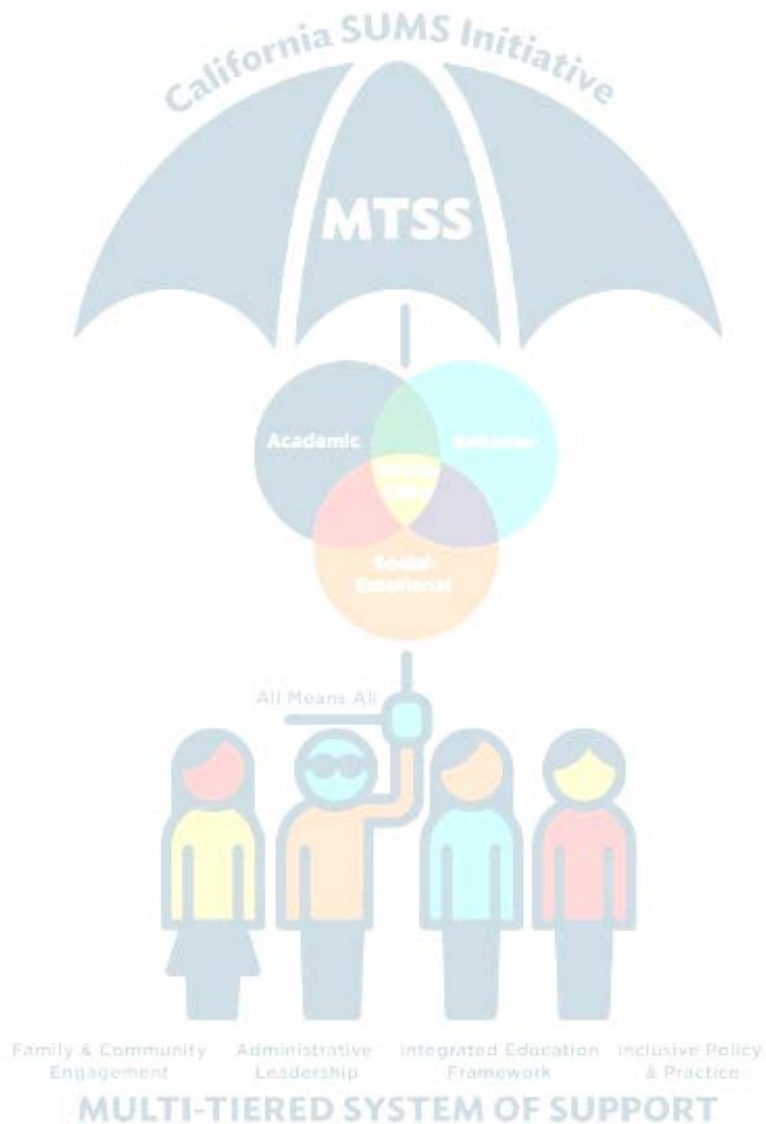# Guide to Understanding
California MTSS

California's Scaling-Up Multi-Tiered System of Support (CA SUMS) is funded through Assembly Bill 104, Chapter 13, Statutes of 2015, and Senate Bill 828, Chapter 29, Statutes 2016, for Developing, Aligning, and Improving Systems of Academic and Behavioral Supports (ISABS). The purpose of the funding is to encourage LEAs to establish and align school-wide, data-driven systems of academic and behavioral supports to more effectively meet the needs of California's diverse learners in the most inclusive environment. The SUMS initiative enables the Orange County Department of Education to develop and disseminate statewide resources and technical assistance for this purpose.

Developing, aligning, and improving systems of academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning support.

Vision

California's vast and complex PreK-12 educational system requires a multi-faceted approach that is scalable and sustainable. The national transition from the No Child Left Behind legislation to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides the context for weaving together multiple resources and supports to enhance student learning into a comprehensive Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework to improve student outcomes based on the California Way. This unification effort addresses barriers to learning and engages students by creating a culture of collaboration among marginalized and fragmented support systems. The road to every child succeeding involves a statewide transformation that:

1) enhances equitable access to opportunity

2) develops the whole child

3) closes the achievement gap for all students

Mission

California's Multi-Tiered System of Support (CA MTSS) Framework promotes the maxim "All Means All" which ensures LEAs and schools successfully implement efforts to meet the needs of each and every student allowing all students to participate in the general education curriculum, instruction and activities of their grade level peers. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), aligned to California's Eight State Priorities, provide the infrastructure for building a statewide system of support--California's Multi-Tiered System of Support Framework is the driver for implementation.

Multi-Tiered System of Support

An integrated, comprehensive framework that focuses on instruction, differentiated learning, student-centered learning, individualized student needs, and the alignment of systems necessary for all students' academic, behavioral, and social success. -CDE, 2017

CCSESA

California County Superintendents
Educational Services Association

Implementation Science

The study of factors that influence the full and effective use of innovations in practice. The factors are identified or developed and demonstrated in practice, to "influence the full and effective use of innovations." Each factor and the factors in combination are subject to continued study along a continuum of improvement. -NIRN, 2015

Improvement Science

Explicitly designed to accelerate learning-by-doing. As the improvement process advances, previously invisible problems often emerge and improvement activities may need to tack in new directions. The overall goal is to develop the necessary know-how for a reform idea ultimately to spread faster and more effectively. It is an iterative process often extending over considerable periods of time. -Carnegie Foundation, 2017

Continuous Improvement

LCAP and MTSS Alignment

|	Conditions of Learning	Engagement	Pupil Outcomes
Local Control Accountability Plan The LCAP is a critical part of the new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). Each school district must engage parents, educators, employees and the community to establish these plans.	Students are provided with safe and properly maintained schools. Teachers are fully credentialed to teach their subject area and students are provided with a broad course of study that help them develop critical thinking skills and prepare them to be civically engaged and college and career ready.	Students are provided with motivating programs, coursework and opportunities where they feel respected, included socially and emotionally and cared for both in and out of the classroom. Families, schools and communities work closely together to build a strong framework for student achievement.	Student achievement means improving outcomes for all students to ensure student success.
Multi-Tiered System of Support An integrated, comprehensive framework that focuses on instruction, differentiated learning, student-centered learning, individualized student needs, and the alignment of systems necessary for all students' academic, behavioral, and social success.	All students regardless of age, race, zip code, language, physical challenge, intellectual ability, capacity, or competency are provided with the most inclusive learning environment.	Families and community members are partners where they have options for meaningful involvement in students' education and in the life of the school and the school responds to family interests and involvement in a culturally responsive manner.	All students are provided with a continuum of services that address their academic, behavioral, social-emotional, health and well-being needs.

Whole System Engagement

The CA MTSS Framework supports whole system engagement, involving multiple levels of involvement, in order to implement the changes required to support students in the most inclusive environment over a sustained period through the following structure:

- **Students and Family:** One coherent system of support begins with students and families. They are the **purpose of our work**.
- **School Site:** Schools have the most direct influence on students and they are the place where **transformation** occurs.
- **LEA/District:** The LEA/District is the **point of intervention** that enables sustainable school-wide transformation for improved student outcomes.
- **County, Region and State:** Sustaining the CA MTSS Framework requires technical support and professional growth which can be provided by county, regional, state agencies of education and other partners.
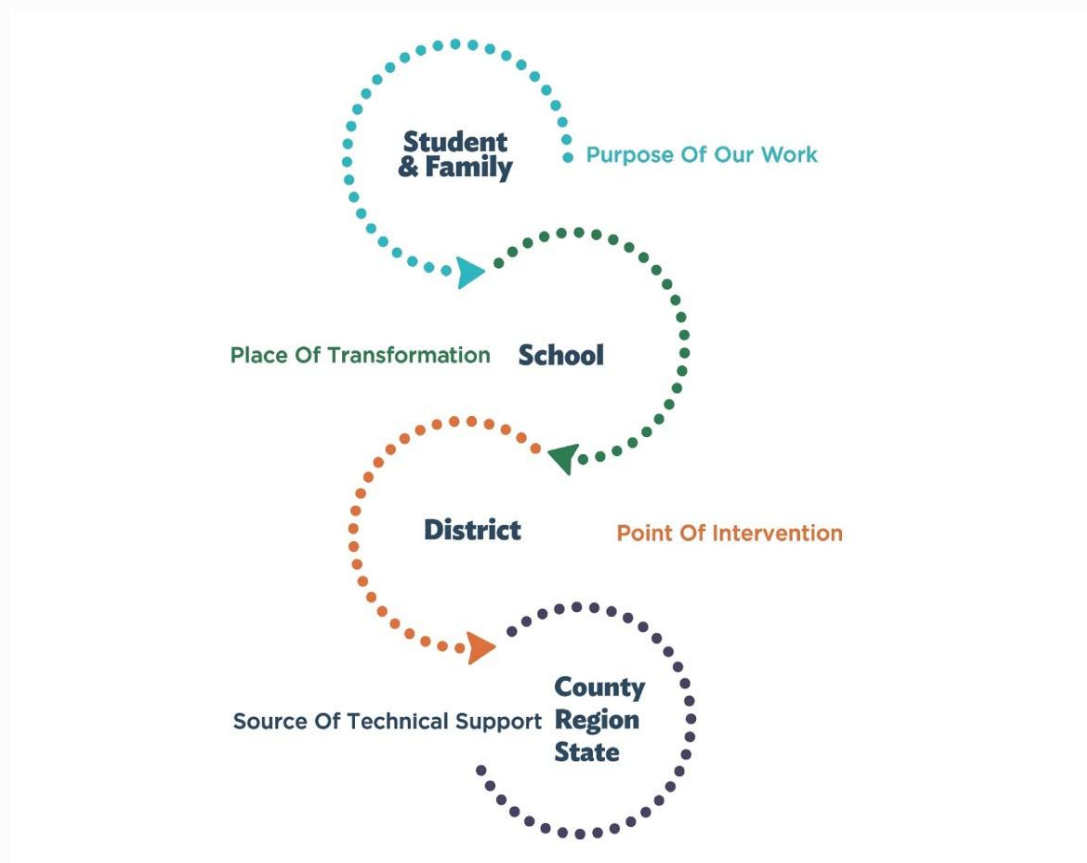
California's Multi-Tiered System of Support (CA MTSS) Framework

The CA MTSS Framework provides the structure needed to achieve an inclusive, equitable, and positive learning environment for each and every child. The CA MTSS Framework braids numerous state, regional, county, district, school, family and community resources to provide districts and schools the supports they need to address each and every student's academic, behavioral and social-emotional learning through a continuum of support that is universally designed and differentiated to meet the needs of the whole child. Inclusive Academic Instruction supported by California's State Standards and Frameworks and Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI2), Inclusive Behavior Instruction such as Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) and Restorative Practices, and Inclusive Social Emotional Learning (SEL) guided by our CA SEL principles, are integrated together to create the core pillars of the CA MTSS Framework. LEAs who implement the framework will ensure culturally responsive schools that increase attendance, prevent dropouts, lower disciplinary rates, improve school climates and boost academic performance for all students.

Built into the CA MTSS Framework is a continuum of support that emphasizes universal support must be provided for all students, recognizing that some students may need supplemental support at times, and a few students may require more intensified support sometimes to be successful. Recognizing that the CA MTSS is a complex, multi-component systems-change agenda, it is necessary to introduce a set of evidence-based supports to enhance the required cultural transformation within LEAs/Districts and schools. Collectively these domains of support constitute a "scaffold" within which progress can be observed on the installation and implementation of CA MTSS. These domains of evidence-based practices include: integrated educational support, family and community engagement, strong leadership, and inclusive policies and practices.

California MTSS
ALL MEANS ALL

CA MTSS Continuum of Support

California MTSS — ALL MEANS ALL

UNIVERSAL SUPPORT
Evidence-based priorities and practices that support the academic, behavioral and social-emotional success of all students in the most inclusive and equitable learning environment

ALL STUDENTS

SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPORT
Additional services provided for some students who require more academic, behavioral and social-emotional support

SOME STUDENTS

INTENSIFIED SUPPORT
Targeted academic, behavioral and social-emotional support directed toward the few students with greater needs

FEW STUDENTS

Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiated instruction, integrated education implemented at all levels of support.

Universal Support ALL Students	Supplemental Support Some Students	Intensified Support Few Students
Teams School Level Grade/Department Levels Teaching Teams **Data** Universal Screeners Outcome Measures Fidelity Data **Evidence-based Practice** Curriculum Instruction **Continuous Improvement Process** School and Grade Levels Strengths-based	**Expanded Grade & Teaching Teams** Specialists Parents & Students **Data** Decision Rules Daily Monitoring Frequent Progress Monitoring Intervention Fidelity Data **Interventions** Based on Identified Needs Frequency, Duration, & Timeline Matched to Need Intended to be Flexible **Continuous Improvement Process** Group Individual Levels Strengths-based	**Expanded Grade & Teaching Teams** Specialists Parents & Students **Data** Decision Rules Daily Monitoring Frequent Progress Monitoring Intervention Fidelity Data **Interventions** Based on Identified Need Frequency, Duration, & Timeline Matched to Need Intended to be Flexible **Continuous Improvement Process** Individual Level Strengths-based

Adapted from SWIFT Education Center

All Means All

Multi-Tiered System of Support

Inclusive Academic Instruction

- Identify a comprehensive assessment system
- Create and utilize teams
- Provide universal academic supports
- Provide supplemental interventions and supports
- Provide intensified interventions and supports
- Develop guideline to implement curriculum with universal design for learning (UDL)

Inclusive Behavior Instruction

- Identify a comprehensive assessment system
- Create and utilize teams
- Provide universal behavior supports
- Provide supplemental interventions and supports
- Provide intensified interventions and supports
- Provide comprehensive behavior supports

Inclusive Social-Emotional Instruction

- Identify a comprehensive assessment system
- Create and utilize teams
- Provide universal social-emotional supports
- Provide supplemental interventions and supports
- Provide comprehensive social-emotional development supports

Inclusive Policy Structure & Practice

Strong LEA / School Relationship

- Develop a district-based team
- Attend school-level meetings
- Provide district-level professional learning
- Identify and remove barriers
- Regularly communicate outcomes

LEA Policy Framework

- Link multiple initiatives
- Review data
- Review and revise policy
- Select research-based practices
- Expand practices into other schools and Districts

Family & Community Engagement

Trusting Family Partnerships

- Engage with students and families
- Obtain input and feedback
- Provide engagement opportunities
- Facilitate home-school communication
- Provide information

Trusting Community Partnerships

- Engage with the community
- Identify mutual interests and goals
- Ensure reciprocity
- Maintain an open door policy
- Invite community members to serve

Integrated Educational Framework

Fully Integrated Organizational Structure

- Identify who has access
- Use non-categorical language and practices
- Use collaborative instruction among peers
- Use paraeducators to support inclusive education

Strong & Positive School Culture

- Foster collaborative relationships
- Create a shared vision
- Identify ways for all staff to contribute
- Ensure all students have access to extra-curricular activities
- Demonstrate culturally responsive practices

Administrative Leadership

Strong & Engaged Site Leadership

- Lead development of a vision
- Attend instructional meetings and classes
- Create a leadership team
- Create opportunities to contribute
- Use data to guide decisions

Strong Educator Support System

- Provide access to instructional coaching
- Seek input from teachers
- Make learning opportunities available to all
- Use data
- Conduct strengths-based evaluations

Adapted with permission from: SWIFT Education Center. (2016). *Domains and Features Placemat*. Lawrence, KS. swiftschools.org

Structural Components of MTSS

Multi-Tiered System of Support		
A continuum of research-based, system-wide practices of data-based decision making used to meet the academic, behavior, and social-emotional needs of all students.		
Dispositions (Beliefs)	**Knowledge**	**Skills**
The school community is committed to the belief that all students should be educated in the most inclusive learning environment regardless of eligibility of special education or other student support services.

The school community is committed to collaboration opportunities between stakeholders to monitor the needs of the whole child.

School staff are committed to continuous improvement by utilizing a School Leadership Team that includes:
•administrators
•teachers
•para-professionals
•specialized personnel
•parents. | The school community understands that all students need a continuum of supports (universal, supplemental, intensified) to meet the needs of the whole child (academic, behavior, and social-emotional). These supports:
•utilize data to inform decisions
•have clearly defined decision
•rules for access and exit
•are delivered by skilled and trained personnel.

The school community understands in order for all students to succeed in the most inclusive learning environment, it is necessary to provide temporary supplemental and/or intensified supports, when needed, in order to access universal instruction.

School staff understand that inclusive academic, behavior, and social-emotional instruction must be universally designed and function together to meet the needs of the whole child.

The school community understands that in order for a Multi-Tiered System of Support to thrive, the system must be supported by:
•integrated educational support
•family and community engagement
•administrative leadership
•inclusive policies and practices. | School staff utilize teams and designated planning opportunities that support and monitor Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiated instruction, Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), and flexible grouping.

School staff utilize comprehensive and well-functioning data systems to inform decisions regarding student needs and ensures implementation effectiveness that includes:
• a valid and reliable evidence base
•universal screeners
•diagnostic assessments/tools
•progress monitoring data to check student improvement
• student outcome data (e.g. office discipline referrals, academic assessments, attendance, school climate surveys)
• implementation data (e.g. classroom walk-throughs, instructional rounds, FIA)
• capacity data (e.g. classroom walk-throughs, instructional rounds, FIA)
• aggregate data analysis (e.g. classroom, grade level, student groups).
School staff utilize effective collaboration practices include, but are not limited to:
• co-teaching
• co-planning
• analyzing data (e.g. screeners, diagnostic, progress monitoring). |

Essential Components for a Multi-Tiered System of Support to Thrive

Integrated Educational Supports

Equity emerges when an educational system includes all students, personnel, and stakeholders within a positive culture and ensures full access for all students to participate in all school-related activities.

Dispositions (Beliefs)	Knowledge	Skills
The school community serves all students in the neighborhood, so that no student is intentionally placed/sent to another school/setting due to the school's lack of capacity to serve them (except extreme cases such as physical safety/psychiatric concerns or due to family preference). The school community is committed to a fully integrated organizational structure that utilizes state guidelines, principles, and recommendations, including but not limited to: • State Standards • Curriculum Frameworks • Dyslexia Guidelines • Social-Emotional Guiding Principles • English Learner Roadmap • Improving Performance of • Students with Disabilities Handbook • Inclusive Behavior Instruction. The school community is committed to not categorizing students and ensuring that culturally responsive practices are utilized to educate all students.	The school community understands the benefits of having all students' primary placement be in the grade level of their peers. School staff understand how extracurricular activities, both inside and outside the school day, maximize academic, behavior, and social-emotional success for all students.	School staff utilize Culturally Responsive Teaching (e.g., instructional strategies, assessment, etc.) to meet student needs associated with various cultural backgrounds. School staff, regardless of their title, support all students. School staff utilize non-categorical language (e.g., building signage, personnel titles, etc.) to promote inclusivity. School staff monitors and reviews non-categorical service delivery practices. The School Leadership Team evaluates and monitors that all students have access to a fully integrated educational framework.

Essential Components for a Multi-Tiered System of Support to Thrive

Family and Community Engagement/Partnerships

When families, community members, and schools form partnerships in which each benefits from and supports the others, the local culture supports and sustains equity within the school's MTSS.

Dispositions (Beliefs)	Knowledge	Skills
The school community is committed to providing families with opportunities/resources to participate in the decision-making of their child's education by building positive partnerships with their students' families. The school community is committed to collaborating with a variety of community partners to match resources and services in the community with identified school needs. The school community is committed to providing equitable access to various resources that benefit the surrounding community.	The school community understands the key components of effective two-way communication and collaboration protocols that are inclusive of family perception, input and participation resulting in continuous improvement. The school community understands that family leaders play a pivotal role in school-based decision making by serving on committees. The school community understands the importance of evaluating the quality of community partnerships in order to ensure that school needs are being met. The school community understands the importance of training volunteers, providing a volunteer handbook and having a clear procedure available for community members to serve as volunteers. The school community understands the importance of offering school resources (e.g., space, technology) for community use and having a clear procedure available for community members to request the use of school resources.	School staff gather input from the community and incorporate feedback for school-based decision-making. School staff recruit families for various committees in order to create equitable opportunities for school-based decision-making. School staff provide information to families about: • School-level systems and practices regarding academic and behavioral instruction and supports • Student progress data • Results of surveys • Committee or team meeting decisions on which families participate as members. School staff identify and build relationships with community partners in order to help address identified needs through the provision of necessary resources to school staff, students, and families. School staff evaluate community partnerships regularly.

Essential Components for a Multi-Tiered System of Support to Thrive

Administrative Leadership

Equity-based MTSS thrives with strong and actively engaged administrative leaders who are committed to improving teaching and learning within a system that empowers educators and school personnel.

Dispositions (Beliefs)	Knowledge	Skills
The school community values School Leadership Teams in order to implement and sustain system transformation that continuously improves teaching and learning, including, but not limited to: • professional learning • instructional coaching • supportive/constructive personnel evaluations. The School Leadership Team encourages open communication with the entire school community and values their contributions in making core school decisions.	The school community understands the variety of methods available to them in order to provide input to the School Leadership Team that ensures success for all students. School staff understand that personnel evaluations are consistently used by School Leadership Teams to provide supportive feedback that identify strengths and specific opportunities for growth for continuous improvement. The school community understands the importance of school staff receiving ongoing professional growth opportunities, based on data and community input, that is grounded in valid and effective research, including but not limited to: • teaching demonstration • timely support and feedback • professional learning.	The school leadership team evaluates and monitors school governance decisions and personnel evaluations to inform professional growth opportunities to ensure student success. The school community utilizes regular opportunities to exchange ideas to address school issues through team meetings and/or other reciprocal communications. The School Leadership Team delegates authority to others to make decisions related to their primary functions.

Essential Components for a Multi-Tiered System of Support to Thrive

Inclusive Policy Structure & Practice		
A supportive, reciprocal partnership between the school and its district or local educational agency is a vital lifeline for long-lasting equity and MTSS.		
Dispositions (Beliefs)	**Knowledge**	**Skills**
The school community values the LEA/District Leadership Team's vision and mission statement that supports inclusive academic, behavior, and social-emotional learning. The school community values the LEA/District Leadership Team's clear and documented processes and support to remove barriers that impede inclusive policy, structure, and practice.	The school community understands the district's role in linking multiple initiatives and revisions of policies to support the CA MTSS Framework. School staff understand that LEA/District Leadership personnel are supportive partners who contribute to School Leadership Teams by attending meetings on a regular basis. School staff understand that the LEA/District Leadership Team utilizes LEA and site level needs assessment, data, and stakeholder input to provide support for professional growth opportunities for all staff across the LEA/district. School staff understand LEA/District Leadership Teams monitor the implementation of CA MTSS and regularly report outcome and fidelity data to the school board.	School staff utilize two-way communication opportunities to assist the LEA/District Leadership Team in improving supports for CA MTSS.