PENNSYLVANIA STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

GUIDELINES FOR TEAMS

The intent of this document is to provide guidance on the essential components needed for team implementation of the Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program (SAP). This guidance is considered by the Pennsylvania Network for Student Assistance Services (PNSAS) to be best practice for SAP teams and is intended to provide direction and support to SAP teams in school entities.

Team Composition & Training

1. The school entity will ensure all team members, including administrators, complete the entire SAP training provided by a Pennsylvania Approved SAP Training Provider (PASTP) and receive a SAP certificate.

2. The school entity will provide oversight of SAP by:
   - A central office administrator should be designated to serve as the district/ school entity SAP coordinator to ensure that the SAP teams are operational.
   - Each building administrator should designate a SAP team coordinator to oversee implementation of each SAP team.

3. Each school entity is required to maintain a properly trained SAP team to include the following:
   - It is recommended that each SAP team consist of at least four members of the school faculty and staff to provide a multidisciplinary perspective and promote shared decision-making, but the size of the team should be sufficient to effectively handle the caseload.
   - It is recommended that each educational entity have a building level administrator who is SAP trained and serves as an essential member of the SAP team.
   - SAP team members should also include representatives from any or all the following groups: building-level administrator, teacher, school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, school nurse, or other related professional school staff. Representative(s) from the county's mental health and drug and alcohol systems may serve as SAP liaisons.
   - It is recommended that SAP teams have sufficient time each week to engage in the full range of SAP activities. These include common team meetings, planning for case management, and identifying interventions. Ideally, this meeting would occur during the contract day.

4. It is best practice to have team maintenance activities at least once a year. Maintenance activities are intended to revitalize or enhance the function of the team and review the four phase SAP process. Drug and alcohol, mental health and/or behavioral health SAP liaisons should be included in maintenance activities. It is not recommended that SAP team

maintenance be conducted by a member of the team. (Contact your PNSAS Regional Coordinator for ideas of facilitators for team maintenance.)

Policies and Procedures

1. SAP teams should stay up to date on federal and state mandates as they relate to the role and function of SAP teams. It is recommended that schools incorporate SAP into relevant policies pertaining to drug/alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, and suicide/behavioral health, school safety, and threat assessment. Policies should be reviewed on an annual basis or at time points specified by relevant legislation.

2. When appropriate the school entity should work to align and/or integrate SAP with multi-tiered approaches (e.g., MTSS, PBIS) and other closely related initiatives within the school setting (e.g., trauma-informed approaches, suicide prevention, threat assessment etc.) to address the needs of all students more efficiently and systematically.
   - Practical Guidance for Exploring the integration and Alignment of the Student Assistance Program (SAP) with a Multi-Tiered Framework for Support
   - Guidance for School Entities: Questions and Answers on K-12 Threat Assessment Procedures and School-based Intervention Teams

SAP Team Data and Reporting

Each school entity will submit PDE 4092 annually through the On-Line Reporting System at www.safeschools.pa.gov.

   - SAP Teams are encouraged to review their data to analyze trends, improve procedures, and identify any gaps in services.

In-School Student Supports

1. SAP teams should, at a minimum, on a yearly basis identify all in-school and community supports. This can be done through resource mapping and development of new supports as needed. Consideration of community-based supports that can be provided to students in school or after school hours can also be considered during resource mapping.

2. In-school supports that may address student academic, social-emotional, behavioral, mental health, vocational, etc. needs include the following:
   - Academic supports (e.g., tutoring, educational support groups, speech/language supports, Title 1, etc.)
   - School Team supports (e.g., MTSS)
   - One-to-One Counseling with School Counselor and/or School Psychologist
   - Services by/from School Social worker
   - One-to-One Follow-up with Team Member or other school personal (e.g., mentoring, check-in-check out, etc.)
   - Crisis Intervention

- Supports for students returning from treatment/out of school placement
- Group Interventions (e.g., skill building, educational support groups). Please consider the following when implementing educational support groups in schools:
  - It is recommended that educational support groups utilize an approved curriculum that focuses on sharing appropriate skills-based or psychoeducational information with students.
  - It is recommended that there be two facilitators (at least one being school staff) for each group. This is helpful when monitoring students and providing additional support as needed.
  - Agency service providers may provide educational support groups in the school. Schools should contact their SAP liaisons and other appropriate human service agencies to determine if they provide educational support group facilitation.

Liaison Agency Involvement

SAP liaison(s) are overseen by the county behavioral health and drug and alcohol systems. A letter of agreement (LOA) should be developed annually and signed by both the provider and school, outlining the following:

- Roles, responsibilities, and expectations
- Referral procedures
- Services that will be provided, such as consultation/education services, screening and/or assessment services, emergency crisis assistance, etc.
- The LOA and/or any changes will be negotiated at a minimum annually and a copy provided to the school entity's County Mental Health and Developmental Services Administrator (MH/DS) and Single County Authority and SAP team.
- The chief school administrator should contact the county drug and alcohol and/or mental Health/Developmental Services Administrator if there are any difficulties securing this service

Informing the School Community

The school entity will make school faculty/staff, students, and families aware of SAP to include the following:

1. Information on the school entity's process for accessing SAP services and the steps to make a referral should be shared with school staff, board members, students, parents, and the community at least annually. Ideally, this information is posted publicly on the school website.
2. Provide training on topics related to SAP to faculty/staff. For example:
   - Training on observable behaviors appropriate for a referral to SAP for all new faculty/staff through an orientation program
   - An overview of SAP and an explanation of the procedures for making referrals to the SAP team