



MTSS in Action: 5 Strategies From School and District Leaders



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As a school or district leader, you’re committed to making sure students get the best academic, behavior, and social-emotional support, but figuring out how to navigate this may be challenging. While a [multi-tiered system of supports \(MTSS\)](#) can ensure that all students’ needs are met through increasingly targeted interventions, implementing a district-wide framework can feel overwhelming.

In this guide, you’ll find examples of **how schools and districts are moving the needle on MTSS**. These innovative schools and districts are using feedback surveys and robust data platforms to strengthen their MTSS, serving students’ social-emotional, academic, and behavioral needs.

Figuring out how to best support students is a complex endeavor. We know because we partner with 2,000 districts to navigate these challenges.

Whether you need support structuring an MTSS framework, consulting on a roll-out plan, or conducting professional development, our team will be your partner and guide. We support thousands of schools and districts with their MTSS through [feedback surveys](#) and [robust data platforms](#) for attendance, academics, behavior, and SEL.

If you’re interested in learning more about how your district can partner with Panorama for MTSS, [visit our website](#) or [schedule a demo with our team](#).

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Supporting Students at Every Tier

MTSS is meant to support all students, including those receiving special education services. This means that students can benefit from special educators and MTSS leadership working together, and that's exactly the approach [Mehlville School District](#) took when implementing new MTSS processes.

District leaders realized they needed a tool to support their new MTSS processes. This tool needed to have the capabilities to integrate data on academics, well-being, and [social-emotional learning](#) (SEL), and track intervention progress across Tiers 1, 2, and 3. It was critical that Mehlville's MTSS also encompassed special education because of a partnership with Special School District (SSD)—a standalone district that provides special education services for students in 22 school districts in the county.

Implementing MTSS Alongside Panorama

Kimberly Lawson, Director of Special Education in Mehlville through SSD, says that when Mehlville began the process of rolling out MTSS a few years ago, they realized that there was a need in the district for data management. Mehlville had already partnered with Panorama for SEL surveys, so when they found out about Panorama Student Success, they thought it would be the perfect complement to their MTSS work.

Mehlville School District
St. Louis County, MO • 10,000 Students



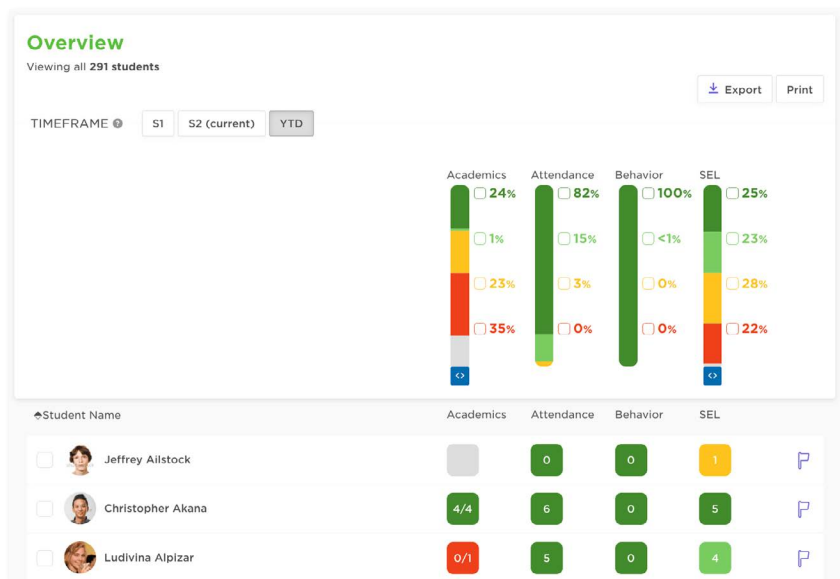
“MTSS work needs to start at the central office in order to be implemented district-wide, and building-level teams need extra support during the first few years.”

—Kimberly Lawson, Director of Special Education

Teachers and interventionists in Mehlville use Student Success as a one-stop shop for data on academics, attendance, behavior, and SEL, as well as for visibility into district benchmarks and state assessments. Knowing that they're doing everything possible for Tier 1 supports gives Mehlville leaders the confidence to make data-based decisions when students are referred for special education services.

Creating a Portrait of Each Student

With Student Success, the district now has a central location where they can get a portrait of each student. They can disaggregate the data and look at different student populations, such as students receiving special education services. From there, educators can take a deeper dive into particular groups. Building-level special education data teams use this feature to identify students who are demonstrating they may need extra support.



The Panorama Student Success platform (Please note that demo data is pictured)

“We can get a quick glance, either at the building level or at the classroom level, that allows us to see where we might need to investigate further into what is happening with a student in terms of attendance, academics, behavior, or SEL. Student Success gives us a clear picture of which students might need high-level interventions, and alerts us to areas we might have missed that need closer attention.”

—Kimberly Lawson, Director of Special Education

Color coding in the Panorama platform makes this quick and easy, says Lawson. Student performance data points across multiple domains are either green, yellow, or red. Looking at this data gives schools a starting point and allows them to make clearer decisions around problem-solving.

“As educators, we know we don’t always have a whole lot of time. Student Success allows us to decide where we want to spend our time in order to ensure that all of our students are achieving.”

— Kimberly Lawson, Director of Special Education

Resource List

- **Guide:** [3 Questions Every MTSS Team Must Ask Weekly](#)
- **Toolkit:** [Interventions and Progress Monitoring Toolkit](#)
- **Blog:** [MTSS and Special Education: Nurturing Effective Alignment and Collaboration](#)



Implementing a Restorative MTSS

Restorative MTSS is a framework rooted in relationship building, designed to create a culture of equity and belonging. Adopting a restorative MTSS approach provides what students need—the way they need it—while simultaneously focusing on academics and social-emotional wellness.

This is the approach [Jordan School District](#) adopted. With the cost of housing rising in the Salt Lake Valley, the district had experienced rapid growth and changing demographics. Leaders knew that they needed to approach things differently in order to best support a diverse population of students, teachers, and staff.

Building a Relationship-Driven & Data-Informed MTSS

“Relationships don’t support the learning—relationships are the learning.”

– Travis Hamblin, Director of Student Services.

As part of implementing a restorative culture, the district recognized the need for a data dashboard to create a data-centered decision-making process. With Panorama, they have a dashboard that teachers and administrators can quickly maneuver through in seconds. This helps educators find students that need help—a preventative measure instead of reactionary.

Jordan School District
West Jordan, UT • 56,000 Students



50% Fewer F’s and 2% Increase in Graduation Rate at Herriman High

Julie Scherzinger, Assistant Principal at Herriman High, says that in 2017-18, they needed to make some serious changes to their school culture. As an administrative team, they were looking for proactive, preventative programs that would help them identify and intervene when students were struggling. Through that research, they found Panorama.

In the last four years and since implementing Panorama, the school has seen 50% fewer F’s and 61% fewer tips in reporting suicide ideation at the school.

When the pandemic hit in March 2020, the school used Panorama to reach out to students, track them, and make sure seniors were staying on track for graduation. In that short period of time, the school was able to implement academic interventions that helped **increase the graduation rate by 2%.**

How Jordan's Counseling Team Uses Panorama to Target Interventions

Stacee Worthen, Secondary Counselor Specialist, says that as counselors, it's important to use data to drive the decision-making process within a restorative MTSS.

“We want to work smarter, not harder. Panorama puts the data at our counselors’ fingertips, helps us collaborate with teachers and administrators in one place, and helps us disaggregate our data so we are exposing any barriers to learning.”

—Stacee Worthen, Secondary Counselor Specialist

For example, counselors often help principals figure out who is on the D and F list. Before Panorama, it would take counselors two days to pull that data—and these reports didn't include anything disaggregated about ethnicity, IEPs, or 504s. With Panorama, staff can get this information with a click of a button. This gives counselors more time to work with students rather than trying to find the data they need.

“It's exciting that we can be more strategic, targeted, and student driven because we have the information we need at our fingertips with Panorama.”

—Stacee Worthen, Secondary Counselor Specialist

Resource List

- Guide: [MTSS Self-Assessment](#)
- Blog: [Creating an MTSS Implementation Plan: 6 Keys for Success](#)
- Blog: [Child Study Team Data Protocol: \[+ Action Planning Template\]](#)



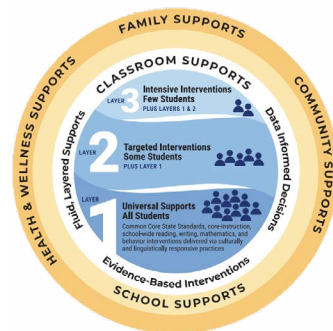
Aligning to State-Specific Frameworks

In 2021, the state of New Mexico introduced a new educational model: MLSS, a Multi-Layered System of Supports. The [MLSS](#) framework seeks to support all students through core instruction while allowing the option for educators to add targeted interventions when needed. Districts needed to rapidly adapt to the new MLSS framework.

[Gadsden Independent School District](#) is moving quickly with its MLSS implementation. Jed Duggan, Director of Student Success at Gadsden ISD, shared how the district partners with Panorama to implement the holistic MLSS framework.

Partnering With Panorama to Implement MLSS Framework

As schools began adopting MLSS, it became clear that Gadsden didn't have a reliable system for collecting and tracking data about the implementation of the new system. Jed Duggan says he saw an opportunity for the district to



A model of the MLSS framework from the MLSS Implementation Guide from the New Mexico Public Education Department.

Gadsden Independent School District Doña Ana County + Southern Otero County, NM 14,200 Students



use data to make decisions needed for this transition, and in order to do that, they needed the tools to track and store data.

“With Panorama Student Success, everything is very clear and easy. It’s no work on my end to gather the data—I just get to analyze the data, and I get to make decisions based off of it. That’s a huge game-changer for many districts.”

—Jed Duggan, Director of Student Success

Now the district can identify specific students who may need additional support and make sure they are getting what they need to succeed. For the first time, Gadsden’s counselors are able to track the progress of academic, behavioral, and social-emotional interventions, and get a holistic understanding of each student.

Using Survey Data to Inform District-Wide Decision-Making

Duggan notes that the district had always wanted to send out surveys to the community, but didn't know how. They didn't have any direction, or even know what questions to ask. With Panorama surveys, they can finally connect with students, teachers, and families.

“In the past, educators have relied primarily on our professional judgment when it comes to decision-making. We do our best, but we don't have any results that can tell us definitively whether or not our initiatives are working. Now, we're being asked for more and more accountability in our decision-making processes.

That's where I see Panorama Student Success and Surveys making a huge impact. With Panorama, we're able to use data from students, teachers, and families to inform and justify the choices we're making in our districts and schools.

—Jed Duggan, Director of Student Success

Resource List

- **Blog:** [Why Your District Needs to Administer a Family Engagement Survey—and 21 Questions You Can Ask](#)
- **Blog:** [15 Survey Questions to Understand School Climate](#)
- **Survey:** [Panorama Student Survey](#)



Connecting the Dots Between SEL and Academics

Today, high-performing schools and districts see SEL as core to students' academic success—and the research backs it up. [A 2017 meta-analysis from CASEL](#) found that students participating in SEL programs performed 13 percentage points higher than their non-SEL peers when it comes to academics.

Over the last year, [San Angelo ISD's](#) district and school teams have been working valiantly to implement their vision for supporting the whole child—laying down the foundation for MTSS and SEL.

Lindy Lyles, Director of Social-Emotional Learning, and Michael Kalnbach, Principal at Glenn Middle School, shared a key part of this process: empowering administrators and staff with easy-to-use tools and data.

San Angelo ISD's Whole Child Vision—and How Panorama Fits In

Several years ago, the district developed a [Learner Profile](#) that serves as a vision for how they want students to graduate and thrive. From there, they asked: How do we measure progress toward this vision? How do we support students to reach this vision?

San Angelo Independent School District
San Angelo, TX • 14,500 Students



Building an MTSS is one way the district reached that vision. Their partnership with Panorama has helped reduce feelings of frustration and being overwhelmed as they work to implement this vision for the whole child across all schools.

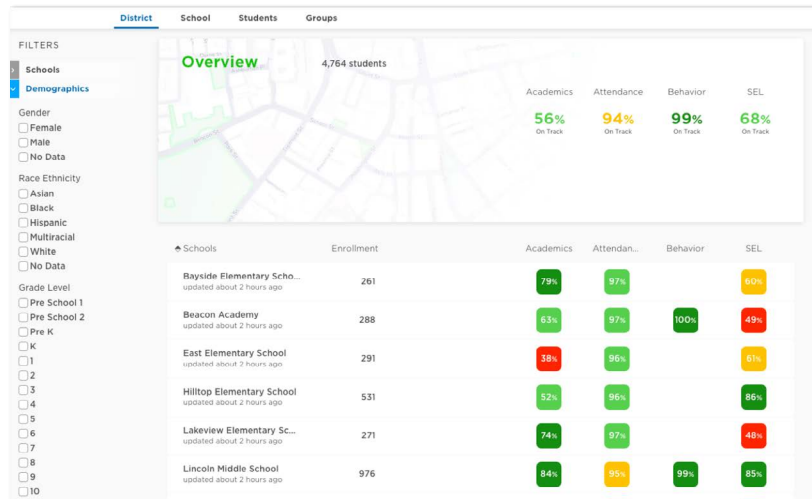
Michael Kalnbach believes strongly that it is the role of educators to take care of all children—beyond academics. This includes mental health and social-emotional learning.

“In order to provide that support, we knew we needed to see the truth about every child—and see it quickly. When we found Panorama, it was clear that Panorama’s vision matched ours. The Panorama platform meets several huge needs that we have—from SEL and climate surveys, to MTSS whole-child dashboards.”

—Michael Kalnbach, Principal, Glenn Middle School

Incorporating SEL into MTSS Data to Support Students

Lindy Lyles says that Panorama helps the district incorporate SEL into MTSS data. They use Panorama's SEL assessments and culture and climate surveys for students, staff, and families, and that data gets funneled into the Panorama platform. From a district perspective, Lyles can see how they're doing across all campuses. This can help administrators understand where they need to spend their time and where principals need support.



The Panorama Student Success platform (Please note that demo data is pictured)

“Our counselors, at-risk coordinators, and social workers can cross-reference data on which students on campus are failing, have low attendance, and are self-reporting low SEL. We can instantly get from a roster of 2,000 students to a list of 20 students who are urgent and critical—and that’s where we would go first.”

—Lindy Lyles, Director of Social-Emotional Learning

Resource List

- **Research Brief:** [What New Research Tells Us About SEL and the ABCs of Student Success](#)
- **Blog:** [How to Identify the Best SEL Strategies for Your Students \[+ Intervention Guides\]](#)
- **Blog:** [Small-Group Interventions for Reading, Math, and SEL \[+ Intervention Planning Forms\]](#)



Creating a Strong Base of Tier 1 Supports

Strong Tier 1 practices are essential for strengthening school climate, relationships, and classroom instruction. But how do you build—and systematize—a strong base of Tier 1 supports?

To do this well, there's a lot to learn from [Ogden School District](#). The district has a strong vision for student support that focuses on building **strong relationships** with students. This vision motivates their approach to MTSS and informs everything they do—from Tier 1 interventions to how they collect and use data.

Don't Reinvent the Wheel for Every School

Ogden strives to deliver consistent MTSS services across the entire district. Although the goal of MTSS is to provide individualized support to every student, it's not efficient or repeatable to write a new behavior plan every time a student acts out or shows signs of struggle. Developing district-level systems and core MTSS values ensures that students are getting the best support possible at every school.

District leaders have worked hard to maintain consistency in MTSS services across school sites. These shared elements include [data collection systems](#), [intervention menus](#), support teams, and professional development.

Ogden School District
Ogden, UT • 12,300 Students



A Strong Tier 1 is the Best Prevention For Needing Tier 2 or 3 Interventions

A focus on building a strong base of Tier 1 supports creates a proactive and preventative MTSS culture. In Ogden, school sites evaluate Tier 1 data every month to identify one area for improvement. For instance, at New Bridge Elementary School, one month they might be working on students' friendship skills because of a rise in playground incidents.

“Our three major Tier 1 systems relate to behavior, attendance, and academics. Interwoven through all three are our new efforts in understanding how SEL impacts those three areas for our students.”

—Janice Bukey, Former Principal, New Bridge Elementary



Here are a few of Ogden’s school-based Tier 1 strategies:

- **Attendance challenges** to celebrate good attendance with a traveling trophy and ice cream parties.
- **Daily behavior spotlights** over the PA and on a bulletin board to encourage positive behavior.

Manage and Progress Monitor in One Central Data System

Administrators, staff, and educators need shared access to progress monitoring data to quickly identify struggling students and understand if interventions are working. While intervention planning and progress monitoring are usually used for small groups or individual students, educators can use them to aid in planning and monitoring the success of universal Tier 1 supports as well. These can be for an entire class, grade level, school building, or district.

For Ogden School District, [Panorama](#) is that central data system. Educators can review and log student intervention data across academics, behavior, attendance, and social-emotional learning in one place. They can track academic and SEL interventions, make qualitative progress notes, and collect vital student voice data directly inside the platform.

Resource List

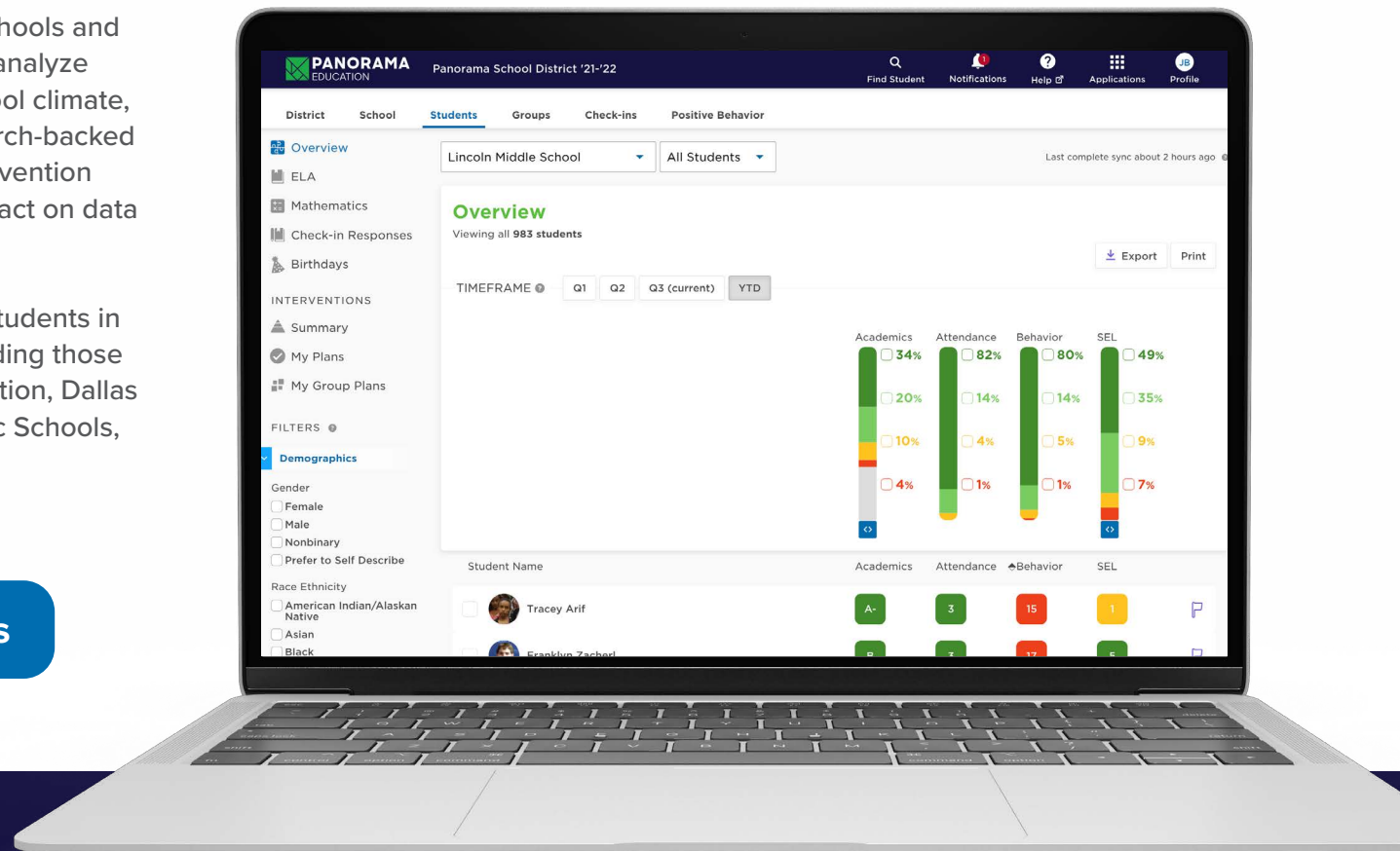
- **Blog:** [42 MTSS Intervention Strategies for Your Student Support Team](#)
- **Guide:** [Supporting Every Student: 18 Research-Based Interventions for Your MTSS](#)
- **Blog:** [Check-In Check-Out: Intervention Tips and Guidance](#)

About Panorama Education

Panorama Education partners with K-12 schools and districts across the country to collect and analyze data about social-emotional learning, school climate, family engagement, and more. With research-backed surveys, actionable data reports, and intervention tracking tools, Panorama helps educators act on data and improve student outcomes.

Panorama supports more than 15 million students in 25,000 schools across all 50 states, including those in the New York City Department of Education, Dallas Independent School District, Seattle Public Schools, and San Francisco Unified School District.

[Schedule a Meeting With Us](#)



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