/blog](http://www.projectachieve.info/blog)

Twitter: [@DrHowieKnoff](https://twitter.com/DrHowieKnoff)


9:45 to 11:15 (90 minutes)

2

**The Ultimate Educational Goal**

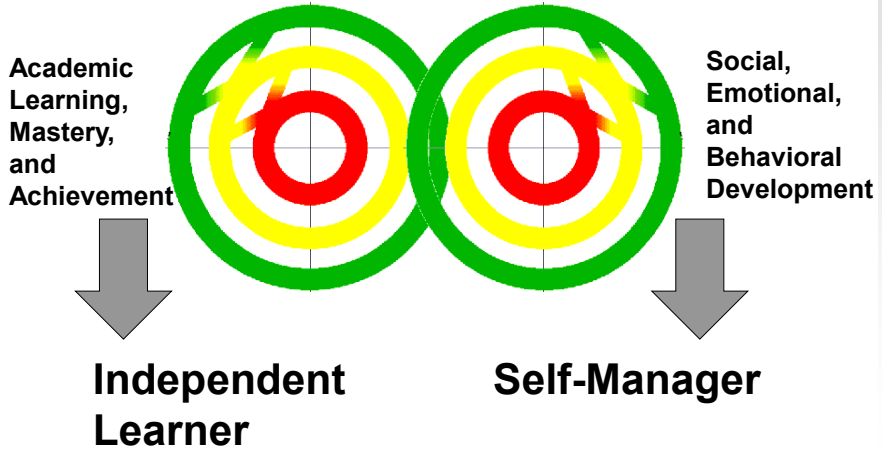
IS TO:

**Maximize ALL Students' Academic Achievement and Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Development**



3

**From a Student Perspective...  
Our Goal is to create...**



**Academic Learning, Mastery, and Achievement**

**Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Development**

**Independent Learner**

**Self-Manager**

4

**The MTSS Process focuses on providing students the academic and/or behavioral services, supports, strategies, or programs they need to be successful.**



5

## **ESSA's Definition for MTSS**

The new ESEA/ESSA defines "multi-tier system of supports" as:

*"a comprehensive continuum of evidence-based, systemic practices to support a rapid response to students' needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based instructional decision-making."*

The term appears only five times in the law. Two are in the section that defines the term as above.

The other three relate to struggling, ELL, and students with disabilities.

6

## ESSA's Major Behavior-Related Components (rti, pbis, mtss)

- \* ESEA/ESSA does not mention “response-to-intervention.”
- \* The law mentions “positive behavioral interventions and supports” three times and “multi-tiered systems of supports” five times, and **ALWAYS** in lower case words with NO acronyms.
- \* Thus, ESEA/ESSA does not require the use of the US DoE's PBIS or MTSS frameworks. Districts are free to adopt or create other models that work.

7

## Where Does Multi-tiered Process Start?

### In the classroom:

- With effective instruction and classroom management delivered by effective teachers
- Where students' mastery of academic material and positive response to classroom management is assessed and monitored in an ongoing way
- Where data-based problem-solving begins when students are not academically or behaviorally successful



8

## Where does the Multi-tiered Process Go?

For students who are not responding to effective instruction and teacher-initiated instructional or intervention approaches over time:

- The problem-solving process becomes more formal
  - diagnostic or functional assessments are completed
  - more intensive classroom-based interventions are implemented
  - student progress is monitored more frequently
  - data is used to determine the success of the interventions or the need for more intensive services.
- More specialized, multidisciplinary resources are used to deliver more specialized interventions to produce improved child outcomes
- The intensity of services delivered are driven by student outcomes!!

9

## Free Resources Available

A Multi-Tiered Service and Support Implementation  
Blueprint for Schools and Districts: Revisiting  
the Science to Improve the Practice  
(Knoff, Reeves, & Balow, 2018)

-----  
Project ACHIEVE's School Improvement and Positive  
Behavioral Support System/Social-Emotional  
Learning Overview (Knoff, 2019)

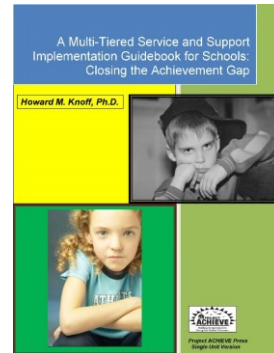
-----  
[www.projectachieve.info/store/more](http://www.projectachieve.info/store/more)

10

## MTSS Guidebook Available

### A Multi-Tiered Service and Support Implementation Guidebook for Schools: Closing the Achievement Gap

Knoff, 2019



<http://www.projectachieve.info/store/more>

11

**The MTSS Process focuses on providing students the academic and/or behavioral services, supports, strategies, or programs they need to be successful.**

**\*Ten Science-to-Practice Practices**



12

# Science-to-Practice #1

- The First “Intervention” is Effective Differentiated Academic and Behavioral Instruction by an Effective Classroom Teacher with Effective Classroom Management



13

## Students Succeed Because of their Instructional Environments

### Teacher-Instructional Factors:

Are teachers well-matched to their students and curricula?



### Student Factors:

Are students prepared and “programmed” for success?

### Curricular Factors:

Are curricula well-matched to students and teachers?

14

## Science-to-Practice #2

- Academic screeners are different than Behavioral screeners
- Both need to assess for “False-Positives” & “False-Negatives”



15

## Science-to-Practice #3

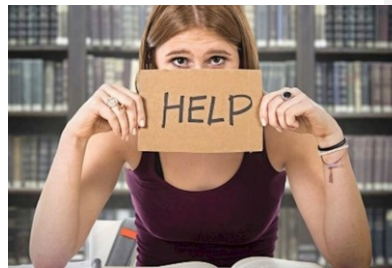
- **For Students “red-flagged” by the Academic- or Behavioral-Screeners:**  
Curriculum-based/Social-Emotional-Behavioral Assessments need to be completed to determine their current, functional skill levels; and to clarify/quantify their specific gaps or needs.



16

## Science-to-Practice #4

- These assessments may identify a student's need for:
    - Instructional/Behavioral Classroom Adaptations
    - Academic/Behavioral Skill Remediation
    - Accommodations
    - Curricular Modifications
    - Classroom Interventions
- to be implemented by classroom teachers.



17

## Science-to-Practice #5

- These assessments may also identify a student's need for a more formal data-based problem-solving process.
- This process, including comprehensive Record and Educational History Reviews, should occur prior to any "Tier II" interventions.



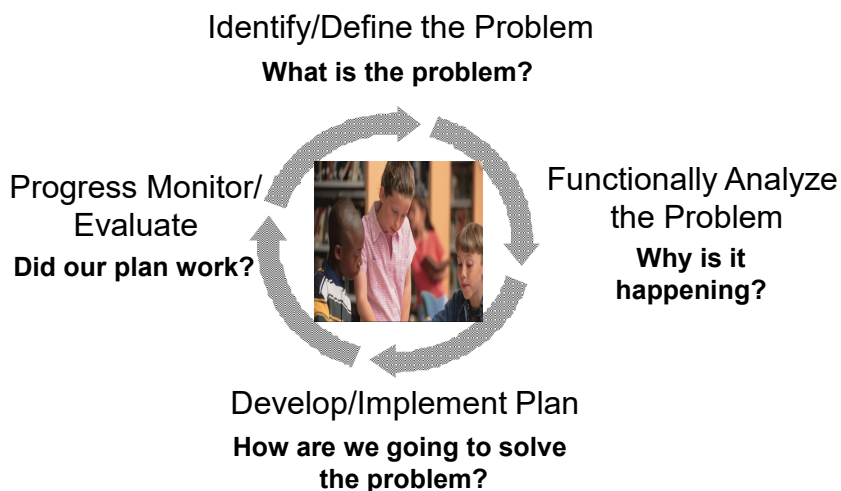
18

## Science-to-Practice #6

- The goal of the data-based functional assessment problem-solving process is to determine the root cause of a student's difficulties.
- Root cause assessments recognize that poor instruction, poor classroom management (past or present) and/or poorly chosen, matched, or aligned curricula—including social skills curricula—may explain poor student outcomes.

19

## The Data-based, Functional Assessment Problem Solving Process



20

## The Critical MTSS Problem-Solving Components

- Accurate Identification of the “Problem” and the Gap between this and a desired Outcome
- Successful Differentiation between the “Problem” and a “Symptom”
- Accurate Functional Analysis of the Gap (i.e., WHY the gap exists)
- Successful Selection of the Research-based Intervention that links to the Functional Analysis
- Appropriate Training, Preparation, Implementation, and Evaluation of the Intervention

21

## When Students do not Succeed:

We Need to Analyze their  
Instructional Environments

### Teacher-Instructional Factors:

Are teachers well-matched to their students and curricula?



### Student Factors:

Are students prepared and “programmed” for success?

### Curricular Factors:

Are curricula well-matched to students and teachers?

22

## Said a Different Way . . . Are Struggling Students . . .

**Instructional  
Casualties:**  
Past or  
Present?



**Student-Specific  
Casualties:**  
Past or  
Present?

**Curricular  
Casualties:**  
Past or  
Present?

23

## The Interdependency Between Academics and Behavior



**Academic Success**  
Independent Learning

**Behavioral Success**  
Social, Emotional,  
and Behavioral  
Self-Management

24

## Science-to-Practice #7

- The results of the root cause analysis should be linked to classroom-based, strategic, or intensive services, supports, strategies, and/or interventions.

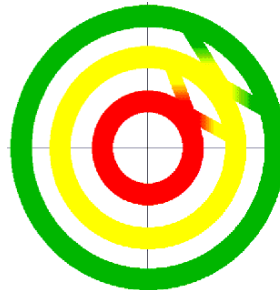
While not needed, some schools organize these services in tiers.



25

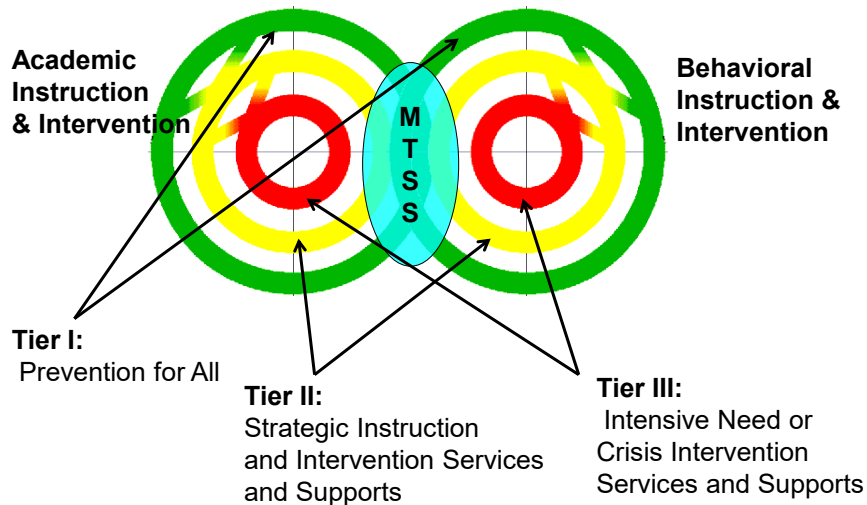
## Science-to-Practice #8

- The intervention tiers reflect the intensity of the services and supports, not the expertise of the people delivering, the settings involved, or the grouping patterns used for the interventions.



26

## Multi-tiered: Prevention, Strategic Intervention, and Intensive Need Services



27

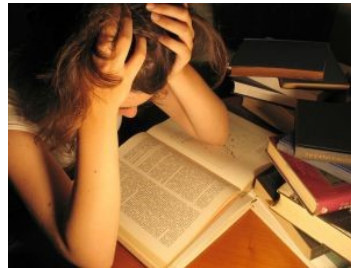
## Science-to-Practice #9

The Primary Multi-tiered Service Delivery Approach involves:

**Problem-Solving – Consultation – Intervention**

**NOT**

**Wait to Fail – Refer – Test – Place**



28

## When Students Academically Struggle or Present with Behavioral Challenges

The Goals of the MTSS Process are to Address the Needs of these Students by:

- **Using a problem-solving process** to identify the root causes of students' academic struggles or social-emotional challenges—linking the results to research-based services, supports, strategies, or interventions
- **Providing consultation to teachers** so that the instructional changes or targeted interventions are implemented with integrity and success.

29

## When Students Academically Struggle or Present with Behavioral Challenges

The Goals of the MTSS Process are to Address the Needs of these Students by:

- **Collecting assessment and intervention progress or outcome data** to validate success, or to create a baseline in case different or more intensive instruction or interventions are needed later.
- **Increasing the knowledge and skills** of all of the teachers and other professionals involved.

30

## Science-to-Practice #10.1

- In order for the Problem-Solving Process to work instructional staff need to have access to a Building-level MTSS team of multidisciplinary experts to help facilitate the implementation of strategic or intensive assessment, instruction, or behavioral intervention processes



31

## Science-to-Practice #10.2

- The Multi-tiered Problem-Solving Process is Taught to, Modeled for, and Implemented by EVERYONE in the School.

It is:

- ✓ Written and Resourced,
- ✓ Planned and Consistent,
- ✓ Evaluated and Continuously Improved



32

## Project ACHIEVE's Research-to-Practice Model

### Project ACHIEVE:

A district-wide continuous school improvement/  
school success model focused on maximizing  
the academic and  
social, emotional,  
behavioral  
development and  
progress of all  
students



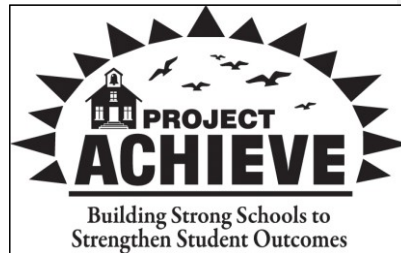
33

## Project ACHIEVE: 1990- present

### Project ACHIEVE's Evidence-based Model:

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services'  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services  
Administration (SAMHSA) — 2000

Described in the National  
Registry of Evidence-based  
Programs and Practices  
(NREPP)



34

## **Project ACHIEVE: 1990- present**

### **Notable Project ACHIEVE Sites and Grants**

- Arkansas Department of Education’s SPDG
- School Climate Transformation Grants: Martin County (KY), Laker Elementary/Huron County (MI), Teaneck Schools (NJ), Talihina (OK)
- Baltimore City (MD) Schools—Outreach and Dissemination grant
- Shelby County (OH), Scranton (PA), Northeast (NM) Regional Education Cooperative—Elementary & Secondary Counseling grants
- Montgomery (MD) County School District—Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant
- Hillsborough/Polk County (Tampa Bay, FL) School Districts—U.S. Office of Special Education Program Personnel Preparation grants
- 10 Native American communities—School Improvement Grants (SIG)

35

## **Components of the Multi-Tiered Process**

The Multi-Tiered process involves two primary components:

### **Component 1: Multi-Tiered Teaming**

- A teaming process involves the use of different staff and/or teams that apply the problem-solving process to address a specific student situation.

### **Component 2: The Data-Based Functional Assessment Problem-Solving Process**

- Determines why a student is not responding to effective instruction and classroom management.

36

## The Multi-Tiered Services Team

- Membership: Made up of the best academic and behavioral intervention specialists in or available to the school. Includes many of the school's instructional consultants, related services and special education personnel, and other direct service instructional and intervention support staff.
- Meets: On a weekly basis as an entire team to consider new cases and review existing cases. Its goals, outcomes, and agenda are connected to the school's SIP plan

37

## Who's on Your Team???

### The Multi-Tiered Services Team (MTSS):

Building Principal/Administrator  
Curriculum/Academic Intervention Specialists  
Behavioral/Behavior Management Specialists  
Special Education Teachers  
Counselor  
School Psychologist  
Social Worker  
Speech Pathologist  
School Nurse

38

## The Multi-Tiered Services Team

- Responsibility: Guides the school's use of data-based functional assessment problem-solving and intervention processes when students are not responding, academically or behaviorally, to effective instruction and classroom-based interventions
- Coordinates the school's early intervening services, and its strategic and intensive instruction and intervention process for individual students who are underachieving or unsuccessful, or who are non-responders or negative responders

39

## The Multi-Tiered Services Team

- Ensures that students in need receive intervention services, as much as possible, in the general education classroom **through consulting with the regular classroom teacher(s).**



40

## **The Goals of MTSS Team Meetings**

- Determine if there is enough “Relevant-Known” information to . . . .
- Identify the best academic or behavioral, assessment, instruction, or intervention specialist to. . .
- Go into the setting(s) where the “problem” exists to help teachers and others to “solve the problem”

41

## **The Primary Case-Specific Outcome at the Building-level MTSS Team**

1. If there are too many Relevant/Unknown questions and answers, the Building-level MTSS/RtI<sup>2</sup> team suspends the case review, decides who will collect what information, and determines when the team will reconvene to hear and consider the new data.
2. When there is sufficient information, the MTSS/RtI<sup>2</sup> team decides who is the best assessment- or intervention-oriented consultant, in or available to the school, to work directly with the teacher to complete a comprehensive functional assessment, and to help design, implement, and evaluate strategic instructional or intervention services, supports, strategies, or programs.

42

# Critical Point. . .

Virtually all of the data-based functional assessment, intervention identification and planning, and intervention implementation and evaluation is done by the consultant assigned to the case by the Building-level MTSS team, outside of the MTSS team meetings, and directly in the classroom or setting where the difficulties are occurring.



43

## Components of the Multi-Tiered Process

The Multi-Tiered process involves two primary components:

### **Component 1:** Multi-Tiered Teaming

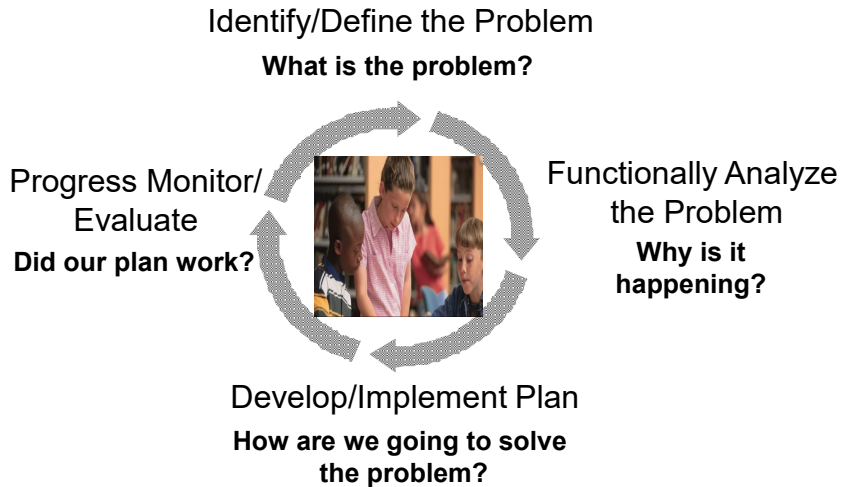
- A teaming process involves the use of different staff and/or teams that apply the problem-solving process to address a specific student situation.

### **Component 2:** The Data-Based Functional Assessment Problem-Solving Process

- Determines why a student is not responding to effective instruction and classroom management.

44

## The Data-based, Functional Assessment Problem Solving Process



45

## An Overview of the Problem Solving Process at the Student Level

- Step 1: Review all existing Data and History on the Student
- Step 2: Complete a “Gap Analysis,” Functionally Describe the “Problem,” and Identify Replacement Behaviors
- Step 3: Generate Hypotheses (using functional assessment) to explain why problem is occurring
- Step 4: Assess (confirm or reject) Hypotheses

46

## An Overview of the Problem Solving Process at the Student Level

- Step 5: Design and Write the Intervention Plan
- Step 6: Implement the Intervention Plan and Interventions
- Step 7: Formatively and Summatively Evaluate the Interventions and Intervention Plan

47

## The Critical MTSS/RtI<sup>2</sup> Problem Solving Components

- Accurate Identification of the “Problem” and the Gap between this and a desired Outcome
- Successful Differentiation between the “Problem” and a “Symptom”
- Accurate Functional Analysis of the Gap (i.e., WHY the gap exists)
- Successful Selection of the Research-based Intervention that links to the Functional Analysis
- Appropriate Training, Preparation, Implementation, and Evaluation of the Intervention

48

## **A Model Multi-Tiered Implementation Process/Flow-Chart for a School**

- **Step 1**

The General Education teachers provide effective differentiated academic instruction and implements effective classroom management, while evaluating student progress and mastery.

49

## **A Model Multi-Tiered Implementation Process/Flow-Chart for a School**

- **Step 1a: Student is not Succeeding Academically or Behaviorally**

The General Education teachers do informal problem-solving, academic or behavioral curriculum-based analyses. . . then re-teach, modify the curriculum or instruction, provide skill remediation, implement informal accommodations . . .

50

## A Model Multi-Tiered Implementation Process/Flow-Chart for a School

- **Step 2 Student Continues to Not Succeed– Progressively or Significantly**

Teachers begin the data-based, functional assessment process: Problem Identification

The teachers complete a Record Review, meet with parents, meet with previous teachers (and others), and work with relevant school personnel (e.g., counselor, school nurse) to collect student history, student background, and current status information.

51

## Engaging in the Data-based, Functional Assessment Problem Solving Process

Identify/Define the Problem  
What is the problem?

Progress Monitor/  
Evaluate

Did our plan work?



Functionally Analyze  
the Problem

Why is it  
happening?

Develop/Implement Plan

How are we going to solve  
the problem?

52

## **Initial Problem Identification/Analysis Steps** **“First Things First”**

- ❖ Consider, Describe, and Quantify Initial Concerns
- ❖ Review of Records
- ❖ Determine the Student’s Current Classroom Status:  
Academic/Behavioral Progress and Work Samples  
Scope & Sequence Checklist (academic concern)  
Behavioral Checklist (academic and behavioral concern)
- ❖ Parent Contact(s)/Interview(s)– Determine Need for  
Social-Developmental History
- ❖ Previous Teacher/Other Interview(s)
- ❖ Discount the Medical
- ❖ Classroom Observations

53

## **Initial Problem Identification “Outcomes”**

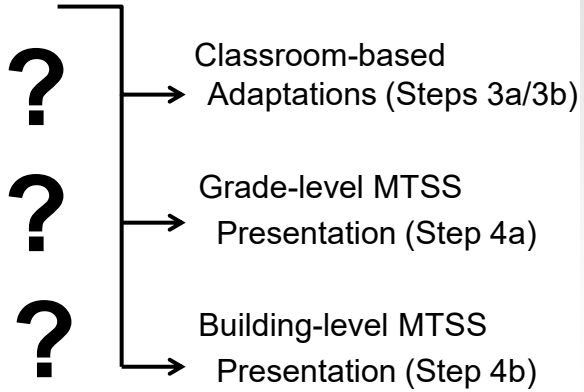
- ❖ Identify Student Assets and Weaknesses
- ❖ Identify Critical Life Events, Milestones,  
Circumstances (Positive and Negative)
- ❖ Discount/Identify Medical, Physiological, Genetic,  
Biochemical Status, Circumstances, Events
- ❖ Identify Academic and Social-Emotional/Behavioral  
“Speed of Acquisition”/Developmental Progression
- ❖ Identify Issues of Attendance, Poor Instruction,  
School and/or Curricular Moves/Transitions

54

# A Model Multi-Tiered Implementation Process/Flow-Chart for a School

## Step 2

## Step 3/4 Options

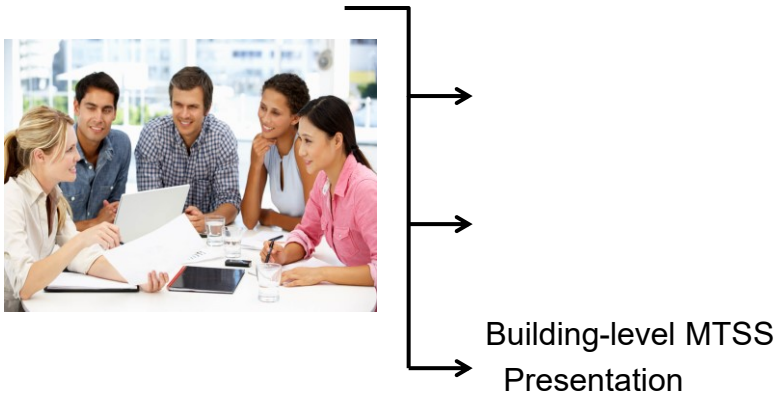


55

# A Model Multi-Tiered Implementation Process/Flow-Chart for a School

## Step 2

## Step 3/4 Options



56

# Engaging in the Data-based, Functional Assessment Problem Solving Process

Identify/Define the Problem  
What is the problem?

Progress Monitor/  
Evaluate  
Did our plan work?



Functionally Analyze  
the Problem

Why is it  
happening?

Develop/Implement Plan  
How are we going to solve  
the problem?

Dentist

57

# Problem Analysis Areas

**Instructional  
Casualties:**  
Past or  
Present?

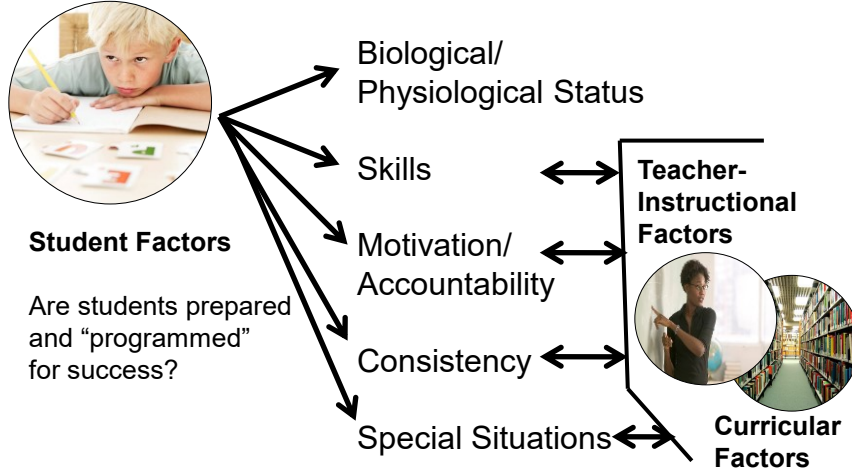


**Student-Specific  
Casualties:**  
Past or  
Present?

**Curricular  
Casualties:**  
Past or  
Present?

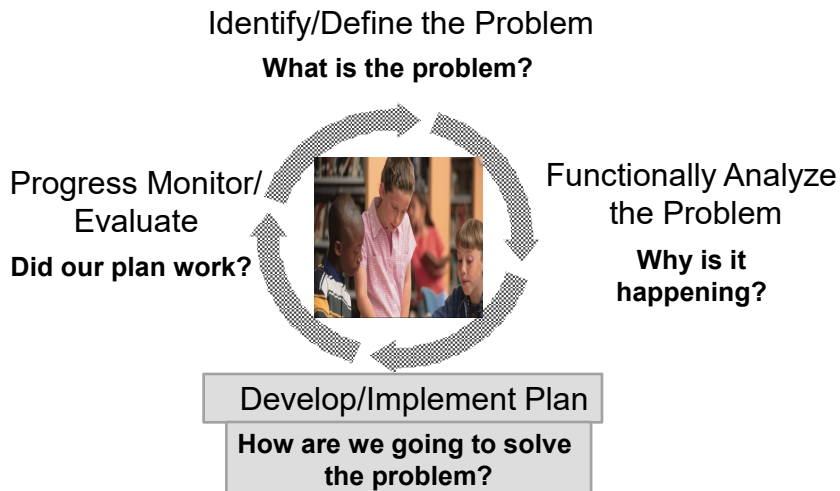
58

## Functional Assessment Evaluates the Components of Student Self-Management



59

## Engaging in the Data-based, Functional Assessment Problem Solving Process



60

## Implementing Interventions

- Interventions should:
  - ✓ Use a “Problem-solving, Consultation, Intervention” mode of operation.
  - ✓ Focus on changing behaviors; Not treating diagnostic labels, categories, or conditions.
  - ✓ Follow a “Response-to-Intervention” prevention-oriented model.
  - ✓ Be delivered in the Setting of Origin, or in the Least Restrictive Environment.

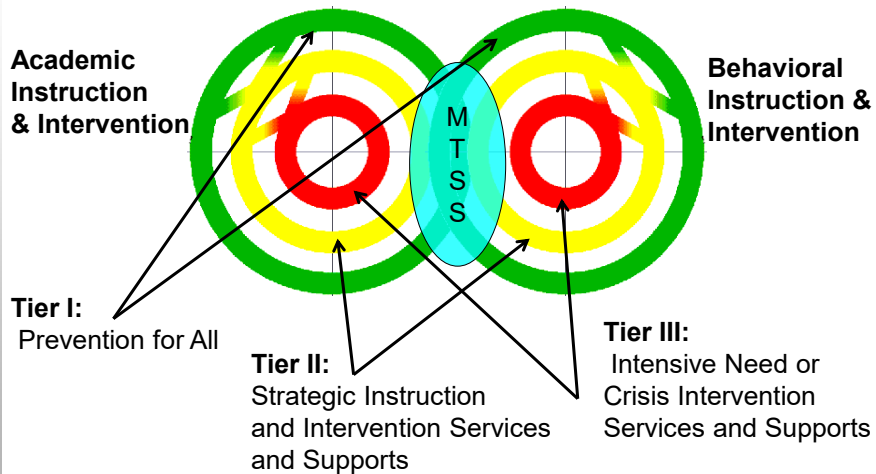
61

## Implementing Interventions

- Interventions should be:
  - Linked to functional assessment/problem analysis results
  - Planned before they are executed
  - Acceptable and realistic
  - Produce meaningful results
  - Be taught to teachers and students before implementation
  - Be implemented with integrity and intensity
  - Be useful for other students whenever possible

62

## PBSS: Multi-Tiered Prevention, Strategic Intervention, and Intensive Need Services

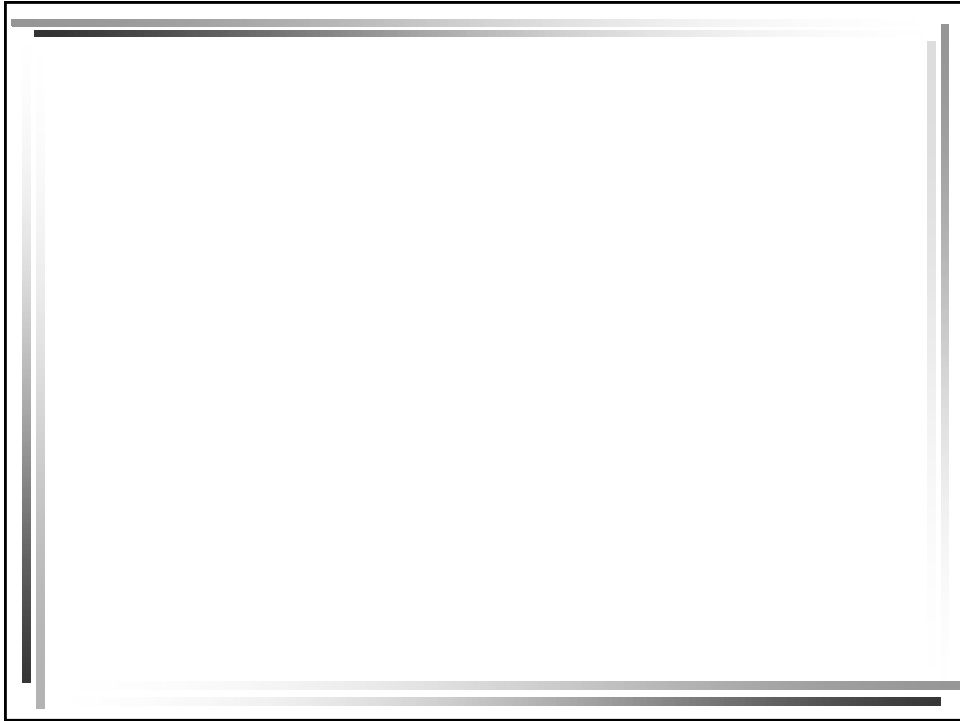


63

## Presentation Review

- Overview
- ESEA Realities: Multi-tiered Systems of Support
- Current Flaws and Real Solutions
- The MTSS Team and Process
- The Data-Based Problem-Solving Process
- Summary

64



65

**Howard M. Knoff, Ph.D.**  
**Director, Project ACHIEVE**  
**Educational Services**

**49 Woodberry Road**  
**Little Rock, AR 72212**

E-mail: [knoffprojectachieve@earthlink.net](mailto:knoffprojectachieve@earthlink.net)  
Phone: 501-312-1484

Websites: [www.projectachieve.info](http://www.projectachieve.info)  
Blog: [www.projectachieve.info/blog](http://www.projectachieve.info/blog)  
Twitter: [@DrHowieKnoff](https://twitter.com/DrHowieKnoff)

66

## MTSS Guidebook Available

### A Multi-Tiered Service and Support Implementation Guidebook for Schools: Closing the Achievement Gap

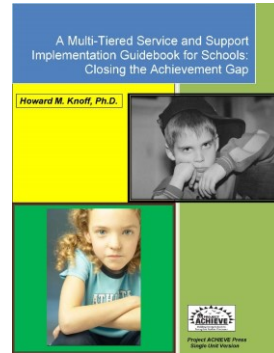
[Knoff, 2019] \$29.95

**Through Midnight May 31st !!**

**15% Off All Electronic  
(including SEL/Social Skills Books)**

Promo Code at Check-Out: **15%OFF**  
(All CAPS)

<http://www.projectachieve.info/store/more>



67

## Free Resources Available

### A Multi-Tiered Service and Support Implementation Blueprint for Schools and Districts: Revisiting the Science to Improve the Practice

[Knoff, Reeves, & Balow]

-----  
Project ACHIEVE's School Improvement and Positive Behavioral Support System/Social-Emotional Learning Overview [Knoff]  
-----

[www.projectachieve.info/store/more](http://www.projectachieve.info/store/more)

68