Ingham Impact Episode 7: Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Multi-Tiered System of Supports is an infrastructure that helps support all students, both academically, socially, and behaviorally. So, putting systems in place that will help support students at three levels, and they call them Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3. As a MTSS consultant for the ISD I really work with districts to help support and collaborate with districts to build an MTSS system and infrastructure, at the district level, the building level, and the classroom level. So really developing that tiered system to support all students, whether they are struggling and at-risk students, or students who are high achievers and need some more enrichment. A lot of times our processes used to wait, and wait and wait until we had kind of a situation that was so full-blown where we weren't intervening early enough with students but I think at this point in time, we're getting much better at it, much more efficient, identifying student need, and then structuring our school day to accommodate them. It really allowed us to really focus on student need, and I think those early identification pieces are so crucial as far as education is concerned for students. And what I specifically do for the ISD is I work with principals and leadership teams to ensure that we are really looking at individual student data, and that embedded in the practice of what we do, day in and day out, that we are providing appropriate interventions for students at the Tier 2 and Tier 3 level. For those students that are getting that solid core curriculum, and are still having difficulty, we look at that Tier 2 intervention. And again, that can be academically, or behaviorally, so putting in some intervention and some supports to help lift their success. If that's not helping students, two things need to happen: you need to look at that Tier 2 intervention and instruction to make sure that that is solid and being done with fidelity and if that is happening and students still aren't successful, then we look at maybe they need a little more support and we look at that Tier 3 intervention and really giving them more time and intensity to help support that student. I'm in the buildings a lot, so I have the pleasure of working in Lansing Public Schools right now with mainly their priority schools. So everyday I'm either talking to a principal or last week I took a small group of young boys that were kind of a disciplinary issue but we sat down and we talked, took them to the library, got some good instruction going on then was able to debrief with the teacher later, and coached etc. So it's a lot of small, micro stuff but it's also then, I may be sitting with and presenting to a leadership team. There's no normal day nor normal work week. My work depends on what the district wants and needs from me as a consultant, and that's exciting about the work. Because, although an MTSS infrastructure has the components, the components look different in every district. So I might be doing that, I might be teaching CHAMPS all day to Lansing teachers, and so that's another fun thing. So there's a lot of different facets of what I do, but, boy, I really like to be in the buildings and that day to day piece and I think that's part of the principal and teacher in me. The strongest benefit to an MTSS model in my opinion is that it's proactive; we aren't waiting for students to fail before we

intervene. We are looking at the data, we are taking each student, looking at each student's data, and then looking at data as a whole to be proactive. So, the model as a whole really helps support students, not only academically but self confidence, self worth; we are in turn hopefully really helping students enjoy school and understand that they can learn; this is what I need to do, this is how I can get there, and then I have these people, these educators, these teachers helping me get there. When you can provide supports to districts and teachers in the form of instructional techniques, research based instructional strategies, curriculum assess-ability; It all comes down to providing services to get every one of our students the specific resources they need to be successful. That's our goal, I think, an overall stretching goal, we all have a stake in that. And I think whether it's a student with special needs, or whether it's a student that's having behavior issues, whether it's a student who is accelerating through the curriculum, all of those students have equal needs, and we want to be able to help all of them and I think all of us participate in that as an ISD. We're really taking a lot of the best practices that we've been doing for years, prior to it even becoming MTSS or MTSS infrastructure; we're taking those, we're using those as a model and we continue to research and grow. So we can call it RTI, we can call it MTSS, we can call it best practices in education, it is all the same thing. It is really looking at how we can best support students and use data to drive our decision making.

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