Link Community Charter School
NJ Tiered System of Supports (NJTSS) Manual

Addressing the Academic, Social, and Emotional Needs of All Link Scholars in Grades K-8

DRAFT MANUAL
Fall 2022

23 Pennsylvania Avenue
Newark, NJ
Background and Overview
To best support the academic, social, and emotional needs of students, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) recognizes NJ Tiered Systems of Support (NJTSS) as a framework based on best practice for providing instruction and intervention designed to meet students’ diverse needs. This manual highlights the steps taken at Link Community Charter School (LCCS) to implement NJTSS in grades five through eight. Additional information regarding NJTSS can be found in the NJDOE implementation guidelines (2019) and guide decision-making at LCCS: https://www.nj.gov/education/njtss/guidelines.pdf.

Essential Components of Tiered Systems of Support
Link Community Charter School (LCCS) recognizes the essential components of NJTSS, highlighted in the framework pictured below.

![Three tiers of support guide intervention based on multiple measures of student data. Included in the model are components of school leadership, family/community engagement, and positive school culture and climate.]

Best Practices

All Tiers
- District/schools provide Tier 1, 2, and 3 supports and interventions along a continuum based on individual student needs that are always changing, as opposed to labeling students as “Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3 students” or “RTI students”
- Accommodations for students with disabilities and students who are English language learners are provided to students who need them at all three tiers of instruction and support.
The New Jersey Department of Education recognizes tiered systems of support as a continuum supported by ongoing progress monitoring.

**Link Community Charter School Implementation Plan**

Based on the “Start Where You Are” guidelines highlighted in the New Jersey Department of Education Division of Student Services Implementation Guidelines (2019), Link Community Charter School is committed to building on the strength of a robust curriculum and instructional program. Timelines matched with action steps are highlighted in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline/Phase</th>
<th>Action Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Spring 2022 (Phase 1)** | - Review of Data from the 2021-2022 school year  
- Gather and review resources on NJTSS  
- Review models of RTI and multi-tiered systems of support  
- Identify research-based models of innovative practices  
- Invite key stakeholders to participate in the process |
| **Summer 2022 (Phase 1)** | - Administration/Leadership Retreat and Planning  
- Determine vision, goals, and common language for NJTSS  
- Assess the strengths and needs at LCCS  
- Needs-based assessment demonstrated a need for building capacity for ELA/Math intervention |
| **Fall 2022**           | - Teacher Professional Development at Opening Meetings (introduce vision, goals, and common language for NJTSS/I&RS)  
- Introduction and Launch of the W.I.N. Period  
- Data Informed Decision Making-Data Review and Tiering of Students for ELA/Math (Use of Matrices) |
| Introduction of Tier 2/Tier 3 trackers for data-driven decision making and progress monitoring |
| Literacy Interventionist (GR 5-6) appointed at LCCS |
| Identified goals and outcomes for the 2022-2023 implementation of NJTSS |

**Winter/Spring 2023 (Phase 2)**

- Assess the strengths and needs at LCCS noting current resources (eg. financial, personnel, and instructional) and practices in place
- Determine what is needed to strengthen the framework
- Enhance family and community engagement around the NJTSS framework

**Summer 2023**

- Use data to refine SMART goals
- Assess NJTSS framework/sustainability at LCCS
- Determine next steps for the 2023-2024 school year
- Survey the school community to gather additional feedback regarding NJTSS implementation
- Provide recommendations and a summary report to the LCCS Board of Directors

**Ten Key Points for Success @ Link**

1. **Awareness** - I see and get the need.
2. **Resources** - I have the resources I need.
3. **Research** - I understand the research-practice connection.
4. **Expertise** - I acknowledge the role of experts in this process.
5. **Building** - I know the stronger Tier 1 is the stronger the foundation is.
6. **Coordination** - I know tiered systems must be flexible.
7. **Instruction** - I know intervention feels “intervention-like.”
8. **PD** - I recognize staff development makes this work.
9. **Admin-Support** - I should be able to share my successes and confusions openly.
10. **Purpose** - I know the “why” behind this model.

_A reflective practice set of guiding questions for implementation at LCCS._
The following goals guide NJTSS implementation at LCCS for the 2022-2023 school year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2022-2023 NJTSS Goals at LCCS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Engage teachers/instructional staff in the review of academic data in ELA/Math using multiple measures to identify trends with high, medium, and low groups of students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provide ongoing small group instruction in ELA across disciplines, communicating expectations with content area teachers and engaging interventionists/coaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Utilize instructional coaches and leadership team members throughout the NJTSS/I&amp;RS process to effectively monitor successes and needed interventions.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Roles and Responsibilities at Link**

**Leadership Team** (eg. Head of School, Principal, Vice- Principals, Supervisor of K-4, Dean of Students)

- The roles and responsibilities of the leadership team are to articulate the purpose and components of the RTI process, while fostering a safe and trusted environment for all stakeholders. The leadership team shall guide the collaborative efforts of all team members to ensure the involvement of an active teaching and learning cycle, that includes school goals, data analysis, best practices, and research.

**Coaches** (eg. Literacy Coach, Math Coach)

- The roles and responsibilities of the instructional coaches are to support the implementation of effective instructional strategies, while promoting the implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS). The instructional coaches will assist in facilitating collaborative data driven conversations and decision making for schoolwide achievement and mastery of learning goals.

**Interventionists** (eg. Literacy Interventionist)

- The roles and responsibilities of the interventionists are to provide specific, targeted instruction to individual students, while providing small groups for students who have been identified for Tier III instruction and/or recommended by the I&RS committee. The interventionists shall work in conjunction with the classroom teacher while assessing student progress for 4-6 weeks at a time.
Social Workers
- The roles and responsibilities of the school social workers are to provide support and guidance in designing, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of school-wide universal supports, targeted group interventions, and intensive individual interventions in objective and measurable terms. The school social workers will provide relevant background information and will serve as liaisons for children and families, while providing individual and small group behavioral and social-emotional strategies in continuous cycles.

Teachers
- The role and responsibilities of teachers as instructional leaders are to provide a variety of instructional strategies, activities, and assessments within the general education setting to assist students of all abilities and tiers. The instructional leadership team may include the classroom teachers, special education teachers, teachers of specific content areas, and paraprofessionals. Each of these individuals play an important role in the NJTSS process, I&RS referral process, and progress monitoring.

Data-Driven Decision Making and Progress Monitoring
Matrices - Teachers and instructional leaders review data at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year to determine trends across tiers in ELA and Math (See Appendix). Students who receive Tier 2 and Tier 3 support are monitored over a 4-6 week instructional cycle, as interventions and supports are in place.

Data Walls- Recognizing that implementing tiered systems of support is a continuum and students’ needs change throughout the year, data walls for ELA and Math are updated in the Fall/Winter/Spring of each school year.

Staff Development- Ongoing staff development is provided to review updates and ongoing processes and procedures regarding NJTSS and I&RS. Department meetings, grade-level meetings, and professional development days are utilized to review successes and challenges around tiered interventions.

Advisory-Through the Advisory structure at LCCS, advisors meet with scholars regularly to have intentional conversations around each individual scholar’s data, goals, and interventions.
2022-2023 W.I.N. (What I Need) Period
During the 2022-2023 school year, Link Community Charter School established a W.I.N. period as part of the instructional day to...

Student Expectations

Opportunities to work on skills **on their own** in...

- Math (IXL)
- ELA; (Newsela, Mindplay, or SSR)
- Homework Help/Study Skills

Opportunities to work on skills **with teacher-directed small group support**.
Launch Lessons
At the launch of the W.I.N. period, LCCS teachers provide a lesson set for introducing W.I.N. and setting expectations for the school year. Students in grades 5-8 are introduced to the purpose of W.I.N. as a student-centered period for intervention and independent practice. Students create profiles based on their individual needs and begin to track their progress in student folders. In addition, students reflect on the LCCS Homework Policy and discuss a plan for success in alignment with Link’s Core Values. A homework survey is distributed and results are analyzed and discussed with scholars. All students sign a compact to demonstrate their understanding of the W.I.N. period. Follow-up lessons include discussions around available student data provided by the New Jersey Department of Education (e.g., NJSLA; Start Strong). Students complete a W.I.N. reflection with the support of their teacher through conferring. Finally, students are ready to actively participate in the W.I.N. period and maintain a track record utilizing the “W.I.N. Progress Monitoring Form.”

Leadership Support for WIN
- Academic Planning
  - ELA-Dr. Ken Kunz
  - Math-Danielle Perrotta
- WIN Support Planning/Homework Help/Study Skills-Grade Level Meetings
- Scheduling & Logistics- Kathleen Hester; Hannah Kennedy; Crystal Covington
- Restoration & Reflection-Ameenah Brown

Contact information for W.I.N. support and implementation.
Restorative Justice and Tiered System of Supports
The school utilizes the strategy of Restorative Justice to handle conflict between students or between students and staff. Restorative Justice focuses on repairing harm through inclusive processes that engage all those affected by an issue through guided conversation. It includes taking responsibility, problem solving and mediation, thereby providing a learning opportunity and consequences rather than just punishment.

Connections to I&RS
The LCCS team of social workers provides an annual training to staff at the launch of each school year to review the processes and procedures for I&RS. Included in this presentation are the (1) overview of I&RS, (2) steps for identifying students, (3) and the flowchart for implementation. Included below are the I&RS team members.

**2022-2023 I&RS Team Members**

- Iris Acevedo - I&RS Coordinator / Social Worker
- Crystal Covington - Vice Principal
- Ameenah Brown - Dean of Students
- Amanda Ryan - Special Education Teacher -or-
- Josie Arizmendi - Special Education Teacher -or-
- Sharon Bell - Special Education Teacher
- Dr. Jen Cruz - Psychologist
- Karen Hamma - School Nurse (medical)
- Referring teacher(s)

*A directory of contacts for the LCCS I&RS team*

**Link Community Charter School I&RS**

- Step 1: Teacher identifies student having academic, health and/or behavior difficulties. Teacher implements general, academic, and behavioral interventions without success.
- Step 2: Teacher enrolls the I&RS team with student referral.
- Step 2 cont: Teacher is sent the I&RS teacher questionnaire to be completed and returned in 1 week.
- Step 3: Parent is contacted about the I&RS referral and sent a fact sheet and parent questionnaire to be returned in 1 week.
- Step 4: The teacher/parent questionnaires are submitted to the I&RS Coordinator, and a meeting is scheduled. The teacher/parent are notified of the meeting date and time. Action plan created.
- Step 5: Teacher implements the action plan and collects data.
- Step 6: 4-6 weeks I&RS coordinator schedules a review meeting with the teacher and data is reviewed.

A. Action plan is working and requires no revisions.
B. Action plan requires some revisions; if necessary, decisions are made to modify strategies.
C. After 2 unsuccessful cycles of I&RS, the I&RS coordinator may refer the student to the child study team.

*A flow chart for implementation of I&RS at LCCS*

**Additional Resources:** [https://www.nj.gov/education/njtss/](https://www.nj.gov/education/njtss/)
Contact Information
Questions regarding New Jersey Tiered System of Supports (NJTSS) and the I&RS process can be directed to participating members of the leadership team and individuals highlighted in this manual. For general information, please contact Kathleen Hester at khester@linkschool.org.

Fall 2022 NJTSS Manual Planning Team
Dr. Ken Kunz, Literacy Specialist and Coach
Crystal Covington, Vice Principal
Eugenia Cooley, Reading Specialist

Reviewed by Kathleen Hester, Principal, October 2022
Appendix A: Math Matrix, Grades 5-8

Name________________________  Team_______________________  Teacher______________________  Grade Level_________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1</th>
<th>Tier 2</th>
<th>Tier 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NJSLA Score of 4-5</td>
<td>NJSLA Score of 3</td>
<td>NJSLA Score of 1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Strong No Support</td>
<td>Start Strong Some Support</td>
<td>Start Strong High Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IXL Benchmark TBD</td>
<td>IXL Benchmark TBD</td>
<td>IXL Benchmark TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add'l Data TBD</td>
<td>Add'l Data TBD</td>
<td>Add'l Data TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Progress Monitoring**

**Beginning of the Year**
Date_______  Tier ____

**Middle of the Year**
Date_______  Tier ____

**End of the Year**
Date_______  Tier ____
Appendix B: ELA Matrix, Grades 5-6

Name________________________   Team_______________________
Teacher______________________   Grade Level_________________

Tier 1 and Tier 2 Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NJSLA Score of 4-5</td>
<td>NJSLA Score of 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start Strong No Support</td>
<td>Start Strong Some Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literably-on or above instructional level</td>
<td>Literably-1-2 years below instructional level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsela Data TBD</td>
<td>Newsela Data TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add'l Data TBD</td>
<td>Add'l Data TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tier 3 Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5th Grade</th>
<th>6th Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*If Available</td>
<td>*If Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2022 NJSLA ELA Score of 1 (Did Not Yet Meet Expectations) or 2 (Partially Met Expectations)</td>
<td>Spring 2022 NJSLA ELA Score of 1 (Did Not Yet Meet Expectations) or 2 (Partially Met Expectations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literally Reported Reading Level</td>
<td>Literally Reported Reading Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;2 Years Below Reading Level</td>
<td>&gt;2 Years Below Reading Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall Instructional Target: S/T</td>
<td>Fall Instructional Target: V/W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIPPS Plus Placement Test Decoding Support for Older Readers (1st/2nd Grade Reading Level)</td>
<td>*Optional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Optional</td>
<td>*Optional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*ELA data collected and shared through i&amp;RS/teacher referral</td>
<td>*ELA data collected and shared through i&amp;RS/teacher referral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Progress Monitoring
Beginning of the Year
Date_______ Tier ___

Middle of the Year
Date_______ Tier ___

End of the Year
Date_______ Tier ___

Appendix C: ELA Matrix, Grades 7-8

Name________________________ Team_______________________
Teacher______________________ Grade Level_________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1</th>
<th>Tier 2</th>
<th>Tier 3</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NJSLA Score of 4-5</td>
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<td>Start Strong No Support</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literably-on or above instructional level</td>
<td>Literably-1-2 years below instructional level</td>
<td>Literably-&gt;2 years below instructional level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsela Data TBD</td>
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<td>Newsela Data TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add’l Data TBD</td>
<td>Add’l Data TBD</td>
<td>Add’l Data TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Progress Monitoring
Beginning of the Year
Date_______ Tier ___

Middle of the Year
### Appendix D: Reading/Writing Phonics Matrix
**Grades K-1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1</th>
<th>Tier 2</th>
<th>Tier 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Map Score</td>
<td>Map Score of Average</td>
<td>Map Score of Low, Low Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi Average, High</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigance &gt;88</td>
<td>Brigance 61-88</td>
<td>Brigance &lt;61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F &amp;P Benchmark Assessment</td>
<td>F &amp;P Benchmark Assessment</td>
<td>F &amp;P Benchmark Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On or above instructional level</td>
<td>1 year Below instructional Level</td>
<td>&gt;2 years below instructional level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sipps Placement Assessment</td>
<td>Sipps Assessment</td>
<td>Sipps Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K:Beginning Level</td>
<td>1 year below instructional level</td>
<td>&gt;2 years below instructional level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences/Guided Reading</td>
<td>Small Group/Individual Conferences</td>
<td>*1:1 LLI Intervention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Grades 2, 3 and 4 to be added
(LLI Launching in fall 2022)

**Progress Monitoring**
Beginning of the Year
Date: ________ Tier: ________
Middle of the Year:
Date: _______ Tier:_______

End of the Year:
Date:_________ Tier:________

Appendix E: Math Matrix
Grades K-1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1</th>
<th>Tier 2</th>
<th>Tier 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Map Score: Hi Average, High</td>
<td>Map Score: Average</td>
<td>Map Score: Low, Low Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigance &gt;88</td>
<td>Brigance 61-88</td>
<td>Brigance &lt;61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Additional Data TBD IReady</td>
<td>*Additional Data TBD IReady</td>
<td>*Additional Data TBD IReady</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Grades 2, 3 and 4 to be added

Progress Monitoring
Beginning of the Year
Date:_______ Tier:_______

Middle of the Year:
Date: _______ Tier:_______

End of the Year:
Date:_________ Tier:________