

Multi-Layered System of Supports & the Student Assistance Team



MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS WHILE DISTANCE LEARNING

In school year 2020–2021, New Mexico will transition to implementing the Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS) by focusing on technical assistance and professional development. New Mexico will fully implement MLSS during the 2021–2022 school year. The New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) has taken this step purposefully, influenced by both the recognition of current health conditions affecting education and the need to disseminate statewide the lessons learned during the school year 2019–2020 MLSS Pilot. This transition year will provide an opportunity for robust professional learning (PL) on MLSS to all district and state-authorized charter school leadership teams.

NMPED recognizes that the current health crisis highlighted complex needs with regards to documenting and providing student supports. The demand for distance learning means that a variety of challenges will arise with elements of academic and behavioral supports being new to both teachers and students. This requires that schools provide parent(s) or guardians with increased supports as they look to provide educational supports at home. Services such as virtual parent/ teacher conferences and supplemental learning materials will help ensure that families understand what is expected and that families are provided the supports to meet those expectations.

As the school year begins, teachers should work with students to provide increased behavioral supports with an emphasis on minimizing distractions to increase engagement. During this time, teacher teams should work to prioritize essential elements of instruction and ensure that those elements are in place while providing online distance learning to students. These elements include content delivery, assignments/ assessments, and how to provide a variety of opportunities for evaluative feedback to students.

While MLSS emphasizes that content-area teachers are responsible for providing ALL students with intensive learning interventions, it is important to consider that most interventions provided through online platforms will be modest in scope, but are worthwhile attempts that should be documented, so that intervention planning is best informed when schools return to full capacity. When schools re open, districts and state charters must ensure that resources and personnel are provided to address the screening and diagnostic needs of students. In addition, careful consideration should be given to student learning gaps from lack of instruction to ensure that students are not unduly referred to SAT for special education or gifted determination.

What is MLSS?

MLSS is NMPED's revision of the Response to Intervention framework (RtI). MLSS is a coordinated and comprehensive framework that educators use to organize their schools and school systems to support student learning. This support is accomplished by identifying and supporting students' needs and by providing the resources that teachers, health and wellness personnel, and school administrators require for full implementation and long-term sustainability of MLSS. Most importantly, the MLSS framework empowers general education teachers to intervene quickly when students need additional supports.

The MLSS framework accomplishes this by:

- Aligning all interventions to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and student data;
- Being proactive and flexible about addressing student needs; and
- Providing a holistic model of student supports through tapping into the expertise that the family, classroom teacher, school administration, and health/wellness staff offer toward readying students to experience academic and behavioral success in school.

For more information regarding MLSS and SAT, please visit:

<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/multi-layered-system-of-supports-mlss/>

What is MLSS? (continued)

MLSS provides immediate support in instances of educational crisis. Decisions regarding layered interventions are made by the classroom teachers and support personnel closest to the students. A SAT meeting is not required to increase or reduce layered supports, or to move back and forth across layers in the MLSS process. Additionally, there are no documentation requirements for moving a student in or out of a layer of support, and general education teachers should use the data available to them when making decisions for learner supports. Family participation in the MLSS process is essential for interventions to achieve their intended impacts. While family participation is strongly encouraged, it is not required to provide a student with the learner supports that progress monitoring data identify as a need. Schools provide support to families through this process, so parents and families understand the needs for the process and for moving up and down increasingly intensive layered interventions and can support the interventions, changes of interventions, and intervention adjustments.

What is SAT?

The Student Assistance Team (SAT) is a school based group of people whose purpose is to provide additional support to students who are experiencing academic or behavioral difficulties that are preventing the students from benefiting from general education because they are either performing below or above expectations. The SAT is comprised of a core group that anchors the team. Core members should have good communication skills and a solid working knowledge about a variety of supports (types of interventions, educational and community resources, etc.). Core team members may vary by school, but should include at a minimum: an administrator, regular education staff, and specialists in accordance with Section (J)(4) 22-2C-6 NMSA, 1978

MLSS-SAT: Referral & Documentation

Referral to the SAT is not required for assigning a student to layered interventions as part of New Mexico's Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS). There are no documentation requirements for moving a student in or out of a layer of intervention beyond what is normally required by general education teachers. Appropriate interventions should be provided to all students regardless of referral to the SAT, and regardless of special education or gifted determination. Additionally, students in the SAT process are entitled to receive all appropriate Layer 1, 2, and 3 interventions. A high rate of SAT referral and/or retention recommendations suggests that the school or district leadership may wish to evaluate the school's culture and climate, core instructional program, instructional practices, and behavioral expectations. SAT referrals require data and information from multiple sources.

| SAT Previous Role | SAT within MLSS |
|---|---|
| SAT referrals included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Obvious disability » Gifted referral » Student has been retained » Student is in danger of being retained (must follow NMAC requirements) » Student has been exited from Special Education » Student has been restrained two or more times in a 30-day period | SAT is only required for the situations specified by law: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Obvious disability » Gifted referral » Student has been retained » Student is in danger of being retained (must follow NMAC requirements) » Student has been exited from Special Education » Student has been restrained two or more times in a 30-day period |
| A parent who requests his/her child be in SAT or referred for an evaluation of a learning disability | A parent who requests his/her child be in SAT or referred for an evaluation of a learning disability |
| A student could only be referred to SAT in Tier 2 | A student can be referred to SAT at any layer in MLSS |
| Tier 2 & 3 targeted interventions could only be accessed through SAT | Targeted interventions can be accessed at any layer |
| Teachers had to wait until the SAT meeting to change an intervention if ineffective SAT Intervention plans were monitored and adjusted for efficacy after a certain time period | Based on data, a teacher can adjust or change an intervention that is not effective at any time |
| The previous SAT process only allowed for interventions to be developed and placed on the Academic Intervention Plan, Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) or Academic Improvement Plan (AIP) | Accommodations and interventions can be included in the Student Support Plan (Academic Improvement Plan or Behavior Intervention Plan) |
| The SAT team was usually the only place to study student performance and create interventions | Teacher PLCs collaborate weekly/biweekly to study student performance and create school-wide supports for interventions instead of just a SAT team doing this |

SAT is only required for the situations specified by law:

1. Obvious disability
2. Gifted referral
3. Student has been or is in danger of being retained (must follow NMAC requirements)
4. Student has been exited from Special Education
5. Student has been restrained two or more times in a 30-day period minimum: an administrator, regular education staff, and specialists in accordance with Section (J)(4) 22-2C-6 NMSA, 1978.

If you have questions regarding MLSS and SAT, please contact:

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