



Department of
Education

Shaping the future

Specialised Learning Programs - Autism

A blueprint for supporting the
provision of education to students
attending a Specialised Learning
Program



Executive summary

The Western Australia Department of Education is committed to ensuring that every child, including those with special educational needs, has access to a high-quality education. The School of Special Educational Needs: Disability (SSEND) builds the capability of Western Australian public schools to ensure students with disability (diagnosed or imputed) are able to access the curriculum on the same basis as their peers. SSEND promotes inclusive learning environments through research and evidence-based practice.

SSEND oversees the provision of education in Specialised Learning Programs – Autism (SLPs) for students from Kindergarten to Year 12 with autism. SLPs provide a unique opportunity for autistic students who are at risk of disengagement, underachievement and/or who exhibit behaviours of concern to receive individualised support within a mainstream school setting. Guided by a Primary and Secondary Operational Framework, SLPs target age-appropriate academic engagement and achievement while supporting social-emotional learning and student wellbeing. SLPs directly support the six priority areas outlined in *Every student, every classroom, every day – Strategic directions for public schools 2020–2024* and *Building on strength – Future directions for the Western Australian public school system*.

1. Provide every student with a pathway to a successful future.
2. Strengthen support for teaching and learning excellence in every classroom.
3. Build the capability of our principals, our teachers and our allied professionals.
4. Support increased school autonomy within a connected and unified public school system.
5. Partner with families, communities and agencies to support the educational engagement of every student.
6. Use evidence to drive decision-making at all levels of the system.

Through the provision of responsive evidence-based educational programs, professional learning for staff, and the use of student-centred and neurodiversity-affirming models of practice, SLPs aim to:

1. Provide expert support for autistic students within mainstream primary and secondary school settings
2. Promote a high performance – high care culture in all programs
3. Explicitly implement protective behaviour instruction for autistic students
4. Utilise and model inclusive practice, and support the implementation of evidence-based approaches that deliver high quality instruction
5. Engage key stakeholders and value collaboration between colleagues, families, networks of schools and external support agencies.

This blueprint was developed to sit alongside the Primary and Secondary Operational Frameworks to provide practical guidance for supporting the academic and behavioural success of all students attending SLPs. The blueprint was co-designed by Monash University and members of the SSEND SLP team. The blueprint is underpinned by the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Framework.

MTSS was chosen as a preferred framework for delivering educational and behaviour support programs to students attending SLPs because it provides an opportunity to integrate practices and systems to support student outcomes in the areas of academic learning, behaviour, and wellbeing. MTSS (a) prioritises early identification and targeted interventions to prevent learning and behavioural difficulties from escalating, (b) recognises the unique learning needs of students with disability and tailors instruction accordingly, (c) emphasises collaboration among educators, specialists, support staff, and parents to comprehensively support autistic students, and (d) relies on data collection and analysis to guide decision making.

This blueprint is also designed to sit alongside other policies and procedures that guide the provision of education to students attending SLPs, including the *Student Behaviour in Public Schools* policy, the *Student Health in Public Schools* policy, and *Teaching for Impact*.

The blueprint is divided into three sections. The first section defines MTSS and describes the ways in which MTSS represents a synthesis of concepts and research findings from the disciplines of prevention science, implementation science, and evidence-based practice. In addition, the relation between MTSS, academic Response to Intervention, and School Wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports is provided.

The second section describes how school staff might integrate evidence-based practices to support student academic learning, behaviour, and wellbeing. Examples of practices and pedagogies are provided within a custom response-to-intervention model developed specifically for SLPs featuring two levels of intensity at Tier 3. In addition, recommendations are provided about foundational skills that should be addressed as part of the core curriculum and within Individual Education Plans for students attending SLPs.

The third section describes how school staff can adopt an integrated systems approach (or governance approach) to support the successful and sustained implementation of evidence-based practices for students attending SLPs. In this section, the roles and responsibilities of key staff members who work across and within SLPs are described, and recommendations are provided regarding how teams might be formed to support implementation of the practices described in this blueprint and provide ongoing, job-embedded professional learning opportunities to staff. Recommendations are provided about ways to ensure quality standards are achieved within SLPs through the use of SSEND and school-level teaming, data-based problem solving, student and family collaboration, and staff professional learning.

This blueprint is accompanied by a practice workbook that includes worksheets designed to help school staff apply the recommendations provided in the blueprint in their professional practice. The blueprint will be reviewed and updated as new forms of practice-based evidence are generated about effective ways to support the successful and sustained implementation of safe and effective academic and behaviour support practices for all students attending SLPs.

Finally, a note on terminology. We recognise that there are diverse perspectives and preferences regarding the language used when talking about autism. Some people with lived expertise of autism prefer identify-first language and the use of the term "autistic person." Other people with lived experience of autism prefer person-first language and use of the term "person with autism." We respect the right of individuals with lived experience to choose their preferred terms and believe that each person's preferred terms should be used when referring to them.

Table of contents

Table of contents.....	4
Models of disability.....	7
The Medical Model of disability.....	7
The Social Model of disability.....	7
The Human Rights Model of disability.....	7
Neurodiversity-affirming education.....	8
Introduction to Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and its foundations.....	9
Prevention science.....	9
Implementation science.....	10
Evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence.....	10
The relation between MTSS, RTI, and SWPBIS.....	12
The MTSS framework.....	14
The Foundation (School vision and values).....	14
The Roof (Goals and school improvement initiatives).....	14
The Walls (Systems).....	14
The Furniture (Practices).....	15
Putting it all together.....	15
Deciding what and how to teach.....	16
Practice and pedagogies to support student learning and engagement in Specialised Learning Programs.....	16
Teaching for Impact and the MTSS framework.....	16
Foundational skills.....	17
Functional communication.....	17
Vocabulary.....	17
Receptive language.....	18
Incidental learning.....	19
Social-emotional skills.....	20
Transitions and routines.....	21
Personal independence.....	21

Individual education planning.....	23
Measuring progress toward IEP goals.....	25
Tips for including student voice in the development of IEP goals.....	26
Integrating practices and pedagogies in an MTSS.....	27
The SLP MTSS model.....	29
The Universal Design for Learning framework	30
Moving from Intensity 1 to Intensity 2 supports in SLPs.....	34
A focus on classroom set up	34
Visual supports	35
Predictability and routines	35
Sensory considerations	35
A focus on behaviour support	36
Systems to support the successful and sustained implementation of practices in Specialised Learning Programs.....	37
Staffing - Roles, responsibilities, and scope of practice	37
SSEND SLP Leadership Team	37
SSEND SLP Level Staff	38
School Level Staff	39
Classroom Level Staff	40
Teaming.....	41
SSEND SLP Leadership Team	41
SSEND SLP Level Staff	42
Network Community of Practice	43
School Level Teams	43
Classroom Level Teams	44
Individual Student Teams	45
Data collection	46
Sources of Data	47
Examples of screening data	48
Examples of assessment data	48
Examples of formative (progress monitoring) data	49
Examples of summative (outcome) data	49
Examples of fidelity (quality of implementation) data	49

Engaging in data-based problem solving.....	50
Step 1: Establish a team	50
Step 2: Identify the problem	50
Step 3: Analysing the problem	51
Step 4: Plan a solution to the problem	51
Step 5: Implement the action plan	52
Step 6: Evaluate the effects of the action plan	52
Professional learning workshops or seminars	53
Professional learning	53
Job embedded professional learning	54
Collaboration	56
Glossary	59

Models of disability

Links to WA policy and practice documents		
Teaching for Impact	Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy & Procedure	Specialised Learning Programs Operational Framework
Student Diversity	Identify and communicate the rights and responsibilities of all students and staff	Introduction

In developing this blueprint for education contexts, we have carefully considered different models of disability and their implications for our interactions with autistic students who attend SLPs. Specifically, the medical, social, and human rights models of disability each have implications for how society perceives, responds to, and supports individuals with autism.

The Medical Model of disability

The medical model perceives disability as an individual's personal impairment or medical condition. It focuses on diagnosing, treating, and rehabilitating the person to reduce or overcome their impairments. In an educational context, the medical model would emphasise medical interventions, therapies, and individual adjustments to support autistic students. It highlights the importance of identifying and addressing their specific needs and challenges.

The Social Model of disability

In contrast to the medical model, the social model of disability recognises that disability is not solely caused by an individual's impairments but is heavily influenced by societal barriers, discrimination, and exclusion. In an educational context, the social model highlights the need for inclusive policies, accessible environments, and social changes that enable the full participation and equal rights of autistic students. It emphasises removing barriers and creating an inclusive educational environment that supports their learning and development.

The Human Rights Model of disability

Building upon the social model, the human rights model views disability as a fundamental aspect of human diversity and asserts that disabled individuals, including autistic students, have the same inherent rights and freedoms as everyone else. In an educational context, the human rights model emphasises treating autistic students with dignity, equality, and respect. It advocates for their active participation in decision-making processes, legal protections, and the implementation of inclusive policies that ensure their rights are upheld.

It's important to note that these models are not mutually exclusive, and different aspects of each model can be relevant in an educational context. However, within this blueprint, we strongly emphasise the social model and human rights models of disability, which acknowledge the importance of inclusive practices, accessible environments, and societal changes to create a supportive and inclusive educational experience for autistic students.

Neurodiversity-affirming education

Links to WA policy and practice documents		
Teaching for Impact	Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy & Procedure	Specialised Learning Programs Operational Framework
Student Inclusion	Identify and communicate the rights and responsibilities of all students and staff	Strategic direction of the Department of Education and SSEND

'Creating, safe, orderly, inclusive, supportive and culturally responsive environments that enable students to fulfil their learning potential is a responsibility shared by all members of the public schooling system and each school community. Positive student behaviour is essential to promote engagement in learning and to maximise the impact of classroom teaching.'

[Source: Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy](#)

SSEND SLP Leadership team and educators working in SLPs are committed to respecting the unique interests, talents, strengths, preferences, and goals of autistic students who attend SLPs. Delivering neurodiversity-affirming education to autistic students is crucial for creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Staff working with SLPs and host schools can create positive and effective educational experience for autistic students by:

1. Recognising and celebrating the strengths, interests, talents, preferences, and goals of students
2. Showing a warm and welcoming attitude toward diversity and difference
3. Ensuring each student has an Individual Education Plan that is personalised and developed in collaboration with the student and their parents
4. Using clear and understandable language and visual supports when communicating with students to ensure that students understand what is happening during the school day
5. Recognising that students learn differently and use a variety of teaching strategies and modalities to accommodate the different needs of students in the classroom, such as hands-on activities, visual materials, and technology-based learning supports when appropriate
6. Recognising that autistic students communicate differently and encourage multiple modes of communication, such as speech, pictures, gestures, writing, and AAC
7. Supporting students to develop their self-advocacy skills by encouraging them to express their needs, preferences, and concerns
8. Providing safe spaces for students to go to when they need a break or to self-regulate
9. Encouraging staff to participate in professional learning about autism delivered by people with lived experience of autism
10. Encouraging staff to identify and challenge their own biases or preconceived notions about autism, through reflective practice.

Introduction to Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and its foundations

Links to WA policy and practice documents		
Teaching for Impact	Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy & Procedure	Specialised Learning Programs Operational Framework
Student Engagement	Provide multi-tiered systems of support	Strategic direction of the Department of Education and SSEND

A multi-tiered system of support holistically considers student needs and provides tiered and interconnected interventions, so students receive the appropriate level of support.

This includes intensive support that is individualised and provided alongside effective case management for students with complex behaviour support needs.

The key principles of a MTSS approach include early identification of student needs, ongoing progress monitoring, data-driven decision-making, and a systematic approach to implementing interventions. The goal is to prevent academic and behavioural difficulties, provide timely and appropriate support, and ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed.

MTSS integrates a continuum of resources, strategies, structures, and practices that seek to support and improve all students' learning and behaviour. It is underpinned by prevention science, implementation science, and behaviour science.

Prevention science

MTSS represents a synthesis of concepts and research findings from diverse disciplines. The first is prevention science. Prevention science focuses on the development of evidence-based strategies that reduce risk factors and enhance protective factors to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities, and the dissemination of these strategies through policy initiatives and community-based, accessible programs. Interventions are systematically intensified based on levels of risk identified through screening measures, forming waves or tiers of support dependent on population needs. Prevention science is based on a theory of change that argues that the needs of most of the population should be met at the least intensive and most cost-effective universal tier, reserving limited resources for those that have the greatest need and are at the greatest risk.

By providing a tiered model of support, MTSS uses this same logic and ensures that effective interventions and support are provided to all students at the universal tier. Supports are then intensified based on student need.

To learn more about prevention science, visit: <https://www.npscoalition.org/prevention-science>

Implementation science

MTSS is also underpinned by implementation science. Research consistently shows that interventions and evidence-based practices that are poorly implemented – or not implemented at all – do not produce expected benefits. Implementation science is the scientific study of methods and strategies that facilitate the uptake of evidence-based practice and research into regular use by practitioners and policymakers. The field of implementation science seeks to systematically close the gap between what we know and what we do (often referred to as the know-do gap) by identifying and addressing the barriers that slow or prevent the use of beneficial interventions and evidence-based practices. MTSS includes an emphasis on supporting the implementation of practices across tiers through teaming and coaching.

To learn more about implementation science, visit: <https://impsciuw.org/implementation-science/learn/implementation-science-overview/>

Evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence

MTSS provides a way for educators to engage in the process of evidence-based practice and to generate practice-based evidence.

An evidence-based practice or an evidence-based approach is a specific practice, strategy, intervention, package, program, support that has been shown to be effective for teaching a specific skill or addressing a specific behavioural challenge in peer-reviewed published research.

MTSS encourages the use of evidence-based teaching and behaviour support practices, or those practices with research evidence to support their effectiveness with students in school settings.

Evidence-based practice is a process rather than a specific strategy. Evidence-based practice is a decision-making process that guides educators to integrate research evidence with the strengths, goals, values, and needs of students and families, using their professional judgement and wisdom. It is unlikely that peer-reviewed published research will provide a contextually and culturally appropriate solution to every problem or area of student need. We cannot simply take strategies and interventions off the pages of peer-reviewed journals and implement them as is with our students. Rather, we need to use our judgement and wisdom to individualise and adapt the interventions and strategies we use, to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy over time, and to make changes to the strategy based on the student's unique response. Some people have promoted using the term evidence-informed practice to indicate that the process should be person-centred rather than research-centred and to elevate the importance of professional decision-making.

MTSS guides teachers to use an evidence-based practice model when selecting, adapting, implementing, and evaluating practices for students by ensuring that practices are individualised and appropriate in the local context and by guiding teachers and school leaders to use data-based problem solving to evaluate how well practices are working.

Practice-based evidence is the process of gathering and using information derived from the practical experiences and observations of professionals working in a specific field or setting. It is an approach that emphasises the use of real-world data and insights gained from actual practice to inform decision-making and guide interventions. While traditional evidence-based practice may rely more heavily on rigorous scientific research and controlled studies, practice-based evidence

recognises the value of knowledge gained from practitioners' direct experiences with students or in specific contexts. It acknowledges that certain aspects of practice may not yet have been extensively researched or that research findings may not always perfectly align with the complexities of real-world situations. In addition, practice-based evidence recognises that the complex and dynamic nature of real-world practice often requires adaptation, flexibility, and the integration of both research-based knowledge and the insights gained from direct experience. Practice-based evidence can help inform and refine evidence-based practices, filling in gaps and addressing the nuances and complexities that may not be fully captured in research studies alone.

It is important to note that practice-based evidence should not be seen as a replacement for rigorous research or evidence-based practices. Instead, it is a complementary approach that recognises the value of both research-based evidence and the knowledge gained from practitioners' experiences. Integrating practice-based evidence with existing research can enhance the effectiveness and relevance of interventions, leading to better outcomes for students and teachers.

MTSS supports the generation of practice-based evidence by guiding educators to collect and analyse data from actual practice, including observations, case studies, feedback from clients, and professional expertise. This approach allows educators to draw on their own experiences and learn from the outcomes they observe in their day-to-day work. It can provide valuable insights and guidance for decision-making, program development, and continuous improvement in school settings.

The relation between MTSS, RTI, and SWPBIS

MTSS represent an evolution of tiered response approaches to interventions. MTSS employs similar principles to academic Response to Intervention (RTI) and School Wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) in that it integrates a continuum of resources, strategies, structures, and evidence-based practices that seek to improve all students' learning and behaviour.

A multi-tiered system of support holistically considers student needs and provides tiered and interconnected interventions so students receive the appropriate level of support. MTSS enable schools to view student behaviour through multiple lenses and assist them to identify, plan, resource and monitor student achievement, engagement and wellbeing, and connect services and support when responding to the needs of students and schools.

Within MTSS, response to intervention (RTI) approaches may be used. A positive behaviour support RTI comprises of three tiers:

Universal

The school promotes positive behaviours for all students and maintains safe, respectful learning environments with preventive, whole-school systems and practices, including Good Standing. All students are engaged in a social behaviour curriculum.

Targeted

The school develops a supplementary range of response strategies to support students displaying emerging, low-level behaviours of concern.

Intensive

Individualised support is provided alongside effective case management for students with complex behaviour support needs.

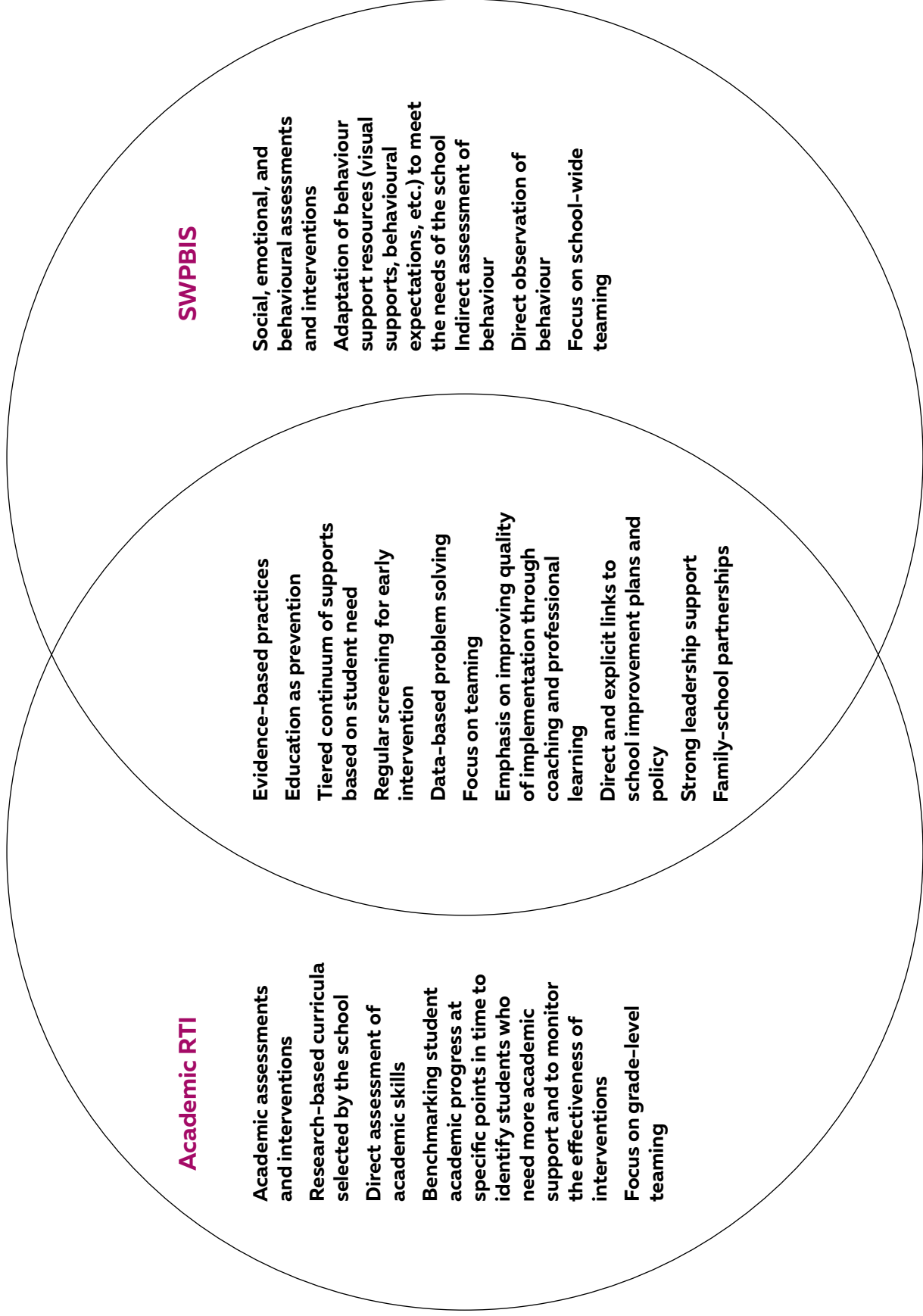
Student behaviour data should be regularly reviewed to identify and respond to emerging trends and to confirm that school level behaviour support approaches are not disproportionately impacting on particular student cohorts – e.g. Aboriginal students or students with disability.

The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) is an annual collection of data that identifies students with disability receiving adjustments and the level of adjustments provided, including behaviour support adjustments.

[Source: Student Behaviour in Public Schools Procedures](#)

The figure over page, adapted from Sugai and Horner (2009) and McIntosh and Goodman (2016) shows some of the similarities and differences between academic RTI and SWPBIS:

This figure, adapted from Sugai and Horner (2009) and McIntosh and Goodman (2016) shows some of the similarities and differences between academic RTI and SWPBIS:



The MTSS framework

The house analogy can be helpful when describing the MTSS Framework.

The Foundation (School vision and values)

When implementing MTSS, the first step is to lay the foundation for success. It can be helpful to start by identifying the vision and mission of the school, the values of the school, and the attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge of the educators within the school. In vision and values statements, schools might establish and communicate classroom assumptions and practices that are geared toward supporting an inclusive community. Some examples might include:

1. the expectation that each student is valued and viewed as a capable learner
2. a sense of personal responsibility for the success of all students in a school community
3. collaboration with others to meet student needs is standard practice
4. differentiation of curriculum and instruction as the norm

Articulating the vision and values of the school is important because it serves as a strategic plan for success. It can act as a guide when members of the school community encounter challenges and can also help motivate members of a school community to work toward shared goals.

The Roof (Goals and school improvement initiatives)

Once the foundation for success has been laid by developing a vision and values and understanding the attitudes towards and beliefs of teachers, you can put the roof on the house. The roof includes the school's goals and identified valued outcomes for students, and links to broader school improvement initiatives. At this step, members of a school community can work together to identify goals and valued outcomes for students and teachers. It may be helpful here to discuss some of the challenges the school is experiencing when supporting students and deciding what a successful solution to those challenges would look like. This allows you to understand the individualised needs of each school and develop contextually and culturally relevant goals that work toward meaningful outcomes. To do this, we can use the same SMART goals framework that we might use when developing individual learning goals for students. Our goals should be specific, measurable, and agreed upon, and include a description of how progress will be monitored.

The Walls (Systems)

Now that we have laid the foundation and put on the roof, we need to put up the walls of our school. The walls are the systems we use to connect the foundation to the roof. The systems are the activities we undertake within the school to achieve our goals and experience valued outcomes. We build these systems around students and educators to support their success at school. Some of the most important systems that are included within an MTSS framework are teaming, resourcing, professional learning, leadership, and collaboration. Ultimately, systems are designed to support the implementation of effective practices in the classroom, to help teachers and school leaders evaluate how specific practices are working and what is not working well and needs to be changed, and to help make decisions about when and how to deliver more intensive, educative supports to some students.

The Furniture (Practices)

In our schools, we can think of the practices as analogous to the furniture inside the house. The furniture might look very different from house to house and room to room, but ideally, we select furniture that serves a purpose and benefits us. We can also move the furniture around as needed and replace old, broken furniture with new furniture. Using the MTSS framework empowers schools to identify the practices that are working well and benefiting students, identify practices that may not be working well and may need to be discontinued, and select and implement new practices to fill gaps and address challenges.

MTSS uses a tiered approach to supporting students that links to the underpinning principles of prevention science. By providing a tiered model of support, MTSS ensures that effective interventions and support are provided to all students at the universal tier. Supports are then intensified based on student need. This tiered approach helps educators develop a preventative rather than reactionary mindset around addressing student needs and helps avoid the tendency to rush to highly individualised interventions in the first instance.

Putting it all together

The MTSS framework can guide schools to:

1. View all students as capable learners (values and vision)
2. Embrace a positive and welcoming attitude towards all students (values and vision)
3. Value the inclusion and participation of all students (values and vision)
4. Look at student needs AND strengths (practices)
5. Proactively design lessons to set all students up for success (practices)
6. Adopt an educative approach to addressing difficult behaviours (practices)
7. Make data-based decisions about student progress and areas where students need additional support (systems)
8. Foster strong parent-school engagement (systems)
9. Create teams who can support all students and their parents and teachers (systems)
10. Provide access to resources and professional learning opportunities related to supporting all students (systems)

More information and free resources about MTSS can be found at:

- <https://mtss4success.org/essential-components>
- <https://www.edresearch.edu.au/resources/intro-multi-tiered-system-supports>
- <https://www.pbis.org>

Practice and pedagogies to support student learning and engagement in Specialised Learning Programs

Deciding what and how to teach

Links to WA policy and practice documents		
Teaching for Impact Plan Teach and Assess	Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy & Procedure	Specialised Learning Programs Operational Framework
Differentiation High Expectations	Provide multi-tiered systems of support	Objectives Pedagogy

Educators working in SLPs are responsible for making frequent decisions about what to teach and how to teach to meet the needs of a diverse cohort of students. In what follows, a description of considerations for selecting skills to teach and practices for teaching new skills is provided. When thinking about what to teach and how to teach, educators working in SLPs can use a decision-making framework that draws on evidence-based practice, practice-based evidence, and applied behaviour analysis. This framework includes the following components:



1. **Assess** – First, we gather information to identify the student’s strengths and needs in the areas of academics, behaviour, and social-emotional learning



2. **Plan** – Second, we meet as a team to discuss the student’s unique strengths, preferences, goals, and needs, and use this information to develop an IEP



3. **Teach** – Once the IEP is developed, we teach new skills that will help the student achieve their personalised learning goals, using a variety of evidence-based teaching and behaviour support strategies



4. **Assess** – At all stages of assessment, planning, and teaching, data is collected to help us evaluate what is working well for the student and what needs to be changed or improved



5. **Support** – Through coaching and feedback, we support teachers and education assistants to implement teaching and behaviour support strategies and assist with progress monitoring and data-based decision-making

Teaching for Impact and the MTSS framework

Teaching for Impact is a major component of the Department’s *Quality Teaching Strategy*. It shares the Department’s position and understanding of effective teaching practice and is grounded in evidence, and the practical experience of teachers and principals across Western Australia.

Tier 1 supports in a mainstream MTSS can be effectively guided by *Teaching for Impact*.

Foundational skills

SLP teachers and education assistants provide support to students in the homerooms and in classrooms to achieve academic, behavioural, social and emotional outcomes required for education. The operational framework underpinning the SLPs specifies that each student's individual program will be based on their unique profile, strengths, needs and goals, and encourage the development of social and communication skills for personal development (page 6; Section 5.1 Objectives). Thus, there is a need for educators working with SLPs to consider the specific skills that will be taught to each child to enhance their academic and non-academic outcomes.

SLPs are unique educational settings that provide opportunities for students on the autism spectrum to learn foundational skills and capabilities to support their transition to a mainstream classroom setting. Foundational skills are those that are directly taught in mainstream classrooms but are critical for all students to be able to fully participate in aspects of educational and social life at school. Therefore, it is important that foundational skills are taught alongside academic skills in SLPs. Here are examples of capabilities (or groups of skills) and the specific skills that correspond to each capability that might be included on a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Functional communication

Communication refers to the child's ability to express their wants and needs and to conveying or exchanging information, ideas, thoughts, or feelings with others. Communication may be vocal (speech), gestural, facial expressions, written, or supported through other means such as pictures, symbols, or assistive technologies (such as speech generating devices). A well-developed communication repertoire can help students self-advocate and can protect against the development of behaviours of concern. Some skills to consider teaching as part of the student's individual learning plan include:

1. Requesting needed and desired items
2. Saying no, stop, or terminating non-preferred actions or activities
3. Requesting help with difficult tasks
4. Requesting a break
5. Requesting more time
6. Gaining the attention of the teacher or other adults
7. Gaining the attention of peers

Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to the words and terms that a student understands and can effectively use in their communication, whether spoken or written. Vocabulary is an essential component of language proficiency and plays a crucial role in expressing ideas, understanding others, and conveying meaning effectively. Vocabulary involves meaning, pronunciation, and usage of words. A large vocabulary repertoire can help autistic students communicate, understand spoken and written instructions, comprehend information present aloud and in text, and participate in social interactions. Some autistic students may need more support to learn new vocabulary to ensure they can fully participate in a knowledge-rich curriculum at school. Some skills to consider teaching as part of the student's individual learning plan include:

1. Names of preferred people, places, items, and activities
2. Names of common items found at school and home
3. Names of teachers and peers
4. Numbers
5. Letters
6. Letter sounds
7. Identification of pictures, objects, places, and people
8. Naming pictures, objects, places, and people
9. Telling stories
10. Recalling and retelling events
11. Sorting, identifying, and naming categories, and generating category items
12. Understanding and using more complex grammatical structures (e.g., plurals, verb tenses, pronouns)
13. Understanding and using more advanced vocabulary words and synonyms

Receptive language

Receptive language refers to the student's ability to understand the spoken language of other people. It involves the processing and interpretation of incoming linguistic information, including words, sentences, and discourse, to derive meaning and make sense of communication. A well-established receptive language repertoire can help autistic students understand classroom expectations, follow instructions from the teacher, and engage in social interactions with others. Some skills to consider teaching as part of the student's individual learning plan include:

1. Responding to name
2. Responding to safety instructions ("stop" "come here")
3. Following one-step instructions
4. Following multi-step instructions
5. Following instructions containing prepositions, adjectives, and adverbs
6. Following written instructions
7. Listening to and understanding short stories and simple narratives
8. Sequencing events or actions in a story
9. Identifying rhyming words and recognising basic phonological patterns.
10. Understanding basic concepts (e.g., colours, shapes, sizes, spatial relationships)
11. Understanding and answering questions about short stories and informational texts
12. Inferring meaning from context and making predictions while reading or listening

13. Comprehending longer stories and texts with increased complexity
14. Identifying main ideas and supporting details in texts
15. Understanding and interpreting figurative language (e.g., idioms, metaphors)
16. Making connections between texts and personal experiences or prior knowledge
17. Understanding cause and effect relationships and making inferences

Incidental learning

Incidental learning refers to the student's ability to learn new things in the context of everyday activities and interactions, without the need for planned and direct instruction. Incidental learning is how students of all ages learn new skills that are not part of the curriculum. It occurs when students make connections, draw conclusions, or gain insights from their surroundings, events, or situations. For example, a child may learn new words by overhearing conversations, learn problem-solving strategies through personal experiences, or develop social skills by observing and imitating others. However, autistic students may need additional support to acquire foundational skills that support incidental learning. Some skills to consider teaching as part of the student's individual learning plan include:

1. Attending to a teacher or peer when no distractions are present
2. Attending to a teacher or peer when distractions are present
3. Sustaining attention to a person or activity
4. Imitating motor actions of others
5. Imitating actions with objects
6. Imitating words or vocalisations
7. Imitating multi-step actions
8. Imitating actions following a delay
9. Imitating actions presented on video
10. Generalised imitation
11. Solving problems by watching others
12. Taking notes
13. Organising information

Continued over

Social-emotional skills

Social and emotional skills encompass a range of skills that involve understanding and managing one's own emotions, developing empathy for others, building and maintaining positive relationships, and effectively navigating social interactions. These skills are crucial for individuals to establish healthy relationships, make decisions, and succeed academically. However, autistic students often need additional support to learn social and emotional skills, as challenges in social and emotional development is a core feature of autism. Some skills to consider teaching as part of the student's individual learning plan include:

1. Identifying one's own emotions
2. Identifying emotions displayed by others
3. Identifying one's own strengths and talents
4. Making choices
5. Making an alternative choice when one's preferred option is not available
6. Taking turns
7. Ending preferred activities
8. Persisting with a difficult task
9. Waiting for needed and desired items
10. Tolerating disappointment
11. Problem solving
12. Resolving conflict
13. Understanding social boundaries (related to touch and personal space)
14. Greetings and social initiations
15. Parallel play
16. Associative play
17. Cooperative play
18. Understanding social rules and expectations
19. Identifying and making friends
20. Considering the consequences of actions
21. Evaluating risks
22. Perspective-taking
23. Identifying and responding to bullying
24. Engaging in safe and respectful relationships

Continued over

Transitions and routines

Transitions and routines are important elements in daily life that provide structure, predictability, and help people move between different activities or settings. They are particularly beneficial for children, including those with autism, as they promote organisation, reduce anxiety, and facilitate a sense of stability. However, in schools, transitions can sometimes be loud and less structured, which can be challenging for autistic students. In addition, some autistic students may need additional support to learn common classroom routines. Some skills to consider teaching as part of the student's individual learning plan include:

1. Enter school grounds from the drop off point
2. Finding and entering the classroom
3. Finding a seat at the table, desk, or floor
4. Moving to the next activity or location when the bell rings
5. Setting up a daily timetable
6. Referencing and following a timetable
7. Unpacking backpack at the beginning of the school day and packing up at the end of the school day
8. Storing food and personal belongings at school
9. Keeping track of personal items at school
10. Finding adults when needed
11. Finding academic materials and putting academic materials away at school
12. Emergency evacuations

Personal independence

Personal independence skills*, also known as activities of daily living (ADL) skills, are essential abilities that individuals need to perform to take care of themselves and engage in daily life activities independently. These skills encompass various self-care tasks and functional abilities that contribute to personal autonomy and independence. Some skills to consider teaching as part of the student's individual learning plan include:

1. Personal Hygiene: Skills such as brushing teeth, grooming hair, washing hands, and using the toilet independently
2. Dressing: The ability to dress oneself, including putting on and taking off clothing, fastening buttons or zippers, tying shoelaces, and selecting appropriate attire for different occasions
3. Eating and Feeding: Skills related to eating and feeding include using utensils appropriately, cutting food, pouring liquids, drinking from a cup or straw, and understanding basic table manners
4. Community safety: Skills related to mobility involve moving around independently, walking, navigating stairs, using public transportation, crossing roads safely

5. Money management: The ability to handle money and financial transactions, including counting money, making purchases, budgeting, and understanding concepts like saving, spending, and making change
6. Time management: Skills related to time management include understanding and using clocks or timers, following schedules, planning and organising daily activities, and being punctual
7. Meals and nutrition: The ability to prepare simple meals and snacks, including skills such as measuring ingredients, using kitchen appliances safely, following recipes, and understanding basic nutrition
8. Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Skills related to safety involve recognising and responding appropriately to potentially dangerous situations, understanding emergency procedures, practicing personal safety habits, and knowing how to seek help when needed

*Personal independence skills may not be included in the IEP or taught at school, but teachers might work on generalising these skills during naturally occurring opportunities at school. Personal independence skills should be discussed with parents and allied health professionals prior to inclusion in the IEP.

Individual education planning

Links to WA policy and practice documents		
Teaching for Impact	Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy & Procedure	Specialised Learning Programs Operational Framework
Student Engagement Student Inclusion Student Diversity High Expectations Learning Intentions and Success Criteria Setting Goals	Provide multi-tiered systems of support Provide behaviour support to students with complex needs	Objectives Outcomes

All students attending SLPs have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that outlines their student-centred learning goals for the school year. IEPs may include a mix of academic (literacy and numeracy) goals and goals aligned to the foundational skills described above.

The goals included in IEPs should be informed by multiple sources of information, including:

- Discussions with parents
- Discussions with students
- Discussions with other educators or professionals who know the student well
- Student record reviews (such as previous assessments, progress reports, plans, and recommendations)
- Naturalistic observations of students in the classroom and school
- Direct assessment of student skills (for example, using direct instruction curriculum).

Well written IEP goals are SMART:

S	Specific	The goal should describe the new skill or behaviour you would like the student to learn in objective terms, so the student's progress can be observed and measured and all educators agree on what the skill of behaviour looks like
M	Measurable	The goal should describe how the skill will be measured (for example, using frequency, percent correct, or percent of intervals) and the criterion for "achievement", or mastery, of the skill or behaviour
A	Attainable	The goal should describe a challenging yet achievable skill. You may need to use your professional judgement and determine what is likely to be attainable for the student based on the student's previous learning and based on conversations with the student, parents, and/or others who know the student well
R	Relevant	The goal should be meaningful to the student and their learning, and should represent a skill of behaviour that the student will have lots of opportunities to use at school
T	Time Bound	The goal should specify when the new skill or behaviour will be measured

Here is an example of a SMART goal:

STUDENT will independently request needed and desired items using a single word vocalisation (the item name), without displaying behaviours of concern, in at least 80% of naturally occurring opportunities as measured across the last two weeks of Term 2, with at least 5 items.

This goal is:

Specific: The new behaviour (what we want the student to do) is clearly described in objective terms and the complexity of the communication response (single word vocalisation) is noted

Measurable: The behaviour will be measured using percent of opportunities, and this is specified in the wording of the SMART goal

Attainable: Based on the student's past performance and current abilities, an achievable number of items to learn to request has been noted (rather than expecting the student to use a full sentence to request for all possible needed and desired items)

Relevant: Learning to request is a foundational skill that will help the student communicate their wants and needs in safer and more understandable ways at school, and is likely to serve as a replacement behaviour for any behaviours of concern the student might display

Time Bound: Data will be collected and progress toward the goal will be assessed during the last two weeks of Term 2

Well written IEP goals should also plan for generalisation of learnt skills. Generalisation means that the student can use the skill in contexts that are different from the initial teaching context.

We likely want the student to be able to use the newly learnt skill with different people (teachers, parents, and peers; generalisation across people) in different settings (SLP homeroom, mainstream classroom, and yard; generalisation across settings) at different times (morning and afternoon; generalisation across time).

We also want the student to be able to respond to "multiple exemplars" of pictures, items, and words. Multiple exemplars might refer to items that belong to the same category but look different (for example, a big blue ball, a football, and a tennis ball) or words that sound different but have the same meaning ("hi!", "hello", "hey!").

Here are some ways we might build elements of generalisation into the wording of SMART goals:

- Across two teachers and two classrooms, STUDENT will match pictures to printed words with at least 80% accuracy and independence as measured across 3 consecutive sessions, with at least 10 picture-printed word combinations.
- STUDENT will expressively identify pictures with 90-100% accuracy and independence as measured across 3 consecutive sessions with 5 exemplars of 20 different pictures.

Measuring progress toward IEP goals

Links to WA policy and practice documents		
Teaching for Impact	Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy & Procedure	Specialised Learning Programs Operational Framework
Questioning Check for Understanding Moderation	Provide multi-tiered systems of support Provide behaviour support to students with complex needs Retain records	Outcomes

Once SMART goals are written, progress monitoring systems can be developed to help teachers assess how the student is progressing toward meeting their SMART goals. Here are some examples of how teachers can monitor student progress:

1. Collect baseline data at the beginning of the IEP implementation to understand the student's starting point and set a benchmark for progress.
2. Create a checklist of the student's IEP goals and when formative assessment data will be collected each term.
3. Create a one-page data sheet that can be used to collect information on different goals throughout the school day.
4. Use frequent formative assessments throughout the learning process to gather ongoing information about the student's learning and to identify areas where the student may need additional support.
5. Provide opportunities for the student to practice skills each week, and collect data on the number of times the student can perform the skill independently (+) and the number of times they can perform the skill when provided with help or a prompt (+P).
6. Break skills down into a series of discrete steps and collect data on the steps the student can do independently and the steps the student can do when provided with help or a prompt.
7. Count the number of times a student displays a specific behaviour during a time-limited (e.g., one hour) observation.
8. Keep track of the student's performance on mastery tests included in direct instruction programs.
9. Use short pre- and post-tests when introducing new skills.
10. Keep a collection of the student's work samples and portfolios that demonstrate their progress over time.
11. Support the student to self-assess their own work and self-monitor their own progress.
12. Conduct regular classroom observations to see how the student is applying their skills and strategies in naturalistic situations.

Tips for including student voice in the development of IEP goals

Links to WA policy and practice documents		
Teaching for Impact	Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy & Procedure	Specialised Learning Programs Operational Framework
Student Inclusion Shared Approaches Learning Intentions and Success Criteria Prior Knowledge	Identify and communicate the rights and responsibilities of all students and staff Incorporate restorative principles, systems, and approaches	Strategic direction of the Department of Education and SSEND

1. Ensure the student is invited and encouraged to attend the IEP meetings. Their presence allows them to contribute directly to the discussion and decision-making.
2. Make sure the student feels comfortable and supported during the IEP meetings. Encourage open communication, active listening, and respect for their opinions and ideas.
3. Use language and terms that are age-appropriate and understandable for the student.
4. Discuss academic and non-academic goals with the student and invite them to express their aspirations, interests, and areas they want to improve.
5. Focus on the student's strengths and talents, incorporating them into the IEP to bolster areas of challenge.
6. Encourage the student to take ownership of their goals by involving them in progress monitoring and self-assessment.
7. For younger students or those who may find it challenging to express themselves verbally, provide alternative means of communication, such as drawing, writing, or role-playing.
8. Ask how the student prefers to receive support. Some may prefer one-on-one instruction, while others may prefer working in groups.
9. Allow the student to express any concerns or fears they might have about their education.

Integrating practices and pedagogies in an MTSS

Links to WA policy and practice documents		
Teaching for Impact	Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy & Procedure	Specialised Learning Programs Operational Framework
Differentiation Review Previous Learning Explicit Teaching Worked Examples Scaffolds and Frameworks Gradual Release of Responsibility Questioning Check for Understanding Personal and Social Capability Feedback Metacognitive Strategies	Provide multi-tiered systems of support Provide behaviour support to students with complex needs Develop, implement, and monitor a whole school approach to behaviour Incorporate restorative principles, systems, and approaches	Objectives Pedagogies Eligibility and Needs

Practices is the term used to describe the curricula, instructional time, interventions, and strategies that are used with students across the school, in the classroom, and with individual students. Practices are what we use to teach new skills and support improved student behaviour. The goal of an integrated MTSS approach is to optimise student learning and behavioural, social, and emotional development by providing all students and teachers with a safe, welcoming learning environment with few distractions, keeping students in the classroom and engaged in classroom instruction, and making the most of instructional time through effective teaching strategies across domains.

In mainstream schools, a three-tiered model of support is often used to deliver practices.

1. Tier 1 (or universal) strategies and supports are designed to optimise learning and prevent problems as early as possible. These strategies are positive and proactive and benefit most students. Tier 1 practices are not selected specifically in response to individual student needs or challenges, but rather are designed to maximise success for all students in all areas.
2. Tier 2 (or targeted) supports are added based on individual student needs. Supports at Tier 2 are designed to supplement, not replace, Tier 1 supports. For many students, Tier 2 supports may involve more individualised accommodations to help students access and actively participate in the core curriculum. Other common Tier 2 practices include brief individual or small-group instruction (academic or social), or specific changes to the classroom environment to maximise student academic engagement and minimise interfering behaviour.
3. Tier 3 (or intensive) interventions are intensive, individualised interventions for the remaining 5% of students for whom Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports are insufficient. These are typically wrap-around services that involve one-on-one interventions, such as individualised functional behaviour assessment, function-based positive behaviour support plans, and individual education plans. Although there are common Tier 3 intervention strategies, each support plan incorporates interventions in a unique and specific manner to best address the individual student's needs.

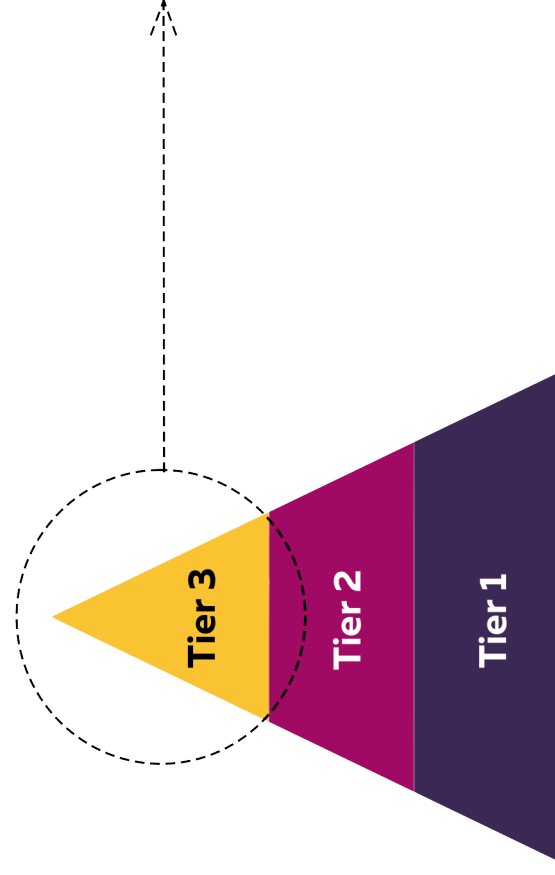
An SLP is a Tier 3 intervention. There is still a need to ensure that all students who participate in SLPs receive high quality, evidence-based educational and behavioural supports across all aspects of the school day. There is a need to ensure that there are screening procedures and pathways in place to identify students who may need even more intensive support within an SLP.

A model incorporating two levels of intensity guides the provision of evidence based educational and behaviour support practices in the SLPs:

Tier 3 - Intensity 1: All students receive Individual Education Plans that include specific, measurable, meaningful, and student-centred learning goals in the areas of academics, behaviour, and social-emotional learning. A variety of evidence-based strategies and supports are used to help students achieve their individualised learning goals. Strategies and supports are selected strategically based on students' unique strengths and needs and based on the specific skills being taught. The specific strategies used optimise learning for students and prevent problems as early as possible. In addition, whole class positive behaviour support strategies are implemented to support students to develop behavioural and social-emotional skills that will facilitate their transition into mainstream learning settings.

Tier 3 - Intensity 2: Supports are added for some students based on individual student needs, in addition to Intensity 1 supports. Intensity 2 supports may involve (a) additional assessment to identify student needs, (b) intensified instruction in specific academic, behavioural, or social-emotional skills, (c) more individualised accommodations to help students access and actively participate in learning, (d) specific changes to the classroom environment to maximise student academic engagement and minimise interfering behaviour (e) functional behaviour assessment and function-based positive behaviour support plans, and/or (f) more intensive wrap around supports involving professionals from other disciplines (e.g., speech therapy, occupational therapy, psychology, behaviour analysis).

The SLP MTSS model



Mainstream MTSS

In mainstream schools, a three-tiered model of support is often used to deliver practices. The tiers comprise:

- Tier 1: Universal support
- Tier 2: Targeted support
- Tier 3: Intensive support

SLP MTSS

A model incorporating two levels of intensity at Tier 3 guides the provision of evidence based educational and behaviour support practices in SLPs.

The Universal Design for Learning framework

The Universal Design for Learning framework underpins the delivery of evidence-based practices in the academic, behavioural, and mental health and wellbeing domains. When using the Universal Design for Learning framework to design equitable and accessible learning experiences for students, educators can:

1. Determine what it is you want the students to learn.
2. Decide how you will assess student learning, using both formative and summative assessment methods. In addition, decide if one, some, or all students will need accommodations or modifications to participate in assessment.
3. Identify any barriers to learning that your students may experience (or ask students or their parents' what barriers they feel they are experiencing).
4. Create your lesson plan with student strengths and these barriers in mind and take steps to reduce barriers to learning by proactively providing accommodations or modifications for one, some, or all students.
5. Teach your lesson using a range of teaching strategies that provide all students with lots of opportunities to respond, demonstrate their learning, and receive feedback.
6. Reflect on your teaching – what worked, and what would you do differently next time?

The Universal Design for Learning guidelines can be used to think about ways to break down barriers to learning and participations and design more inclusive learning experiences.

Multiple Means of Representation: This guideline focuses on presenting information in various ways. By offering content in multiple formats, teachers can better engage learners and ensure that everyone has access to the information they need. When teaching a history lesson, a teacher could provide multiple means of representation by:

1. Assigning a textbook chapter.
2. Showing a documentary video.
3. Organising a role-playing activity.

Multiple Means of Engagement: This guideline emphasises providing diverse learning experiences to engage students' interests and sustain their motivation. By offering various options for participation, teachers can support different learning preferences and passions. In a science class learning about ecosystems, a teacher could offer multiple means of engagement by:

1. Allowing students to choose a specific ecosystem they find fascinating and create a presentation about it.
2. Conducting a field trip to a local park or nature reserve to observe ecosystems firsthand.
3. Using interactive simulations or virtual reality tools to explore different ecosystems in a digital environment.

Continued over

Multiple Means of Expression: This guideline invites students to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge in various ways. In an English literature class studying a novel, a teacher could provide multiple means of expression by:

1. Providing students with an option to write a traditional essay on the novel.
2. Allowing students to create a visual representation, like a poster or infographic, on the novel.
3. Organising a class debate or dramatic performance on the novel.

In what follows, examples of evidence-based practices and programs are provided that can be used in this adapted MTSS framework. Note the similarities across all three domains.

Intensity 1 Academic Practices and Pedagogies	Intensity 1 Behaviour Practices and Pedagogies	Intensity 1 Mental Health Promotion and Wellbeing Practices and Pedagogies
<p>An individual education plan (IEP) that includes SMART academic learning goals</p> <p>Individualised, meaningful, and student-centred IEP goals</p> <p>Differentiated instruction aligned to IEP goals for academics</p> <p>Family involvement in practicing skills at home</p> <p>Screening for children who may be at-risk of academic disengagement or poorer academic outcomes</p> <p>Modelling</p> <p>Incidental teaching</p> <p>Task analysis</p> <p>Explicit and direct instruction</p> <p>Direct Instructional Curricula</p> <p>Worked examples</p> <p>Multiple exemplars instruction</p> <p>Use of guided, independent and spaced practice</p> <p>Frequent opportunities to respond</p> <p>Active student learning activities</p> <p>Scaffolding</p>	<p>An individual education plan (IEP) that includes SMART behavioural learning goals</p> <p>Individualised, meaningful, and student-centred IEP goals</p> <p>Differentiated instruction aligned to IEP goals for behaviours</p> <p>Effective classroom environments (layout, seating plans, lighting, ventilation, noise levels)</p> <p>Establishing and maintaining predictable classroom routines</p> <p>Active supervision of all learning environments</p> <p>Family involvement in reiterating and reinforcing desirable behaviours at home</p> <p>Screening for children who may be at-risk for the development of behaviours of concern</p> <p>Direct instruction to teach effective communication skills, such as asking for help, asking for more time, seeking peer and teacher attention, asking for something different, or saying no</p> <p>Establishing clear, positively stated classroom behavioural expectations</p> <p>Regular explicit teaching and reinforcement of expected classroom behaviour</p> <p>Modelling of expected classroom behaviour</p> <p>Providing prompts or pre-corrections for expected classroom behaviour</p>	<p>An individual education plan (IEP) that includes SMART social-emotional learning goals</p> <p>Individualised, meaningful, and student-centred IEP goals</p> <p>Differentiated instruction aligned to IEP goals for social-emotional skills</p> <p>Effective classroom environments (layout, seating plans, lighting, ventilation, noise levels)</p> <p>Building positive and trusting relationships with students</p> <p>Fostering a friendly, respectful, and inclusive school environment</p> <p>Creating physically and psychologically safe classrooms</p> <p>Create networks of peer buddies/mentors</p> <p>Establish strong communication with families</p> <p>Regular screening for children who may be at-risk for the development of mental health challenges or poorer wellbeing</p> <p>Providing direct instruction in social and emotional skills</p> <p>Providing direct instruction in respectful relationships</p> <p>Mandatory reporting training for all staff</p> <p>Trauma-informed teaching training for all staff</p>

Intensity 2 practices and pedagogies are delivered in addition to (not in place of) **Intensity 1**, and might include:

Intensity 2 Academic Practices and Pedagogies	Intensity 2 Behaviour Practices and Pedagogies	Intensity 2 Mental Health Promotion and Wellbeing Practices and Pedagogies
<p>Provide a higher number of hours of 1:1 or small group support to the student</p> <p>Provide a higher number of academic learning opportunities to the student across the school day</p> <p>Make adaptations to direct instruction curricula and break academic skills down into smaller teachable components</p> <p>Make more individualised modifications to the classroom environment to help the student attend and participate</p> <p>More frequent data collection and analysis to monitor student progress</p> <p>Additional educational assessment to pinpoint student academic strengths and needs</p> <p>More frequent collaboration with the student, their family, and outside of school professionals, using a student-centred planning process, to develop individualised learning supports (wrap around supports)</p>	<p>Provide a higher number of opportunities for the student to practice positive classroom behaviours across the school day</p> <p>Provide a higher number of opportunities for the student to practice communicating their wants and needs across the school day</p> <p>Provide more frequent positive reinforcement for positive classroom behaviour</p> <p>Provide increased active supervision</p> <p>Provide increased access to academic and wellbeing supports</p> <p>A functional behaviour assessment, to identify why behaviour of concern is occurring (i.e., the communication purpose of the behaviour)</p> <p>Conduct an Assessment of Lagging Skills and Unsolved Problems (ALSUP)</p> <p>Risk assessment and safety planning</p> <p>A skill-based positive behaviour support plan, that describes how to change the environment around the student to reduce behaviours of concern and increase replacement behaviours</p> <p>Collaborative and Proactive Solutions</p> <p>More frequent collaboration with the student, their family, and outside of school professionals, using a student-centred planning process, to develop individualised behaviour supports (wrap around supports)</p>	<p>Individualised social, emotional, and wellbeing assessments</p> <p>Quality of life assessment</p> <p>More frequent collaboration with the student, their family, and outside of school professionals, using a student-centred planning process, to develop individualised mental health and wellbeing supports (wrap around supports)</p> <p>Student counselling services</p>

Moving from Intensity 1 to Intensity 2 supports in SLPs

It is important for staff to have a process for making decisions about when a student may need more intensive Tier 3 - Intensity 2 supports at school. We want to avoid rushing to provide Tier 2 level supports when Tier 3 - Intensity 1 level supports are not yet in place or are not delivered with fidelity. To determine if a student may need Tier 3 - Intensity 2 level supports, and what those support should look like, teachers and program coordinators can complete one or more direct observations of the student at school and fill out the observation checklist.

Following the observation, if the teacher and program coordinator feel that the student would benefit from Tier 3 - Intensity 2 level support, they can convene a student support group meeting with the student (if applicable), the student's family, and other professionals who support the student to discuss the types of Tier 3 - Intensity 2 supports that might be needed. The teacher and program coordinator should also consult with the SSEND Program Coordinator SLP, to determine if support from a consulting teacher may be helpful. During the student support group meeting, an action plan should be developed that specifies what Tier 3 - Intensity 2 level support is needed, who will coordinate this support, and how other team members will be trained to provide this support.

A focus on classroom set up

Links to WA policy and practice documents		
Teaching for Impact	Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy & Procedure	Specialised Learning Programs Operational Framework
Learning Environment Student Diversity Student Engagement	Provide behaviour support to students with complex needs	Pedagogy

Creating an inclusive classroom environment that supports the participation and independence of autistic students involves thoughtful planning and implementation of strategies. The following are considerations for your SLP classrooms:

Structured physical environment

- Arrange furniture and learning areas to provide clear and defined spaces for different activities.
- Use visual cues, such as labels, signs, and visual schedules, to provide structure and help students navigate the classroom.
- Minimise sensory distractions by providing a quiet area or using noise-cancelling headphones if needed.
- Ensure the classroom is well-organised and free from clutter to reduce sensory overload

Visual supports

- Implement visual schedules to provide a visual representation of the daily routine and activities, helping students understand expectations and transitions.
- Use visual cues, such as visual timers, checklists, and visual instructions, to support comprehension and task completion.
- Label storage areas, materials, and resources with visual symbols or pictures for easy identification.

Predictability and routines

- Establish consistent routines and procedures that students can rely on, as predictability can reduce anxiety and enhance independence.
- Clearly communicate any changes or disruptions in advance, using visual supports to prepare students for transitions or unexpected events.
- Create a visual or written schedule that outlines the daily routine and prominently display it in the classroom.

Sensory considerations

- Create a sensory-friendly classroom by providing options for sensory breaks or calming activities, such as a cosy corner with soft seating.
- Be mindful of sensory sensitivities and adapt the environment, considering lighting, noise levels, and visual distractions.
- Allow for movement breaks or opportunities for students to release excess energy in a structured and safe manner.

A focus on behaviour support

Links to WA policy and practice documents		
Teaching for Impact	Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy & Procedure	Specialised Learning Programs Operational Framework
Student Wellbeing Personal and Social Capability	Provide behaviour support to students with complex needs	Pedagogy

Students attending SLPs may display behaviours of concern for several reasons. It is important for school staff to consider why students may engage in behaviours of concern and to recognise that behaviours of concern often serve a communication purpose for autistic students. Students might engage in behaviours of concern because:

- Student(s) don't know the classroom behaviour expectations
- Student(s) don't know how to exhibit expected behaviour
- Student(s) unaware they are engaging in behaviours of concern
- The expectations or demands of the classroom exceed the student's current abilities
- Behaviours of concern are a way for the student to communicate their wants and needs

Practices delivered at Tier 3 - Intensity 1 in SLPs should focus on preventing behaviours of concern, without the need for a functional behaviour assessment or individualised behaviour support plan. These proactive practices emphasise the teaching of foundational skills that help the student communicate their wants and needs, participate in classroom routines and transitions, wait appropriately and choose from available options when their preferred option is not available, attend to the teacher and follow instructions, and use calming and self-regulation. For autistic students, these skills may need to be more explicitly taught by breaking them down into small teachable components, providing prompting or support, and gradually scaffolding the difficulty level of the task.

Students who display more persistent or severe behaviours of concern may need Tier 3 - Intensity 2 supports including a functional behaviour assessment and more individualised behaviour support plan. The Collaborative and Proactive Solutions model may also be suitable for use with students who display more persistent behaviours of concern that are not effectively addressed with Tier 3 - Intensity 1 supports. More information on ways to support students with behaviours of concern can be found here:

- [How to find the underlying reasons for challenging behaviour with functional behaviour assessment](#)
- [How to develop effective positive behaviour support plans in schools](#)
- [Lives in the Balance \(Collaborative and Proactive Solutions\)](#)

Systems to support the successful and sustained implementation of practices in Specialised Learning Programs

Staffing - Roles, responsibilities, and scope of practice

Links to WA policy and practice documents		
Teaching for Impact	Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy & Procedure	Specialised Learning Programs Operational Framework
Shared Approaches	Build a school community culture of positive behaviour	Overall and operational responsibility

Each school that hosts a program enters into an agreement with the Department and receives a Targeted Initiative. The SLP are funded through a combination of the Targeted Initiative and student Individual Disability Allocation (Level two). When at capacity (25 students), funding will support three full-time teachers, up to eight full-time education assistants and one full-time Program Coordinator in primary settings. When at capacity (18 students), funding will support two full-time teachers, up to six full-time education assistants and one full-time Program Coordinator in secondary settings. Infrastructure modifications that are required by the SLP are negotiated with the Department in the year before programs become operational (Operational Guidelines, page 9).

SSEND SLP Leadership Team

Principal of School of Special Educational Needs: Disability

- Build the capability of staff working in SLPs to ensure every student in an SLP is a successful student
- Provide information as required to Department of Education senior leadership
- Participate in meetings with Host School Principals and PCs
- Consults with SSEND Autism Advisory Council
- Supports the Associate Principal SLP
- Collaborating and communicating with other SSEND Depts

Associate Principal – SLP – Autism EIIP, School of Special Educational Needs: Disability

- Provide consultancy to the leadership team of the host school to support the implementation of the program;
- Provide professional learning for the host school staff prior to the program commencing (installation support)
- Provide support to the host school in the selection of students to the program (sit on panels)
- Support program staff through ongoing professional learning
- Coordinate professional learning opportunities

- Support the host school in developing, implementing and evaluating evidence-based programs
- Provide strategic planning and direction to SLPs
- Develop quality assurance systems in SLP
- Report to the minister as needed (briefings, guidance, updates)
- Conduct funding model reviews
- Collaborate and communicate with other SSEND departments
- Expand the use of SLPs
- Share information about SLPs with other departments and look for opportunities for collaboration (e.g., CTs, interns, sharing learnings)
- Implement the operational framework

SSEND SLP Level Staff

SSEND Program Coordinator SLP, School of Special Educational Needs: Disability

- Be a first point of contact for program coordinators (hotline and red flags)
- Managing referrals for students who need more (Tier 3 – Intensity 2) level support
- Coordinate wrap around supports for some students
- Conduct a once a term visit to each SLP and once a term meeting with the PC in each SLP
- Meet regularly with AP SLP to discuss progress and challenges in each SLP
- Bridge between SLP and mainstream
- Focus 2023 – Expanding the use of SLPs
- Provide training for EAs
- Supporting PCs with education and transition planning
- Supporting PCs with behaviour support planning and safety
- Support the PC in working with mainstream educators to identify gaps in knowledge and skill and support building skills
- Implement the operational framework
- Allocate support to mainstream students when host school principals throw up a red flag
- Coordinate additional supports that can be provided by CTs (receive requests for assistance and allocate to CTs)
- Coordinate external supports when needed (when CTs cannot address student need)
- Liaise with Head of Service Area (HOSA)
- Work as part of the extended leadership team and disseminate information from the extended leadership team to CTs and PCs
- Linking hubs of SLP PCs

Consulting Teachers, School of Special Educational Needs: Disability

- Provide consultation around complex cases
- Provide Assessment > Intervention Planning > Implementation Support (upskilling staff) > Monitoring of Intervention for students on caseload
- Support professional learning and capacity building

School Level Staff

Host School Principal

- Implement targeted and evidence based academic and non-academic programs and support for student enrolled in the SLP;
- Access to mainstream classes and provision of SLP classrooms;
- Performance management of Program Coordinator;
- Collaboration with the PC to manage the program budget and expenditure;
- Collaboration with the PC to manage staff merit selection processes;
- Assessment against program targets/participation in program evaluations; and
- Case management as required.

Program Coordinator

- Conducts eligibility and need assessments/determine suitability of enrolment;
- Establish a panel to validate student suitability prior to a place in the SLP being offered (Y4 and above should involve consultation from Secondary PC).
- Implement targeted and evidence based academic and non-academic programs and support for student enrolled in the SLP;
- Oversees the development, implementation, monitoring and review of Individualised Education Plans for each student which will allow for parents and other key stakeholders to have input; and
- Provides flexible timetabling for each student to allow for seamless transition from the homeroom to mainstream classes, depending on individual student needs, to allow students to be included in classroom assessments;
- Performance management of program staff;
- Support transiting planning; and
- Negotiate/secure additional support needs.
- Report against Targeted Initiative outcomes.

Classroom Level Staff

Teachers

- Develop IEPs with support from the PC
- Plan classroom lessons
- Lead daily reviews
- Identify behaviours of concern
- Consult with PC to develop data collection procedures
- Conduct direct observation of students
- Collect and analyse data on behaviours of concern for individual students
- Develop student groupings for lessons
- Develop daily timetable
- Make Tier 3 Intensity 2 decisions (IEP goals, groupings, amount of transition time, behaviour supports, program modifications)
- Deliver instructional programs to students
- Classroom environment

Education Assistants

- Deliver instructional programs to students
- Collect skill acquisition data
- Collect maintenance and generalisation sessions
- Oversee one component of the curriculum (e.g., maths)
- Deliver universal classroom behaviour support strategies
- Use student specific reinforcement systems
- Make Tier 3 Intensity 1 decisions (prompting and prompt fading, reinforcement)

Teaming

Links to WA policy and practice documents		
Teaching for Impact	Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy & Procedure	Specialised Learning Programs Operational Framework
Shared Approaches Explicit Teaching	Develop, implement, and monitor a whole school approach to behaviour Build staff capacity through training and support	Quality Standards

Teaming is a critical component of MTSS. Teaming has many advantages:

1. Teaming ensures the workload is distributed across multiple individuals, which can reduce stress and reliance on any single person.
2. Teaming decreases the risk of abandonment of the MTSS framework as a result of staff turnover.
3. Teaming builds the capacity of current and new staff.
4. Teaming provides an opportunity for the sharing of ideas, and ensures that decisions are informed by the perspectives of multiple key staff.
5. Teaming enhances the transparency of the decision-making process.
6. Teaming ensures the school is populated with many staff members who are familiar with the MTSS framework, practices, and data collection systems.
7. Teams are people who engage in data-based problem-solving activities.
8. To support the successful implementation of practices that support all students attending SLPs, teams might be developed across several levels and include key people at each level.

SSEND SLP Leadership Team

The SSEND SLP Leadership team supports SLPs by providing overall strategic direction and ensuring equitable distribution of resources such as time, funding, and professional learning.

The SSEND SLP Leadership team can play a key role in supporting the implementation of the blueprint by:

1. Meeting regularly with members of the SSEND SLP Level Staff to identify opportunities, celebrate successes, and problem solve challenges.
2. Providing training in elements of the blueprint to members of the SSEND SLP Level Staff.
3. Providing members of the SSEND SLP Level Staff with the time and resources needed to do their job well.
4. Ensuring members of the SSEND SLP Level Staff can access supervision to assist them to support students and families with complex needs.

5. Sharing information about MTSS and the how MTSS is being implemented in SLPs with other Statewide Services teams and government representatives.
6. Collaborate with other Statewide Services teams share implementation success stories and discuss how MTSS might be implemented in other areas within the Department of Education.

A key activity of the SSEND SLP Leadership Team is to support the activities of the SSEND SLP Level Staff.

The SSEND SLP Leadership Team provides the highest level of oversight of implementation of the blueprint. The SSEND SLP Leadership Team should meet at least monthly to discuss and review the implementation of the blueprint in SLPs.

SSEND SLP Level Staff

In consultation with the SSEND SLP Leadership Team, The SSEND SLP Level Staff provides more intensive consultations to schools and staff working within SLPs to support their implementation of the blueprint.

The SSEND SLP Level Staff can play a key role in supporting the implementation of the blueprint by:

1. Providing supervision to Program Coordinators
2. Providing training in elements of the blueprint to members of School Level Teams
3. Providing resources related to materials, training and time
4. Provide consultation around students with higher support needs
5. Creating a detailed action plan for ensuring the implementation of new practices with SLPs across the state
6. Creating a detailed action plan for addressing problems with implementation in SLPs
7. Describing how the implementation of the blueprint aligns with SLP and host school values, goals, and improvement plans across the state
8. Communicating outcomes associated with the implementation of the blueprint to the SSEND SLP Leadership Team
9. Celebrating notable achievements, to help maintain morale and leverage the support needed to sustain successful implementation of the blueprint

A key activity of the SSEND SLP Level Staff is to support the activities of the Program Coordinators.

The SSEND SLP Level Staff reports to the SSEND SLP Leadership Team. The SSEND SLP Leadership Team should meet monthly to discuss and review the implementation of the blueprint in SLPs.

Network Community of Practice

The SSEND SLP Level Staff plays a key role in supporting the professional development and job-embedded professional learning of Program Coordinators. This can occur through a community of practice with Program Coordinators, facilitated by SSEND SLP Level Staff members. The community of practice can meet virtually to allow for ease of participation by all Program Coordinators, and can support the implementation of the blueprint by:

1. Bringing together Program Coordinators with similar roles to share expertise, experiences, and best practices. Through active participation and collaboration, Program Coordinators can learn from each other's successes and challenges, fostering a culture of continuous learning
2. Providing a supportive environment where Program Coordinators can engage in peer learning. Program Coordinators can seek advice, ask questions, and discuss relevant topics, which encourages reflective practice
3. Allowing Program Coordinators to share resources, case studies, tools, and research
4. Providing opportunities for more senior team members to serve as mentors or coaches, supporting the professional growth and development of Program Coordinators. This mentoring relationship provides personalised guidance, feedback, and advice
5. Providing a forum for Program Coordinators to initiate and engage in collaborative projects that address real-world challenges that they are experiencing in their roles
6. Connecting Program Coordinators with external resources such as industry experts, thought leaders, conferences, and relevant literature. These external connections expand the learning opportunities for Program Coordinators.

A key activity of the Program Coordinators is to support the activities of School and Classroom Level teams within their respective SLPs.

School Level Teams

School Level Teams support the implementation of the blueprint in their unique school context. Each host school should have a school level team that includes the Host School Principal, the Program Coordinator, the Teachers who oversee each SLP classroom in the host school, and any other host school personnel who might provide valued input.

The School Level Team can play a key role in supporting the implementation of the blueprint by:

1. Providing supervision, professional learning, and coaching to teachers
2. Providing training in elements of the blueprint to members of Classroom Level Teams
3. Providing resources to Classroom Level Teams related to materials, training and time
4. Creating a detailed action plan for ensuring the implementation of new practices within the SLP classrooms within the school
5. Creating a detailed action plan for addressing problems with implementation of new practices within the SLP classrooms within the school
6. Describing how the implementation of the blueprint aligns with classroom values, goals, and

improvement plans

7. Communicating outcomes associated with the implementation of the blueprint to the SSEND SLP Level Staff
8. Celebrating notable achievements, to help maintain morale and leverage the support needed to sustain successful implementation of the blueprint

Each School Level Team reports to the SSEND SLP Level Staff. The School Level Teams should meet at least quarterly to discuss and review the implementation of the blueprint in the SLP classrooms in their school.

A key activity of School Teams is to support the activities of Classroom Level teams and Teachers within their respective SLPs.

Classroom Level Teams

Each SLP classroom is also made up of an informal team. The classroom teacher is responsible for leading the implementation of universal supports that proactively address the needs of all students in each classroom. Thus, the classroom teacher should be considered key in intervention planning and implementation in the blueprint.

In addition to teachers, education assistants (EAs) and support staff may be part of the classroom team. EAs and support staff (e.g., specialists, therapists) may work collaboratively with the classroom teacher to support the delivery of universal supports, or to deliver more individualised supports to specific students. If class sizes are small, the classroom team may not meet formally on a regular basis. However, larger classroom teams may need to set aside time for more formal meetings on a regular basis. This may be particularly important if team members require training on specific practices that are used within the classroom.

The Classroom Level Team can play a key role in supporting the implementation of the blueprint by:

1. Implementing whole-class, small-group, and sometimes individual student practices and pedagogies
2. Collecting data on individual student performance (e.g., formative and summative assessment data)
3. Analysing student data to determine which practices and pedagogies are working well, and should be continued
4. Analysing student data to assess which students may need specific additional support
5. Analysing student data to determine which practices and pedagogies are not working well, and may need to be discontinued

Each Classroom Level Team reports to the School Level Team. The Classroom Level Teams should meet at least quarterly to discuss and review the implementation of the blueprint in their classroom.

Informal meetings may occur more frequently.

A key activity of Classroom Teams is to support the activities of Education Assistants and individual students within their respective SLPs.

Individual Student Teams

Each individual student has an informal team, which includes the student themselves, the student's family, the teacher, one or more education assistants, and other professionals including school leaders and therapy providers. This team should be responsible for the student's academic and social growth, career development, and quality of life. This team should co-design the student's IEP and co-evaluate the student's progress toward their IEP goals.

The Individual Student Team can play a key role in supporting implementation of the blueprint by:

1. Discussing the student's unique learning needs and views
2. Creating an individual education plan for the student
3. Planning reasonable adjustments to support the student's participation
4. Planning for the student's personal or medical care at school
5. Planning transitions – for example, from primary to secondary school
6. Reviewing the student's progress toward their individual goals

Each Individual Student Team reports to the Classroom Level Team. The Individual Student Team should meet at least twice per year to discuss and review the student's progress and IEP. Informal meetings may occur more frequently.

Data collection

Links to WA policy and practice documents		
Teaching for Impact	Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy & Procedure	Specialised Learning Programs Operational Framework
Setting Goals Learning Intentions and Success Criteria Moderation	Provide multi-tiered systems of support Provide behaviour support to students with complex needs	Quality Standards

Data are pieces of information that can be quantified to help guide implementation efforts, and to evaluate the effects of implementation. Data are used to show what is working well within a school, and what could be improved. Data are used within an integrated MTSS model for five main purposes:

1. Data help identify students requiring additional support (screening data).
2. Data help clarify what type of support would be most helpful, either at the school level, classroom level, or individual student level (determining scope of the problem).
3. Data help monitor student progress and growth on an ongoing basis (formative assessment, or leading indicators).
4. Data help school teams identify what practices are currently in place and how well they are implemented (fidelity data).
5. Data help assess student outcomes on a broader scale (summative assessment, or lagging indicators).

In addition to enabling ongoing progress monitoring, data provide other important benefits to educators:

1. Data helps educators optimise their effectiveness. To be optimally effective, educators must be able to use their time and resources effectively to maximise student progress and achievement. Data collection allows educators to determine what is working well and should be continued, and what practices and interventions are not benefiting students and should be discontinued (de-implemented).
2. Data helps educators engage in the process of evidence-based practice. Educators are increasingly expected to use evidence-based and evidence-informed teaching and behaviour support practices in their classrooms. However, educators should not simply implement teaching and behaviour support strategies as described in peer-reviewed research. Rather, teaching and behaviour support strategies should be adapted to meet the unique needs of individual students, and then data should be collected to verify the effectiveness of the adapted strategy with the student or students.
3. Data helps educators to be accountable for outcomes, in that data can be used to communicate outcomes for students to team members, such as school leaders, families, and the students themselves.

Sources of Data

Data are typically categorised as indirect or direct. Indirect data are generally measures of perception, opinion, or attitude about a behaviour, skill, or practice from the student, educator or other stakeholders. Indirect data may be collected via rating scales, surveys, or interviews. This type of data may yield important information about the perceived acceptability of the practice, and the value of the outcomes. Indirect data may also include measures of things that are correlated with behaviours of concern, such as the frequency of out of school referrals, suspensions, expulsions, or critical incidents.

Direct data are measures of some dimension of the actual behaviour targeted for increase (academic skills) or reduction (behaviours of concern). There are many different types of direct data that can be recorded. The type of data collection system used will depend on the target behaviours that are being measured, and the resources in the environment in which the plan will be implemented (e.g., staffing ratios, practical considerations).

It is important to distinguish between leading and lagging indicators when discussing data collection systems. Both are important. Standardised assessment tools such as NAPLAN or the Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales (or other criterion or norm referenced assessment tools) are lagging indicators. Lagging indicators are our big goals, the long-term impact we hope to achieve; for example, changes in a diagnosis category as a result of intervention, or a grade at the end of a course. These are important and commonly reported in research, but it is difficult to affect these indicators directly in any meaningful way. This is because they only measure behaviour occasionally, such as at the beginning of intervention and then once every 6-12 months thereafter. Thus, they may result in too little intervention being provided, too late. These types of lagging indicators are often measured using summative assessments.

Leading indicators, on the other hand, are predictive in nature. These data points are frequent and formative, and they offer valuable information that can help us to adjust intervention and change course in the moment. Examples of leading indicators, or types of formative assessments that can be used in the classroom, include direct observations of students, quizzes and polls, peer feedback, strategic questioning, and student self-assessment.

	Leading (formative) Indicators	Lagging (summative) Indicators
Indirect Data (examples)	<p>Conversations with parents on a regular basis about the student's learning and behaviour (drop off and pick up)</p> <p>Conversations with the student on a regular basis about their learning at school</p> <p>Communication with parents via See-Saw</p> <p>Regular consultations with the student's therapist(s)</p>	<p>A once-a-year parent-teacher conference</p> <p>Once a year parent satisfaction survey</p> <p>Once a year student voice survey</p>
Direct Data (examples)	<p>Classroom observations</p> <p>Formative assessment</p> <p>Frequent questioning to assess students' level of understanding</p> <p>Spelling or maths quizzes</p> <p>Exit tickets</p> <p>Tally of the number of times a behaviour occurs during a class period</p> <p>Peer assessment of student work</p> <p>Student self-assessment of their work</p> <p>Discrete trial data</p> <p>Placement tests</p> <p>Direct instruction in-program mastery tests</p>	<p>A letter grade at the end of a semester or school year</p> <p>NAPLAN results</p> <p>Standardised tests</p> <p>Final exams</p> <p>A psychoeducational assessment</p>

Examples of screening data

1. EOIs
2. SLP Inquiry form
3. Diagnostic report (eligibility)
4. Direct observation (suitability)
5. Indirect assessment (suitability)
6. Academic achievement records

Examples of assessment data

1. Pat Maths
2. Pat Reading
3. Placement tests for DI programs
4. Fluency test for reading (Acadience)
5. SA spelling test

6. ABLES WA (personal and social capability)
7. Direct observation of student
8. UFLI
9. Syntax Project for Writing
10. Core Language

Examples of formative (progress monitoring) data

1. Transition timings
2. Direct instruction program data or mastery tests
3. Percent of correct responses
4. Attendance (by day or week)
5. Spelling, maths tests
6. Frequency, duration, time sampling, etc. of behaviours of concern
7. Critical incidents (by day or week)
8. Direct classroom observations

Examples of summative (outcome) data

1. Number of students that transition out of SLPs to mainstream settings per year
2. Number of IEP goals achieved by student
3. Attendance (missed days of school per year)
4. Total number of critical incidents (by student, year level, or school)
5. Total number of suspensions (by student, year level, or school)
6. NAPLAN (Years 3, 5, 7, and 9)
7. Standardised test scores
8. On entry (Years P, 1, 2)
9. OLNA and WACE (Year 10/11)

Examples of fidelity (quality of implementation) data

1. Environmental scan
2. Classroom checklist
3. Classroom walk throughs
4. Direct observation of teacher/EA practice
5. PBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI)
6. Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) tool
7. PBIS Self-assessment Survey (SAS)

Engaging in data-based problem solving

Links to WA policy and practice documents		
Teaching for Impact	Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy & Procedure	Specialised Learning Programs Operational Framework
Moderation	Provide behaviour support to students with complex needs	Quality Standards

Problem solving teams are a critical component of MTSS. These teams are responsible for analysing data and making decisions about instruction and the intervention process. Models of problem solving and data-based decision-making share origins in Behavioural Consultation, a widely recognised and effective practice for delivering professional services to students in educational contexts. Contemporary Behaviour Consultation typically follows a multi-stage model process that includes several steps. Below, we describe a six-step model of behavioural consultation, the purpose of which is to facilitate data-based problem solving and decision making.

Step 1: Establish a team

During this step, the school team should be formed. The team may consist of school leaders, educators from different year levels, allied health or specialist service professionals, and possibly professionals external to the school. During this step, the team should clarify the purpose and objectives of the team. This may involve:

1. Deciding how the implementation of MTSS aligns to the values and strategic plan of the school
2. Deciding the roles and responsibilities of different members of the team
3. Deciding on the sources of data that are currently available, and whether or not new data collection tools need to be introduced (engaging in the process of resource mapping)
4. Deciding how often and in what form the team will meet
5. Deciding how information will be shared amongst team members
6. Establish rapport between team members, and agree upon set of shared goals

Step 2: Identify the problem

This first step involves bringing a problem to the attention of the team. Examples of potential problems to be solved within the school include:

1. Year 3 reading scores are too low
2. Year 6 students are displaying higher levels of bullying behaviour
3. Students from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds are disproportionately experiencing exclusionary disciplinary practices
4. Teachers are feeling stressed due to managing high levels of behaviours of concern in the classroom

At this stage, the team should look for the sources of data that help illustrate the problem (such as

standardised test scores or attendance records). The main purpose of this step is to determine whether a problem exists, define the problem as precisely as possible, and decide whether it is a problem worth addressing.

Step 3: Analysing the problem

Next, the data should be reviewed more closely to determine where the problem is occurring, how long standing the problem is, who the problem impacts (teachers, students, or both?), and whether the problem is significant enough to warrant further evaluation. It is also important to look at the environment to identify some factors that may be contributing to the problem. For example, using the example that year 3 reading scores are too low, the problem clarification step may reveal that:

1. Upon further analysis, it is noted that year 3 students are engaging in more interfering behaviour during reading lessons
2. Upon further evaluation, it is noted that year 3 reading instruction is not appropriately matched to student abilities
3. Upon further evaluation, it is noted that year 3 reading instruction is being implemented inconsistently across groups

A careful analysis of the data during this step will help the team to develop solutions that are more directly linked to the root cause of the problem. During this stage, it is also important to establish baseline data, or data that can be used to compare the effectiveness of interventions that are put in place to address the problem.

Step 4: Plan a solution to the problem

Next, the team should develop a solution to the problem that is linked to the cause of the problem. This process can include three actions (Scott, Anderson, & Alter, 2012):

1. brainstorming possible strategies
2. selecting strategies that are both feasible to implement and likely to be effective
3. developing a clear action plan for implementing and assessing outcomes

Solutions may include some or a combination of the following actions:

1. Review resources (e.g., research publications, research reviews, handbooks, departmental guidelines) to determine strategies that are likely to be effective
2. Develop a written action plan that clearly describes the steps that will be taken to address the problem
3. Determine the resources that are needed to implement the action plan
4. Determine if the action plan is likely to be acceptable to staff and students

5. Determine if the action plan is likely to be practical in the settings in which it is meant to be implemented
6. Determine staff training needs, to ensure that staff are confident and capable of implementing the action plan
7. Create a clear goal that will indicate whether the plan is successful. The goal should be accompanied by a description of the sources of data that will be used to evaluate progress

Step 5: Implement the action plan

Once the action plan is developed, communicated to the wider school community, and a goal is set, the plan can be implemented. During this step, fidelity data should be collected to ensure the action plan is implemented as described. During this step, the team should meet regularly to review data on the fidelity of implementation. If fidelity data indicate that the action plan is being implemented with good fidelity, those responsible for implementing the action plan should receive frequent and specific positive performance feedback. If fidelity data indicate that the action plan is not being implemented with good fidelity, those responsible for implementing the action plan should receive corrective feedback and additional support to help them improve.

Step 6: Evaluate the effects of the action plan

Once the action plan is implemented, the team should meet regularly to review its effectiveness. The goal and the sources of data that are being used to evaluate progress toward the goal should be reviewed. Each team meeting presents a decision-making opportunity:

1. If the data suggest that the action plan is effective (i.e., the data show the problem is improving), the strategies should be continued. This should be communicated to and celebrated with the wider school community
2. If the data suggest that the goal is met (i.e., the data show the problem has been resolved), the strategies and frequency of data collection and review can be faded. This should be communicated to and celebrated with the wider school community. It will be important to continue to monitor outcome measures relating to these goals.
3. If the data suggest that the action plan is not effective (i.e., the data show the problem is staying the same or getting worse), the team should start the problem-solving process again at Step 2, while applying new information learned during the previous problem-solving cycle.

Professional learning

Links to WA policy and practice documents		
Teaching for Impact	Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy & Procedure	Specialised Learning Programs Operational Framework
Shared Approaches	Build staff capacity through training and support	Staffing and resource provisions

While relying on “experts” to deliver training and provide on-going technical assistance is a long-standing model within education, MTSS stresses building “expertise” across all educators within a school through the problem-solving team model. To build expertise across a wide range of teachers, administrators, and staff, statewide and SSEND SLP level staff must build a parallel process that has the capacity to deliver quality training and provide on-going assistance to schools. Professional learning for all staff may be enhanced using workshops and job-embedded professional learning and coaching.

Professional learning workshops or seminars

When delivering workshops in schools, the following features have been identified as having a significant positive impact on student outcomes:

1. Workshops are presented over an extended period of time (e.g., a term focus)
2. Workshops include explicit teaching of core content
3. Workshops provide active learning opportunities for staff, including:
 - modelling
 - practise of skills
 - performance feedback provided to staff
4. Workshops include access to ongoing expert support
5. Workshops are delivered in conjunction with in-school coaching

One such way to provide professional learning that includes each of these components is by using a behavioural skills training (BST) model. Behavioural skills training is a staged approach to professional learning that ensures staff are provided with:

1. Explicit instruction in new content and skills
2. Written training materials to supplement verbal training
3. Modelling of skills (e.g., video models, in-vivo modelling, peer-modelling)
4. Active opportunities for skill rehearsal with relevant role-play scenarios

5. Performance feedback for participants on their use of the skills

This style of professional learning can be delivered in smaller 'bite sized' professional development sessions in which a specific skill is targeted and staff are actively engaged in professional development within a staff meeting session.

Job embedded professional learning

Job embedded professional learning is a model of professional development within schools focused on quality instruction and student achievement. Job embedded professional learning includes the following components:

1. Occurs during the workday and in the workplace.
2. Closely connected to the actual work of teachers in classrooms with their current students.
3. Designed to improve teachers' instruction.
4. Intended to improve student learning.
5. Centred on the academic, behavioural, and wellbeing student needs of the school.
6. Directly linked to the goals set for students by the team and school.

Coaching is one strategy for delivering job embedded professional learning:

1. External coaching is generally provided by personnel with specific expertise who do not have specific teaching or administrative duties within a school. External coaches should have experience with the implementation and evaluation of evidence-based practices for autistic students. External coaches should have knowledge and skill of specific coaching practices that support effective implementation of the evidence-based practices they are supporting staff to use.
2. Internal coaching is provided by school building-based staff who do not have direct teaching duties and receive additional training to serve as a direct resource to their colleagues on the MTSS team. Internal coaches primarily serve as the link between statewide services and SEND SLP level staff and the school team. Internal coaches should be someone within the school building who already is partly responsible for SLPs and has flexibility in the school day. Internal coaches have many of the same responsibilities as external coaches (e.g., attending meetings, prompting, reminding, reinforcing) only applied at the school team level.

Working within teams is another way to deliver job embedded professional learning, and may include the following:

1. Using Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to foster collaboration between teachers, program coordinators, and network level staff. In PLCs, staff can work together to analyse their classroom practice, learn new instructional strategies and tactics, field-test them in the classroom and report the results to each other.
2. Providing opportunities for peer observations and peer coaching for all teachers and EAs to refine their teaching while they embed new teaching strategies to become more effective in working with the students currently in their classrooms.

3. Providing opportunities for more senior staff to mentor newer staff
4. Using a formal team structure that includes having a purpose (goal), outcomes for meetings (action plans, agendas and minutes) and a focus on classroom instruction to improve student achievement (selecting instructional and behaviour support strategies, planning lessons and reflecting on practice)
5. Including professional learning activities within teams, which include analysing student data and engaging in data-based problem solving to build the data literacy and problem-solving skills of team members

SSEND leaders and host school leaders can support job-embedded professional learning in the following ways:

1. Creating a school culture, support structures, systems and dedicated time for making job-embedded professional development an intrinsic part of both the teacher and EA workday.
2. Keep the SLP focused on the main objective: student achievement.
3. Develop a school and SLP climate among staff that promotes continued learning focused on improving students' success at school.
4. Identify, train and support program coordinators and coaches in providing regular job-embedded professional development to teachers.
5. Identify, train and support teachers in providing regular job-embedded professional development to EAs.
6. Provide and protect common teacher professional learning time, which is distinct from planning time.
7. Use student performance data to inform decisions of job-embedded professional development.
8. Align teacher and EA evaluation with the teacher learning occurring in job-embedded professional development so teachers can regularly strengthen their practice.
9. Celebrate achievements regularly.
10. Measure the progress of teacher and student learning to ensuring success for all.

Collaboration

Links to WA policy and practice documents		
Teaching for Impact	Student Behaviour in Public Schools Policy & Procedure	Specialised Learning Programs Operational Framework
Culturally Responsive Approaches Student Engagement Shared Approaches Culturally Responsive Pedagogies	Build a school community culture of positive behaviour Identify and communicate the rights and responsibilities of all students and staff	External relations and community engagement

The use of collaborative practices can help autistic students feel safe, secure, and supported at school and help students generalise what they have learned at school to home and vice versa. Collaborative practices can help teachers and school leaders look at ways to adapt the learning environment, curricula, teaching approaches, and school policies to better facilitate the inclusion and participation of autistic students. The use of collaborative practices during the period of transition to school may promote a greater sense of belonging and higher quality educational and social outcomes for children with autism at school.

Collaboration is enhanced when schools work with all stakeholders as partners in the transition planning process. The following strategies can be used to support effective collaboration between teachers, early childhood educators, and families before, during, and after the child's transition to school:

1. Families can benefit from clear and easy to understand information about the types of support that are available to their child and family at the host school and within the SLPs. Teachers and school leaders might provide accessible information about funding for students with disability, how to prepare and submit applications for additional in-school support, and the types of reasonable adjustments that the school provides for autistic students. In addition, teachers and school leaders can provide information to families of autistic students who attend SLPs about how they will work with external providers (such as psychologists or speech and language therapists) to ensure that information can be shared and beneficial supports (such as communication support) can be provided to the student at school.
2. For autistic students, families are usually the primary influence on their learning and development. For this reason, it is important for educators to work collaboratively with families during the transition to school and throughout the school year. Family-centred practice is a model of collaboration in which educators recognise the expertise of families, respect the choices of families, and work with families as equal partners and shared decision-makers in transition planning. Teachers and school leaders might include families as equal partners by:
 - Maintaining open lines of communication with the student's family
 - Learning about and focusing on the strengths of the student with autism and family, in addition to understanding the student's unique educational and behavioural needs
 - Encouraging families to ask questions, clarify information, and make informed choices about the types of support provided to their child at school

- Listening to families and incorporating their suggestions and ideas into the development of strategies to support the student at school
 - Learning about and understanding the ways in which the family supports the student at home and in the community, to enhance continuity of learning between home and school
 - Recognising that families may need support from the school and allied health professionals to choose the types of support their child needs when transitioning to school and during the school year
 - Maintaining a flexible and responsive approach, which recognises that the needs of the family and student may change at different stages
3. Teachers and school leaders can support families of autistic students to participate in student support group meetings in practical ways by:
- Scheduling the meeting in advance at a time and place that is convenient and comfortable for the family and team. This will allow families time to arrange for needed childcare or support workers for their child
 - Providing families with accessible information about the purpose of the meeting, who will be in attendance, what information families should bring or provide, and copies of any documents that will be discussed ahead of time
 - Encouraging families to invite outside-of-school therapy providers, professionals or other outside supports, such as an advocate or a support person, to attend the meeting and provide input
 - Asking questions about the child's interests, talents, and strengths, as well as their needs and challenges, and establish what goals the family has for their child
 - Maintaining a warm and welcoming atmosphere and demonstrating a positive attitude toward inclusion and diversity
 - Making accommodations for cultural or other family needs (such as interpreters and flexible delivery of transition planning meetings)
 - Seeking permission from the student's parents to speak to the child's support workers, outside school support agency staff, and allied health providers
4. Teachers and school leaders can implement and evaluate the educational and behavioural support provided to the student at school using a team around the learner approach. Team around the learner is a framework for providing holistic and individualised support to autistic students at school and during different points of transition. This model provides a way to use the above-mentioned collaborative practices across several phases, using a family-centred and responsive approach:
- First, a team is created which might include teachers, school leaders, family members, allied health professionals, and/or outside school support agency staff, and the student. The roles and responsibilities of each team member are clarified and documented
 - Next, the team might identify a lead professional, who makes initial contact with the family, provides accessible information to the family, and collects preliminary information about the student for discussion in the meeting

- Early in each school year, a family-centred planning meeting could be held with all team members, the purpose of which is to learn more about the student's strengths and interests, and analyse the support needs of the student and family
- A plan for supporting the student at school (particularly for students with Tier 3 - Intensity 2 support needs) might then developed, with insight and input from the family and other professionals who know the student and family well
- The plan can then be implemented, and the lead professional and other team members monitor the plan and the student's progress through follow up observations, team meetings, and regular discussions with teachers and families. Through ongoing monitoring during and after the transition to school, the student's successes can be regularly communicated and celebrated and support strategies can be modified as the child's needs change.
- During periods of transition and as needed, the lead professional can coordinate contact with outside school support agencies to ensure that information is shared and modifications to support strategies can be made in collaboration.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Academic behaviour	Behaviour such as class attendance, homework completion, and active classroom participation that directly or indirectly influence classroom performance and learning.
Academic Response to Intervention (RTI)	Academic response to intervention is a “preventative systems approach to improving school-wide and individual achievement through high-quality universal instruction and additional tiered supports provided in response to student need” (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016, p. 6).
Behaviour	The way in which a student acts in response to a particular situation or stimulus at school and/or in the community.
Behaviours of concern/ Challenging behaviour	Behaviour that puts the person or those around them (such as their carer) at risk or leads to a poorer quality of life. It can also impact their ability to join in everyday activities, such as participating in academic and social activities at school.
Continuum of supports	A framework for providing increasingly intensive and individualised academic, behavioural, or social-emotional supports and interventions matched to student needs, which enables schools to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way.
Data	Units of information that can be described, observed, measured, thematically or categorically organised, quantified, and analysed.
Formative data	Information collected on an ongoing basis that provides feedback on student learning and behaviour and can be used to make adjustments to teaching and behaviour support practices in an effort to address and maximise student learning and gauge student progress.
Function of behaviour	The underlying reason for, or purpose of, behaviours of concern, that is based on the assumption that behaviours of concern are a form of communication for the person. It is possible for behaviours that look very different to serve the same function, or for behaviours that look the same to serve different functions. Research suggests that behaviour support strategies are most effective when they address the function of behaviour, usually by teaching safer and more understandable forms of communication.
Mental health promotion	Proactive and preventative approaches that support mental health and prevent mental health problems.
Multi-tiered system of support (MTSS)	A multi-tiered system of support integrates academic RTI, SWPBIS, and student wellbeing programs into a unified framework to “provide all students with the best opportunities to succeed academically and behaviourally in school. MTSS focuses on providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need across domains and monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instructions or goals. It is not simply the implementation of RTI and SWPBIS systems. There is a systematic and careful integration of these systems to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of all school systems” (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016, p. 6).
School improvement	The efforts of members of a school community to enhance and facilitate better educational outcomes for students, including academic achievement and wellbeing, that relies on direct measurement of student outcomes and the collection and analysis of data to make decisions about the effectiveness of practices and interventions.

Term	Definition
School Wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS):	School-wide positive behaviour interventions and supports is a “framework for implementing evidence-based practices, providing a three-tiered continuum of supports to students, using systems to support staff in implementation, and using data for decision-making. SWPBIS emphasises an instructional approach to behaviour support, prevention through environmental change, adaptation to the local context, and using the science of applied behaviour analysis to achieve outcomes that are valued by staff, students, and families” (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016, p. 6).
Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)	The development of competencies and skills needed to build resilience, cope with challenges and stress, regulate emotions, behaviour and relationships with others.
Summative data	Information collected periodically and typically in a standardised way that shows student outcomes and can be used to inform the development and evaluation of curriculum, school-wide programs and initiatives, and school improvement plans. Summative data can also be compared across groups to look for similarities and differences in school achievement across schools.
Supports	Supports are defined as any “resources and strategies that aim to promote the development, education, interests, and personal well-being of a person and enhance individual functioning” (Schalock et al. , 2010, p. 175).
Topography of behaviour	What a behaviour looks like, including its form, frequency, intensity, accuracy, and/or duration.
Wellbeing	Wellbeing represents a complex combination of an individual’s physical, mental, social and emotional health factors that relate to positive psychological functioning across a range of outcomes.

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