Total Quality System Definitions
Tiers of Support, Case Management and Case Load

I.   Tiers of Support

Tiers of support apply to the services Communities In Schools provides, brokers and coordinates. Groups of students are described separately below.

Tier 1

Widely available services designed to foster a positive school climate and address school-level risk factors.

- *Possible examples: motivational speaker for schoolwide assembly; college fair; schoolwide anti-bullying program; healthy cooking classes for families*

Tier 2

Targeted services typically provided in a group setting to students with a common need.

- *Possible examples: tutoring, mentoring, attendance monitoring*

Tier 3

Intensive, individualized services typically provided in a one-on-one setting to students with highly specific needs.

- *Possible examples: mental health counseling, mentoring, consultations with a nutritionist, intensive dental work*

Intensity and the Tiers

Interventions increase in intensity from Tier I – Tier III: targeted Tier II supports are more intensive than schoolwide Tier I supports, and individualized Tier III supports are the most intensive. The level of intensity should be considered when determining whether a support is classified as Tier II or Tier III, regardless of whether the support is provided in an individual or group setting.
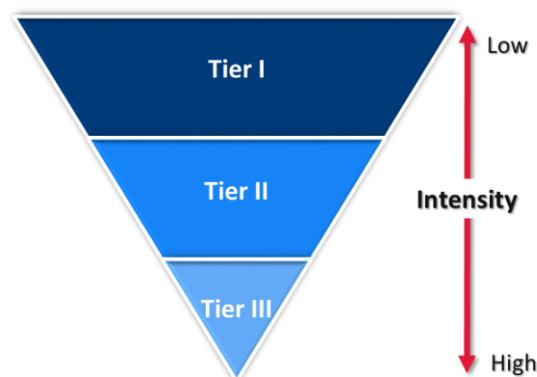

Figure 1: Three Tiers of Support

II. Case Management

At Communities In Schools, case management is defined as a collaborative process to (I) establish a system of services at the school level that can be brokered or provided in support of individual students, and (II) identify and partner with individual students who are at risk of dropping out of school to: assess their needs and assets; create individualized plans for action; provide/broker/coordinate and monitor and adjust service delivery; and evaluate student progress against established goals, all to increase the probability that each student will stay in school and achieve in life.

III. Case Managed Students

A Continuum of Needs

All case managed students have characteristics that place them at risk of dropping out. Some students have relatively moderate risk factors and needs, while others have more intense, complex and pervasive risk factors and needs. Site coordinators can best envision students on a continuum, with the students at the more moderate end needing more moderate levels of support and the students on the more intensive end requiring commensurately more intensive support from Communities In Schools.
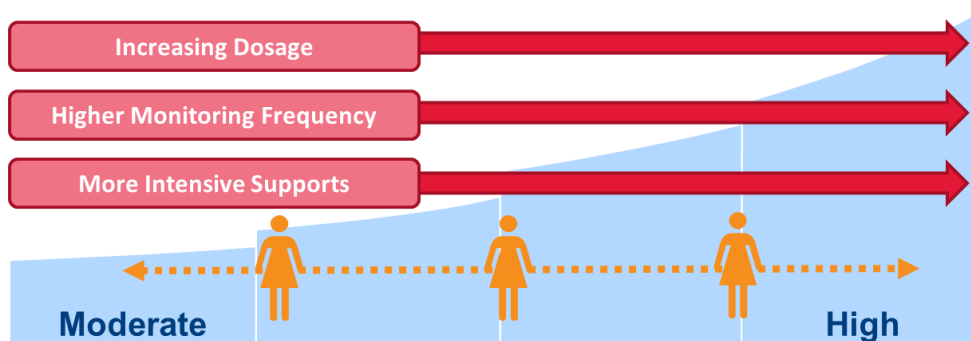

Figure 2: Case Management Continuum

Differentiating between Moderate and High Intensity Students

There is no one-size-fits-all way to determine where students fall on this continuum. Through the referral and initial needs assessment process, site coordinators work to identify the following characteristics of each student:

- Risk factors, including intensity and duration
- Protective factors and assets, including their number and strength

Based on this information, site coordinators use their best professional judgment to assess where each student falls on the continuum. Over time, each student may move along the continuum in either direction as they achieve goals and develop new protective factors or as they develop additional risk factors and needs.

Differentiating Interventions for Moderate and High Intensity Students

The overall components of case management are the same for each student regardless of where s/he falls on the continuum. However, identifying where a student falls on the continuum helps site coordinators ensure that the interventions provided

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within each component have the appropriate intensity for each student's level of need, as illustrated in the following chart.

Case Management Process: Differentiated Interventions by Student Need

Component	Moderate Intensity Student		High Intensity Student
Needs Assessment	• Basic Demographics • Risk Factors/Assets • Baseline ABC Metrics	→	• Additional assessment of risk factors, needs • Family engagement plans
Student Support Plan	• At least one ABC goal	→	• Multiple goals: ABC and other
Supports	• At least one Tier II or Tier III program or intervention • Monthly check-ins with student	→	• Comprehensive, wrap-around supports – from Tier II, Tier III • Multiple check-ins per week with student • Regular check-ins with providers
Adjust, Monitor, Evaluate	• Review progress toward set goal(s) • Review EWIs • Progress is apparent	→	• Progress requires additional time, measures

Aligning Student Needs and Resources

Much as site coordinators must be able to differentiate between students' levels of risk and need in order to provide each student with the correct level of intervention, affiliates must also be able to understand the distribution of moderate and high intensity students across school sites. This is critical to each affiliate's ability to make informed decisions regarding resource allocations, specifically around potential use of AmeriCorps, part-time versus full-time site coordinators, and the use of other volunteers and staff to assist with caseloads so students with high needs are appropriately case managed.