

STUDENT ASSISTANCE CENTER at



Student Assistance Program Levels of Development Guide

The Levels of Development Guide is a comprehensive tool designed to enhance and improve Student Assistance Program core team functioning and sustainability. The benchmarks and standards are aimed at change creating capacity development to help students, staff, and families served by the SAP.

The Levels of Development lists benchmarks at three levels for developing (Level 1) and longer-functioning (Levels 2 and 3) Student Assistance Programs. The Standards of Practice, which serve as the foundation for the benchmarks, are evidence-based.¹ This guide aligns the benchmarks with the Student Assistance Standards of Practice, and identifies the Student Assistance Center’s training, technical assistance, and resources that offer further information about each benchmark.

For a more thorough self-assessment of the Student Assistance Program Standards of Practice, see the Best Practices Formative Assessment Tool at https://www.prevention.org/Resources/documents/Formative_Assessment_Best_Practices.pdf.

Student Assistance Evidence-Based Standards of Practice

1. Building administrator involved in and supports SAP.
2. Alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) and mental health SAP liaison works with team.
3. SAP coordinator exists for the building.
4. Consequences for policy violations for alcohol and other drugs, bullying and other acts of violence are clearly stated.
5. SAP structure and organization (including members and titles, clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, meeting times, membership selection criteria, etc.) are clearly delineated.
6. Description of SAP services for faculty, students and others including handbooks, brochures, etc.
7. In-service training for teachers, pupil personnel, support staff and administrators provide time and support for SAP informational systems.



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Visit the Student Assistance Center

at www.prevention.org to learn more about free training, technical assistance, webinars, and resources for standards-based Student Assistance Programs in grades K-12 Contact Dale Gasparovic, SAC Administrator, at dalegasparovic@prevention.org or at 217.299.8803 for more information.

8. Specific student communication strategy established.
9. Specific parent communication strategy established.
10. SAP is accessible to all targeted students.
11. Formal procedures and decision-making process established.
12. Screening process includes clear and consistent student data collection and review procedures.
13. Confidentiality guidelines are well delineated with team members demonstrating respect for and understanding of parent's and student's privacy rights.
14. Formal parent involvement procedure established.
15. Regular meeting time sufficient to complete SAP work.
16. Members' role assignments and responsibilities articulated (e.g., leaders, secretary, case manager).
17. Supports and provides linkages for students and parents to access school and community services.
18. Procedures promote student access to and compliance with school and community services and treatment recommendations.
19. School resources are available and accessible.
20. Team members participate in appropriate entry level SAP training.
21. Team members participate in a maintenance and development training program.
22. Team has adequate training schedule and budget.
23. SAP monitoring and improvement mechanisms are in place.

Level 1: Common functioning benchmarks for the newly trained student assistance program up through the first 9 - 12 months.

Functionality Benchmarks	Aligned with Standard #	Resources to Understand More About This Benchmark
a. Populations at higher risk due to socio emotional issues, basic life needs, and other life stressors have been assessed.	8, 10, 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Development Training/ Manual • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet • Serious Mental Health Challenges in Older Adolescents and Young Adults – webinar • Supporting Students webinar series
b. Existing programs and resources (both in school and out of school) have been assessed.	17, 18, 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Development Training/ Manual • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet • SAP Resource Map (website) • Student Assistance Program / Community Partnership Training
c. A building administrator is involved with the team, is aware of the support needs of the team, and advocates for those needs.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Development Training/ Manual • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet
d. Completed appropriate entry level training for all team members.	20, 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Development Training/ Manual • One-Day SAP New Team Training • One-Day Whole School Training
e. Developed mission statement, goals and objectives for program operation.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample mission statement – web article • SAP Mission and Practices Sample – web article
f. Conducted information gathering meetings with intervention program or process coordinators to identify integration opportunities.	17, 18, 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAP Resources Map – web article • Supporting Students: SAP and Rtl webinar

Functionality Benchmarks	Aligned with Standard #	Resources to Understand More About This Benchmark
g. Developed a referral system including protocol for identification and reporting concerns (should include policy violations, staff concerns, student and friend referral, and parent concerns).	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Development Training/ Manual • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet • Model School Policy on Suicide Prevention – web article • SAP Technology webinar • School Board Policy – web article • Connecting the Dots1 - Mini PD; Connecting More Dots1- Mini PD; • Case Flow for SAP referrals – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Self-Referral Form – Tools Folder
h. Developed the data screening process including collection protocol for archival, school staff, student interviews, and parent involvement. Should include academic, behavioral, attendance, health and other life stressor data.	11, 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Development Training/ Manual • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools • Student Assistance Forms – web • Getting Started with Student Assistance Programs – web article • SAP Technology - webinar • Practicing Early Intervention Through the Art of Listening webinar • Case Flow for SAP Referrals – Tools Folder • SAP Motivational Exploration – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Program Student Concern Prioritization – Tools Folder
i. Developed a problem solving action step process based on multi-disciplinary problem-solving best practices.	5, 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Development Training/ Manual • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet • SAP Action Map – web tool • Integrating a Solution Focused Model into SAP webinar • Resource Mapping for Student Assistance Interventions webinar • Designing Interventions for Your Student Assistance Program (webinar and Mini PD) • Helping and Stages of Change – web article • Case Flow for SAP Referrals – Tools Folder • Student Concern Prioritization – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Action Plan Checklist – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Program Student Concern Prioritization – Tools Folder

Functionality Benchmarks	Aligned with Standard #	Resources to Understand More About This Benchmark
j. The SAP team/coordinator allots sufficient meeting time for completing the necessary SAP work.	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Development Training/ Manual • Three Key Practices to Improve Your Student Assistance Team Meetings = Mini PD
k. Delineated parent involvement processes are in place.	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Development Training/ Manual • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet • Student Assistance Practices – web article • Case Flow for SAP Referrals – Tools Folder
l. Developed protocols and processes for monitoring student cases.	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Development Training/ Manual • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet • Monitoring Tool (Instructions) – web tool • Three Steps to More Effective Progress Monitoring – Mini PD • Case Flow for SAP Referrals – Tools Folder • SAP Motivational Exploration – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Action Plan Checklist – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Monitoring Form – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Monitoring Form 2 – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Monitoring Form 3 – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Monitoring Chart – Tools Folder
m. Created the initial staff in-service	6, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAP Staff In-Service Agenda – web tool • SAP Staff In-Service Power point Template – web tool • One-Page SAP Description – web article • Connecting More Dots 1 – Increasing Referrals to the SAP • SAP Awareness Planning Tool – Tools Folder
n. Created and delineated team processes and protocols including clearly defined roles, responsibilities, meeting structures.	5, 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Development Training/ Manual • Problem-Solving Team Best Practices Protocols – web booklet and tool • Team Effectiveness Qualities – web article • Student Assistance Core Team Roles and Responsibilities Guide – Tools Folder

Functionality Benchmarks	Aligned with Standard #	Resources to Understand More About This Benchmark
o. Agreements about confidentiality processes have been delineated.	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Development Training/ Manual
p. Created and distributed program marketing materials to administrators, staff, students, and parents.	6, 7, 8, 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Development Training/ Manual • SAP and Staff Development – web article • SAP Brochure Template – web tool • SAP Awareness Planning Tool – Tools Folder
q. Standardized a file maintenance process.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Development Training/ Manual
r. Process evaluation benchmarks have been established and monitored.	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Development Training/ Manual • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet • Student Assistance Core Team Roles and Responsibilities Guide – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Team Functional Analysis – Tools Folder • SAP Need Fulfillment Key Stakeholder Framework

Level 2: levels of functioning and benchmarks for SAPS that have been in place for approximately 12 - 36 months.

Functionality Benchmarks	Connected to which standard?	Connected to which service?
a. Implementing all referral and identification processes.	4, 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Development Training/ Manual • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet • Student Assistance Forms – web tool • SAP Technology – webinar • Case Flow for SAP Referrals • Student Assistance Self-Referral Form
b. Conducting a triage process to move referrals to the most appropriate school service in addition to or outside of SAP services (school counselor, nurse, administrator, Rtl, other).	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Flow for SAP Referrals
c. Conducting sufficient data screening for all identified students.	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Development Training/ Manual • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet • Student Assistance Forms – web tool • SAP Technology - webinar • Practicing Early Intervention Through the Art of Listening – webinar • Case Flow for SAP Referrals • SAP Motivational Exploration – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Action Plan Checklist – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Monitoring Form – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Monitoring Form 2 – Tools Folder

Functionality Benchmarks	Connected to which standard?	Connected to which service?
d. Consistently implements the problem solving action step process based on multi-disciplinary problem-solving best practices for every student for whom screening data is collected.	5, 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Development Training/ Manual • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet • SAP Action Map – web tool • Integrating a Solution Focused Model into SAP webinar • Resource Mapping for Student Assistance Interventions webinar • Designing Interventions for Your Student Assistance Program (webinar and Mini PD) • Helping and Stages of Change – web article • Case Flow for SAP Referrals – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Action Plan Checklist – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Program Student Concern Prioritization – Tools Folder
e. Consistently follows protocols and processes for monitoring student cases.	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Development Training/ Manual • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet • Monitoring Tool (Instructions) – web tool • Three Steps to More Effective Progress Monitoring – Mini PD • Case Flow for SAP Referrals – Tools Folder • SAP Motivational Exploration – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Action Plan Checklist – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Monitoring Form – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Monitoring Form 2 – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Monitoring Form 3 – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Monitoring Chart – Tools Folder
f. Incorporating data from other programs and services as appropriate (Rtl, Pupil Personnel Team, other).	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Students: SAP and Rtl - webinar • Case Flow for SAP Referrals – Tools Folder
g. Developing and implementing program awareness strategies for staff, students, parents, and agencies including new students and new staff.	6, 7, 8, 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance: An Effective Student Support Team Model – web article • SAP Staff In-service Agenda – web tool • SAP Staff In-service Power point Template- web tool • SAP Need Fulfillment Key Stakeholder Framework

Functionality Benchmarks	Connected to which standard?	Connected to which service?
h. Developing relationships with local community services.	2, 17, 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Resources Map – web tool • Student Assistance Program / Community Partnership Training
i. Securing community service providers and others to implement programs and services in the school.	2, 17, 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Program / Community Partnership Training
j. Implementing linkage agreements with service providers.	2, 17, 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Program / Community Partnership Training
k. Creating and identifying staff development opportunities to build capacity to effectively identify and respond to students with non-academic barriers to learning.	6, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet • Connecting More Dots 1 – Increasing Referrals to the SAP – mini PD • SAP Need Fulfillment Key Stakeholder Framework
l. Identifying additional prevention strategies to build social emotional skills.	11, 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance: A Key Characteristic of Your Social-Emotional Learning Strategy • Social Emotional Tools – web booklet • Safe and Sound II Edition –web booklet
m. Establishing SAP educational support groups for selective populations (based on assessment conducted in level 1).	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Educational Support Groups for Student with an Incarcerated Parent • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools– web booklet • Help is Down the Hall – web booklet
n. Developed protocols and processes for conducting educational support groups.	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help is Down the Hall – web booklet
o. Developed protocols and processes for collaborative work with external partners.	2, 17, 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Program / Community Partnership Training
p. Developed a community services and resources grid.	2, 17, 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource Mapping for Student Assistance Interventions – webinar • Student Assistance Program / Community Partnership Training
q. Maintaining ongoing dialogue with relevant internal and external systems for both evaluation data and service coordination.	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAC Annual Report – web tool • Supporting Children in Foster Care through Student Assistance-web resource (new)

Functionality Benchmarks	Connected to which standard?	Connected to which service?
r. Develops, monitors, and measures process and program improvement goals annually.	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Program Best Practices Formative Assessment Tool – web tool • Student Assistance Program Roles and Responsibilities Guide – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Program Roles and Responsibilities Assessment Tool – Tools Folder • Solving the Equation – Evaluation and Planning – Mini PD • Proving Our Worth: Collecting and Using the Right Data – Mini PD • Appreciative Inquiry SAP – Mini PD • Student Assistance Team Functional Analysis – Tools Folder • SAP Need Fulfillment Key Stakeholder Framework
s. Utilizes data to create process and outcome reports appropriate for staff, administration, and community partners.	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proving Our Worth: Collecting and Using the Right Data – Mini PD • Team Functional Analysis – Tools Folder • SAC Annual Report – web tool
t. Utilizes data to make programmatic and service modification and improvements.	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAP Core Team Survey – Tools Folder • Solving the Equation: Evaluation and Planning – Mini PD • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet • Student Assistance Team Functional Analysis – Tools Folder • SAC Annual Report – web tool
u. New services are identified and developed based on collected data.	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solving the Equation: Evaluation and Planning – Mini PD • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet

Level 3: Levels of functioning and characteristics of saps that have been in place for approximately 3 + years.

Functionality Benchmarks	Connected to which standard?	Connected to which service?
a. Integrates Student Assistance Program into the school improvement plan.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet
b. Conducts assessment to determine where SAP Standards of Practice are being implemented.	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet • Student Assistance Program Best Practices Formative Assessment Tool – web tool • Student Assistance Core Team Roles and Responsibilities Guide – Tools Folder • SAP Levels of Development Guide – Tools Folder
c. Creates strategies to align practices to the SAP Standards of Practice.	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet • Student Assistance Core Team Roles and Responsibilities Guide – Tools Folder
d. Uses the SAP Standards of Practice to set priorities and goals.	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet • SAP Levels of Development Guide – Tools Folder • Student Assistance Program Best Practices Formative Assessment Tool – web tool
e. Uses a Multidisciplinary Team Best Practices tool to align problem-solving practices with best practices for multi-disciplinary problem-solving teams.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet • Problem-Solving Team Best Practices Protocol-web tool • Best Practices Standards for Student Assistance- web resource • Student Assistance Program Best Practices Formative Assessment Tool – web tool
f. Assesses school policies and procedures and makes recommendations for change as needed.	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Assistance Program Guidebook: a Resource for Schools – web booklet • School Board Policy – web article
g. Conducts staff and student surveys to identify areas of need and improvement.	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAP Need Fulfillment Key Stakeholder Framework – Tools Folder
h. Develops new in-school programs to meet identified need.	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help is Down the Hall – web booklet

Prevention First is recognized as the primary source for evidence-based Student Assistance training, technical assistance, and resources in the state of Illinois. Each resource listed in the Levels of Development Service/Resource column includes information that in some way addresses the benchmark. Additional resources can be found at <https://www.prevention.org/Resources/SAC-Resources.aspx>.

- Student Assistance Development training including the training manual. Participants receive the manual when attending training. The manual is not distributed separately from training.
- Student Assistance / Community Partnership Training manual. Participants receive the manual when attending training.
- Student Assistance Guidebook: a Resource for Schools which can be found at <https://www.prevention.org/Resources/documents/StudentAssistanceProgramGuidebook.pdf>. The Guidebook has also been distributed on CD format through multiple copy distribution to each Regional Office of Education in Illinois, to each training participant, and included with introduction folders distributed to administrators through drop-in meetings.
- <https://www.prevention.org/Resources/SAC-Resources.aspx> for many online tools, articles and webinars – indicated as ‘web’ in the Services column.
- Webinars refers to archived webinars at <https://www.prevention.org/Resources/SAC-Resources.aspx>
- Professional Development sessions delivered at individual schools to SAP team members – indicated as ‘minis’ in the Services column. Team members select from a menu of mini-PD sessions developed in FY 2014.

Student Assistance Standards of Practice were developed through research at the University of Pittsburgh (2000) and tailored for Illinois by the Center for Prevention Research and Development (2002). The Levels of Development benchmarks were developed jointly by the Student Assistance Center at Prevention First and the Center for Prevention Research and Development in 2008. The levels and benchmarks are based upon data identified through twenty-five years of technical assistance provided to schools in Illinois and through the Illinois Landscape Questionnaire conducted by Prevention First with over 150 Student Assistance Programs (2007-2008).