SAP

PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE STUDENT ASSISTANT PROGRAM (SAP)?

The Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program is overseen by the PA Network for Student Assistance Services (PNSAS) Interagency, Statewide Staff and Regional Coordinators' team; comprised of representation from the PA Departments of Education (Safe Schools Office), Drug and Alcohol Programs (Division of Prevention and Intervention) and Human Services (Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services). SAP is based upon state guidelines, professional standards, policies and procedures adopted by the local school board of directors.

SAP is designed to assist in identifying issues including alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and mental health issues which pose a barrier to a student's 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. While Student Assistance Programs exist in other areas of the country, the structure and operation of the program in Pennsylvania is a unique expression of an integrated model serving the needs of Pennsylvania families and students.

Barriers to Learning Include but are not limited to:

- Withdrawing from family, friends, school, and/or activities
- Change in friends
- Relationship problems
- Unexplained physical injuries
- Talking about suicide
- Depression/Anxiety
- Change in eating/sleeping habits
- Aggressive behavior
- Sudden unexplained drop in grades
- Defying authority, both at home and in school
- The use of, or pressure to use, drugs or alcohol
- Bullying
- Recent death
- Divorce
- Family issues

SAP TEAM:

The Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a systematic team process used to mobilize school resources to remove barriers to learning. The core of the program is made up of a professionally trained team. The team is made up of school staff, liaisons from community mental health, and drug and alcohol agencies. The role of the SAP team is to identify problems or behaviors that are within the responsibility of New Castle Area School District and to make recommendations to assist students and the parent/guardian. If the problem/behavior is beyond the scope of the School District the SAP Team will assist the student and the parent/guardian in acquiring the services needed from within the community.***The SAP team does not diagnose, or treat. But, they may refer for a screening or assessment for treatment.**

SAP PROCESS:
1. **Referral:** Anyone can refer a student to SAP if there is a concern about their problem/behavior. A student themselves can go to any SAP Team member or any other school staff member to ask for help.
2. **Post-Referral:** The SAP team will meet with the student and give them a permission slip to be signed by parent/guardian in order to proceed with the SAP process.
3. **SAP Team Planning:** The SAP team will gather information on the student from teachers, administrators, and any other school personnel who has contact with the student. Together, a plan is developed on how best to proceed in helping the student. This plan is done to help promote academic progress as well as individual success.
4. **Action Plan:** The SAP team will assist the student and parents with in-school and/or community based services and activities. The team may also make a recommendation for Mental Health and/or Drug and Alcohol screening.
5. **Follow-up:** The SAP team will continue to assist students/families after the action plan is put in place. We will meet with the students periodically or weekly to review progress and assist in any way we can.

It is the parent's/guardian's right to be involved in the SAP Process. We encourage parents/guardians to become involved in the decision making process for their child and is key to helping to resolve problems.

The training of team members by a Commonwealth approved training provider, ensures the board of school directors, school administrators, parents, students, and the public that team members have received up-to-date professional training consistent with accountable standards and appropriate procedures. Guidelines for the Commonwealth Student Assistance Program training system contain training standards and competencies for SAP team professionals.

For those students receiving treatment through a community agency, the student assistance team, in collaboration with parents and the agency, can assist in helping plan in-school support services during and after treatment.

SAP PARENT RESOURCES:

1. **[Student Referral Form](#)**

2. SAP Team Contacts
   Frank Bongivengo
   fbongivengo@ncasd.com
   Jonica Vournous
   jvournous@ncasd.com
   Dr. Stacy Decarbo
   sdecarbo@ncasd.com

SAP Service Providers:

[Human Services Center](#)
April McConnell
amcconnell@humanservicescenter.net

[Lawrence County Drug and Alcohol](#)
Jennifer Brown
jbrown@lawsca.org
Hannah Leksell
hleksell@lawsca.org

Mr. David Ward (School Liaison)
dward@ncasd.com

Additional Resources for Help
[Lawrence County Resources](#)