



## What is the Student Assistance Program?

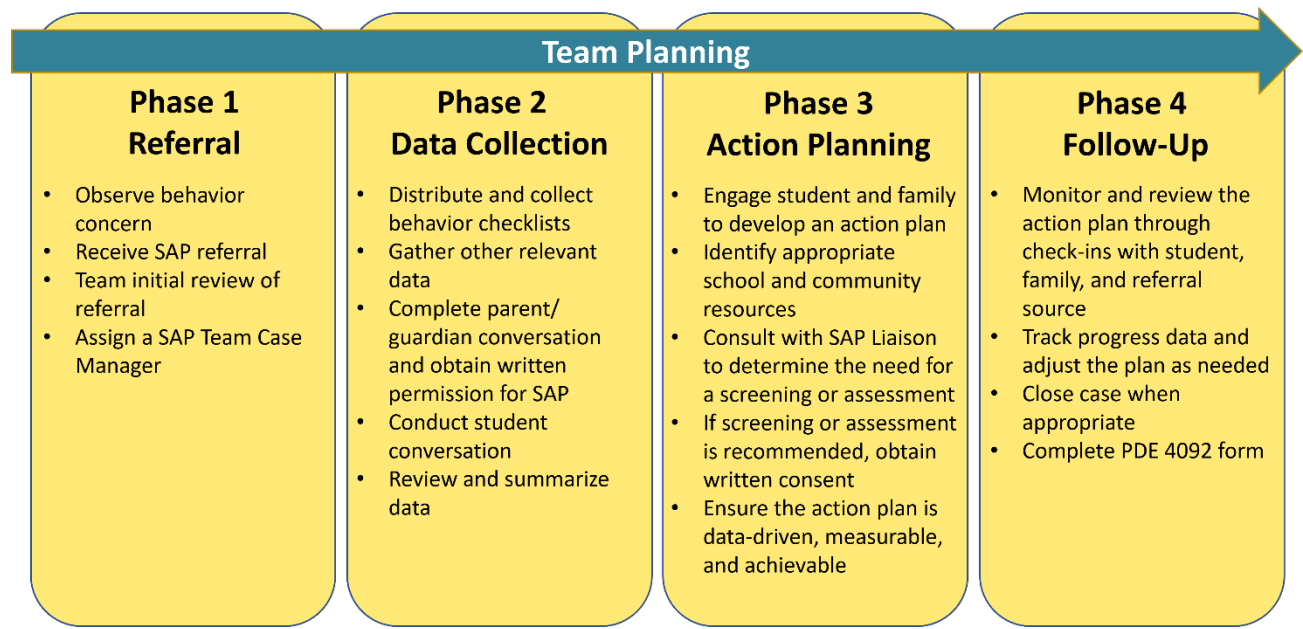
The Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a team process used to mobilize school resources to remove barriers to learning or success. SAP is designed to identify academic, social, attendance, substance use, mental health, and other concerns which pose a barrier to student success. The primary goal of the Student Assistance Program is to help students overcome these barriers so that they may achieve, advance, and remain in school.

The core of the Student Assistance Program is a professionally trained team, including school staff and liaisons from community drug and alcohol, mental health, or behavioral health agencies. SAP team members are trained to review incoming referrals, gather data, and make recommendations to support students in overcoming barriers to learning. These recommendations may include supports and services offered within the school or community. SAP team members do not diagnose, treat, or refer to treatment for behavioral health concerns. The engagement of students and families throughout the SAP process is essential. The SAP team will assist parents in accessing any recommended services and supports.

There are four phases to the student assistance process:



## SAP Best Practice by Phase:



**Referral** - Anyone can refer a student to SAP when they are concerned about a student's behavior.

**Data Collection** – The SAP team gathers objective information and data to inform their decision-making process. Parent permission is required to continue the SAP process.

**Action Planning** – A plan is developed to assist the student in accessing recommended school and/or community supports. The team may utilize liaison services which may include a drug and alcohol and/or mental health screening/assessment.

**Follow-Up** – Follow up includes monitoring progress towards goals and checking in with the family, student, and referral source. The plan may be adjusted as needed.

SAP in Pennsylvania is overseen by the PA Network for Student Assistance Services (PNSAS), comprised of Regional Coordinators and representation from the PA Departments of Education (Office for Safe Schools), Drug and Alcohol Programs (Division of Prevention and Intervention) and Human Services (Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services). The structure and operation of the program in Pennsylvania is a unique integrated model serving the needs of Pennsylvania families and students.

Additional information and resources are available at the [PNSAS web site](#).