

Hatching Tier Two and Three Interventions in Your Secondary School Counseling Program

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Visit the companion website at
<https://www.hatchingresults.com/books/secondary-t2-3>
for downloadable resources.

Foreword

This foreword feels different from those that have preceded our other Hatching Results texts—because it marks both an ending and a beginning.

Across the years, I've had the honor of writing or co-authoring many of the books in this series, but this time I write not as the first author but as the last. Previously, others have written introductions to my books, usually describing my vision or passion for redefining school counseling through data and equity. But this text is the last in our series, and for the first time, I'm writing not as the lead author but as a mentor, colleague, and proud observer.

The shift is more than symbolic—it reflects a transition in leadership, in voice, and in the ongoing evolution of our collective work. This book, the final in our Hatching Results Multi-Tiered, Multi-Domain System of Supports (MTMDSS) textbook series, represents the culmination of a vision: to define, implement, evaluate, improve, and elevate the role of school counselors in creating data-driven, equitable systems of support for all students.

When I founded Hatching Results in 2003, the goal was simple: to strengthen the organizational efficiency, institutional legitimacy, and political capital of school counseling—so it was viewed no longer as a “nice to have” but as a necessary, measurable, and mission-critical component of student success. I believed that if school counselors had the right tools, data, and professional learning, they could demonstrate the profound impact of their work on student achievement, behavior, attendance, and belonging.

Over time, what began as a single idea grew into a national company of extraordinary school counselor leaders—one rooted in our mission of accountability, equity, and student-centered systems change. That movement has shaped this series of books. Each one represented a stage of growth, not just for schools and counselors, but for the company and for each of us as professionals.

What makes this volume particularly special is that it reflects the voices of the next generation of leaders—those who have carried this work forward with fresh energy, deep expertise, and relentless commitment to students. It brings together the contributions of educators and trainers across the country—some who continue to work with Hatching Results, and others who have gone on to lead in new districts and capacities.

This book reflects years of lessons learned—from training thousands of educators, partnering with hundreds of districts, and confronting the uncomfortable realities of implementation. Each voice, each story, and each example in these pages contributes to a shared mission: improving outcomes for all students through comprehensive, data-driven school counseling.

This volume is particularly special because it captures what happens when systems mature—when Tier 3 becomes less about crisis management and more about sustainable, equitable, data-driven support for every student. It also reflects something else—a shift in voice.

We are fortunate to have several Hatching Results Professional Learning Specialists who provide invaluable contributions to this text. Several contributed portions of chapters; others provided research support and thoughtful feedback. Whitney took the lead to tie it all together. Together, the team has written and thoughtfully edited this text with clarity, compassion, and conviction. They are not only writers—they are leaders, former and current practitioners, thinkers, and doers. They know what it means to sit in a school counseling office late in the day, wrestling with the question, “How can I demonstrate I’m making a difference in the lives of the students I serve?” They know the balancing act between compassion and accountability, between heart and data. And they’ve written this book from that exact intersection—the place where passion meets precision.

Whitney, whom I first recruited from Chicago Public Schools, has carried the weight and wisdom of this project with remarkable skill. She took on the monumental role of first author and has always had an uncanny ability to make the complex seem clear and the technical feel human. She has expertly threaded the needle, ensuring coherence across multiple authors and chapters while maintaining a consistent, clear, and accessible voice. Her leadership in coordinating this project—balancing co-authors, contributors, editors, and deadlines—was no small feat. She navigated it with grace, grit, intellect, determination, and good humor, and the finished product reflects her deep understanding of both systems and people.

Danielle, once my graduate student and now president of Hatching Results, has long stood out as an X factor. Her leadership potential was evident even then, as she was already demonstrating the kind of insight and initiative that would later define her career. As a graduate student almost 20 years ago, she was in charge of scoring applications for the state “Flashlight Awards.” She has remained a steadfast partner in this work throughout the years as she went on to earn her doctorate. Today, she continues to model the courage, vision, and heart that this work requires. Her intellect, loyalty, and ability to think both strategically and compassionately have shaped not only this book but the direction of Hatching Results itself.

And finally, Vanessa, whom I’ve known since my early administrator days in Moreno Valley, when she served as the Student Assistance Program (SAP) Secondary School Counselor on Assignment. She has deep site- and district-level experience across grade levels and keeps us grounded in the day-to-day realities of leading and supporting school counselors and students. She brings authenticity and pragmatism to the text. Her perspective ensures that what we write remains rooted in the realities of schools,

students, and the educators who serve them. She has always had the commitment and courage to seek out solutions for those who need it most and so often get the least. She knows firsthand that behind every policy or program is a student, a teacher, a school counselor—someone who needs support today, not tomorrow.

For me personally, this book symbolizes both continuity and change. Watching these women lead has reminded me of the same truth we teach school counselors: When you empower others, the impact multiplies. So, while my role in this project has shifted—from author and founder to mentor, editor, and board chair—I could not be prouder of the evolution represented in these pages. I have watched these leaders grow, challenge ideas, push for clarity, and remain steadfastly focused on what matters most: students.

Watching Whitney, Danielle, and Vanessa carry the work forward has been both humbling and exhilarating. They've taken the heart of what Hatching Results stands for and infused it with fresh energy, sharper systems thinking, and a new generation's sense of purpose. This isn't an ending—it's a handoff. And I couldn't be prouder of the direction they're steering the ship.

So, this foreword is not a farewell; it's a celebration of legacy, evolution, and the courage to grow. Every system needs renewal. Every movement needs new voices. And in this new generation of leaders, I see both a deep respect for the foundation we built and a fearless willingness to expand it. As I pass the torch to them, I do so with profound gratitude and confidence. The foundation we built together remains solid, but the work ahead belongs to this new generation—leaders who will continue to expand, refine, and reimagine what effective school counseling can and should be.

So, as you turn the page and dive into this final Hatching Results MTMDSS volume, know that it represents more than a chapter in a book series—it represents a turning point in our field. It embodies what can happen when collaboration, courage, and clarity converge. This book stands as both a celebration of where we've been and a declaration of where we're going. I am deeply honored to have contributed to this journey and even more honored to witness it continue. I hope it challenges you, inspires you, and equips you to do this work with renewed purpose and conviction.

School counseling is not only about changing student outcomes—it's about changing systems, beliefs, and futures. And thanks to Whitney, Danielle, Vanessa, and so many others who carry this work forward, that change is alive and well.

—Trish Hatch

Founder and Board Chair, Hatching Results Inc.
Professor Emeritus, San Diego State University

Acknowledgments

As the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) movement has gained national momentum, school counselors are increasingly seeking ways to align this important tiered systems approach with the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model®. In 2019, Trish Hatch, Whitney Triplett, Danielle Duarte, and Vanessa Gomez released *Hatching Results for Secondary School Counseling: Implementing Core Curriculum, Individual Student Planning, and Other Tier One Activities*. Now, we are thrilled to introduce *Hatching Tier Two and Three Interventions in Your Secondary School Counseling Program*—a resource designed to equip school counselors with the tools and strategies needed to thoughtfully implement Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions at the secondary level.

As former secondary school counselors who now teach current and future school counselors, we recognize the urgent need to strengthen attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to designing, implementing, evaluating, and continuously improving Tier 2 and 3 interventions. Drawing on the expertise and diverse experiences of the co-editors, chapter authors, and contributors, this book aims to help close those gaps so that school counselors are better equipped to remove barriers to student learning. Grounded in our professional development work with secondary school counselors and administrators nationwide, this guidebook offers practical tools, examples, and templates to support data-based problem-solving and decision-making for supplemental and intensified supports.

We first want to acknowledge the authors of the groundbreaking elementary textbook, *Hatching Tier Two and Three Interventions in Your Elementary School Counseling Program* (2019): Trish Hatch, Ashley Kruger, Nicole Pablo Roman, and Whitney Triplett. As the first MTSS-aligned Tier 2 and 3 strategy text written specifically for elementary school counselors, their work established a systematic, evidence-based approach to creating and implementing high-quality interventions. Their visionary excellence in making theory actionable for practitioners laid the foundation upon which this secondary text was built.

A special thank-you to Angie Ness for your exceptional research and citation support—we could not have done this without you.

Thank you to Ebony Payno and Anna Heinbuch for thoughtfully infusing content to ensure that school counselors within nontraditional schools can apply the content within their unique settings. We also honor the many leaders and scholars who have

advanced the understanding of the school counselor's role in MTSS, Response to Intervention (RTI), and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Your scholarship has paved the way for this work, and we look forward to continued collegial dialogue and collective growth in the field.

Thank you to Glenda Ortez-Galán and the team of school counselors at Sequoia Union High School District for piloting activities now included in this book and for trusting the process. And thank you to our many contributors and thought partners, including Mindy Willard, Nichole Acevedo, Angie Ness, Christina Tillery, Loren Dittmar, Julie Hartline, Tyasha Hemmans, Amanda Miller, Wendy Rock, Haley Wikoff, Lydia McNeiley, Becky Love, Nancy Witrado, Anna Heinbuch, and Brett Zyromski.

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FROM WHITNEY:

First and foremost, I am profoundly grateful that this book is finally done (lol)! The development of this textbook has been a seven-year journey that began with the publication of the elementary version in 2019. Our original plan was to release the secondary version in 2021, but, like so many initiatives, it was put on hold when the global COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States in 2020. During this unprecedented time, our focus rightly shifted to supporting school counselors across the nation as they pivoted to meet the rapidly evolving needs of students and families.

Although the delay altered our publication timeline, it offered a unique and invaluable opportunity for our team at Hatching Results to refine our tools, systems, and approaches before embedding them into this new text. In many ways, we used a Plan-Do-Study-Act process to strengthen our own Plan-Do-Study-Act process. Ultimately, this completed work is designed to help practitioners strengthen and systematize their Tier 2 and Tier 3 approach so that school counselors and student support teams can respond more efficiently, effectively, and equitably to student needs.

I want to thank my husband, Adam, and our middle schoolers, Grady Boone and Everson, for their patience and understanding as I spent nights and weekends writing and meeting with our editorial team. When I train school counselors, I emphasize that time is their most precious and valuable resource, and how they choose to spend it can either advantage or disadvantage students. I hold myself to that same standard. Time spent away from my family must be meaningful, and this book has been exactly that: a labor of love. It has been my honor to volunteer my most precious resource—time—to create something that supports the nation's secondary school counselors who are on the front lines championing students every day.

A heartfelt thank-you to Trish for encouraging us to finish this series and for offering critical support when we needed it most—you were instrumental in helping this book reach the finish line. Thank you to Danielle for your steady cheerleading, thought

partnership, feedback, expert writing, and so much more. To Vanessa (my Saturday buddy!), thank you for your brilliant mind, your generosity of time, and your unwavering support throughout this process. I'm also deeply grateful to our chapter authors and contributors for lending your expertise, heart, and voice to this work.

To the district leaders who coordinate, advocate for, and support secondary school counselors, we see you and thank you for your leadership and commitment to comprehensive school counseling programs.

Finally, to every secondary school counselor, thank you for all you do to ensure that every single student and student group who needs an intervention receives one. Thank you for your growth mindset and humility in believing that you can always grow, and for your courage to try something new in the service of your students. You've got this.

FROM VANESSA:

I am deeply grateful for a fulfilling career in education—23 of those years as a school counselor and the remainder as an administrator. Throughout this journey, I have had the privilege of working alongside extraordinary school counselors, educators, families, and students who have continually inspired and helped me grow. Students remain at the heart of my work, and I believe that this book will help secondary school counselors address the diverse needs of their students.

The transformative role that school counselors play in shaping systems of support for every student is powerful. I am honored to serve as a co-editor and contributor to this book, having firsthand experience with the impact of implementing a Multi-Tiered, Multi-Domain System of Support (MTMDSS) and the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle. Incorporating the school counseling PDSA cycle will enhance secondary school counselors' ability to provide effective Tier 2 and Tier 3 support to students.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to the incredible school counselors I have had the privilege to work with—past and present. Your dedication and steadfast commitment to students inspire me daily. To my mentors—Lori Holland, Nancy Stimpson, Paul Andersen, Bob McDonald, and Maria Elena Josie—thank you for modeling teamwork and sharing your wisdom that shaped my career. A special thank-you to our editorial team: Trish Hatch, my lifelong mentor—thank you for your unwavering guidance, belief in me, and endless encouragement. Danielle Duarte, seeing you grow from one of my students into a leader in the field fills me with pride. Whitney Triplett, your brilliance and dedication continue to amaze me. A special thank-you to all of the contributors of this book: Thank you for sharing your knowledge and for continuing to give your talents to the profession of school counselors.

To my family—thank you for being my foundation. Mom and Dad, you were my first teachers and greatest role models. Joe, Ted, Cecelia, and Alvin, your love and guidance mean the world to me. Kevin, thank you for your constant encouragement and support, and for always reminding me about the importance of being a lifelong learner. Finally, to my daughter, Brittany, I am blessed to be your mom and am endlessly proud of you, and to my beautiful granddaughters Sophia, Olivia, Amelia, and Aria—may you always recognize your greatness and never doubt your ability to reach your dreams.

FROM DANIELLE:

I keep saying I'm not going to write another book . . . and yet, here I am. Although it's been nearly a decade since I last worked as a practicing school counselor, I still feel immense joy when I revisit the group curriculum, workshops, and results presentations from that time. While much has evolved in our field, so much still remains relevant today. It's been both nostalgic and inspiring to overlay new knowledge about the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle with Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, reimagining how to strengthen the work I once led to better support today's school counselors.

A heartfelt thank-you to Megan LaBare, my school counseling teammate at Potter Junior High School, who helped design, implement, evaluate, and transform our school counseling department into a RAMP®-honored comprehensive school counseling program. I lovingly referenced so much of our work throughout this book and thought fondly of our kids (students) who benefited. And this is why I continue to write: to ensure all school counselors gain the attitudes, knowledge, and skills to best support their students despite any challenges they may face.

This book would not exist without Whitney's incredible dedication, organization, and perseverance—thank you for taking the lead and carrying us across the finish line! I'm also deeply grateful to have written another book alongside Vanessa, who first brought me into the California Association of School Counselors when I didn't yet see myself as a leader. And to Trish—who trained me in her school counseling graduate program, mentored me as both a school counselor and a grant project director, supported my work with Hatching Results, encouraged me to pursue my doctorate, and welcomed me back to the nest when I graduated—thank you for continually challenging me to grow and for always believing in me.

And last in acknowledgment but always first in my heart: to my incredible daughters, Esme and Dalia. Though writing and editing this book sometimes meant extra hours with a babysitter, my deepest hope is that all children have access to the same resources and opportunities I strive to give you. Thank you for your patience, for your laughter, and for being the greatest gifts I could ever ask for in the whole wild world.

FROM TRISH:

With the completion of this final volume in the Multi-Tiered Multi-Domain System of Support (MTMDSS) series, I am deeply grateful to those who brought both heart and discipline to this work.

To my co-editors—Whitney, Danielle, and Vanessa—thank you for your commitment to excellence, your courage to innovate, and your tireless effort to ensure that this text reflects the best of our shared practice. To our contributing authors, thank you for lending your voices, expertise, and lived experience to deepen and enrich this work. Each chapter bears the mark of your insight and dedication to the profession.

To the entire amazing team at Hatching Results, thank you for carrying forward the work of using data to improve outcomes for students every day. Your dedication to this

mission ensures that our shared vision—to support the school counselors who serve them—continues to grow and evolve.

To our school and district partners who opened their doors, shared their stories, and modeled the transformative power of a results-based approach, your willingness to make your work transparent continues to inspire the field.

To our readers—school counselors, district leaders, and preparation program faculty—thank you for engaging deeply with this material, for challenging yourselves and us, and for putting systems in place that ensure equitable access and opportunity for every student.

To my colleagues at Moreno Valley Unified, who will forever be in my heart, and to my mentors who shaped my thinking across the years—those at Ed Trust, at the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), and in the early days of accountability and data-driven counseling—thank you for helping lay the foundation on which all of this stands. To the original contributors to the ASCA National Model®, whose pioneering ideas Judy Bowers and I had the privilege to synthesize—blending and building upon their best thinking to create a new model for our profession—thank you for setting in motion the movement that transformed school counseling and continues to guide it today.

To the Obama administration, who honored me with the opportunity of a lifetime to contribute to the College Opportunity Agenda and the First Lady’s Reach Higher Initiative—thank you for respecting the profession of school counseling and for prioritizing the underrepresented, underserved, and underperforming students we serve.

And finally, to my grandchildren—Nolan and Emery—who, for the first time, have a school counselor of their own—and, as it turns out, they truly love them—thank you for reminding me why this work matters so deeply.

This book closes one chapter but continues a shared journey—of school counselors committed to results, of systems built on equity, and of work that never truly ends.

About the Editors



Whitney Triplett, MA, PPS, is a vision-driven leader committed to advancing equity, access, and the success of all students through highly intentional, comprehensive school counseling programs. As vice president at Hatching Results, she leads the Partner Services Department, setting vision, strategy, and impact goals with a focus on change management and implementation fidelity across districtwide school counseling systems.

Whitney is the co-author of the bestselling texts *Hatching Results for Secondary School Counseling: Implementing Core Curriculum, Individual Student Planning, and Other Tier*

One Activities (Hatch, Triplett, Duarte, & Gomez, 2019) and *Hatching Tier Two and Three Interventions in Your Elementary School Counseling Program* (Hatch, Kruger, Pablo, & Triplett, 2019). She brings deep expertise in facilitating professional learning and providing strategic thought partnership to school counselors, site administrators, district leaders, and state education agencies, thereby strengthening student outcomes in measurable and meaningful ways.

Before joining Hatching Results, Whitney served in the central office of Chicago Public Schools, where she supported more than 800 school counselors and college and career coaches. During this time, she also served on the board of the Illinois School Counselor Association and chaired its statewide task force to update the Illinois School Counseling Model. For this work, she was recognized as the 2018 Illinois School Counseling Advocate of the Year.

Earlier in her career as a high school counselor, Whitney earned RAMP® recognition in 2011 and received an Oppenheimer Recognition Award for her collaborative efforts to raise her school's Freshman On-Track rate by developing innovative progress monitoring tools for student achievement, attendance, and behavior. An Education Pioneers alum, Whitney remains passionate about transforming schools so that every student in the nation has equitable access to a high-quality education—including a comprehensive school counseling program.



Vanessa Gomez, EdD, is a passionate change agent with 3 decades of service in education, including 23 years as a school counselor across all levels, from elementary to alternative education. She currently serves as the director of equity and access for San Jacinto Unified School District in California, where she leads the implementation of the district's Equity and Access Plan.

A recognized leader in school counseling, Vanessa has led award-winning teams and specializes in developing and implementing comprehensive school counseling programs grounded in a Multi-Tiered Multi-Domain System of Support (MTMDSS). She has expertise in crisis response, suicide prevention protocol development, and professional development training in social/emotional wellness, cultural proficiency, and trauma-informed practices.

Vanessa served as an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Counseling and School Psychology at San Diego State University (SDSU), where she was honored with the Most Influential Faculty Award. During her career as a school counselor, she was named one of the Top 10 School Counselors in the American School Counselor Association. Vanessa earned her doctorate from SDSU, where her dissertation focused on implementing trauma-informed approaches in schools.

In addition to her leadership role, she has been a Lead Professional Learning Specialist for Hatching Results and co-author of *Hatching Results for Secondary School Counselors: Implementing Core Curriculum, Individual Student Planning, and Other Tier One Activities* (Hatch, Triplett, Duarte, & Gomez, 2019). In 2024, she was recognized as Advocate of the Year by the California Association of School Counselors.



Danielle Duarte, EdLD, is passionate about supporting students' academic success, college and career readiness, and social/emotional development while using data to demonstrate the impact of comprehensive school counseling programs. A former school counselor, counseling grant project director, and adjunct faculty member, Danielle now serves as president of Hatching Results, where she leads national efforts to strengthen data-driven school counseling systems.

She earned her doctorate in education leadership from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and her doctoral capstone focused on increasing racial equity in advanced coursework within a large, diverse school district.

Earlier in her career, Danielle successfully wrote and directed a \$1.1 million elementary and secondary school counseling program grant for her district—hiring, training, and supporting school counselors in the development of comprehensive programs. She also taught future school counselors as an adjunct professor at San Diego State University and the University of San Francisco. Over the past decade, she has trained thousands of educators nationwide and co-authored two books: *Hatching Results for Elementary School Counseling: Implementing Core Curriculum and Other Tier One Activities* (Hatch, Duarte, & De Gregorio, 2018) and *Hatching Results for Secondary School Counseling: Implementing Core Curriculum, Individual Student Planning, and Other Tier One Activities* (Hatch, Triplett, Duarte, & Gomez, 2019).

Danielle has served on the board of directors for the California Association of School Counselors, including as president, and on the Cal Aggie Alumni Association (UC Davis) Board. She is also a certified Harvard Data Wise Coach and AVID Staff Developer.

Featured in *San Diego Magazine's* “17 Big Ideas for 2017: Let’s Implement More School Counseling Programs,” Danielle believes every student can succeed with the right systems of support and well-trained school counselors leading the way.



Trish Hatch, PhD, is a nationally recognized leader in school counseling, known for her work bridging research, practice, and policy. A former school counselor, administrator, and district leader, she joined the faculty at San Diego State University (SDSU), where she directed the School Counseling Program from 2004 to 2015 and was later named professor emeritus upon her retirement. As founder and board chair of Hatching Results Inc., she continues to provide governance leadership while the company delivers nationwide training and consultation on data-driven, evidence-based practices.

Trish is the best-selling author of *The Use of Data in School Counseling: Hatching Results for Students, Programs, and the Profession* (2014) and co-author, with Julie Hartline, of the second edition (2021). She co-authored *Evidence-Based School Counseling: Making a Difference With Data-Driven Practices* (Dimmitt, Carey, & Hatch, 2007) and *The ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs* (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2003, 2005). This seminal document redefined the role of school counselors nationwide.

Additional texts in the Hatching Results series include *Hatching Results for Elementary School Counseling: Implementing Core Curriculum and Other Tier One Activities* (Hatch, Duarte, & De Gregorio, 2018); *Hatching Results for Secondary School Counseling: Implementing Core Curriculum, Individual Student Planning, and Other Tier One Activities* (Hatch, Triplett, Duarte, & Gomez, 2019); and *Hatching Tier Two and Three Interventions in Your Elementary School Counseling Program* (Hatch, Kruger, Pablo, & Triplett, 2019).

Known for her dynamic leadership, passionate advocacy, and unwavering commitment to the profession, Trish served as an expert consultant on school counseling for the Obama administration at the White House and the U.S. Department of Education. She also co-led the 2014 White House Convening on School Counseling at SDSU in partnership with the Office of the First Lady's Reach Higher Initiative.

A former ASCA vice president and state association president, Trish has received numerous honors, including the ASCA Administrator of the Year Award, the Mary Gehrke Lifetime Achievement Award, induction into the H. B. McDaniel Hall of Fame at Stanford University, the National Association for College Admission Counseling Excellence in Education Award, and recognition by the California Association of School Counselors as both School Counselor Educator of the Year and recipient of its Lifetime Achievement Award.

Contributing Authors



Nichole Acevedo is an assistant director of partner services at Hatching Results, where she equips school counselors with the tools and resources needed to build sustainable, data-driven comprehensive programs that enhance student outcomes. Her school counseling experience includes 11 years in the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Nichole's passion for school counseling has been exhibited through her leadership, advocacy, and sharing of program results, which contributed to the success in improving the counselor-to-student ratio in her previous school district. In 2023, Nichole was recognized as the Pomona Unified School District

High School Counselor of the Year. Her leadership contributed to state and national districtwide school counseling program recognition through effective use of data and strategic advocacy.

Nichole's additional experiences include serving on the board of directors for the California Association of School Counselors. Additionally, she has taught graduate-level leadership and fieldwork supervision courses for school counselors preparing to enter the field.

Nichole is deeply driven by a mission to dismantle barriers that hinder access to quality education and vital resources in her community. She is also committed to advancing the role of school counselors as agents of change and student success through training, systems-level advocacy, and continuous improvement.



Loren Dittmar, PhD, is a nationally recognized speaker and consultant specializing in school mental health, suicide prevention, and the well-being of the adults who serve youth. He partners with schools and organizations nationwide to expand mental health supports, strengthen staff resilience, and build cultures where people feel seen, supported, and empowered to live authentically.

With over 25 years of combined experience in clinical and educational settings, Loren brings a rare blend of frontline practice and scholarly depth. His background includes five years in the clinical mental health field, 18 years as a

school counselor, including service as a director of school counseling, and 13 years as an adjunct professor. He served as a lead professional learning specialist with Hatching Results, supporting districts in implementing data-driven, ASCA-aligned comprehensive school counseling programs. He was also the lead expert for the mental health section of the international resource [covid19k12counseling.org](https://www.covid19k12counseling.org). Loren has served in various leadership roles across multiple state school counselor associations and currently serves on the board of directors for the Palmetto State School Counselor Association.

Through courageous conversations and healthy vulnerability, Loren equips audiences to ignite purpose, inspire change, and transform the way they lead, live, and connect.

Learn more at [DrLorenSpeaks.com](https://www.DrLorenSpeaks.com)



Julie Hartline, EdD, became an educator after discovering as a parole officer that over 85% of her caseload had not completed high school. She served as the Campbell High School counseling lead for 14 years where her department became the first Georgia high school to receive the Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP®) by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) in 2008. She was named the 2009 ASCA School Counselor of the Year and earned her doctorate in professional counseling and supervision in 2011.

In 2012, Julie transitioned to the Cobb County School District where she helped supervise K–12 school counselors for 5 years, during which she served as the 2014–2015 Georgia School Counselor Association president. She was a clinical assistant professor at the University of North Florida from 2017 to 2020 and then served as a director with Hatching Results from 2020 to 2025. She is the co-author, with Trish Hatch, of *The Use of Data in School Counseling*, second edition (2021).

Julie has trained and educated school counselors, administrators, and educational leaders around the nation via in-person professional development, webinars, conference sessions, and more. She is passionate about the field of school counseling and the difference comprehensive school counseling programs make in the lives of students.



Angie Ness, PhD, NCC, is the impact research specialist for Hatching Results, where she also serves as a lead professional learning specialist, providing professional learning and consultation to school counselors and administrators. She enjoys helping school counselors learn to build comprehensive programs that meet the needs of their students and the school community. A strong proponent of using data to uncover areas of inequity and advocating for system change on behalf of students, Angie has presented her work at state, national, and international conferences.

Before joining Hatching Results, Angie was a school counselor, working at all grade levels from elementary to high school, and held leadership roles in the Elkhart County Comprehensive Counseling Collaborative, composed of seven school districts. She was also an Indiana School Counselor Association (ISCA) Emerging Leader. Angie holds a master's in school counseling, graduate certificates in applied educational neuroscience and clinical mental health counseling, and a doctorate in counselor education and supervision. She is a member of the ACES School Counseling Interest Network, develops and delivers professional development through her work as part of the comprehensive school counseling strategic priority team for Keep Indiana Learning, and serves as a RAMP® reviewer.



Christina A. Tillery, PhD, is an award-winning educational researcher, licensed educator, and passionate advocate for youth mental health and school counseling. With over a decade of experience in K–12 education, she has served as a high school counselor, mentor, consultant, and leader in professional development for school counseling practitioners.

Christina currently serves as a lead professional learning specialist for Hatching Results, where she supports school districts nationwide in designing and implementing data-driven, equity-focused comprehensive school counseling programs. She is a member of the Virginia School Counselor Association's Research and Graduate Student Engagement Committee, where she advances professional learning initiatives and helps bridge the gap between school counseling research and practice.

Her scholarship centers Black girls' educational and mental health experiences, Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR), and student voice in educational decision-making. Christina earned her PhD in counselor education and supervision from Virginia Commonwealth University, where her dissertation used YPAR and photo-voice to reimagine school-based mental health services through the lens of Black girls. She is dedicated to amplifying youth perspectives and preparing school counselors to lead transformative, sustainable change in their schools and communities.



Mindy Willard is the senior director of partner services at Hatching Results, where she partners with district leaders to design and strengthen equitable, data-driven school counseling systems that improve outcomes for all students. A former district-level coordinator, Mindy brings nearly 21 years of K–12 experience as an elementary, middle, and high school counselor. She supports school districts in translating policy into practice, advocating for sustainable change, and addressing inequitable practices through systemic solutions.

Mindy's leadership has been recognized at both the state and national levels. She was named the 2013 American School Counselor Association (ASCA) School Counselor of the Year and the 2008 Arizona School Counselor of the Year. Her comprehensive program received ASCA's RAMP® designation, and she later served as a lead RAMP reviewer. Mindy is a past president of the Arizona School Counselors Association and former advocacy director for the Wisconsin School Counselor Association.

As a national speaker, Mindy regularly presents on topics such as Multi-Tiered, Multi-Domain Systems of Supports (MTMDSS), supporting neurodivergent learners and their families, and using data to drive equity and access in school counseling. Her contributions to this textbook reflect a deep commitment to helping school counselors build systems that support students—not just with individual interventions, but through lasting, schoolwide change.

Learning Targets

The text will prepare readers in the following areas:

CHAPTER 1: MULTI-TIERED, MULTI-DOMAIN SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS

ATTITUDES

- Believe that comprehensive school counseling programs are integral to Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS).
- Value prevention and early intervention as equity strategies.
- Believe that supports, not students, are in tiers.
- Recognize collaboration across roles as essential for systemwide change.
- Embrace continuous improvement and data-driven decision-making.

KNOWLEDGE

- Understand MTSS origins—Response to Intervention (RTI) + Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)—and how MTMDSS extends to three school counseling domains.
- Know the characteristics of supports at Tiers 1–3 and their approximate percentages of students served.
- Identify how MTMDSS aligns with the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model®, the ASCA Ethical Standards, and the ASCA Professional Standards and Competencies.
- Understand the school counselor’s leadership role in equity and systemic change.
- Recognize person-first language and its implications for inclusivity.

SKILLS

- Explain MTMDSS to colleagues, administrators, and families.
- Map existing school counseling services across the three domains and tiers.

- Identify opportunities to strengthen Tier 1 foundations before expanding Tier 2 and 3 work.
- Use person-first and equity-centered language when discussing student needs and tiered supports.
- Facilitate conversations linking MTMDSS to district and site goals.

CHAPTER 2: NEW APPROACHES TO TIER 2: SHIFTING PARADIGMS AND PDSA

ATTITUDES

- Hold high expectations that all students can access rigorous opportunities with the right supports.
- Believe that improvement is iterative—progress comes through cycles of learning.
- Value reflection and team learning as essential to effective school counseling practice.
- Recognize that relying primarily on referrals can reinforce bias and inequitable access to services.
- Embrace the mindset that intentionality and planning, not urgency and reaction, should guide school counseling practice.
- Recognize that small tests of change can lead to significant, large-scale improvements.

KNOWLEDGE

- Understand each PDSA (Plan-Do-Study-Act) phase and the 10 steps used in this book.
- Recognize how continuous improvement strengthens Tier 2 and 3 systems.
- Explain the risks of referral-driven identification (bias, inconsistency, inequity) and the benefits of data-driven approaches to identifying students for Tier 2 interventions.
- Recognize the components of an effective, equitable referral system and how it complements data-driven identification.
- Recognize roles and scopes of student service providers and where they overlap.
- Distinguish “guidance counselor” versus “school counselor” roles and why the shift matters.

SKILLS

- Construct a simple PDSA pilot plan for a school counseling intervention and reflect on what worked and what didn’t.
- Advocate for and model systems that balance responsiveness (through referrals) with intentional, proactive intervention planning (through data).

- Collaborate with administrators and other service providers to design and implement a unified referral system and train teachers and staff on its use.
- Use data dashboards or Student Information Systems to track patterns in referrals, disaggregate by student group, and identify inequities.
- Facilitate data reviews that honor both outcomes and process learning.
- Assess current practices and systems through a PDSA lens to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

CHAPTER 3: USING DATA AND WRITING GOALS

ATTITUDES

- Believe that data use is essential for designing equitable, effective, and intentional school counseling programs.
- Recognize that inclusive, equity-focused goals help ensure all students benefit from school counseling programs.
- Value transparency in how goals are created and measured.
- Appreciate that alignment with school and district priorities increases the legitimacy and impact of school counseling work.
- Approach data discrepancies as opportunities for system improvement.

KNOWLEDGE

- Identify types of school counseling data: process, perception, and outcome (achievement and achievement-related).
- Know how the Hatching Results Conceptual Diagram links attitudes, knowledge, and skills to behavior and achievement outcomes.
- Identify the three “buckets” for identifying Tier 2 needs—demonstrated needs, missed opportunities, and student groups.
- Know the structure of SMARTIE (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound, inclusive, and equitable) goals.
- Recognize common pitfalls in goal writing (vague outcomes, unmeasurable indicators).
- Understand how to align school counseling goals with school improvement and district strategic plans.

SKILLS

- Disaggregate data by student group to identify equity gaps and disproportionality.
- Use a fishnet approach to systematically identify students who qualify for Tier 2 interventions by setting cut points and querying data at regular intervals.

- Write equity-minded SMARTIE goals, in alignment with school and district priorities, to strengthen collaboration and advocacy.
- Analyze and interpret school data to identify student needs and gaps aligned with Tier 2 priorities.

CHAPTER 4: DETERMINING ROOT CAUSES AND SELECTING INTERVENTIONS

ATTITUDES

- Recognize that students’ academic performance, behavior, and attendance are shaped by systems, environments, and access—not just effort or ability.
- Value curiosity, compassion, multiple perspectives, and cultural humility when exploring why students struggle.
- View trauma-informed, equity-centered practice as essential to effective Tier 2 and Tier 3 support.
- Recognize that the “right” intervention depends on the right diagnosis through root cause analysis.
- Commit to using evidence and context, not convenience, to choose strategies.
- Believe that interventions must be fluid and adaptable as new information emerges.

KNOWLEDGE

- Define and distinguish among acquisition needs, performance concerns, and systems issues as categories of root causes.
- Describe the influence of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and social determinants of health (SDOH) on student learning and behavior.
- Explain the purpose and process of root cause analysis within the PDSA cycle.
- Identify tools for uncovering root causes (e.g., 5 Whys, empathy interviews, minute meetings, pre-intervention surveys).
- Understand the importance of student, family, and teacher voice in determining root causes and selecting interventions.
- Recognize legal and ethical requirements for informed consent and survey administration (e.g., Hatch Amendment).

SKILLS

- Conduct root cause analyses using tools such as the 5 Whys, empathy interviews, minute meetings, and pre-intervention surveys.
- Differentiate between student-level and system-level barriers and identify where influence and advocacy are needed.

- Match interventions to the identified root cause category to ensure they are targeted, equitable, and feasible.
- Collaborate with educators, families, and administrators to design or adapt interventions that dissolve—not just treat—the root cause.
- Apply trauma-informed, culturally responsive practices when designing interventions and communicating with students and families.
- Advocate for policy or structural changes when systems themselves are contributing to inequity.

CHAPTER 5: TYPES OF TIER 2 INTERVENTIONS

ATTITUDES

- Believe that Tier 2 interventions are essential, equitable extensions of a strong Tier 1 program—not replacements for it.
- Value intentional, data-driven selection of interventions that align to clearly identified root causes.
- Recognize that effective Tier 2 work requires both direct and indirect support from school counselors in collaboration with educators, families, and community partners.
- Embrace innovation and flexibility in designing Tier 2 supports that reflect student voice, identity, and culture.
- View Tier 2 as an opportunity to remove barriers and close opportunity gaps, not simply to manage student behavior or deficits.

KNOWLEDGE

- Distinguish between direct and indirect Tier 2 interventions and explain when each is appropriate.
- Identify commonly used direct interventions—such as small groups, workshops, individual counseling, restorative meetings, and Check-In/Check-Out (CICO)—and understand their purposes, structures, and evidence base.
- Describe indirect Tier 2 interventions including consultation, collaboration, teacher education, family support, and referrals.
- Understand how Tier 2 interventions connect to root cause categories (acquisition, performance, systems) and the broader MTMDSS framework.
- Explain how “closing the gap” interventions and equity-driven data analysis inform Tier 2 priorities and systems change efforts.

SKILLS

- Select interventions that directly address the identified root cause and align with students’ cultural and developmental needs.

- Facilitate interventions that build attitudes, knowledge, and skills designed to dissolve root causes and meet student needs.
- Consult and collaborate with teachers, families, administrators, and community partners to coordinate and strengthen supports for students.
- Design and deliver professional learning for staff that improves equity, climate, and student engagement.

CHAPTER 6: PLANNING FOR INTERVENTIONS

ATTITUDES

- Value the *Plan* phase of the PDSA cycle as the foundation of effective, data-driven Tier 2 intervention design.
- Recognize that thoughtful planning increases both equity and efficiency, ensuring students receive the right support at the right time.
- Embrace the importance of measuring what students *learn* (attitudes, knowledge, and skills), not just what school counselors *do*.
- Appreciate the balance between the *art* and *science* of Tier 2 work—combining creativity in facilitation with the use of evidence-based practices and data.

KNOWLEDGE

- Understand the *Plan* steps of the PDSA cycle and how they connect to the broader process of continuous improvement.
- Know the purpose, structure, and components of Tier 2 action plans, including how they align with SMARTIE goals and program outcomes.
- Explain how to select and align standards (e.g., ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors, Learning for Justice Social Justice Standards, CASEL Social/Emotional Learning [SEL] Competencies) with measurable objectives.
- Understand effective lesson/session design (objectives, materials, procedures, evaluation).
- Explain how pre- and post-assessments and outcome data are used to evaluate the effectiveness of school counseling interventions.

SKILLS

- Develop Tier 2 action plans that clearly articulate target groups, SMARTIE goals, intervention content, and desired outcomes.
- Select appropriate standards and write measurable, attitudes-, knowledge-, and skills-aligned objectives that directly link to student outcomes.
- Create valid and scorable pre- and post-assessments that measure growth in attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

- Design accessible, culturally relevant learning experiences that align lesson plans and engagement strategies with identified student needs, data outcomes, and standards.
- Apply cultural relevance, evidence-based practice principles, and engagement strategies into the design and delivery of Tier 2 interventions.

CHAPTER 7: PLANNING FOR SMALL GROUPS

ATTITUDES

- Value small-group counseling as an essential, equitable Tier 2 intervention that expands access, efficiency, and belonging for secondary students.
- Believe that careful planning and purposeful facilitation—not curriculum alone—determine a group’s success.
- Recognize that flexibility, reflection, and continuous improvement are vital to effective group leadership.
- Appreciate the school counselor’s role as both facilitator and teacher, blending relational warmth with structured skill-building.

KNOWLEDGE

- Understand the logistical components of small-group counseling, including scheduling, consent, communication, and space considerations.
- Know the four phases of small-group counseling (Formation, Implementation, Evaluation, and Follow-Up) and how they align to the PDSA cycle.
- Identify key facilitation tools—basic counseling skills, engagement strategies, and management techniques—that enhance group cohesion and learning.
- Recognize the importance of cultural responsiveness, ethical practice, and family engagement in planning and implementing groups.
- Understand logistical elements: scheduling, family/caregiver communication, space, and documentation.

SKILLS

- Plan and organize small-group logistics to ensure equitable access, efficiency, and confidentiality.
- Facilitate small-group sessions using structure, routines, and engagement strategies that promote connection, participation, and learning.
- Apply core counseling skills (active listening, linking, paraphrasing, reflection) to build trust and cohesion within groups.
- Manage group dynamics with proactive strategies, positive language, and cultural sensitivity to maintain focus and safety.
- Reflect on and refine facilitation practices for future groups.

CHAPTER 8: TIER 3 INTENSIFIED SUPPORT

ATTITUDES

- Believe that Tier 3 work is an essential—but intentionally limited—component of a comprehensive, data-driven school counseling program.
- Value the school counselor’s role as both a first responder to crises and a systems leader who prevents future crises through stronger Tier 1 and Tier 2 foundations.
- Recognize that collaboration, communication, and boundaries protect both students and school counselors in high-stakes situations.
- Embrace Tier 3 as an opportunity to demonstrate compassion with structure—responding to individual needs while advancing systemic equity.

KNOWLEDGE

- Understand the purpose and scope of Tier 3 interventions within MTMDSS.
- Identify the data indicators and decision rules that determine when a student requires intensified support.
- Distinguish between direct and indirect Tier 3 services and describe when each is appropriate based on the ASCA Ethical Standards and role guidelines.
- Know the key protocols and procedures for Tier 3 response, including Child Protective Services (CPS) reporting, suicide prevention, threat assessment, and crisis team activation.
- Explain how the PDSA cycle applies to Tier 3 interventions, emphasizing rapid, data-informed adjustments.
- Recognize the role of collaboration—with families, staff, local educational agencies (LEAs), and community partners—in delivering coordinated, equitable support.

SKILLS

- Use data to identify students who need intensified Tier 3 support and determine the appropriate level and type of intervention.
- Apply crisis response protocols with professionalism, empathy, and adherence to ethical and legal standards.
- Provide short-term, solution-focused individual counseling and reentry support while maintaining appropriate boundaries and scope.
- Coordinate indirect services such as case management, consultation, and referrals to external providers to ensure continuity of care.
- Facilitate multidisciplinary collaboration through structured meetings, clear communication, and shared accountability.
- Reflect on time-use data and adjust systems to prevent an overemphasis on reactive Tier 3 work, sustaining balance across all tiers.

CHAPTER 9: PROGRESS MONITORING AND INTERVENTION EVALUATION

ATTITUDES

- Value progress monitoring and intervention evaluation as essential—not optional—components of equitable, data-driven school counseling practice.
- Believe that every minute of intervention time should be purposeful, evidence-based, and responsive to student needs.
- Recognize that measuring both impact and fidelity safeguards equity and improves outcomes for all students.
- Embrace reflection on results, whether positive or negative, as a hallmark of professional growth, leadership, and school counseling excellence.
- Believe students deserve interventions that verifiably work.
- Commit to adjusting practice based on evidence.

KNOWLEDGE

- Understand how Steps 8 (progress monitoring) and 9 (intervention evaluation) of the PDSA cycle connect to continuous improvement in Tier 2 and 3 work.
- Distinguish between impact monitoring (student outcomes) and fidelity monitoring (adult implementation) and why both matter.
- Identify the three key data types (process, perception, and outcome) and how to use each to evaluate effectiveness.
- Know how to establish meaningful baseline data, set progress checkpoints, and use disaggregated data to check for equity gaps.
- Explain how to make data-informed decisions to *adopt*, *adapt*, or *abandon* interventions based on evidence.

SKILLS

- Design and implement progress monitoring systems that collect and analyze data at appropriate intervals for Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.
- Use progress monitoring and fidelity monitoring data to make timely adjustments during interventions while maintaining intentionality and equity.
- Use pre- and post-assessment surveys, spreadsheets, rating scales, and logs effectively.
- Evaluate intervention effectiveness using the Tool for Evaluating Intervention Effectiveness or similar frameworks.
- Disaggregate results to identify patterns across student groups and advocate for systemic improvements.

CHAPTER 10: SHARING RESULTS

ATTITUDES

- Believe that sharing results is a critical act of transparency, advocacy, and leadership.
- Value communicating data through clear, compelling stories that demonstrate why school counseling matters for students and systems.
- Believe that sharing both successes and setbacks strengthens trust, credibility, continuous improvement, and systems of support for students.
- Recognize that visuals make data accessible to all audiences.
- Appreciate that how results are shared can inspire investment and systemic change.

KNOWLEDGE

- Understand the final phase of the PDSA cycle (*Act*) and how sharing results connects to accountability, equity, and advocacy.
- Know ASCA's ethical and professional expectations for communicating outcomes.
- Identify key components of effective results sharing.
- Recognize the principles of ethical storytelling, avoiding overclaims while highlighting collaboration, systems change, and student impact.
- Describe a range of formats for communicating results, including reports, one-pagers, flashlight presentations, and visual data displays.
- Understand how results communication can influence policy, funding, and systemic support for comprehensive school counseling programs.

SKILLS

- Transform data into concise, student-centered stories that illustrate program impact on student growth.
- Create and use visual tools (e.g., graphs, infographics, dashboards) to make data accessible and engaging.
- Develop flashlight presentations and one-pagers that clearly communicate outcomes, equity implications, and next steps.
- Share results in ways that are adapted to different audiences within the school community (e.g., students, staff, administrators, families, and school boards).
- Use results sharing to strengthen partnerships, invite feedback, advocate for program sustainability, elevate the school counselor's role, and lead system-level change.

Multi-Tiered, Multi-Domain System of Supports

By Whitney Triplett, Vanessa Gomez,
Danielle Duarte, and Trish Hatch

A FRAMEWORK FOR TIER 2

This text is designed to guide secondary school counselors (Grades 6–12) in planning, implementing, evaluating, and improving their systems for Tier 2 and Tier 3 student support.

As we begin, it will be helpful to provide an overall contextual framework regarding the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and introduce the Multi-Tiered, *Multi-Domain* System of Supports (MTMDSS), which aligns with the role of the school counselor at any grade level and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model® (ASCA, 2025a).

AN INTRODUCTION TO MTSS IN EDUCATION

The Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a comprehensive framework that addresses the academic and behavioral needs of all students within the educational system (Cowan et al., 2015; Hawken et al., 2008). Proactive and prevention-based, MTSS integrates data-based decision-making with a continuum of supports, including high-quality instruction and evidence-based interventions, to maximize student achievement (Hatching Results, 2024). Research indicates that schools benefit from having multiple evidence-based supports and interventions available, varying in intensity, to meet the diverse behavioral, social/emotional, and academic needs of all students (Anderson & Borgmeier, 2010). MTSS is an outgrowth of Response to Intervention (RTI) and encompasses Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS).

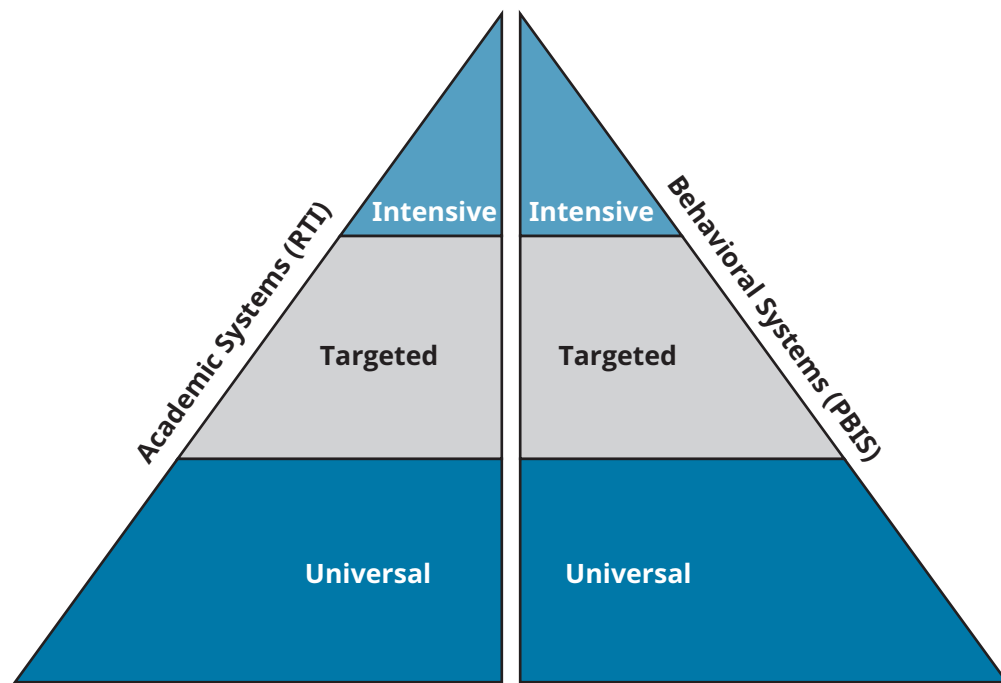
BEGINNINGS IN RTI AND PBIS

Response to Intervention (RTI) was a popular educational framework in the early 2000s for a multi-tiered approach to supporting students' learning needs through early identification and intervention. It called for quality classroom instruction for all students (Tier 1), targeted interventions for some students (Tier 2), and intensive

interventions for those students who require additional support (Tier 3) (Preston et al., 2016). Although it emerged after the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002) to promote equity in special education referrals and to reduce unnecessary referrals for special education (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Gersten & Dimino, 2006), it quickly became apparent that RTI was an efficient and effective mechanism for ensuring that *all* students receive supports according to their tiered level of need. Originally designed to support academic instruction for students, it later expanded to include behavioral instruction and support for students as well (Stormont et al., 2010). Like RTI, MTSS facilitates effective, universal implementation, focusing on core academics and differentiated interventions to support the academic success of all students.

Another commonly used framework, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), is designed to improve social, emotional, and academic outcomes for students by implementing effective, equitable, and efficient systems of support in schools (Center on PBIS, 2025). PBIS is designed to clearly teach and reinforce behaviors that contribute to a safe and effective learning environment for all. PBIS promotes systems change to ensure consistency, schoolwide activities, and instruction for students on behavior expectations. Like PBIS, MTSS is a problem-solving model that employs a continuum of positive, proactive, multi-tiered behavioral interventions (Kennelly & Monrad, 2007). See Figure 1.1 for illustrations of the RTI and PBIS models.

FIGURE 1.1 Traditional Tiered Educational Models: RTI and PBIS



Source: Reprinted from Hatch & Hartline (2021).

MTSS 101

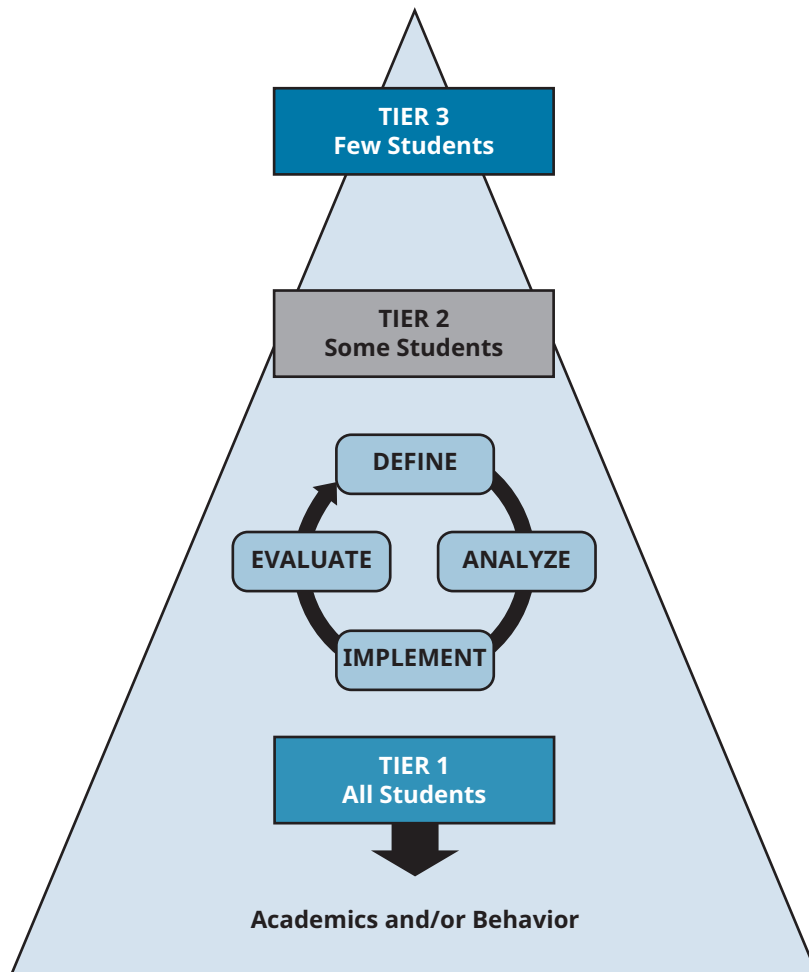
Building upon the academics-focused RTI framework and the behavior-focused PBIS framework, MTSS is a culturally sustaining, evidence-based “umbrella framework” implemented in schools to create fully integrated systems that ensure all students’ needs

are met in the areas of academic and behavioral development, as well as other key areas such as mental health and social/emotional development (Brown-Chidsey & Bickford, 2016; McIntosh & Goodman, 2016). Strong yet agile systems are implemented with intention and monitored closely by all adults in the building (in role-appropriate ways) using cyclical, data-based decision-making (Ehren et al., 2006) to strengthen learning conditions and support for all students. MTSS is associated with positive student outcomes in a variety of areas, including increased academic achievement, decreased discipline referrals and suspensions, increased attendance, and decreased school dropout (Bohanon et al., 2023; Childs et al., 2016; Freeman et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2018; Scott et al., 2019).

One essential component of MTSS is the continuum of supports (see Figure 1.2) with data-informed allocation of services and supports to identify and address the needs of all students:

Tier 1 is foundational, prevention-oriented, and standards-based, representing the universal academic and behavioral support that all students receive through instruction and schoolwide programs and activities. For example, in the same way that all students

FIGURE 1.2 Traditional Tiered Educational Models: MTSS



Source: Reprinted from Hatch & Hartline (2021).

take English 1 as ninth graders, all freshmen would participate in universal instruction on appropriate behavior in high school. Preventative in nature, Tier 1 programs and activities are implemented with the entire student population. Educators utilize Universal Design for Learning (CAST, 2025) and proactively differentiate (modify/adapt) their instructional practices to support students' individual needs, providing a more challenging or more supportive learning environment as necessary. When Tier 1 is implemented well, approximately 80% of students are successful and need no further support.

Tier 2 is comprised of supplemental supports and interventions for students identified through the use of data identifiers/indicators. Teachers and others collaborate to determine the data-driven identifiers that will serve as the mechanism for the students to receive a Tier 2-level intervention (e.g., grades, frequency of missing assignments, test scores, formative assessments). After investigating the root cause, teams carefully and intentionally select evidence-based interventions that are likely to produce desired outcomes and are aligned with student needs and root causes. Supplemental supports are accessible to all students as needed and are layered on top of universal supports. Supplemental supports enhance, rather than replace, the existing universal supports (Orange County Department of Education [OCDE], 2021). When Tier 1 is implemented effectively, approximately 15%–20% of students will require supplemental Tier 2 support to achieve success (Fletcher & Vaughn, 2009; Nitz et al., 2023).

Tier 3 is characterized by increasingly intensified and individualized support tailored to students with the highest level of need. Similar to the process at Tier 2, educators collaborate to determine the data-driven identifiers to qualify students as deserving of Tier 3-level support. Similar to supplemental Tier 2 supports, intensified Tier 3 supports are accessible to all students as needed and are layered on top of existing universal supports (OCDE, 2021). When both Tier 1 and Tier 2 are implemented effectively, approximately 5%–10% of students will require intensified Tier 3 support to achieve success (Fletcher & Vaughn, 2009; Nitz et al., 2023).

MTSS AND SCHOOL COUNSELING

Since the early 2000s, the field of school counseling has aligned its work with RTI, PBIS, and, most recently, MTSS. Early editions of the ASCA National Model, particularly the first edition (ASCA, 2003) and the second edition (ASCA, 2005), laid the groundwork for the profession to center approaches and mindsets that would later become integrated into MTSS, including

- data-driven decision-making,
- a continuum-of-support approach to service delivery (e.g., guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and system support),
- integration of school counselors into the school leadership team,
- emphasis on the school counseling program being integral versus ancillary,
- promoting equity through intentional disaggregation of data by student group and closing-the-gap efforts,

- clarifying the school counselor’s role through a lens of systemwide collaboration, and
- emphasis on school counselors serving as leaders, advocates, collaborators, and systemic change agents.

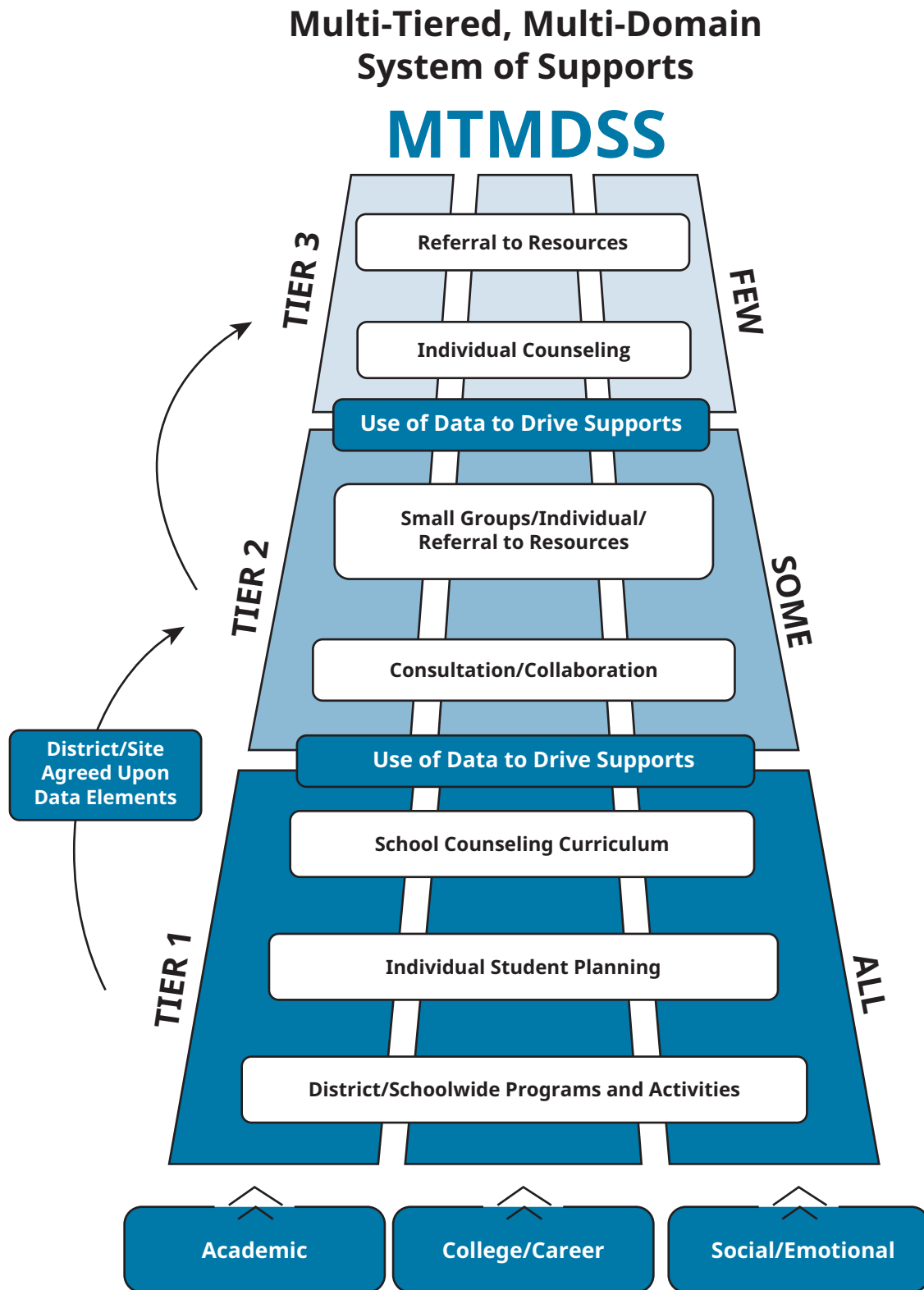
Later, school counselor educators collaborated to align comprehensive school counseling program models with MTSS, with a particular focus on integrating RTI and PBIS (Sink, 2016). Calling on school counselors to be leaders, implementers, facilitators, and supporters of MTSS, Ziomek-Daigle et al. (2016) describe the overlap between the two frameworks (RTI and PBIS), highlighting the specific areas of overlap, including use of data, evidence-based practices, collaboration, advocacy, cultural responsiveness, and systemic change. More recently, Goodman-Scott et al. (2019) released a text titled *The School Counselor’s Guide to Multi-Tiered Systems of Support*, in which they provide school counselors with extensive information and practical resources. Written by national experts in the field, this text provides practical resources for strengthening a comprehensive school counseling program through alignment with MTSS across three tiers of support, and is grounded in strong research and theoretical foundations. It is designed to improve comprehensive school counseling programs, particularly through MTSS alignment.

CONNECTING MTSS TO SCHOOL COUNSELING DOMAINS: MTMDSS

While much has been written discussing the school counselor’s role within the MTSS framework, this text describes the newest model, which focuses on a more inclusive framework for applying the MTSS component of the continuum of support to the school counselor’s “deliver” component for *all three domains* within the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2025a). While MTSS is generally focused on two main areas of support (academic and behavior), school counselors are called to focus on *three* domains of support for students: (a) academic, (b) college/career, and (c) social/emotional (which encompasses behavior and mental health). “Although MTSS provides a framework through which to meet the varying academic and behavioral needs of students in schools, it does not provide a three-tiered approach for addressing the college/career needs of students” (Hatch & Hartline, 2021, p. 28). The Multi-Tiered, *Multi-Domain* System of Supports (MTMDSS) was designed to address this gap, specifically with school counselors and college/career access partners in mind, by incorporating a tiered approach for college/career supports. School counselors and others provide actual tiered supports within the domain of college and career readiness, necessitating a version of the continuum of supports that includes this important component. The inclusion of college/career in the tiered framework helps practitioners visualize and operationalize the delivery of college/career supports to students according to demonstrated level of need (Hatch, 2017; Hatching Results, 2024).

To visually represent a tiered continuum of supports that aligns with the three school counseling domains, MTMDSS was developed in 2016 (Hatch, 2017) and updated in 2024 (Hatching Results, 2024) (see Figure 1.3). MTMDSS is a decision-making framework that utilizes evidence-based practices, such as Universal Design for Learning and data-driven decision-making, to address the needs of *all* students across *all* school

FIGURE 1.3 Multi-Tiered, Multi-Domain System of Supports (MTMDSS)



Source: Adapted from Hatch (2017).

counseling domains. Note that for purposes of this text, from this point forward, we refer to the three school counseling domains of academic, college/career, and social/emotional development (encompassing behavior and mental health).

School counseling programs are an integral part of the overall educational program, essential for student success. The entire school community is committed to student academic achievement, college and career readiness, and social/emotional well-being. Schoolwide proactive, preventative, and data-driven intervention services and activities belong to the entire school. Therefore, it is recommended that schools *incorporate the third domain* (college and career readiness) into their MTSS programs and establish a comprehensive, schoolwide Multi-Tiered, *Multi-Domain* System of Supports (MTMDSS).

MULTI-TIERED, MULTI-DOMAIN SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS (MTMDSS)

The MTMDSS framework (see Figure 1.3) is designed specifically for school counseling programs to organize a continuum of instruction, interventions, and supports to meet students' needs with the goals of (a) ensuring that all students receive developmentally appropriate instruction in all three school counseling domains, (b) increasing the academic, college/career, and social/emotional competencies of all students, (c) ensuring guaranteed interventions and supports for students demonstrating a data-driven need, and (d) maximizing student achievement. The MTMDSS model organizes school services and supports into three levels, or tiers, of increasing intensity.

TIER 1: UNIVERSAL SUPPORT—FOR ALL STUDENTS (100%)

The universal school counseling program comprises the delivery of services that *all students* receive (curriculum, appraisal/advisement/individual student planning, and schoolwide programs and activities). A standards- and competency-based (ASCA Student Standards: Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success [ASCA, 2025c]) school counseling *curriculum* (formerly called “guidance curriculum” or “core curriculum” and currently called “instruction” in the ASCA National Model, fifth edition [ASCA, 2025a]) is developmental in nature, preventative and proactive in design, and comprehensive in scope. *Individual student planning* (aligned with Appraisal and Advisement in the fifth edition) includes 4- and 6-year college/career planning and career readiness and is generally most applicable to students in Grades 6–12. *Schoolwide programs and activities* for all students, such as national awareness weeks and celebrations (e.g., Red Ribbon Week, College Signing Day, FAFSA Challenge, The Great Kindness Challenge), conflict resolution/restorative practice programs, and family education programs, are provided to all students and/or families, align with classroom lesson content and standards, and are part of the universal school counseling program.

TIER 2: SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPORT—FOR SOME STUDENTS (~15%–20%)

Tier 2 school counseling supports are designed for (a) students who have a *demonstrated need* in the areas of achievement, attendance, behavior, social/emotional/mental health, or college and career readiness, (b) students who haven't yet opted

into *opportunities* they qualify for, or (c) student *groups* who are disproportionately represented in any school data or for whom gaps exist.

This is a highly data-informed process, involving the identification of targeted students through regular (e.g., every grading period) data screening metrics that are prescheduled and predetermined by the entire student support team, which includes school counselors (Hatch, 2017). These data, including attendance, behavior, and grades, are also regularly disaggregated to identify evidence of equity and access issues, such as disproportionality and gaps.

Tier 2 supports are intended to be short-term, goal-focused, and collaborative. Efficient and effective Tier 2 systems rely on regular progress monitoring by the student services team to determine when to initiate, continue, or end supports for students based on evidence of success, and to continually improve the systems, interventions, and processes themselves.

TIER 3: INTENSIFIED SUPPORT— FOR A FEW STUDENTS (~5%–10%)

Tier 3 intensified school counseling supports are designed for students who require individualized, more frequent, and/or highly specific support in the domains of academic, college/career, or social/emotional development. These supports may be direct or indirect and are provided on a short-term, limited basis through consultation and collaboration with student services personnel, teachers, families, and others until the concern is resolved and/or referral to appropriate services is made (ASCA, 2021). Referrals may shift the level of support needed from the school counselor to Tier 2 (or even Tier 1); however, it is still essential to follow up with the student and maintain communication with providers once a referral has been initiated. More on this will be provided later in the text.

School counselors are reminded that only about 5%–10% of students require Tier 3 support when a strong MTMDSS is being implemented. For this reason, best practice is for schools to invest considerable time in strengthening their proactive Tier 1 systems of support and intentional Tier 2 supports so that students' needs are met proactively, thereby reducing the need for intensified Tier 3 supports.

Supports (Not Students) Are in Tiers and the Importance of Person-First Language

A common misconception is that students are grouped into tiers, but this is an inaccurate and potentially harmful conceptualization. The MTSS continuum of supports (the triangle, Fig. 1.2) and the MTMDSS continuum of supports (the trapezoid, Fig. 1.3) illustrate how *supports* are grouped into tiers across varying levels of intensity. This means it's inaccurate to use phrases such as *Tier 2 students* for two main reasons:

1. Students are not actually placed into tiers; rather, the *system* is designed by tiers. All students receive Tier 1 supports, and if needed, some students also receive

supplemental and/or intensified supports layered on top of the Tier 1 supports they are already receiving. Students do not “move through” the tiers; rather, supports are provided to them depending on the demonstrated level of need.

2. Students may demonstrate need in some domains but not others. For example, a particular student’s academic needs may be met through Tier 1 supports, but they may also require Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports in the social/emotional domain. It would be inaccurate and incomplete to call this student a Tier 3 student. Similarly, another student may need Tier 2 support in math, Tier 3 support in behavior, and Tier 1 support in all other areas. Students are multifaceted and have a variety of needs across multiple domains.

The words we choose to use can empower or disempower. School counselors and other educators are encouraged to use person-first language consistently. Rather than saying *Tier 2 or Tier 3 students*, choose to say *students demonstrating a Tier 2 or Tier 3 need in the area of XYZ*. The intentional use of person-first language is a crucial step in ensuring that our implementation of MTMDSS is inclusive and equitable. We can be leaders and change agents through modeling appropriate language when speaking about students.

ACTIVITY 1.1

Readers are encouraged to review the 3-minute video located on the Hatching Results website outlining the tiered approach to MTMDSS and to assess their own program in relation to the video. Share this video with others!



Multi-Tiered,
Multi-Domain System
of Supports
<https://qrs.ly/84h4s58>

MTMDSS ALIGNMENT TO TEXT

The purpose of this text is to provide thorough instruction on the interventions and supports that secondary school counselors provide within Tiers 2 and 3, as well as the systems that produce efficient and effective implementation of these activities. Although this book focuses on Tiers 2 and 3, it is critical to note the importance of secondary school counselors implementing a strong, comprehensive Tier 1 system of support. Without a strong Tier 1 system of support, there may be a greater need for Tier 2 and/or Tier 3 support.

In the authors’ previous book, *Hatching Results for Secondary School Counseling: Implementing Core Curriculum, Individual Student Planning, and Other Tier One Activities* (Hatch et al., 2019), secondary school counselors are provided essential strategies for developing and delivering a Tier 1 comprehensive school counseling program that serves all students. The book emphasizes aligning services with the ASCA National Model and the MTMDSS framework to ensure equity, access, and data-driven practices. It also guides school counselors in selecting and implementing Tier 1 instruction that addresses the academic, college/career, and social/emotional

development of students, and provides detailed recommendations for lesson planning, classroom management, pre- and post-tests, and student engagement, with a focus on cultural responsiveness and ethical practices.

Additionally, the authors highlight the importance of individual student planning, schoolwide programs and activities, and family engagement as key components of a successful Tier 1 system. School counselors are encouraged to collect and analyze data through pre- and post-tests and results reports to measure the effectiveness of their programs and advocate for systems change. The book also provides tools for marketing results to the school community and building sustainable and scalable systems, making it a valuable resource for both new and experienced school counselors aiming to maximize their impact at the secondary level. As you read this book, please keep in mind the critical importance of establishing a strong foundation for Tier 1 support.

Throughout this text, we will dive deeply into planning, implementing, evaluating, and improving Tier 2 and 3 activities. These include *direct* (individual, small-group, and large-group interventions and supports) and *indirect* (consultation, collaboration, and referral) services, focusing on data-driven and developmentally targeted interventions.

Tier 2 and 3 interventions and supports are data-driven, evidence-based, aligned, developmentally appropriate, and standards-aligned, similar to the Tier 2 and 3 interventions provided by teachers. Rather than conducting “random acts” of Tier 2 and 3 activities, school counselors and student services teams assess the developmental and data-driven needs of students and create targeted intervention action plans. School counseling data collection and intervention activities occur at regular intervals within the three domains (academic, college/career, and social/emotional). Data collection times are scheduled before the start of the school year, and data collected at various intervals (e.g., monthly, at progress reports, quarterly, or semestrally) may be used to identify student needs. Data collection also plays a critical role in monitoring the progress and success of interventions that support students. The calendar and the intervention action plan are then shared with faculty, families, and other key partners.

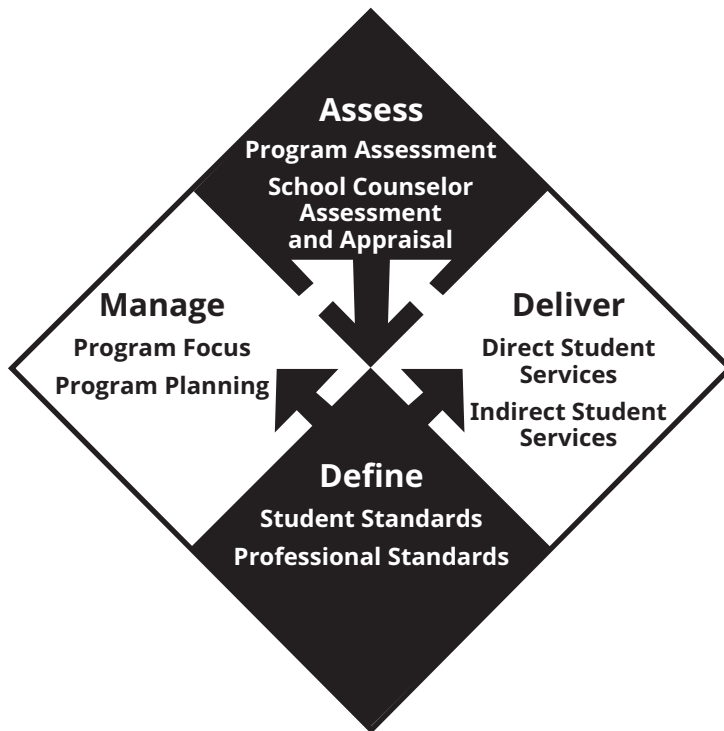
Throughout this textbook, the authors use a variety of terms interchangeably to describe ways that school counselors provide Tier 2 and Tier 3 support to students, such as *activities*, *interventions*, *supports*, and *services*. The authors acknowledge that each of these terms may have different meanings in various contexts, depending on the state and local terms commonly used in different circumstances. All terms reflect various direct and indirect Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports.

ALIGNING MTMDSS WITH THE ASCA NATIONAL MODEL

Activities in MTMDSS align with several components of the ASCA National Model (Figures 1.4 and 1.5), which recommends that school counselors spend 80% of their time providing direct and indirect services to students. As noted earlier, effective MTMDSS implementation typically results in approximately 15% of students requiring Tier 2 supports and 5% requiring Tier 3 supports. To minimize the need for supplemental interventions, school counselors are encouraged to prioritize a strong Tier 1 program. This includes dedicating substantial time to school counseling, classroom

instruction, schoolwide programming, and other prevention-focused efforts. A robust Tier 1 foundation, anchored in evidence-based practices, can significantly reduce the number of students requiring Tier 2 and 3 supports. As such, significant time, staffing, and resources should be invested in Tier 1 implementation.

FIGURE 1.4 ASCA National Model Diamond



ASCA National Model Alignment

Readers will find that in addition to 5th edition language, this book uses a hybrid of language from the third and fourth editions to ensure consistency with other texts published in our series. This book also uses some fifth-edition concepts and language.

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FIGURE 1.5 ASCA National Model Suggested Use of Time

	Delivery System Component	Elementary School % of Time	Middle School % of Time	High School % of Time	ASCA Recommendation
Direct Services	Core Curriculum (Tier 1)	35%	30%	20%	80% or more
	Individual Student Planning (Can be Tier 1/2/3)	5%	15%	25%	
	Responsive Services (Can be Tier 1/2/3)	25%	20%	20%	
Indirect Services	Referrals, Consultation, Collaboration (Can be Tier 1/2/3)	20%	20%	20%	
	System Support (Can support Tiers 1/2/3)	15%	15%	15%	20% or less

Note: Adapted from Gysbers & Henderson (2000) and American School Counselor Association (2012).

ALIGNING MTMDSS WITH THE ASCA SCHOOL COUNSELOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND COMPETENCIES

The purpose of the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards and Competencies (ASCA, 2025b) is to outline the mindsets and behaviors that school counselors must embody and employ to meet the standards of the school counseling profession and the needs of students. Some of the standards that align with Tiers 2 and 3 in the MTMDSS model include the following:

Mindsets

- M 1. Each and every student can learn and succeed.
- M 5. Effective school counseling is a collaborative process involving school counselors, students, families, teachers, administrators and other education partners.
- M 7. School counseling programs promote and enhance student academic, career and social/emotional development.

Behaviors—Professional Foundation

- B-PF 2. Apply knowledge of educational systems, legal issues, policies, research and trends in education
- B-PF 6. Apply knowledge of cultural, social and environmental influences to enhance student success and opportunities

Behaviors—Direct and Indirect Student Services

- B-SS 1. Design and implement instruction aligned to the ASCA Student Standards: Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success in classroom, large-group, small-group and individual settings
- B-SS 2. Provide appraisal & advisement in classroom, large-group, small-group and individual settings
- B-SS 3. Provide short-term counseling in small-group and individual settings
- B-SS 4. Make referrals to appropriate school and community resources
- B-SS 5. Consult to support student achievement and success
- B-SS 6. Collaborate with families, teachers, administrators and other education partners for student achievement and success

Behaviors—Planning and Assessment

- B-PA 2. Identify achievement gaps and factors contributing to those gaps
- B-PA 3. Develop achievement gap plans based on student data annually
- B-PA 4. Assess and report program impact to the school community
- B-PA 5. Use time appropriately according to national recommendations and student/school data

Note: As of the publication of this text, the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards and Competencies can be found on the ASCA website at <https://bit.ly/ascastandards2025>.

ALIGNING MTMDSS WITH THE ASCA ETHICAL STANDARDS

The purpose of the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (ASCA, 2022) is to guide the ethical practices of school counselors, who are expected to thoroughly read and abide by these standards. A sampling of standards that align with Tiers 2 and 3 in the MTMDSS model can be found in the following section. (Note: This list is not meant to be comprehensive.)

A.3. Comprehensive School Counseling Program

School counselors:

- a. Provide students with a culturally responsive school counseling program that promotes academic, career and social/emotional development and equitable opportunity and achievement outcomes for all students.
- b. Collaborate with administration, teachers, staff and stakeholders for equitable school improvement goals. . . .
- c. Review and use school and student data to assess and address needs, including but not limited to data on strengths and disparities that may exist related to gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability and/or other relevant classifications.
- d. Deliver research-based interventions to help close achievement, attainment, information, attendance, discipline, resource and opportunity gaps.
- e. Collect and analyze participation, ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors and outcome data to determine the progress and effectiveness of the school counseling program.
- f. Share data outcomes with stakeholders.

A.4. Academic, Career and Social/Emotional Planning

School counselors:

- a. Collaborate with a community of stakeholders to create a culture of postsecondary readiness.
- b. Provide and advocate for all students' pre-K-postsecondary career awareness, exploration, and postsecondary planning and decision-making to support students' right to choose from the wide array of career and postsecondary options, including but not limited to college/university, career and technical school, military or workforce.
- c. Identify and examine gaps in college and career access and address both intentional and unintentional biases in postsecondary and career counseling.

(Continued)

(Continued)

- d. Provide opportunities for all students to develop a positive attitude toward learning, effective learning strategies, self-management and social skills and an understanding that lifelong learning is part of long-term career success.
- e. Address any inequitable systemic policies and practices related to students' postsecondary choices.

A.6. Appropriate Collaboration, Advocacy and Referrals for Counseling

School counselors:

- a. Collaborate with all relevant stakeholders, including students, school faculty/ staff and parents/guardians, when students need assistance, including when early warning signs of student distress are identified.
- b. Provide a list of outside agencies and resources in their community, or the closest available, to students and parents/guardians when students need or request additional support. School counselors provide multiple referral options or the district-vetted list of referral options and are careful not to indicate an endorsement or preference for one individual or practice. School counselors encourage parents/guardians to research outside professionals' skills/experience to inform their personal decision regarding the best source of assistance for their student.
- c. Connect students with services provided through the local school district and community agencies and remain aware of state laws and local district policies related to students with special needs, including limits to confidentiality and notification to authorities as appropriate.

A.7. Group Work

School counselors:

- a. Offer culturally sustaining small-group counseling services based on individual student, school and community needs; student data; a referral process; and/ or other relevant data.
- b. Provide equitable access to participation in groups, including alleviating physical, language and other obstacles.
- c. Assess student needs to determine if participating in the group is appropriate for the student.
- d. Inform parents/guardians of student participation in and the purpose of the small group.
- e. Facilitate short-term groups to address students' academic achievement, postsecondary and career exploration, and social/emotional well-being.
- f. Use data to inform group topics, establish well-defined expectations and measure the outcomes of group participation.

- g. Reflect on group outcomes and determine adjustments that may improve future group interventions.
- h. Communicate the aspiration of confidentiality as a group norm, while recognizing and working from the protective posture that confidentiality for students in small groups cannot be guaranteed.
- i. Select topics for groups with the clear understanding that some topics are not suitable for groups in schools (e.g., incest survivorship, eating disorders, dating violence) and accordingly take precautions to protect members from harm as a result of interactions with the group.
- j. Facilitate culturally sustaining groups from the framework of evidence-based or research-based practices.
- k. Practice within their competence level and develop professional competence through training and supervision.
- l. Provide necessary follow-up and/or referrals to additional resources for group members.

A.10. Marginalized Populations

School counselors:

- a. Advocate with and on behalf of students to ensure they remain safe at home, in their communities and at school. A high standard of care includes determining what information is shared with parents/guardians and when information creates an unsafe environment for students.
- b. Actively work to establish a safe, equitable, affirming school environment in which all members of the school community demonstrate respect, inclusion and acceptance.
- c. Identify and advocate for resources needed to optimize and support academic, career and social/emotional development opportunities.
- d. Collaborate with parents/guardians when appropriate and strive to establish consistent, constructive two-way communication in their preferred language to ensure students' needs are met.
- e. Understand and advocate for all students' right to be treated in a manner that honors and respects their identity and expression, including but not limited to race, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, language and ability status, and to be free from any form of discipline, harassment or discrimination based on their identity or expression.
- f. Advocate for the equitable right and access to free, appropriate public education for all youth in which students are not stigmatized or isolated based on race, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, language, immigration status, juvenile justice/court involvement, housing,

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socioeconomic status, ability, foster care, transportation, special education, mental health and/or any other exceptionality or special need.

- g. Advocate for access to and inclusion in opportunities (e.g., Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, gifted and talented, honors, dual enrollment) in which students are not stigmatized, isolated or excluded based on race, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, language, immigration status, juvenile justice/court involvement, housing, socioeconomic status, ability, foster care, transportation, special education, mental health and/or any other exceptionality or special need.
- h. Actively advocate for systemic and other changes needed for equitable participation and outcomes in educational programs when disproportionality exists regarding enrollment in such programs by race, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, language, immigration status, juvenile justice/court involvement, housing, socioeconomic status, ability, foster care, transportation, special education, mental health and/or any other exceptionality or special need.
- i. Recognize the strengths of students with disabilities as well as their challenges and provide best practices in supporting their academic, career and social/emotional needs.

Note: As of the publication of this text, the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors can be found on the ASCA website at <https://bit.ly/ascaethical2022>.

ALIGNING MTMDSS WITH THE ASCA POSITION STATEMENTS

ASCA's (2021) position statement, "The School Counselor and Multitiered System of Supports," calls for school counselors to be partners in developing and implementing an MTSS that includes but is not limited to RTI and PBIS (see Figure 1.6). According to the position statement, the school counselor's role is to provide "*each and every* [emphasis added] student with standards-based school counseling instruction to address universal academic, career and social/emotional development, and [to analyze] . . . data to identify students who need [supplemental or intensified] support" (ASCA, 2021, "The School Counselor's Role" section). School counselors collaborate with all school staff to identify and implement evidence-based interventions that support students who require additional assistance. As school counselors align their work with MTSS through comprehensive school counseling programs designed to improve student achievement and behavior, the MTMDSS model in this text adds the third domain of college and career readiness to the MTSS continuum of support, which typically addresses only academics and behavior. A multi-domain approach to school counseling, Tier 1 instruction and supports, Tier 2 supplemental supports, and Tier 3 intensified supports ensures that students' needs are met comprehensively and in alignment with the ASCA National Model.

FIGURE 1.6 The School Counselor and Multitiered System of Supports Position Statement



The School Counselor and Multitiered System of Supports

(Adopted 2008, revised 2014, 2018, 2021)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors are stakeholders in the development and implementation of multitiered system of supports (MTSS), including, but not limited to, response to intervention and responsive positive behavioral interventions and supports. School counselors align their work with MTSS through the implementation of a school counseling program designed to affect student development in the academic (achievement), career (career exploration and development) and social/emotional (behavior) domains.

The Rationale

MTSS is a culturally sustaining, evidence-based framework implemented in pre-K–12 schools using data-based problem-solving to integrate academic and behavioral instruction and intervention at tiered intensities to improve the learning and social/emotional functioning of all students (Sink, 2016). Guided by student-centered data, MTSS teams engage in cyclical data-based problem solving; make informed decisions about general, compensatory and special education; and assist in the creation of a well-integrated and seamless system of instruction and intervention (Ehren, Montgomery, Rudebush, & Whitmire, 2006).

Within the framework of a data-informed school counseling program, school counselors augment their collaboration, coordination and leadership skills (Shepard et al., 2013) to meet the needs of all students and identify students who are at risk for not meeting academic and behavioral expectations. School counselors collaborate across student service disciplines with teachers, administrators and families to design and implement plans to address student needs and to promote students' academic, career and social/emotional success (ASCA, 2019). Data is collected and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the learning supports for continual improvement efforts over time.

MTSS offers school counselors opportunities to have a lasting impact on student academic success and behavior development while integrating the framework within a school counseling program (Ziomek-Daigle, Goodman-Scott & Donohue, 2016). The application of MTSS aligns with the role of school counseling at any grade level and can be used across the academic, college/career and/or social/emotional domains established in the ASCA National Model (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020).

The School Counselor's Role

School counselors enhance student academic, career and social/emotional development through the implementation of a school counseling program based on the ASCA National Model (2019). Through these programs, school counselors align with the school's MTSS by:

- providing each and every student with standards-based school counseling instruction to address universal academic, career and social/emotional development
- analyzing academic, career and social/emotional development data to identify students who need support
- identifying and collaborating on research-based intervention strategies implemented by school staff
- evaluating academic and behavioral progress after interventions
- revising interventions as appropriate
- referring to school and community services as appropriate
- collaborating with administrators, teachers, other school professionals, community agencies and families in MTSS design and implementation
- advocating for equitable education for each and every student and working to remove systemic barriers

School counselors align their school counseling program with MTSS by providing direct and indirect student services including:

- Tier 1 interventions in the form of classroom instruction and schoolwide programming and initiatives
- Tier 2 interventions including small-group and individual counseling, consultation and collaboration with school personnel, families and community stakeholders
- Tier 3 indirect student support services through consultation, collaboration and facilitation of referrals (Goodman-Scott, et al., 2020).

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Additionally, school counselors provide Tier 1 services by emphasizing the use of data and collaboration (Betters-Bubon et al., 2016; Betters-Bubon & Donohue, 2016; Goodman-Scott et al., 2016) and engage in evidence-based prevention work (Goodman-Scott et al., 2014). In Tier 2, school counselors provide direct services such as targeted group counseling (Sherrod et al., 2009) and individualized interventions (e.g., check in, check out; Dart et al., 2012) (Goodman-Scott, et al., 2020). In Tier 3, typically school counselors only provide indirect services as supporters through consultation, collaboration and facilitation of referrals as members of the MTSS team (Goodman-Scott, et al., 2020).

School counselors collaboratively support the process of MTSS universal screening for mental health (Donohue et al., 2016), academic and behavioral supports. The school counselor may also provide indirect student service by presenting data or serving as a consultant to a student support team. The school counselor engages as part of the leadership team in MTSS but “should not be the sole leader of MTSS in our buildings” (Goodman-Scott, et al., 2020, p. 33).

Summary

School counselors implement school counseling programs addressing the needs of each and every student. Guided by review of student data, school counselors deliver instruction, appraisal and advisement to students in Tier 1 and 2 and collaborate with other specialist instructional support personnel, educators and families to provide appropriate instruction and learning supports for students in Tier 2 within the school’s MTSS program. School counselors also work collaboratively with other educators to remove systemic barriers for each and every student and implement specific learning supports that assist in academic and behavioral success.

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Tier 3: Direct or Indirect?

It is important to note that while the position statement on MTSS indicates, “in Tier 3, typically school counselors only provide indirect services” (ASCA, 2021, “The School Counselor’s Role” section), the authors of this text offer an alternative perspective. While many Tier 3 supports are indirect, some important Tier 3 school counseling supports are direct:

- Individual counseling to assess crisis response needs and to determine appropriate supports. Examples:
 - Academic crisis counseling for students who transfer in far below grade level or with few credits (e.g., an 11-year-old who has never attended school and is now enrolling for the first time; a 17-year-old enrolling with very few credits)
 - Supporting students experiencing a mental health crisis in the moment (e.g., meeting with the student to ascertain the situation and needs before connecting them with referral resources)
 - Postsecondary crisis counseling for seniors whose admission to university was rescinded, are flagged for verification on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), exhibit severe signs of summer melt, or have no means to get to the postsecondary campus
- Intensified, short-term, goal-focused counseling to address barriers to achievement, attendance, and appropriate behavior.

The authors support the understanding that school counselors should allocate minimal time to providing Tier 3 direct services and remain mindful of avoiding encroachment into long-term therapy, which is beyond their role and training as school counselors.

ACTIVITY 1.2

Review the ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards and Competencies (ASCA, 2025b), the ASCA (2021) position statement on MTSS (Figure 1.6), and the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (ASCA, 2022) with your administrator. Discuss how a comprehensive school counseling program provides tiered supports to meet the needs of all students.

BABIES IN THE RIVER

“Babies in the River” is a wonderful parable often told to illustrate the difference between prevention and intervention. Co-editor Trish adapted this version from Pat Martin (Hatch, 2014).

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On a spring afternoon, after the students had left at the end of a minimum day, a group of high school counselors walked to a nearby park area next to a river to eat lunch together for the first time all year. Considering that they rarely even ate lunch at all, this was a treasured event. After a few minutes of talking and eating, Mariana noticed a baby floating down the river. Alarmed, she jumped up to assess the situation. As she did, she noticed several babies floating. She screamed for her colleagues to help, and for the next 20 minutes, they retrieved dozens of babies out of the river, until finally the babies stopped floating by. Exhausted, Mariana returned to her picnic and realized that Jessie was missing. Where was Jessie? Hadn't she been helping rescue the babies? Pretty soon, Jessie was heard whistling down the walkway. The rest of the group inquired, "Where were you? We were busy retrieving babies, and you were nowhere to be found!"

"Well," she said, "I decided to go up the river to see how they were getting in! Turns out someone, in their wisdom, decided to build a nursery/preschool next to the river! I noticed that the door had a broken lock, so first I fixed that. Then I realized that the babies didn't know how to swim, so I taught them. Then I learned that the teachers had no floaties, so I bought floaties and put them near the exit, so that if any babies fall in again, they can throw a floaty in the water in order for the babies to assist themselves. Finally, I filed a complaint with the city to ensure that no one ever builds a nursery or preschool within a mile of a river again!"

Though the prevention approach is almost always the most appealing, it can be difficult for school counselors if they think that shifting to prevention education means turning their backs on those students currently in need. It is also not always obvious how to work within the system to redesign how it functions—to build it differently, to partner with and train those on the front lines, and to assist them in understanding how to provide first-level instruction and supports. But this is a requirement if school counselors are going to meet the needs of *all* students, because there is not enough time to rescue every drowning student (hypothetically), especially considering the student-to-counselor ratios throughout the country.

The bottom portion of the MTMDSS pyramid (see Figure 1.3) is the largest section and reflects the importance of prevention education and universal support for all students (100%). Just as in the "Babies in the River" story, school counselors can either fill their day with reactive services (i.e., rescuing the babies one after another) or get out in front of things and engage in strategic prevention (i.e., teaching the babies how to swim or installing a safety gate). When school counselors spend a majority of their day mired in Tier 2 and 3 reactive services, they may feel like they are in an emergency room rather than a school, and they won't have time for teaching prevention education and for designing systems of support to catch students early. Without a strong prevention system in place, the need for responsive services will continue to grow. Implementing a strong Tier 1 program, complete with classroom lessons and school-wide activities, will allow students to gain the attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary to reduce their need for Tier 2 services, thereby reducing the time spent in this tier. By

prescheduling Tier 2 data collection, school counselors make sure students receive an early and immediate intervention with the goal of reducing the number of students in need of Tier 3 support.

Shifting the perspective of the school counselors' role within MTMDSS from the myths to facts (as highlighted in Table 1.1) is helpful in moving the school counseling program activities from being primarily responsive to being proactive. It takes commitment, planning, time, and cooperation from administration, faculty, and staff alike. As school counselors begin to shift their time to focus more on Tier 1, consideration should be given to addressing the potential challenges of finding a balance between the time spent in classrooms (proactive) and the time spent engaged in the reactive services they previously provided. A strong Tier 1 system will enable school counselors to improve efficiency and effectiveness as they seek to improve their Tier 2 and 3 systems and data-driven interventions.

TABLE 1.1 Myths Versus Facts About School Counselors' Role in a Multi-Tiered, Multi-Domain System of Supports

MYTH	FACT	LEARN MORE
School counselors only or mostly provide Tier 2 and 3 supports.	School counselors provide all students with universal support, including standards-based school counseling instruction to address academic, college/career, and social/emotional development.	ASCA (2021) position statement about the school counselor in MTSS: https://bit.ly/SC-MTSS
School counselors provide instruction and support in only one domain (i.e., college/career or social/emotional).	Today's school counselors are vital members of the education team, helping all students in the three domain areas of academic, college/career, and social/emotional development.	"The Role of the School Counselor" (ASCA, 2025d): https://bit.ly/ascarolestatement
Most of the school counselor's time is spent on Tier 2 and 3 supports.	School counselors should spend significant time planning, implementing, evaluating, and improving their Tier 1 universal supports for students (i.e., classroom instruction, appraisal and advisement, and schoolwide programs and activities) with a high degree of integrity, which is the most efficient means for serving the greatest number of students.	"Integrating RTI With School Counseling Programs: Being a Proactive Professional School Counselor" (Ockerman et al., 2012). Researchers indicate that around 80% of children should be expected to reach successful levels of competency through Tier 1 delivery (Fletcher & Vaughn, 2009; Nitz et al., 2023). "Spending 90% of the school counselor's time with 10% of the students is not the philosophy of intentional school counseling" (Hatch & Hartline, 2021, p. 54).

Source: Adapted from Triplett (2017).

Considerations for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs in Alternative, Nontraditional, and Innovative Settings

Too often, school counselors in alternative education settings lack access to resources tailored to their unique contexts, making it difficult to implement comprehensive school counseling programs. Most professional materials are designed for school counselors in traditional settings, leaving those in alternative education to adapt existing frameworks on their own. At the same time, the presence of school counselors in these nontraditional settings has grown—supporting homeschooling networks; serving incarcerated, pregnant, and parenting youth; or working in reengagement programs designed for students who have previously disconnected from school.

Recognizing this gap, the editors of this textbook intentionally infused shaded callout boxes throughout the text to ensure alternative education school counselors see their work reflected and valued. To deepen this representation, we partnered with two former school counselors, Ebony Payno and Anna Heinbuch, who have led comprehensive programs in alternative settings. Their experiences, advice, and expertise provide authentic insights to help colleagues in similar contexts adapt and thrive. Here's the first one!



NAVIGATING MTMDSS IN ALTERNATIVE, NONTRADITIONAL, AND INNOVATIVE EDUCATION SETTINGS

By **Ebony Payno**

Do you remember the very first time you learned about Multi-Tiered, Multi-Domain Systems of Support (MTMDSS) in comprehensive school counseling programs? Do you also remember thinking, “How is this going to happen in my work setting?,” “This doesn’t make sense for the students I work with,” or “I can definitely apply some aspects of this framework, but not all of it”? If any of these thoughts resonate with you, you may be a school counselor working in an alternative education setting. And you’ve probably sat in countless districtwide meetings among your peers who work in comprehensive or “traditional” school settings, feeling like the “outcast” of school counseling, charged with the task of doing the seemingly impossible: building a comprehensive data-driven school counseling program with limited resources and time. These are valid concerns, *and* the great thing about MTMDSS is that it can be adapted for any learning environment, including alternative education! Regardless of where you might be in your MTMDSS level of implementation, progress is a continuous process that must be embraced at every stage. Prioritizing key components of your program supports in multifaceted settings, such as in-person, virtual, or independent study, will help to eliminate perceived feelings of inadequacy oftentimes experienced by members of the school counseling program. By allowing data-driven program support in each tier and domain to evolve and grow over time, emerging subtle negative feelings can turn into moments of success and small wins. Remember, on the other side of

stagnation, doubt, or a sense of hopelessness is creativity, flexibility, grace, and the data-driven comprehensive school counseling program that your students are most deserving of. We've got you covered! Tips for alternative education school counselors can be found throughout this book to help you make connections with your setting. You are seen and valued in this book, and we look forward to serving as your companion along this journey with you! ■

This text is written to support secondary school counselors as they begin the process of eliminating old patterns of random interventions and creating new, intentional, data-driven systems that will catch students early. Ideas in this text are written to provide thoughtful, equity-based interventions designed to eliminate barriers to learning and to reduce the number of students requiring immediate response (i.e., rescuing babies out of the river). When students receive early intervention and are taught the skills they need to improve, they are less likely to be at risk of drowning later down the river. Of course, there will always be a need for crisis response as students and families experience tragedies and trauma—the MT(MD)SS team of diverse educators must develop systems to manage these needs collaboratively. The goal is for school counselors to spend more time providing universal Tier 1 support so students' needs are met earlier, thereby reducing the need for more intensive support later downriver. While this text is designed to guide secondary (Grades 6–12) school counselors in planning, implementing, evaluating, and improving their systems for Tier 2 and Tier 3 student supports, readers are encouraged to consider this framework as most effective when built on a strong foundation of universal Tier 1 supports.

MTMDSS ASSESSMENT

ACTIVITY 1.3

Please review the Multi-Tiered, Multi-Domain System of Supports (MTMDSS) diagram (Figure 1.3) illustrating sample school counselor activities within an MTMDSS. Next, complete the blank MTMDSS diagram (see Figure 1.7) by listing your current Tier 1, 2, and 3 activities, lessons, and interventions per domain: academic, college/career, and social/emotional development. Look for strengths, gaps, and potential areas for growth.

FIGURE 1.7 Blank MTMDSS Diagram



**HATCHING
RESULTS**

**School Counseling Program
Assessment Worksheet: “Deliver”**

Instructions: List your school counseling program’s supports below! Work with your team (if applicable) to correctly categorize each support in the spaces provided, paying specific attention to both the domain and the tier. Note that Tier 3 College/Career generally applies only to high school.

SCHOOL NAME: _____

		ACADEMIC	COLLEGE/CAREER	SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL
T I E R 3	Direct T3 Support (with students)	•	•	•
	Indirect T3 Support (on behalf of students)	•	•	•
T I E R 2	Direct T2 Support (with students)	•	•	•
	Indirect T2 Support (on behalf of students)	•	•	•
T I E R 1*	Direct T1 Support (with students) School Counseling Instruction	•	•	•
	Direct T1 Support (with students) Individual Student Planning, Appraisal, and Advisement	•	•	•
	Direct T1 Support (with students) Schoolwide Programs and Activities	•	•	•
	Indirect T1 Support (on behalf of students)	•	•	•
*Remember: If all students don't receive it, it's not Tier 1.		ACADEMIC	COLLEGE/CAREER	SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL

Source: Hatching Results Inc.

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