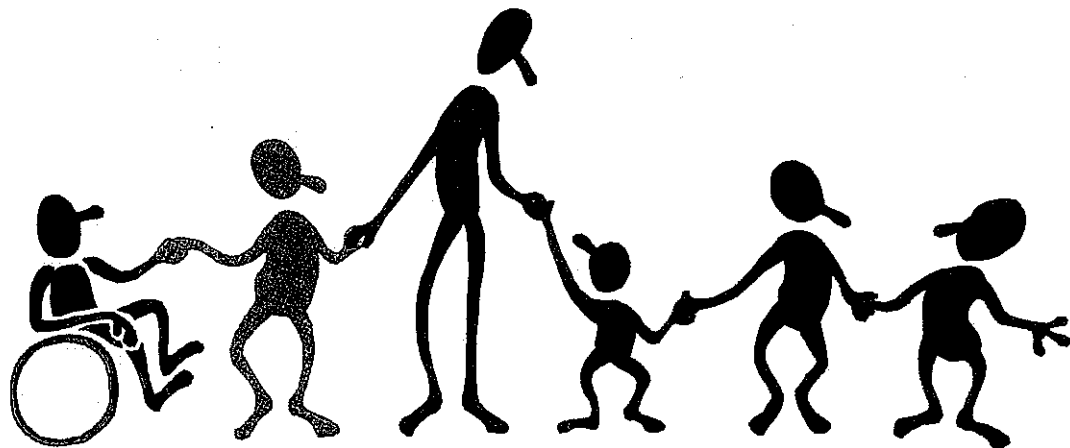


Howard County Public School System
Office of Student, Family and Community Services

Department of Student Services

Student Assistance PROGRAM GUIDELINES



The Student Assistance Program

The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is an intervention program used in schools that provides a systematic procedure of early identification, intervention, referral and follow-up of "at-risk" students. These students are "at-risk" because of dysfunctional behavior patterns which may be related to involvement with Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (ATOD).

HISTORY

In the spring of 1987, two members of the Masonic Charities of Maryland, Inc., approached the Maryland State Superintendent of Schools and offered to fund a program to address alcohol and drug use among adolescents. Based upon a model used in Pennsylvania, the Maryland State Department of Education initiated the first training of eight (8) school teams in August, 1997. Since then, more than 260 teams have been trained in Maryland. Currently, there are over 300 active teams with more than 2500 members.

THE MODEL

The Student Assistance Program Core Team model consists of multi-disciplined teams of school personnel who, in collaboration with local health department/agency adolescent addictions assessors, identify, collect data on, intervene with and refer to appropriate resources, those students and their families who have been affected by ATOD.

A Core Team is typically composed of a school administrator, a guidance counselor, a school nurse, two or more teachers, and other staff identified by the principal. The Student Assistance Program plan presupposes the existence and availability of an adequate adolescent addictions treatment network. The local health department or local private agency adolescent addictions assessors serve as consultants to the core team and meet with them as needed. The school psychologist, pupil personnel worker and local health department mental health counselor frequently serve as members-at-large of the core team.

THE PROCESS

Our schools are in a unique position to identify changes in a child's behavior such as increased absenteeism or tardiness, declining grades, or any changes in performance such as in athletics or other extra curricular activities. Any one or more of these changes may be an indicator that the child is "at risk". A student who is experiencing difficulty in school, or demonstrating changes in behavior, should be referred to the school's Student Assistance Program team.

Top Ten Facts About The Student Assistance Program **(SAP)**

- 1.** SAP is a countywide program in the Howard County Public School System.
- 2.** The main goal of SAP is to encourage and assist students in remaining free of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.
- 3.** The Student Services Department in every school participates in SAP.
- 4.** There is a systematic and specific approach to assist students who may be struggling with substance abuse.
- 5.** The process for addressing any individual student concerns is outlined in Policy 9230-PR under Student Intervention.
- 6.** All information is strictly confidential!
- 7.** Parent insight is a valuable part of SAP.
- 8.** Teamwork amongst the parent/guardian(s) and the SAP team is very instrumental in helping individual students who may need outside resources.
- 9.** Each year there is a SAP workshop for staff that focuses on resources and the latest trends regarding alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs amongst teens.
- 10.** Each school has a SAP representative available to share more information about this program.

If you would like to learn more, please contact your school and ask for the SAP representative!

Protocol and Types of Referrals

Student Assistance Program - Protocol

Mission Statement: Every school will include SAP referrals on their Student Support Team agenda.

Goal: To identify and refer those students whose immediate health and safety may be compromised by involvement with substances.

If a staff member suspects a student may be suffering from substance abuse.

- Inform the school counselor of potential concerns.
- School Counselor or staff member should request the student to be added to the Student Support Team agenda.
- Distribute the Substance Abuse Behavior Checklist for teacher feedback.
- Discuss the results of the Substance Abuse Behavior Checklist during the Student Support Team Meeting.
- The Student Support Team will decide to continue with a SAP Referral based on the information given in the meeting.
- Designated team members (based on individual referrals) will meet with parents to address concerns of potential substance abuse. Referrals should be given to parents to provide resources for outside assistance. SAP referral will be given to parents.

Possible Warning Signs of Adolescent Substance Abuse

Bloodshot eyes	Slurred Speech	Diminished alertness
Sudden emotional outburst	Irritability	Falling asleep in class
Unsteady gait	Smell of alcohol or smoke	Falling asleep in class
Unable to follow class rules/directions	Uncooperative	Marks on arms
Violent/Erratic Behavior	Dilated Constructed Pupils	Chemical Odor

Note: It is important to maintain student confidentiality throughout this procedure.

Student Assistance Program (SAP) - Process for Immediate Referral

The following procedure has been developed to guide school staff on the steps to take if a student exhibits signs or systems that may indicate involvement with substance during school hours. : **It is important to maintain student confidentiality throughout this procedure.**

1. If the referral is immediate, contact Administration or Student Services **immediately** so they can escort the student to a private office or area for an assessment by Health Services.
2. The Health Assistant/Cluster Nurse will follow the Health Services procedure for students suspected of substance abuse.
3. If the Administrator was not notified in step one, the Health Assistant, Cluster Nurse or School Counselor** will notify the Administrator after the health assessment.
4. The Health Assistant/Cluster Nurse and Administrator will collaborate to determine if the student requires emergency medical treatment, if the student may safely stay in school, or if disciplinary action is needed.
5. If applicable, the School Administrator, will alert the student's parent/guardian that his/her child was assessed by Health Services for signs/symptoms/physical findings that could possibly indicate substance abuse and that the result of the assessment is cause for concern of possible substance use.
6. Should step 5 occur, the parent/guardian will be asked to pick his/her child up from school. Before leaving school with his/her child, the Administrator, Health Assistant/Cluster Nurse, and/or School Counselor will meet with the parent/guardian. The Health Assistant/Cluster Nurse or School Counselor will complete an "Integrative Counseling School Referral" or "Howard County Health Department Substance Abuse Evaluation" form for the parent/guardian so they can get their child tested at their own discretion.
7. Whoever completes the "integrative Counseling School Referral" or "Howard County Health Department Substance Abuse Evaluation" in step 6 will notify the SAP Rep that an immediate referral was made and the above form was given to the parent.
8. The SAP Rep will include this as a SAP Referral in their data that is reported at the end of the year.

****If the School Psychologist has a relationship with the student referred, he/she may take on the role that the School Counselor is assigned during this process.**

SAP Protocol For Referrals That Do Not need Immediate Attention

- _____ Staff member with concern fills out the **Referral Form (in binder)**.

- _____ The designated case manager for the referral completes the **Case Manager's Checklist**.

- _____ The **checklist is discussed** at an SST/IIT/SAP team meeting so the team can make an **informed decision on whether or not to proceed** with the SAP referral process.

- _____ Distribute the **SAP Combination Observation Checklist** to staff that work **directly with the student**.

- _____ Student is **again** added to the **SST/IIT/ or SAP** Team agenda. Results of the **SAP Combination Observation Checklist** are discussed at this meeting.

- _____ **Team decision** on whether or not there is a need to **invite the parent/guardian(s)** to a conference to discuss concerns. If "yes", go to the next step. If not, the SAP Rep keeps the info in a confidential place.

- _____ Two or three members of the SST or SAP team will meet with parent/guardian(s) to **share and discuss summarized data and also to seek more information** through **parent/guardian(s) insight**. Concerns of potential substance abuse are addressed.

- _____ **Resources** for free drug testing are **given to parent/guardian(s)**, as well as the referral sheet for those resources, such as Congruent and Integrative Counseling and Howard County General Hospital. Other resources may be provided as seen appropriate by the SST or SAP team members.

IDENTIFICATION

STEP 1 • IDENTIFICATION

GOAL: To identify students whose behavior, attendance, performance, and/or grades indicate that they may be "at-risk" because of the possible involvement with alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

Any concerned individual (school staff member, parent, or student) can submit a concern form to the MSAP team expressing their concerns for a student.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

Concerns are submitted to the MSAP team by any individual. Concerns are written. Once a written concern is received by the MSAP team, the Team meets and discusses this and other related matters. The Team decides a course of action for each referral, and when appropriate, moves to Step 2 of the MSAP Process.

HOW ARE PARENTS INVOLVED?

Parents can become involved in the identification process by asking the MSAP Team for help.

Team will need to plan for educating parents about how they can help their child.

Strategies to involve parents include presentations at PTA meetings, newsletters to parents, and contact with support groups for concerned parents.

DATA COLLECTION

STEP 2 • DATA COLLECTION

GOAL: To compile a comprehensive profile of the identified student's attendance, performance, behavior, and grades from each adult who may have this student in the school day. From this data, the Team can develop a profile of the student which may indicate the possibility of a problem associated with alcohol or other drug use.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

Each referred student is assigned a Case Manager from the membership of the team. This person collects and compiles data on the student from every adult associated with the student in the school.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

At the team meeting, the Team discusses the referral and decides the appropriate action. If the decision is to collect data, the data is collected by using the Local School System approved data collection form. Only observable/objective behavior-related data is collected. Collected data includes: grades, attendance, performance, behavior, counselor's statement, health concerns, staff reports, etc.

HOW ARE PARENTS INVOLVED?

Teams can involve parents at either of two points in the data collection process. First, the team may wish to collect data on the student from home as well as from school. In this case, the case manager or another Team member contacts the parents to determine whether the parents have concerns or questions regarding the child's behavior. However, in the majority of cases, the Team may determine that it is most appropriate to contact the parents after data has been collected from the staff.

When the parents are involved at this point, the goal of the contact is two-fold:

- To determine what behaviors are observed at home
- To invite the parents to join with the Team to help their child

Important issues for the Team to consider at this step include:

- Evidence of child abuse (if present, the Team will need to follow local school board policies and procedures for contacting Protective Services immediately).
- Possibility of parents' denial negating the Team's actions.

**Student Assistance Program
Case Manager's Checklist**

Student Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Please find relevant information that may aid the IIT/SST team. Be prepared to share this information at the next meeting.

✓	Student Information	Comments/Summary
	504	
	IEP	
	Action Plan	
	Student Support Plan	
	Current Grades	
	Attendance	
	Health Issues	
	Disciplinary Referrals	

Date: _____

To: _____

The form on the back of this letter indicates that the student named on the Observation Checklist has been brought to the Student Assistance Team's attention. It reflects the concern of at least one individual regarding the health and well being of that student. However, it should NOT be misconstrued as identification of the student as a user of alcohol and/or drugs. At present, we have no information to substantiate that conclusion.

To help us decide whether to refer this student for an assessment or to take other action, we would appreciate your completion of the Observation Checklist. Any specific additional information you are able to contribute would be most helpful.

Please note that although the form provides a checklist, we need and welcome any additional comments you can provide, i.e., anecdotes, perceptions, and experiences with the student.

We hold all information provided in the strictest confidence and trust you will do so as well. Please do not discuss this request with anyone. Kindly return the completed form in a sealed envelope.

Thank you! Your observations will help us to provide needed interventions for this student.

Sincerely,

Case Manager

Confidential

Combination Observation Checklist

Case Number _____

Tally		Tally		
Academic Performance		Current Grade _____	Social/Emotional	
		Work incomplete and/or not turned in		
		Unprepared for class		
		Lacks motivation		
		Does not stay on task		
		Decline in participation		
Attendance		Absent Frequently # _____		
		Late frequently # _____		
		Frequent visits to health room		
		Frequent visits to the bathroom		
Extra curricular Activities		Lost eligibility		
		Misses practice without reason		
		Dropped out of school sport/activity		
Behavior		Attempts to sleep in class		Interpersonal Relations
		Defies rules		
		Aggressive		
		Seeks attention or disrupts class		
		Borrows money		
		Dishonest		
		Tests limits constantly		
		Expressions of violence in writing/drawings		
		Expressions of intolerance and prejudice		
		Affiliation with gangs		
		Serious threats of violence		
	No behavior concerns/ not engaged in learning			
Physical Appearance		Pale or poor complexion	Alcohol & Other Drugs (AOD)	
		Dark circles around eyes		
		Facial swelling		
		Constantly hungry		
		Sudden loss of appetite		
		Slurred speech or rapid speech	Legal	
		Bloodshot eyes or dilated pupils		
		Frequently complains of feeling sick		
		Weight loss or "bulking out"		
		Frequent physical injuries	Family	
		Talks about AOD use		
		Others report concern about AOD use		
		Wears AOD clothing or jewelry		
		Odors of marijuana/alcohol/chemicals		
		Smokes cigarettes		
		Associates with AOD users		
		Prior arrest		
		On probation		
		Other violations of the law		
		Family under stress		
		Runaway/unaccounted for time periods		
		Seems alienated from family		
		Possible family AOD abuse		

Comments/Other Information:

INTERVENTION

STEP 3 • INTERVENTION

GOALS: To alert parents to the SAP Team's concerns about the behavior and performance of the student that may indicate the student's use of alcohol and/or other drugs.

To have the parents and students agree for the student to be screened or assessed for problems related to the use of alcohol and/or other drugs to determine what help, if any, is needed.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

The Team must decide who will first intervene with the parents to share the data and to enlist their support in intervening with the student. The intervenor may be the case manager, another member of the Team, or more than one team member.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

The intervention begins with the telephone call to the parents to arrange the conference. The intervention is always planned and conducted to foster mutual respect among the SAP Team member(s), the parents, and the student.

HOW ARE PARENTS INVOLVED?

It is imperative that parents be involved as early as possible in the student assistance process. In an "ideal" scenario, the parent(s) will have been involved during the Identification or Data Collection steps of the process and remain involved during the intervention phase by joining the Team in an intervention on the student.

However, in the majority of cases, the Team will have chosen to delay involving the parent(s) until the Intervention Step. In these situations, the initial "intervention" will be with the parents. The parents are invited into the school for an informal (or formal) intervention to share the data which had been collected and the Team's recommended plan of action. The Team and parents then join together to intervene with the student.

Assuming that the Team has been successful in their intervention with the parents, the next goal of getting the student to agree to meet with the assessor must be accomplished as quickly as possible.

*Material provided by: Milt McKenna
Maryland State Department of Education*

Guidelines for Intervention: Talking Points

PHONE CALL:

- ◆ Identify yourself as a member of the Student Assistance team
- ◆ Mention mission of the Student Assistance team: receive concerns about students
- ◆ Invite parent to come to school to share information and concern
- ◆ Assure parent that this is NOT a disciplinary call
- ◆ Avoid disclosing much information over the phone; face-to-face is better
- ◆ Work with parent's schedule to arrange meeting time

PARENT MEETING AT SCHOOL

- ◆ Begin the meeting
 - ◆ Welcome the parents
 - ◆ Introduce the meeting participants
 - ◆ State the reason for the meeting
 - ◆ Outline the agenda
- ◆ Share the initial concern without disclosing the originator of the concern form
- ◆ Share the non-drug specific data first to prepare parents for more serious data
- ◆ Share drug-specific data if you have any
- ◆ Invite parents to ask clarifying questions about the data
- ◆ Ask parents if they have noticed any unexplained changes in their child
 - ◆ Isolation from family
 - ◆ Sleeping pattern or eating changes
 - ◆ Change of friends (new and different)
 - ◆ Low motivation; lack of interest in activities, church, sports, etc.
 - ◆ Temper outbursts; exaggerated responses to usual questions/requests
 - ◆ Lying
- ◆ State the goal (e.g, assessment) and ask parent's commitment to pursue it
- ◆ Forecast escalating consequences or implications of current problems if not addressed
- ◆ If parents refuse resources and seem to be ready to leave, suggest that you contact them within a short time (weeks) to see if change, positive or negative, has occurred
- ◆ If parents accept and agree to goal, thank parents for their partnership with the team in an effort to help their child and set up meeting with assessor
- ◆ Close the meeting

[See reverse side for sample meeting script; **bold** words are key and appropriate vocabulary]

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENT DURING A SAP INTERVENTION

- Use "I" statements to show care and concern when sharing your own personal experiences

Say: "I am worried about John because..."

- Share first-hand specific data

Say: "He fell asleep in my class 3 times in the last week."

- Avoid sharing generalizations

Do not say: "John doesn't care anymore."

- Avoid sharing opinions or rumors

*Do not say: "All the kids say he gets drunk a lot" OR
"I think he gets high after school."*

- Stick to the facts

Say: "John had an A first quarter in my class and not he has a D."

Say: "John had a strange odor about him..."

- Reinforce that the problem is NOT John, but his BEHAVIOR

*Say: "This isn't like him." OR
"I'd like to see the happy, successful John again."*

- Acknowledge the efforts of the parent(s)!

Say: "We know that you have tried...and how frustrated you are..."

- Use "we" statements when encouraging parents to consider a drug/alcohol assessment

Say: "Given the information we have shared, we feel that it would be helpful to rule out the possibility of drug/alcohol use."

- Conclude unsuccessful interventions with a forecast of the continued observable behavior which may occur if the student continues to use drugs/alcohol

Say: "We are concerned that if these behaviors continue that John may end up in trouble with the law..."

*Material provided by: Debbie Germroth
Howard County Public Schools*

REFERRAL

STEP 4 • REFERRAL

GOAL: To provide to parents and students a professional substance abuse assessment and treatment referral, if necessary.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

An assessor meets with the student and parents to conduct a substance abuse assessment.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

Below are listed several possible options for assessments. Teams should be aware of the Local School System's policies and choose the course of action which best meets the needs of the students and families within the parameters of the local policies.

1. An assessor from the local health department or from a private agency may work directly with the school and be available to the Team and students/families within the school or agency setting to conduct the assessment.
2. The parents may wish to utilize a specific private agency for assessment purposes. In this case, the Team should allow the parents the flexibility of following their own course of action.

Whichever course of action the parents choose, the Team should suggest that the parents encourage the assessor to obtain permission from the student to release information. This release must always be signed by the student. This release allows the assessor, the Team, parents and the student to share information in an effort to provide support and guidance for the student during this very difficult time.

HOW ARE PARENTS INVOLVED?

Parental permission is required for any school-based assessment. It is the responsibility of the assessor to refer the parents and student to the most appropriate source of treatment. The goal is to choose a provider with whom the family is familiar and who shares the goal of the family for the child. A further consideration is the type of insurance coverage the family carries. MSAP Teams can share with parents their knowledge of available resources as well as helping them successfully navigate the bureaucracy that may be encountered.

Referral Form for SAP Substance Abuse Evaluation

(Please bring this form with you at the time of the appointment so the evaluation fee can be waived.)

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Parent Name: _____

Student Address: _____

Student Phone #: _____

School: _____

School Phone #: _____

Referring SAP Contact Person: _____

Reason for Referral (please be specific):

Staff Signature: _____

SAP assessments are available at the following agencies. Please call to make an appointment.

Howard County Health Department
The Counseling Center
7178 Columbia Gateway Drive
Columbia, MD 21046

or

Integrative Counseling
10630 Little Patuxent Pkwy.
Suite 209
Columbia, MD 21044

Phone: 410-313-6202

Fax: 410-313-6212

Phone: 410-740-8067

Fax: 410-740-8068

Note: Free evaluations are available to students who have not been suspended or expelled due to a substance-related incident. The SAP fee waiver does not apply to adolescents who are seeking an evaluation secondary to a substance-related legal charge. This waiver is an early identification tool for those adolescents and families who seek assistance prior to school or legal consequences.

***Please note federal confidentiality regulations prohibit counselors from releasing substance abuse assessment information unless a signed consent is on file.**

Howard County Health Department
Bureau Of Addictions

Procedure SAP Referral For A Free Student Screening

1. The school SAP/SST/IIT will decide after the evaluation process the need for a screening .
2. The parent (s) are then contacted and a referral is discussed.
3. The parent (s) are then given the option to come to Howard County Health Department for a **free screening** or another provider of substance abuse services.
4. When the health department is chosen, the **Referral For SAP Student Substance Abuse Screening form will be completed and given to the parent.**
5. The parent will then call the HCHD adolescent counselor assigned to that school directly to make a screening appointment.
6. The referral form will be presented to the secretary upon arrival at Riverwood Center for verification of a free service. Without the form, a free service may not be provided.

FOLLOW-UP

STEP 5 • FOLLOW UP

GOAL: To provide support to the student and families in implementing the recommendations of the assessor.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

The MSAP Team monitors the student's progress to ensure that he or she is receiving the necessary community and school-based support.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

The Team may link the student with a faculty or peer mentor, a peer helper, a support group, or other resources to support his/her recovery.

HOW ARE PARENTS INVOLVED?

Teams are encouraged to keep in contact with parents during the follow-up phase. For example, students returning to school from an inpatient treatment facility should have intake conferences with the case manager and parents present. Joint planning during the follow-up phase increases the likelihood for recovery and decreases the chances of miscommunication, manipulation, and relapse.

We need to be aware that we are often asking students to change a behavior that is strongly resistant to change. Unfortunately, this need to change usually occurs at a time in the adolescents' lives when they often lack the skills to make such changes. We must look at a variety of strategies to support these students in the school setting.

Follow-up also applies to those situations where the Team may have decided to review data after a certain period, or will follow-up with parents after their initial refusal to agree to convince their child to obtain an assessment.

FOLLOW THROUGH ON THE FOLLOW-UP!

*Material provided by: Milt McKenna
Maryland State Department of Education*

EXAMPLES OF "FOLLOW-UP" ACTIONS BY STUDENT ASSISTANCE TEAMS

➤ AFTER INTERVENTION MEETING TO ENCOURAGE PARENT ACTION:

- ✓ If "tabled," reconnect with parent at a later date
- ✓ Call parent to determine follow-through on assessment or treatment
- ✓ If referred again, *re-intervene*
- ✓ If parents will not come in to school, seek alternatives and leverage from *principal, PPW, nurse, etc.*

➤ TO SUPPORT STUDENT'S RECOVERY:

- ✓ Adjust the student's schedule to:
 - Provide release time for post-treatment support
 - Avoid re-association with enabling companions
 - Place student with staff members who contribute to recovery efforts
- ✓ Assign a staff member as a mentor
- ✓ Involve the student in a peer recovery group
- ✓ Assess the student's progress periodically

*Material provided by: Milt McKenna
and Mike Codori*

MSAPPA

Step 5 Follow-Up