MLSS NEWSLETTER

NEW MEXICO
Public Education Department

# Advisement Remains a Core Component of the Educational Experience

WRITTEN BY: Christian Naranjo

As New Mexico schools transition into adopting the Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS), it is useful to consider the MLSS layering framework as a model for how to provide college and career advisement to all students. Advisement remains an essential component of the core educational experience, and we must support each student in the development of a guiding vision for their future.

The New Mexico Public Education Department manual for MLSS provides three layers of intervention:

» **Layer 1:** Universal Interventions,
» **Layer 2:** Targeted Interventions, and
» **Layer 3:** Intensive Interventions.

In this article, we will discuss each layer of MLSS and examine the ways that schools can support students' learning and behavioral needs through the lens of college and career readiness.

MLSS LAYER 3
Intensive Interventions

MLSS LAYER 2
Targeted Interventions

MLSS LAYER 1
Universal Interventions
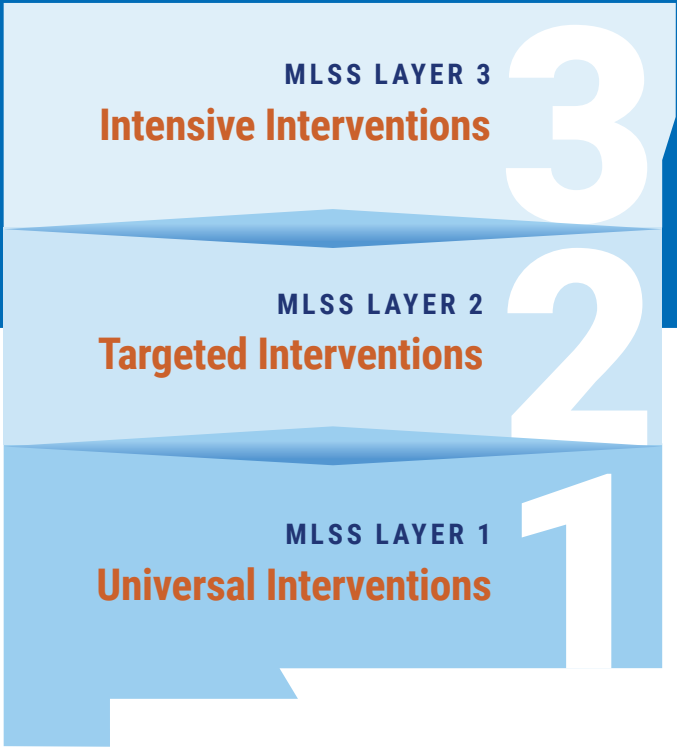
1. Universal Interventions

First, all students should be receiving Universal Interventions (Layer 1), which include high-quality and differentiated core instruction. In regards to advisement, career exploration information should be available to every New Mexico student. Early career exploration often starts in elementary grades, however the formal career advisement process normally starts with the Next Step Plan. This is a personal and written plan that is developed by each student at the end of grades 8–11 and is updated again during the senior year (grade 12).

The purpose of the Next Step Plan is to identify the student's career interests and the foundational

educational steps required to be fully prepared for that career path. The plan is designed to ensure the student is on target, not only to complete high school graduation, but also to be prepared for the next steps in their career journey, whether that involves industry credentialling, community college, or a traditional baccalaureate college pathway. The student reviews and updates their plan annually with an advisor.

The Next Step Plan should set the stage for further postsecondary and career exploration; however, other level-one interventions should also be provided to all students. For example, advisors can connect students to college fairs at the school campus or through a wide-ranging platform like College Board's Big Future Days, which provides high school students an opportunity to meet with college admissions representatives from universities across the country. Advisors can also help students think about their future career by giving them access to resources like the New Mexico Career Clusters Guide Book (Spanish version here) and the Pathway2Careers dashboard.

The New Mexico Career Clusters Guide Book is a New Mexico specific tool to help students plan and prepare for a career. It provides a structure for selecting careers based on linking what they know about themselves with information about occupations and typical training requirements. It provides recommended high school pathways to help prepare for particular careers that are in-demand in New Mexico.

The Pathways2Careers dashboard provides current labor market data for each school district in the state, to enhance a student's ability to identify a career destination. It allows students to:

» Find what jobs are available in their geographical area,

» Discover how many jobs of a particular career are available,

» Learn the median wage for that career, and

» See the projected new job growth for that career.

When we provide college and career information—Next Step Plans, college and career fairs, and career exploration—to every New Mexico student, we are successfully fulfilling our duty for Universal Interventions (Layer 1).

2. Targeted Interventions

Second, some students should be receiving Targeted Interventions (Layer 2), which include a focused approach to certain groups of students and their specific needs. For advisors, this may include recruiting students for Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual Credit (DC) classes. For example, while many schools offer traditional AP classes such as English or Calculus, many New Mexico students also demonstrate high potential for success in AP Computer Science Principles and AP Spanish. School counselors can use PSAT data to identify which students have high potential for specific classes and then conduct targeted recruiting.

Another option for Layer 2 advisement includes providing FAFSA nights for students who have expressed interest in postsecondary education, but are not sure how to make college economically affordable. Providing targeted information about college student aid programs gives students a better chance of following through with their postsecondary goals. For the 60 percent of students who have a goal of attending a college or university, targeted SAT or ACT preparation can support students in reaching their full potential for being matched to an appropriate postsecondary institution.

As one last example for targeted, Layer 2 inventions, advisors can coordinate aligned work based learning opportunities. Career Technical Education (CTE) concentrators may be ready for aligned internships, pre-apprenticeships and other earn-and-learn opportunities.

When we provide a focused approach for identified college and career preparation needs—AP and DC, FAFSA nights, SAT/ACT prep, and apprenticeship recruiting—we are properly completing Targeted Interventions (Layer 2).

3. Intensive Interventions

Third, a few students should be receiving Intensive Interventions (Layer 3), which are intensive and individualized interventions that are evidence-based. This is often tied to the [Early Warning System](#) (EWS), which uses data to alert teachers and administrators when students are not on track for graduating. The system looks closely at the attendance, behavior, and course grades. When a student is struggling with one or more of these factors, an EWS intervention team can step in and provide needed assistance to help get the student back on track.

Emotional and mental needs are displayed differently by different students, and the EWS system is highly effective in identifying students who need these supports because of the triangulated approach to overt behavioral challenges, as well as more cloaked challenges of attendance and grade issues. Therefore, school counselors are an essential partner in both EWS identification and interventions. If students are dealing with family issues at home or are having a difficult time maintaining a school-life-work balance, advisors should provide one-on-one help to these students to ensure they are on a successful path.

When we provide intensive and individualized interventions that are evidence-based—EWS and emotional/mental support—to very few students, we succeeding with Intensive Interventions (Layer 3).

All of these examples serve as an important reminder—MLSS layers are an extremely useful way of thinking about college and career advisement. The framework allows New Mexico educators and advisors to provide top notch college and career preparation to all students. Some students may only need Universal Interventions (Layer 1); however, other students may need all three interventions. The layered model of increasingly intensive interventions allows us make college and career readiness a core component of the educational experience.

If there are any questions about how your school can integrate the MLSS into its college and career readiness programs, please feel free to reach out to the Director of the [College and Career Readiness Bureau](#), Dr. Elaine Perea, at Elaine.Perea@state.nm.us or 505-469-3475.

MLSS and EWS: A Perfect Collaboration

WRITTEN BY: Felicia Walker

As schools and districts in New Mexico face many variables and challenges when educating students, there seems to be an approach that could be beneficial in addressing these issues. Many schools across New Mexico have heard about or are currently implementing an Early Warning System (EWS), at different levels, to assist with addressing the needs of their students. An EWS, coupled with New Mexico's Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS), could prove to be a "dynamic duo." The information below will highlight and compare how these two systems are similar and complement each other well—to have all students ready for success!

MLSS & EWS:

The Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS) is New Mexico's adaptation of the Response to Intervention Framework (RtI). MLSS is a coordinated and comprehensive framework for educators to use to organize their schools and school systems to support student learning. This support is accomplished by identifying and supporting students' learning and behavioral needs.

MLSS allows schools to recognize and provide the resources teachers, health and wellness personnel, and school administrators require for full implementation and long-term sustainability of MLSS.

Early Warning Systems (EWS) rely on readily available existing data housed at the school to:

» Predict which students are at-risk for dropping out of high school or not moving to next grade level (in Middle and Elementary Schools);

» Target resources to support off-track students while they are still in school, before they drop out;

» Predict students who are not performing up to ability or are not college and career ready; and

» Examine patterns and identify school climate issues.

Now let's compare the definitions of MLSS and EWS to draw out some overlapping focus:

MLSS is a framework for school personnel to support students by delivering a range of layered interventions based on data-driven and data-informed student needs. MLSS includes high-quality instruction and interventions with progress monitoring for impact. MLSS provides students with the interventions and supports needed to succeed in the general curriculum.

An EWS is a system of data-based indicators predictive of student outcomes related to grade level promotions, high school graduation and postsecondary success. The key indicators in the EWS formulation are the **ABCs: Attendance, Behavior, and Course Performance** (credits earned). The second component of EWS is action prompted by the indicators to help students get back and stay on track, be promoted in each grade, and graduate.

Classroom & School Supports

Just like MLSS, EWS needs both strong and supportive leadership from principals and districts to organize the adults in schools into effective teams. Thus, one of the key differences between EWS and other student support strategies is the essential role played by teams of adults working together to use predictive indicators, and then taking strategic actions to keep all students on track to high school graduation and postsecondary success.

In schools, having standing team(s) of adults who meet regularly and frequently to review student data and indicators is a central part of EWS and MLSS. The team(s) should analyze the indicator data, determine which students to focus on and how, and then take action to set more youth on the path to postsecondary persistence. Team(s) also should evaluate their actions over time so they can improve school practices and policies. Each team should bring together knowledge and experience from multiple sources to forge a collective response for individual students, groups of students, or the entire school. Decisions should not depend on a single adult in a classroom or counseling suite. Instead, adults should collaborate to support each other as they address issues facing students. Many of these stated tasks are also expectations defined in the MLSS Layered Supports and School Supports. Also, the Layered Supports of MLSS, mirrors the "Tiers of Supports" outlined in an EWS. See chart below:

Family & Community Supports

Building on the EWS data indicators and school-based analysis and actions, EWS provides a larger framework to help schools reach outside their campuses to build stronger collaborations in the community, with students' families, and with postsecondary institutions and employers. Many schools already have partnerships with community or religious groups, businesses, and civic groups. EWS aims to raise the bar for what schools and communities can accomplish together to strengthen and support students for success during and after high school. This puts even more of a premium on schools and communities being able to provide all their students with generative experiences and supports that prepare them for postsecondary and adult success. As an EWS system is developed in the PreK—12 sphere, major institutions controlling key transitions from high school to adult success must work to eliminate such constraints and enable students moving through each system to succeed. Various means can help to achieve this, such as community compacts, mayoral and civic leadership, business roundtables, and local educational organizations or collaborations—which some are mentioned in the MLSS Core Components, under the Community Schools Act (CSA).

In closing, if schools are implementing EWS, naturally, they will implement the MLSS Layered Supports and many of the MLSS Core Components. What a "Perfect Collaboration!"

MLSS LAYERED SUPPORTS*	EWS TIERED INTERVENTION LEVELS*
MLSS LAYER 1 **ALL** students receive *universal interventions*	**EWS TIER I** *Prevention/Intervention* designed to support **ALL** students in the grade/school/classroom
MLSS LAYER 2 **SOME** (small groups) students receive *targeted interventions*	**EWS TIER II** *Interventions* designed for a **SMALLER GROUP** of students who are exhibiting off-track behavior (in any of the A,B,Cs)
MLSS LAYER 3 **FEW** students receive *intense interventions*	**EWS TIER III** *Interventions* designed for **INDIVIDUALS OR A FEW** students who are exhibiting strong off-track behaviors (in any of the A,B,Cs) and have not made progress from previous interventions

*MLSS Layers and EWS Tiers do not equate to NM Istation Levels