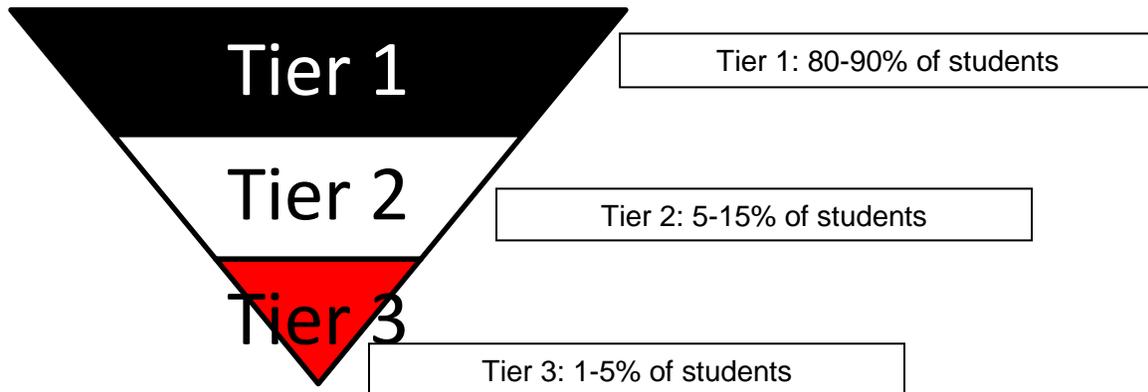


Mills Park Elementary School

How do we help struggling students?

If you find your student is struggling with any aspect of development (academic, social, behavioral, and emotional), you should know that there is a system of support in place at Mills Park Elementary that is aligned with the district, state, and national model of intervention. The model is multi-tiered and involves support through three primary tiers. This model of support is referred to as Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). We are here to help!



Tier 1 refers to the practice of providing all students with sound research-based curriculum and school-wide positive behavioral support through the use of a range of proven instructional strategies (i.e. Common Core, Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS)). Various sources of data are utilized to ensure that all students are responding to instruction. Parents will receive information on how a student is performing at regularly scheduled parent/teacher conferences.

Tier 2 support is provided to any student who falls below the academic or behavioral standards that are expected from instructional strategies used at Tier 1. Once a need is identified, a team collaborates to develop plans for students who are in need of this level of support. An intervention that is designed to address targeted student needs can be provided within the regular classroom or within a smaller learning setting, such as the English as a Second Language Program or the Reading Intervention Program. Students receiving Tier 2 support are monitored more frequently to help determine progress with the use of these additional supports. Parents will be notified by the teacher if their student is identified to receive Tier 2 support.

Tier 3 refers to the most intensive level of intervention support and is reserved for the small percentage of students who continue to demonstrate significant academic, behavioral, or emotional delays after receiving support at Tier 2. A Tier 3 team identifies additional interventions to accelerate student progress based on goals that are monitored at weekly.

Special Education Services might be considered for students who continue to struggle and show a slow rate of response to Tier 3 interventions and strategies, as this might indicate the presence of an educational disability. Parents sometimes request for their student to be “tested” for suspected learning or behavioral disabilities. The school will always formally respond to these requests through an Individual Education Program (IEP) meeting. However, a referral for special education testing requires the team to determine the appropriateness of the request in consideration of previous intervention support, present performance, and learning history. Prior to “testing,” students should have had regular access to interventions in Tier 2 and 3 and demonstrate a continued struggle to make progress. It is our experience that sometimes parent requests for testing are made in an effort to solicit help for a struggling student. There are legal guidelines that must be followed to determine if a student is eligible to qualify for Special Education services. All parents are strongly encouraged to first communicate concerns to the child’s teacher and to discuss the appropriateness of a referral for additional support at Tier 2 or 3 of the MTSS process.

Questions or requests for additional information regarding a possible referral to the Tier 3 team can also be directed to the team’s coordinator, Nancy Stavarakakis (nstavarakakis@wcpss.net) or school psychologist, Amy Hawkins (ahawkins@wcpssnet).