



Policy Bulletin

Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Programs

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STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Best Practice Guidelines for Single County Authorities

The Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Programs (BDAP), along with the Student Assistance Program (SAP) Guidelines Committee, which consisted of representatives from Single County Authorities (SCAs), prevention providers and statewide prevention organizations, has developed SAP Best Practice Guidelines for SCAs to adhere to when providing SAP services in their service areas.

The Commonwealth Student Assistance Program utilizes a systematic team approach composed of professionals from various disciplines within the school and liaisons from community agencies. These selected professionals are trained to identify barriers to learning, and, in collaboration with families, strategize for 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 assessment and intervention for drug and alcohol related problems.

The *attached* Best Practice Guidelines identify roles and responsibilities for schools and the local drug and alcohol agencies involved in the operation of a successful SAP, which promotes effective practices at the local level. As of January 1, 2005, the SCAs should adhere to these Best Practice Guidelines when providing SAP services.

Assistance for the implementation of the Best Practice Guidelines is available to SAP agencies/providers and SCAs through BDAPs' Prevention Program Analyst, Lonnie S. Barnes. Mr. Barnes can be reached by email at lobarnes@state.pa.us or by phone at (717) 787-2606.

**Department of Health
Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Programs**

**STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
Best Practice Guidelines for Single County Authorities**

Introduction

The Commonwealth Student Assistance Program (SAP) utilizes a systematic team process composed of professionals from various disciplines within the school and liaisons from community agencies. These selected professionals are trained to identify barriers to learning; and, in collaboration with families, to strategize for 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 assessment for drug and alcohol related problems.

These best practice guidelines identify roles and responsibilities for schools and the local drug and alcohol system involved in the operation of a successful SAP that promotes effective practices at the local level.

Assistance for the implementation of these best practice guidelines is available to SAP agencies/providers and Single County Authorities (SCAs) through the Department of Education (PDE) SAP regional coordinators and the designated Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Programs (BDAP) prevention staff.

**Best Practice Guidelines for Single County Authorities (SCAs)
For the Implementation of Student Assistance Program Services**

These guidelines are applicable to SCA direct service staff and to SCA contracted SAP agencies/providers.

1. Provide effective delivery of SAP services to student assistance teams in the county/joinder as outlined in the guidelines for SAP liaison services within this document either through SCA direct service staff and/or by contract with one or more local agency/provider staff.
2. Provide on-site consultation services to each student assistance team within the county/joinder area.
3. Should have the direction and supervision of liaison staff provided by an individual knowledgeable about the Commonwealth Student Assistance Program and capable of providing local system-wide focus and representation.

4. Should have Letters of Agreement pertaining to the provision of SAP services executed and in effect. The letter of agreement will be signed by agency/provider, school district representative and when applicable, the SCA. A copy of this letter should be on file with the SCA.

At a minimum, 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; and,
 - confidentiality requirements.
5. Monitor services provided annually for adherence to best practices.
 6. Participate in a system of regular communication with stakeholders for SAP in the county/joinder that encourages an interagency approach to meeting student and family needs.
 7. Collaborate with PDE Commonwealth-approved training providers for all SAP training occurring for schools in the county/joinder area.
 8. Utilize state and county SAP and other relevant data available for annual planning and program improvement purposes.
 9. Participate in the local conflict resolution process for SAP.
 10. Submit required reports

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 SAP certification through training provided by a PDE 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/postvention procedures;
- suicide prevention and intervention;
- assessment procedures;
- group dynamics;
- continuum of care;
- addictions;
- 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; and,
- cultural competency.

4. Liaisons should have skills in:

- team facilitation;
- family intervention;
- resource acquisition;
- conflict resolution and problem solving; and,
- oral and written communication.

5. Liaison's responsibilities may include:

- attend core team meetings as time and funding permit;
- provide consultation services as requested;
- provide intervention services as needed;
- facilitate access to the appropriate services;
- participate in and/or facilitate core team maintenance;
- participate in program evaluation activities;
- facilitate and support the school-based aftercare plan for students who are returning to school from treatment;
- facilitate and/or assist with "postvention" efforts;
- facilitate or co-facilitate school-based support groups;
- maintain data for required reporting as determined by the SCA;
- provide relevant training to students, parents, faculty and staff;
- collaborate with other agency providers; and,
- provide community-based and school-based student assessments