

A RESEARCH-BASED FRAMEWORK OF MTSS FOR SKEENA MIDDLE SCHOOL

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MTSS AT SKEENA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Current Situation

What is MTSS?

Universal Screening

Diagnostic Assessment

Evidence-based Interventions

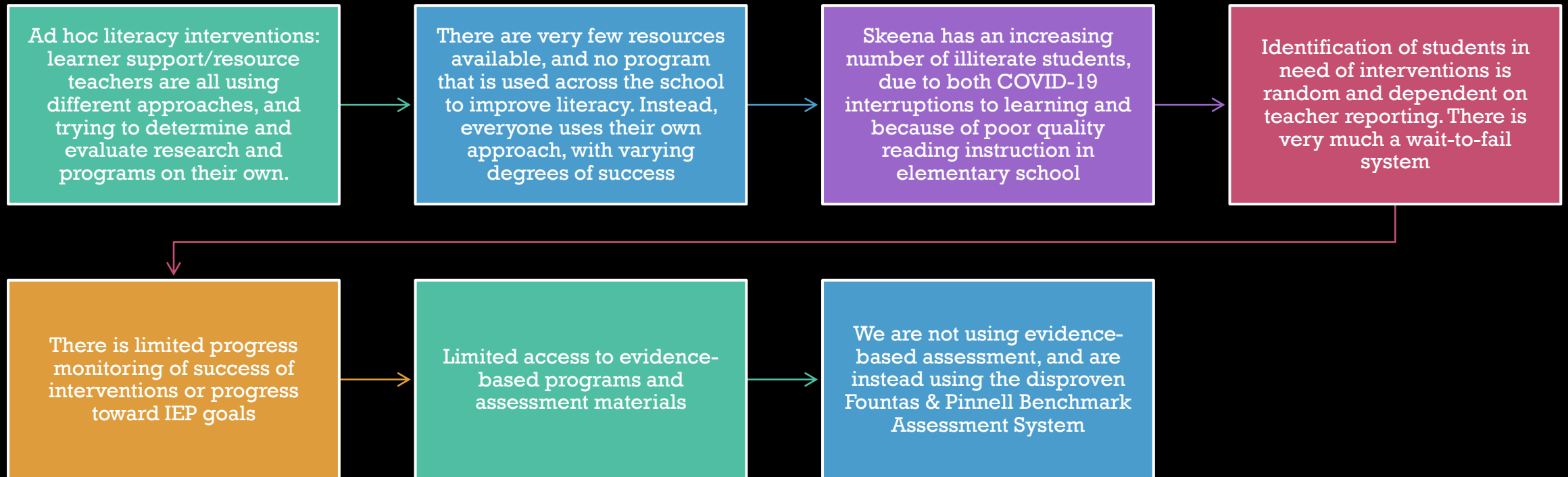
Progress Monitoring

Sharing of Information

Issues and Challenges

Celebrating Success!

SKEENA MIDDLE SCHOOL: CURRENT SITUATION

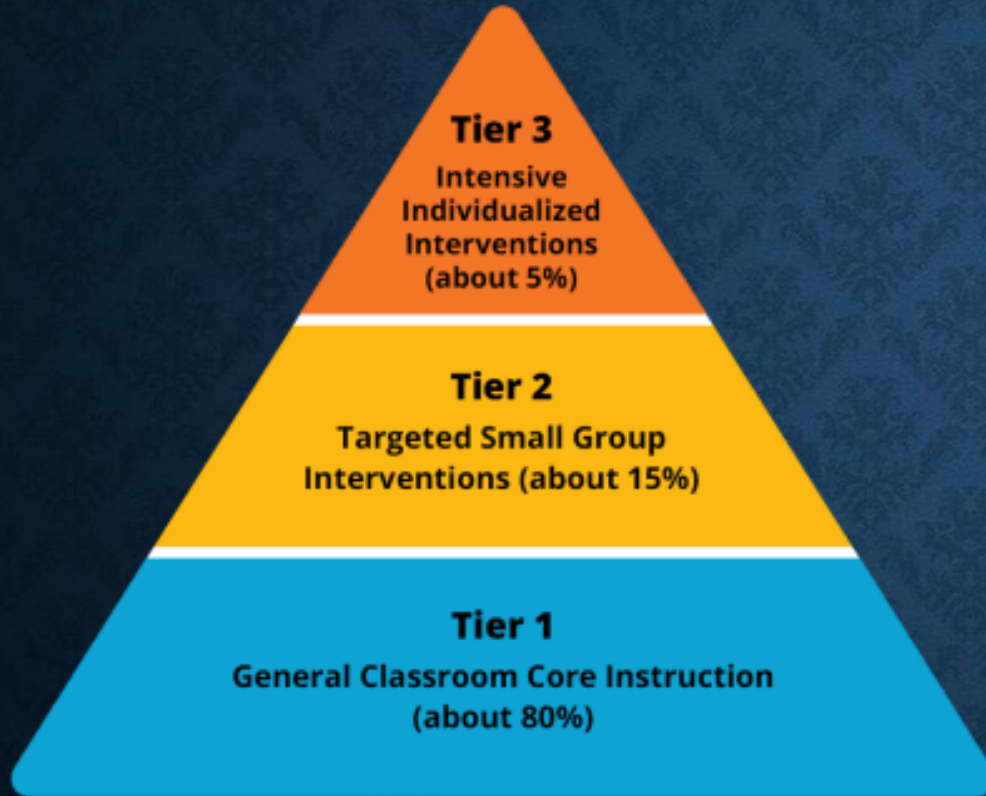




ASSESSMENT ISSUES

- Currently, Skeena is using Fountas & Pinnell's Benchmark Assessment System
- The current assessments we use are so inaccurate that "flipping a coin would actually be better," according to Dr. Matt Burns, as quoted in Peak's 2023 investigation into Fountas & Pinnell's Benchmark Assessment System

WHAT IS MTSS?



What is MTSS? (2025). *Reading Rockets*.
<https://www.readingrockets.org/classroom/evidence-based-instruction/mtss>

- MTSS stands for Multi-tiered System of Supports
- MTSS systematically identifies and intervenes with students who are struggling with literacy
- MTSS is premised on universal, repeated, reliable screening
- It involves systematic, evidence-based interventions to improve literacy
- Tiers of interventions:
 - Tier 1: excellent, evidence-based, instruction in their main classes
 - Tier 2: small-group interventions
 - Tier 3: intensive individualized support with specialized resource teachers
- It involves a system of monitoring students' response to interventions and progress according to grade-level expectations
- Raymond Baerg (2025) explains MTSS as “similar to preventative measures in the public health care system”



UNIVERSAL SCREENING

- We will screen every entering seventh-grade student through Acadience 7-8
- Students will be assessed by a team including the Learner Support teachers, the Literacy Teacher, and the librarian
- Students will be given a gated assessment which begins with Maze and then progresses, for those scoring below benchmarks, to silent reading and oral reading
- Acadience results will inform class-wide interventions in academic classes, especially English and Social Studies
- Students who are not yet meeting grade-level expectations or are at risk for not meeting future benchmarks will be given additional interventions



DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

- Once struggling students are identified, we will use a diagnostic screener to pinpoint the exact, individual needs for struggling readers
- Skeena will use the Beginning and Advanced Reading Surveys through Really Good Reading to pinpoint missing skills in need of further development
- Diagnostic assessment will determine which skills and subskills need to be taught



EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS

- Once students' exact, individual needs are identified through diagnostic assessment, targeted interventions will take place in Tier 2 and Tier 3
- One student, for example, might need phonics instruction in order to proceed to fluency
- Students who are predicted to not meet future benchmarks (Tier 2) will receive additional, targeted interventions with a Learner Support or Literacy Teacher in a dedicated resource block
- Students who continue to not respond to interventions or are severely below the cut point will also receive more intensive interventions in their advisory block, from a Literacy Teacher or a Learner Support Teacher
- Classroom teachers will work with the Literacy Teacher to ensure that their teaching is evidence-based, well-resourced, and effective, to improve Tier 1 instruction
- Students in Tier 2 will receive targeted reading interventions and instruction on reading comprehension strategies and writing strategies, as recommended in Ciullo et al (2016)
- Students in Tier 3 will receive structured literacy interventions with robust supporting evidence such as UFLI



PROGRESS MONITORING

- The MTSS team will evaluate and monitor students' response to intervention through ongoing progress monitoring
- Progress monitoring will continue through the Acadience 7-8 framework
- Students will have ongoing Acadience assessments to check on their rate of improvement and allow the MTSS team to adjust interventions as necessary



SHARING OF INFORMATION

- Make student assessment data available to all educators and administration through a platform managed by the School District, such as EdInsights (which we currently have access to)
- Ensure that teachers can see what precisely students struggled with to allow it to inform their instruction and in-class interventions
- Approach the data from a collaborative perspective
- This will allow everyone to teach from a data-based individualization approach



ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- Cultural challenges: are the assessment tools sensitive to the Indigenous students who form just under half of our population? Are the interventions culturally sensitive?
- “Keeping the status quo of how we are teaching reading when it is not meeting the needs of Indigenous students is colonial.” -- Melissa Flynn, Executive Director, Yukon First Nations School Board, as quoted in Raymond Baerg (2025)
- Linguistic challenges: no ‘j’ sound, for example, in Sm’algyax, the local language of the territory, which impacts Tsm’syen people’s verbal language



CELEBRATING SUCCESS!

- Outcome evaluation: was MTSS successful, from a school-wide perspective? Did the interventions work to improve literacy overall?
- Have a school-wide convention or meeting at the end of the year to share and celebrate successes and to tweak the MTSS to allow for further success next year
- Align MTSS with positives: ensure that teachers are looped in on the data of how their students improve throughout the year, and that teachers are celebrated for their wins
- Share results with families and students to ensure that they see and celebrate their successes. Encourage students to think of themselves as learning along a continuum, in accordance with the BC Curriculum

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All photos taken by Kelsey Wiebe at Skeena Middle School.