**MTSS in Georgia, Tennessee, and Florida**

Name

Institutional Affiliation

Course

Date

**Analysis of State-level Implementation**

**Comparing the State-Level Implementation**

**Georgia State**

The State of Georgia’s Tiered Systems of Supports for Students has both Response to Intervention (RTI) and Student Support Team (SST) as part of the MTSS (Georgia Department of Education). Georgia integrates the instructions and the various interventions that include the following.

The first intervention is the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS). This intervention focuses on the promotion of school safety and the attainment of the best behavior among the learners (Georgia Department of Education). According to the Gerogia Department of Education, PBIS involves the schools teaching and training the learners about the strategies and the behavior expectations for all of them within and outside the school. As a proactive approach, PBIS prefers and targets prevention instead of punishment. The State acknowledges that a good number of learners within Georgia are likely to struggle with behavior. Therefore, the school takes proactive measures by not reacting to the cases of misbheavior but putting measures in place to improve on the students’ behaviors.

The second intervention is the Response to Intervention (RtI). In Georgia State, RtI includes the following key components (Georgia School for the Deaf). It contains a tiered delivery model which is meant to support the students’ needs. Here, the state focuses on implementing standard-based classrooms throughout Georgia. Another component is the implementation of the evidence-based instructions. It is part of the Evidence-based Instruction Practices (EBIPs) which supports all the learners’ long-term development, conceptual understanding, and improves their skills on problem-solving. These are the focus of the classroom pedagogy in Georgia. Again, the RtI focuses on the evidence-based interventions. Georgia State have programs which have been proved to be effective and produce the desired results on implementation. The evidence comes from formal studies and research. The formal studies and research depend on progress monitoring to ensure there is enough evidence on these interventions (Georgia School for the Deaf). The last vital component is the ongoing assessment data. The data is used in the cases where the state desires to know the specific students who do not meet the academic and behavior success standards in their schools.

The third intervention is the Student Support Team (SST). In Georgia State, SST is predominantly a student-oriented problem-solving process which identifies and develops the appropriate interventions for improving behavior and learning. With stakeholders such as the assistant principals, student support specialists, teachers, and parents, SST is appropriate in addressing the concerns and issues of all the students who have been referred for it. SST is tasked with discussing all the recommendations and interventions which could involve instruction modification, school environment modification, and educational resource modification.

In Georgia State, there is a program called the school-based Mental Health (SMH) which is used to ensure early interventions for various childhood mental health symptoms (Georgia Hope). The aim of this model is to ensure that childhood mental health is addressed early enough before it translates into a chronic condition. The state partners with all the schools to accommodate at least one therapist within the counties to ensure they act early enough when such symptoms are identified in the learners.

Closely related to SMH is the Writing Assessment Program (WrAP). In Georgia, WrAP is used to measure every learner’s writing achievement. Through this program, the teachers can point out their students’ weaknesses and strengths in writing.

**Tennessee State**

The Tennessee Department of Education uses a special MTSS Model called the Tennessee MTSS Model. This model comprises of three tiers. The first tier recommends that all students within Tennessee receive research-based, appropriate quality instructions as informed by the State’s standards (Tennessee Department of Education). The quality instructions should be provided within positive behavior environment which observes a continuous universal screening activity and continuous assessments. Tier I targets all the learners within the state but manage to help approximately 80-85% of the learners. Tier II is intended to give an extended support to the category of learners identified as “at risk students” (Tennessee Department of Education). These students are selected based on their academic and non-academic skills. They must not have met the expected standards in the first tier; therefore, calling for an improvement in various aspects of the tier. While the state targets a huge number, it ends up supporting approximately 10-15% of the learners. Also, the state has measures to support students who do not meet the standards set out in Tier II. The state uses Tier III to offer the right interventions to students deemed to be below their grade levels in class and out of class activities. In Tier III, the interventions are more explicit, intensive and focused on the learners’ specific needs than Tier II does.

Tier I has the following four main components.

***Engaging Academic Instructions***: Tennessee State requires that all schools and classrooms implement all the specific strategize set by the state to optimize the learner’s success potential across all ages (Tennessee Department of Education). The state calls for engaging academic instructions at all times. In particular, the state requires the schools and classrooms to have differentiated content, differentiated processes, and differentiated product. As such, the state uses Tier I to focus on the readiness of the learners, what the learners are interested in, and the best learning styles that fit every leaner in their respective classrooms. Under this tier, the state gives preference to activities such as the appropriate use of technology and having the right academic choices tasks.

***School Climate and Connectedness***: This aspect of Tier I goes hand in hand with the physical and emotional safety and value that the teachers, parents, and the learners feel they are getting from the school (Tennessee Department of Education). Tennessee advocates for the adoption of the universal strategies for fostering positive and safe environments such as setting the appropriate behavior expectations, having responsible student leadership structures, having policies and measures in place, having the right behavior acknowledgement systems, and restorative discipline approaches.

***Health and Wellness***: The state calls for the adoption of all the strategies that can promote physical and mental health in its first tier. It acknowledges the roles that health and wellness play in the academic and the eventual life outcomes of the students. In particular, the state allows and advocates for the students accessing licensed health professionals, having breakfast programs at school, having comprehensive health education and awareness programs, and frequent health screenings to all the learners (Tennessee Department of Education).

***Social and Personal Wellness***: There is a need for both the adults and children to manage their emotions, having a positive outlook, being optimistic, having positive relationships, and being in the positions to make positive decisions. Tennessee State calls for measures such as having regular class meetings, establishing cooperative learning groups, and having working students’ focus groups.

**Tier II**

As expected, all students are not the same; therefore, some learners are more likely to call for supplemental help that are not found in Tier I. Tier II intends to support the learners who are at risk both academically and behaviorally. The main components being focused on by this tier include behavior, academics, social challenges, personal challenges, and other challenges that may affect the learners’ performance at school.

Tier III

This tier focuses on helping the students who cannot neither benefit from tier I nor tier II. The universal screening systems focus on challenges on social skills, attendance, conflict resolution and management, school refusal, off-task behaviors, anxiety, organization skills, motivation, and family engagement (Tennessee Department of Education).

**Florida State**

 The State of Florida uses Problem-Solving and Response to Intervention Framework (PSRtI) to prepare the leaners to live beyond their school lives (P.K. Yonge, n.d.). Florida uses this framework as a logic framework with core beliefs, systematic problem-solving processes, and other strategies to ensure learning gives the best to the learners. The target group for the framework is the K-12 students.

Florida State focusing on the RtI is keen on the following aspects. Firstly, the state focuses on the high-quality instructions that match and meet the learners’ needs (P.K. Yonge, n.d.). In the context of normal education systems, the learners need revolve around cognitive thinking, the social and emotional aspect of learning, and the psychomotor aspects. The second element is the use of learning rate over time accompanied by level performance (P.K. Yonge, n.d.). Here, assessments are used to reveal the learning rate and the related challenges that the learners are facing while at schools. Lastly, the RtI involves the use of the information and data to make vital and impactful educational decisions.

MTSS has data-based problem-solving aspect which focuses on increasing the quality of the education to all the learners in Florida. It has special focus on Tier I which revolves around the behavioral and academic support to the students and provide the appropriate help.

Based on the analysis, all the three states organize the components differently from one another but have the same objective by using MTSS.

The Degree of Success

According to Eagle, Dowd-Eagle, Snyder, & Holtzman, (2015), the best practices associated with MTSS are universal design for learning (UDL), common teachers’ planning time, universal screening, purposeful and effective progress monitoring, and targeted interventions. All the three states have their MTSS focused on these best practices. Therefore, it is accurate to conclude that they are successful to a greater degree in the implementation of MTSS.

**Matrix of Three States (Configuration Matrix)**

**State 1: Georgia**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  Component | Degree of Implementation |
| Building Relationships with Colleagues, Students, and Parents | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
| Documenting Observations of Learning, Behavior | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
| Administering Assessments  | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
| Universal Screening  | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
| Utilization of Evidence-based instructional practices | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
| Application of professional development strategies |  Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
| Differentiated Instructions | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
| Supporting appropriate academic and behavioral support | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |

**State 2: Tennessee**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  Component | Degree of Implementation |
| Building Relationships with Colleagues, Students, and Parents | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
| Documenting Observations of Learning, Behavior | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
| Administering Assessments  | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
| Universal Screening  | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
| Utilization of Evidence-based instructional practices | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
| Application of professional development strategies | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
| Differentiated Instructions | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
| Supporting appropriate academic and behavioral support | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |

**State 3: Florida**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Component | Degree of Implementation |
| Building Relationships with Colleagues, Students, and Parents | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
| Documenting Observations of Learning, Behavior | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
| Administering Assessments  | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
| Universal Screening  | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
| Utilization of Evidence-based instructional practices | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
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| Supporting appropriate academic and behavioral support | Attached Importance (Good) | Leverage (Good) | Readiness (Good) | Quality(Good) |
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