When a Student Needs More

A Tier 2 Response Map for School Teams

"Identification without a pathway creates another bottleneck."

IDENTIFY — A CONCERN EMERGES

- Screening
- Staff observation
- Student voice
- Family concern
- School data
- Existing support process

A signal tells us to look closer. It does not diagnose the student or determine an intervention.

REVIEW — UNDERSTAND THE CONCERN

What is the concern? · What strengths/context matter? · What info do we already have?
What support exists already? · Is more information needed? · Who decides the next step?

⚠ Is there a potential immediate safety concern?

Consider multiple sources of information rather than one score or event in isolation.

⚠ STOP THE ROUTINE PATHWAY

If a safety concern is present:
Follow established district crisis/safety procedures immediately and involve appropriately qualified personnel. Follow required family-notification and mandatory-reporting steps per district policy and applicable law.

Does not wait for the next MTSS meeting.

MATCH — WHAT DOES THIS STUDENT NEED NEXT?

Don't start with "What program do we have?" — start with "What does this student appear to need next?"

- Structured check-in
- Mentoring
- Check-in/check-out
- Counselor/social worker
- Targeted skill-building
- Individualized support
- Small group
- Family partnership

The appropriate response depends on the student's need, strengths, context, evidence, and the school's role and capacity.

THE ONE-STUDENT TEST

Choose one hypothetical or appropriately de-identified student who needs more than universal support. Walk them through your current system:

1. Who receives the concern?
2. Who reviews it?
3. Who determines what happens next?
4. Who owns the support?
5. What is the goal?
6. When is progress reviewed?
7. What happens if it isn't working?

WHERE DOES OWNERSHIP BECOME UNCLEAR?
That's the gap to fix first.

ASSIGN — OWNERSHIP & GOAL

Who owns the next step? _____

What support will occur? _____

How often / when? _____

GOAL / success measure: _____

A referral is not the end of the pathway — someone must own what happens next.

SUPPORT — DELIVER WHAT WAS PLANNED

- ☐ Did the student actually receive it?
- ☐ Was it delivered with reasonable consistency?
- ☐ Were there barriers to participation or access?

Intervention selected ≠ intervention received

FAMILY, STUDENT VOICE & PRIVACY

Involve student and family perspective where appropriate, consistent with district procedures and applicable law — requirements can differ by intervention, personnel, or student age.

Handle student information consistent with applicable federal/state law and district privacy procedures.

MONITOR — IS IT HELPING?

Goal / success measure: _____ **Review date / cadence:** _____

IMPROVING
Continue support · reinforce progress · consider step-down

NOT IMPROVING YET
Check implementation · reconsider fit · adjust intensity

CONCERN INCREASING
Reassess · consider more intensive support/referral · safety steps if acute risk

ADJUST — CLOSE THE LOOP

☐ CONTINUE ☐ ADJUST ☐ STEP DOWN ☐ INTENSIFY REFER / CONNECT →

EVERY STUDENT IDENTIFIED FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS:

A PERSON → A PLAN → A FOLLOW-UP

A PERSON: who owns the next action? A PLAN: what are we actually doing? A FOLLOW-UP: when will we know what happened?

The goal isn't simply to make a referral. It's to know what happened next.

GROUNDED IN: National Center for School Mental Health — Early Intervention & Treatment (Tiers 2 & 3) · NCSMH / SHAPE System · SAMHSA school mental health guidance · ISBE MTSS / student-support guidance

This tool is intended for school-team planning and reflection. It does not replace district policies, crisis/safety procedures, applicable legal requirements, individualized assessment, or professional clinical judgment.