

# **Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs**

## **STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

### **Best Practice Guidelines for Single County Authorities and Liaison Services**

#### **Introduction**

The Commonwealth's Student Assistance Program (SAP) utilizes a systematic team process, composed of professionals from various disciplines within the school, and liaisons from community agencies. This work is carried out in conjunction with the Single County Authority (SCA) and other contracted professionals who are trained to identify a student's barriers to learning; and, in collaboration with families, to strategize and/or refer identified students for assistance to enhance their school success. As representatives of the county drug and alcohol service system, professionally trained liaisons provide consultation to teams and families regarding the need for referral to community-based and school-based assessments for drug and alcohol related problems.

These guidelines are applicable to SCA direct service staff and to SCA contracted SAP agencies/providers for effective delivery of SAP liaison services to student assistance teams in a county/joinder. These guidelines represent best practice for the operation of a successful SAP program. While this document outlines best practice, SCAs should reference the DDAP Prevention Manual for the minimum requirements applicable to the provision of SAP liaison services.

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#### **Guidelines for Single County Authorities (SCAs) In the Implementation of Student Assistance Program Services**

1. Provide access to SAP liaison services for each student assistance team within the county/joinder area served by the SCA.
2. Be knowledgeable about the Commonwealth's Student Assistance Program (SAP) best practices.
3. Ensure letters of Agreement pertaining to the provision of SAP services are executed and in effect. These Letters of Agreement (LOA) should be negotiated annually, and need to be signed by the agency/provider, school district representative, and when applicable the SCA. A copy of this letter should be on file with the SCA.

The letter of agreement should include the following:

- a designated contact person for the school and agency
- the frequency of attendance for liaisons at SAP core team meetings
- the role of the liaisons in the school SAP process
- referral procedures
- school and agency responsibilities and expectations

- a list of services to be provided and their accompanying cost, if any, to the school
  - record-keeping requirements
  - a procedure for conflict resolution
  - Drug and Alcohol confidentiality requirements
4. Monitor compliance/performance of service providers and SAP liaisons relative to uniform policies, regulations, contractual obligations, and goals/objectives as it relates to SAP.
  5. Provide key contacts to liaisons and providers for students that are in need of “special programs” to meet the needs of assessed students.
  6. Provide an annual program activity report that includes information such as a summary of the SAP liaison services provided, the number and demographics of students served, aggregate data on the primary issues identified via screenings conducted, etc. This report can be shared with schools and other key stakeholders to assist in evaluating the services provided and planning future services.
  7. Monitor services provided annually for adherence to best practices.
  8. Establish a system of regular communication with stakeholders who participate in SAP that encourages an interagency approach to meeting students’ and families’ needs.
  9. Collaborate with The Pennsylvania Department of Education’s (PDE) commonwealth-approved training providers for all SAP training that occurs for schools in the county/joinder area.
  10. Utilize state, county, SAP, and other relevant data available for annual planning and program improvement purposes.
  11. Participate in the local conflict resolution process for SAP.
  12. Submit all required reports to the appropriate agencies in a timely manner.

**Guidelines for SAP Liaison Services**  
**From the Drug and Alcohol Service System to SAP Core Teams**

1. The agency/provider shall have qualified staff identified to serve as system liaison(s) to student assistance core teams and should have appropriate supervision by staff knowledgeable about SAP in schools and the local system-wide services/access. When one person functions as liaison for both the drug and alcohol and mental health service systems, that person should have knowledge, skills, and appropriate supervision in each discipline.

2. Liaisons will receive and maintain SAP certification through training provided by a Commonwealth Approved Trainer. When schools develop new or additional teams, the liaisons assigned to the new or additional SAP team(s) are encouraged to attend training with the school personnel as determined by the Commonwealth Approved Trainer.
  
3. Liaisons should have knowledge of:
  - local child-serving systems
  - relevant Federal and State laws, regulations and policies, including confidentiality provisions
  - procedures for accessing local resources for students and families
  - school policies and procedures for the teams to which they are assigned
  - up-to-date information on PDE Commonwealth school-based SAP, policies, procedures and related issues
  - school crisis intervention and support procedures
  - suicide prevention, intervention, support, and postvention assistance procedures
  - screening and assessment procedures
  - group dynamics and the facilitation of educational groups
  - continuum of care planning
  - addictions and addictions services
  - evidence-based prevention programs
  - ethics
  - SAP standards and competencies
  - School-safety issues (e.g., bullying, hazing, harassment, discrimination, violence, morals offenses, etc.)
  - typical/atypical adolescent development and behavior
  - cultural competency
  - current drug trends
  - drugs and the drugs' pharmacological effects on the human body
  - intervention techniques and strategies
  
4. Liaisons should have skills in:
  - team facilitation
  - family intervention
  - resource acquisition
  - conflict resolution and problem solving
  - oral and written communication
  - working with school personnel
  - consulting with parents in "crisis" situations
  - providing screenings to identify a student's potential intervention and treatment needs
  - suicide prevention awareness and intervention techniques
  - working with the various cultures & customs of the student populations and families they serve

5. Liaison's responsibilities may include the following:
- attending core team meetings
  - providing consultation services as requested (e.g., attends meetings with parents and school official)
  - participating in the planning of county coordination/district council meetings and/or facilitating core team maintenance trainings, which provide a forum for student assistance professionals and their stakeholders to network, share resources, and to receive an ongoing education.
  - participating in program evaluation activities with core team members
  - facilitating and supporting the school-based aftercare plans for students who are returning to school from treatment
  - facilitating or co-facilitating school-based support groups
  - maintaining data for required reporting as determined by the SCA
  - providing relevant training to students, parents, faculty and staff, including the marketing of SAP and SAP services
  - assisting the school with stakeholder in-service (i.e., school board, parents, school staff, community members, etc.)
  - collaborating with other agency providers
  - providing student screenings and conducting level of care assessments when appropriately credentialed and trained to perform the task
  - assisting students and their parents in the referral to and access of appropriate services

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