

# INVESTIGATING PALO ALTO HIGH SCHOOL'S MULTI-TIERED SUPPORT SYSTEMS IN ADDRESSING THE UNDERDIAGNOSIS OF ADHD IN GIRLS

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## INTRODUCTION

ADHD is not a gender-specific disorder—however, American females are 31% less likely to be diagnosed with ADHD than American males (Hobbes, 2019). Many public schools have adopted Multi-Tiered-Support-Systems, or MTSS, as a framework to address the needs of children with academic and behavioral issues (Dong et al., 2020). In this project, I examined Palo Alto High School's current progress and goals in implementing MTSS in order to ultimately further refine the systems of support for the student population. The project ultimately aims to improve learning experiences and environments for students with undiagnosed ADHD.

## OBJECTIVE

By investigating how MTSS is currently being implemented at Palo Alto High School to support students with undiagnosed ADHD, and identifying areas where further improvements could be made to better meet the needs of these students, this study aims to identify how MTSS is currently supporting students with undiagnosed ADHD at Palo Alto High School, as well as areas for improvement.

## METHODOLOGY

I summarized findings from the interview in order to interpret patterns and meanings in the data. The goal for this project was to gain insight into how Palo Alto High School is using MTSS to support students with undiagnosed ADHD and investigate effective modes of education for teachers, in order to ultimately improve the learning experience for students with ADHD.

## MTSS

### MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

#### Supports at Paly\*

**Tier 1:** supports accessible to all students

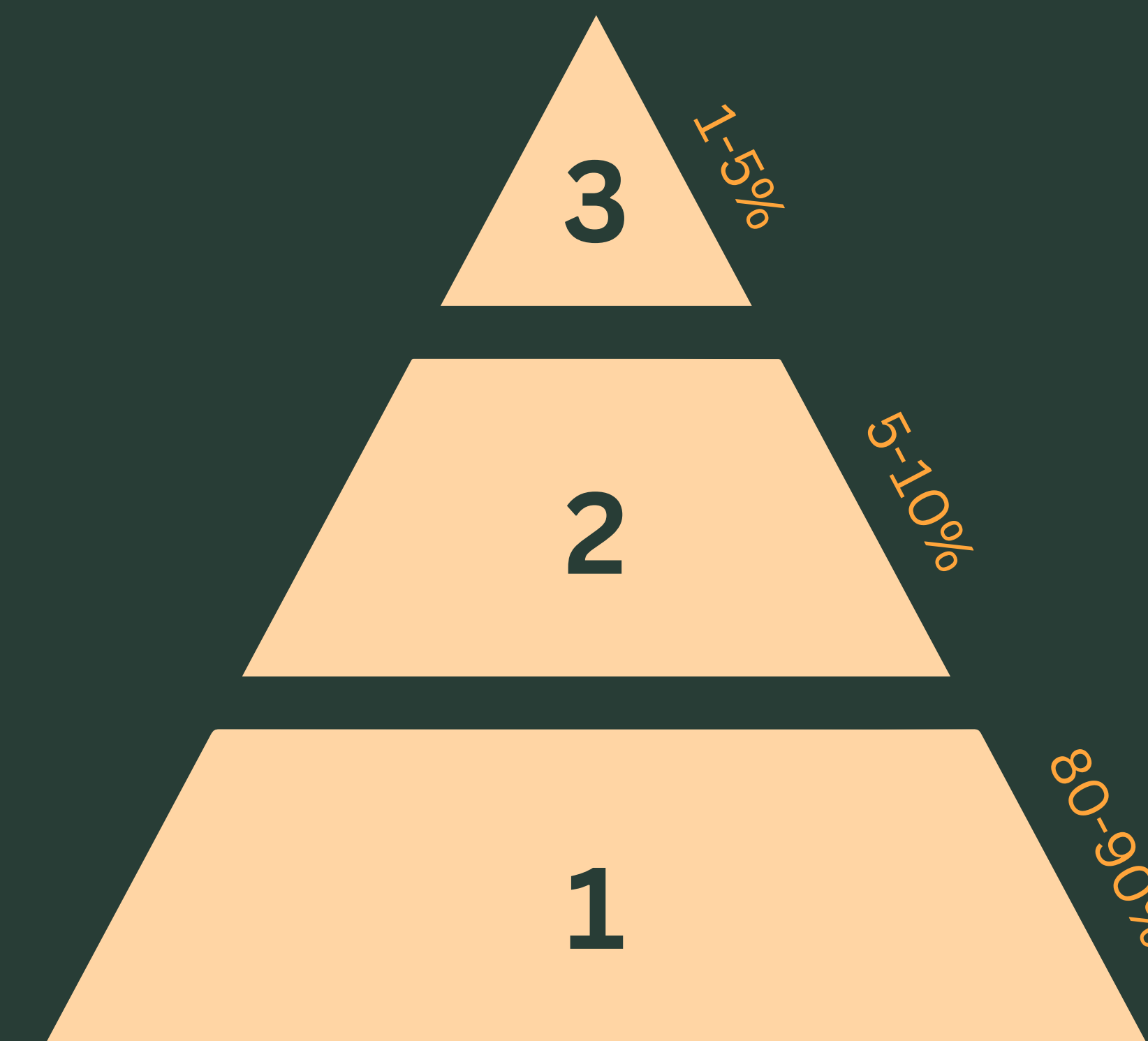
- peer tutoring center
- scaffolded notes
- differentiated assessments
- nurse
- advisory
- wellness center
- TA's
- school counselors
- testing center
- college counselors

**Tier 2:** targeted and group interventions

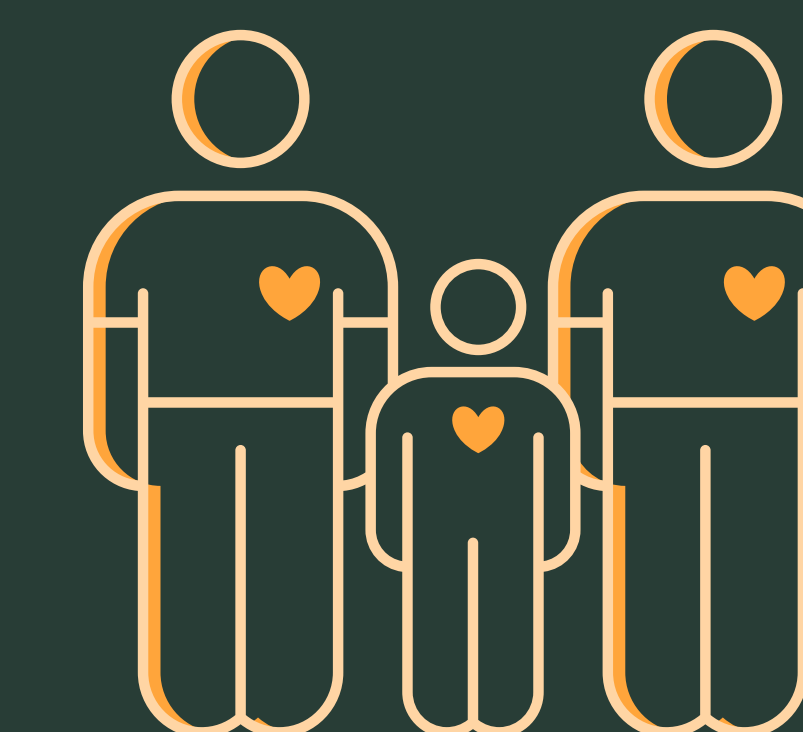
- CICO (check-in check-out) program
- prime (when a teacher explicitly calls a student in)
- additional activities/assignments provided by teachers to replace/supplement assessments

**Tier 3:** intensive individualized interventions

- comprehensive, team approach that includes the student's parents, teachers, and any specialist that may provide information/ideas for helpful supports
- specialized small group classes
- frequently monitored progress (weekly or daily)



**85%** OF STUDENTS' ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIORAL NEEDS ARE MET BY TIER-ONE SUPPORTS



"The better schools get at supporting students at tier one, the less likely it is that they will need to provide more intensive support at higher tiers."

\*This list is not comprehensive. It only contains a FEW examples of what tiered supports can look like at Paly.

## RESULTS/FINDINGS

The interview found:

- Palo Alto High School is implementing MTSS with a focus on tier-one supports to support all students.
- Tier one interventions such as scaffolded notes and differentiated assessments benefit all students, including those with undiagnosed ADHD.
- The school faces challenges in ensuring that MTSS is supporting students struggling with internalized issues, including internalized presentations of ADHD.
- Refining and developing the MTSS system at Paly can ensure that all students receive the support they need to succeed.

## CONCLUSION

Palo Alto High School is primarily focusing on tier one supports to accommodate students with undiagnosed ADHD and other learning differences by providing supports before students necessarily show behavioral issues. However, the lack of education provided to teachers and staff on the internalized presentations of ADHD, particularly in girls, may result in struggling populations being overlooked by the current MTSS at Palo Alto High School. By refining and developing its MTSS system, and providing accessible and relevant education to teachers and staff, Paly can ensure that all students receive the support they need to succeed.

## REFERENCES

List of all annotated references [here](#)