

Why are SAP Referrals Important?

Benefit for the Youth that is Referred

SAP is the viable (and required) process in schools to identify and facilitate addressment of academic, substance use, mental health, and other concerns that pose a barrier to a student's success. To illustrate, there unfortunately is a growing percentage of youth experiencing mental health challenges (some with co-occurring substance use) that school staff in isolation will likely not be able to sufficiently address. SAP provides a team process to mobilize resources to address the barriers to learning that these types of challenges create.

Benefits for Schools and Counties

There are two primary benefits that both schools and communities (situated within counties) access through accurate and timely referrals to SAP. First, SAP can leverage resources to better position both the school and county of residence to address their obligations to provide needed services and supports (e.g., school district responsibilities under both state and federal laws). Second, SAP referrals (or the lack thereof) impact the appropriation of dollars within the state budget proposed by the Governor to the Pennsylvania General Assembly (comprised of the state's Senate and House of Representatives) on an annual basis. Specifically, each year OMHSAS/DHS responds to questions during the budget hearing process regarding needs in commonwealth. The SAP data reported effects the strength of the case that can be made to appropriate dollars toward addressing the challenges youth experience as documented through SAP referrals and subsequent actions taken by SAP Teams.