

Student Assistance Program Best Practices Formative Assessment Tool



Introduction:

“To exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly.”
Henri Bergson

The following tool is designed as a formative assessment process based on best practices in Student Assistance through the work of Fertman, CI; Schlesinger, J; Fichter, C; Tarasevich, S; Zhang, X and Wald, H (2000) in the *Student Assistance Program Evaluation Final Report* submitted to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, October, 2000. Handbook for further understanding components and indicators available for download at <http://www.sap.state.pa.us>

Using This Assessment Tool



Instructions

1. **Section One:** Start by deciding which indicator to assess. Individually, rate and rank each benchmark in that indicator. Discuss the benchmarks within that indicator adding your own benchmarks to the list. The greatest benefit of the tool comes from the discussion about the benchmarks, not in rating or ranking these. Move on to Section Two.

2. **Section Two:** Prioritize the indicators determining as a group which should be the highest priority given your needs and resources. Complete Section Two and move on to Section Three.

3. **Section Three:** Create a plan to implement strategies identified by the team to help you move to your goals.

Helpful Assumptions

- ❖ A true formative assessment process is never finished, but rather monitored to foster opportunities to move forward rather than look back. Formative assessment involves the process of setting benchmarks for progress, prioritizing those, developing and implementing strategies, and reviewing progress. At its best, it is a cyclical process that allows for growth through continual assessment that offers feedback, new strategies and further assessment.
- ❖ Change that occurs in a continuous flow process can often be best accomplished through small steps that provide a cumulative effect over time. Large scale or sweeping improvement may be attractive, but often requires substantial resources.
- ❖ **Benchmarking** is the process of identifying, understanding, and adapting outstanding practices from outside the organization that helps users gauge progress toward the identified practice. The following indicators were found in the Evaluation Final Report as validated through the Pennsylvania research report. The benchmarks are examples of common strategies used to achieve the indicators.

- ❖ Users are encouraged to add additional benchmarks in the 'other' line for each indicator.
- ❖ Student Assistance teams are encouraged to not complete the whole tool individually or try to complete the tool in one sitting.
- ❖ The intent of the tool is to generate discussion that allows a team to look at what is being done with each indicator. The goal, therefore, is to take a segment of the tool, examine the benchmarks, brainstorm additional strategies, and prioritize for planning.
- ❖ No SAP, no matter how well functioning, has all components functioning at a high level at any given time. The SAP should use the benchmarks under each indicator as a guide for discussion rather than as a standard for excellence.
- ❖ What is best for one SAP cannot be considered best for all SAPs. The most effective SAPs have found their own unique combination of strategies and procedures. Therefore, not all indicators or benchmarks are present in even the most effective SAPs.
- ❖ Perception variation by team members will provide opportunities to discuss both the rating and the weight of each benchmark. Each benchmark can best be considered according to the tangible and intangible resources of the school.



Section One – Select an Indicator, Rate, and Weigh Benchmarks

Rate each benchmark by placing a check in the box that best reflect the current practice of your team. Then weigh the priority of the benchmark to your team. After completing one or more Indicators, go on to Section Two at the end of this section.

Rate – Rt.

- a. New for us; no work on this yet. b. Have some level of familiarity. c. Have implemented random strategies
 d. Have a plan and working toward the plan. e. Achieved and solidly in place for us.

Weight - Wt.

1. We will look at this in the future for growth, but will not work toward at this time.
2. Worthy of discussion in the near future for us, but not a priority at this time.
3. Need to consider this a priority, and will be work on this in the next 3 to 6 months.

1. Building administrator involved and supports SAP.

	Rt.	Wt.
1. Administrator attends team meetings regularly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Administrator talks with parents about SAP.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Administrator includes SAP information in building in-services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Administrator provides for meeting time during the school day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Administrator includes SAP as one of the building 'duties'.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Administrator advocates for SAP with central administration and board of education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Administrator promotes staff development in student at-risk issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Administrator has a thorough knowledge of student assistance services in the building.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Other

2. ATOD and mental health SAP liaison works with team.

Rt. Wt.

1. School has a linkage agreement with ATOD and/or mental health specialist.		
2. ATOD and/or mental health specialist communicates with team on a regular basis.		
3. ATOD and/or mental health specialist receives communication from the team on a regular basis.		
4. ATOD and/or mental health specialist sees students on a regular basis in the building.		
5. ATOD and/or mental health specialist meets with team on a regular basis.		
6. ATOD and/or mental health specialist conducts support groups on site.		
7. Other:		

3. SAP Coordinator for the building.

Rt. Wt.

1. Internal SAP Coordinator is provided through district funds.		
2. External SAP Coordinator is provided through district funds.		
3. Other:		

4. Policy violations and consequences for alcohol and other drugs, bullying and other acts of violence are clearly stated.

Rt. Wt.

1. Student handbook includes clear language for each of the above describing what is considered a violation and consequences.		
2. Administrators and staff discuss appropriate behavior, violations and consequences with groups of students during the school year as a preventive strategy.		
3. School policy clarifies the relationship of SAP services to policies regarding all students.		
4. School policy clarifies the limits of confidentiality for all students.		
5. The school uses appropriate marketing strategies to promote the school policies and procedures to both students and parents.		
6. Other		

5. SAP structure and organization (including members and titles, clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, meeting times, membership selection criteria, etc.) clearly delineated.

Rt. Wt.

1. SAP has written procedures including roles and responsibilities, membership criteria, meeting time and place.		
2. SAP has distributed written procedures to administrators, staff, central administration, the school board, other school buildings in the district, and agency personnel working with students in the building.		
3. SAP distributes a visual flow chart of the SA process to administrators, staff, central administration, the school board, other school buildings in the district, and agency personnel working with students in the building.		
4. Other:		

6. Description of SAP services for faculty, students and others including handbooks, brochures, etc.

	Rt.	Wt.
1. SAP services are included on the district and building web pages.		
2. Current technology other than the web page is used to disseminate information about SAP services.		
3. SAP has a designated communication person within the team.		
4. SAP program (non-case) information is included in local newspapers.		
5. Other:		

7. In-services for teachers, pupil personnel, support staff, and administrators provide time and support for SAP informational systems.

	Rt.	Wt.
1. All staff members know how to make a referral.		
2. All staff members receive annual in servicing about SAP.		
3. All new staff members receive information about SAP services.		
4. All staff receive quarterly information about SAP activities.		
5. All staff making referrals receives follow-up acknowledgement and appropriate information.		
6. Relevant community service organizations working with students in the school receive information concerning the SAP and services offered.		
7. Appropriate information about SAP operations and services are distributed on a regular basis to school board members and central office/ building administrators.		
8. Other:		

8. Specific student communication strategy

	Rt.	Wt.
1. All students receive appropriate grade level information annually about the purpose of SAP.		
2. SAP information targeted at students reflects language and design that is appropriate for student's culture.		
3. SAP information distributed to students reflects appropriate cultural sensitivity.		
4. Creative approaches of distributed information targeted at students are used.		
5. Current technology is reflected in SAP information targeted at students.		
6. SAP highlight information is included in the school newsletter.		
7. Other:		

9. Specific parent communication strategy

	Rt.	Wt.
1. A brochure targeted at parents is distributed to all parents with opening school information.		
2. SAP highlight information is included in parent newsletter.		
3. Information about how and when to contact the SAP with a concern is included on the school's website.		
4. All parents attending open house receive a SAP brochure.		
5. Parent brochures are produced in languages that represent the cultural majorities of our student populations.		
6. Other:		

10. SAP is accessible to all targeted students.

1. All staff have been trained in the basic Student Assistance process and know how to identify students and make referrals to the SAP.		
2. Students who receive consequences for violating school policy are also automatically considered by the SAP for services.		
3. All students understand the purpose of the SAP.		
4. Students whose absences exceed the 'normal' range are automatically considered for SAP services.		
5. Our SAP has defined 'targeted students'.		
6. Other:		

11. Formal procedures and decision-making process.

Rt. Wt.

1. The multi-disciplinary team utilizes the collective talents of the group in determining appropriate intervention strategies.		
2. On-going appropriate feedback is provided to initial referral source.		
3. The case management team practices solution-focused rather than problem-focused discussions when reviewing cases.		
4. The case management team utilizes a systematic process in monitoring student progress.		
5. The problem-solving and case management team utilizes a systematic process of record maintenance.		
6. Other:		

12. Screening process includes clear and consistent student data collection and review procedures.

Rt. Wt.

1. Referral process focuses on both objective data (grades, attendance and discipline) and specific observable behaviors.		
2. Faculty observation forms include identification of strengths and assets as well as descriptive data on problems.		
3. Clear, concise, easy to use forms are provided for students, family, and staff.		
4. Referring staff members are routinely included in the SA review procedures.		
5. Other:		

13. Confidentiality guidelines for team are well delineated with members demonstrating respect for and understanding of parent and student's privacy rights.

Rt. Wt.

1. Meeting space protects privacy of discussion of SAP cases.		
2. All staff members receive training in federal confidentiality rights, FERPA, and school confidentiality processes.		
3. SAP team members do not discuss cases with individuals outside the student's SA process.		
4. Files are reviewed semi-annually for compliance with confidentiality procedures.		
5. Procedures are in place for reporting violations of confidentiality rights.		
6. Other:		

14. Formal Parent Involvement procedure.

Rt. Wt.

1. Written procedures exist regarding parent inclusion in the SA process.		
2. Written procedures accurately reflect stated guidelines for parent inclusion.		
3. Parent contact attempts and results are recorded in the case file.		
4. District counsel has approved parent contact procedures.		
5. Contact procedures include consistent information about when and how to contact a parent.		
6. All team members understand the procedures for parent inclusion in the SA process.		
7. Parents feel safe to make referrals to the SAP as demonstrated through consistent parent referrals.		
8. Other:		

15. Regular meeting time sufficient to complete SAP work.

Rt. Wt.

1. All school personnel consider meeting time as 'dedicated' time.		
2. Meeting dates and times are distributed to all school personnel.		
3. A formal agenda is used for each meeting.		
4. Meeting time allows for continuous monitoring of cases.		
5. Meeting time includes periodic maintenance activities.		
6. Team members do not conduct outside activities during meeting time.		
7. Other:		

16. Member's role assignments and responsibilities articulated (e.g. leaders, secretary, case manager).

Rt. Wt.

1. Case assignment and management procedures are in writing and understood by all team members.		
2. Written role descriptions and responsibilities are included in SAP procedures.		
3. New members added to existing teams receive information about roles and responsibilities upon entering the team.		
4. Other:		

17. Support and provide linkages for students and parents to access school and community services.

Rt. Wt.

1. SAP maintains contact with all support group leaders in the building.		
2. SAP maintains lists of school-based mentors for students.		
3. SAP maintains list of tutors for students.		
4. SAP provides parents with a variety of support services throughout the community.		
5. Links to community support services are offered on the SAP web pages.		
6. Other:		

Rt. Wt.

18. Procedures promote student access to and compliance with school and community services and treatment recommendations.

1. School administrators have written procedures detailing access to and compliance with school and community services and treatment recommendations.		
2. Students receive written information about compliance procedures with school and community services.		
3. Parents receive written information about compliance procedures with school and community services		
4. Community service information is reviewed annually for up to date contact information.		
5. Other:		

19. School resources are available and accessible

Rt. Wt.

1. SAP maintains availability information about social work, counseling, and school psychologist services available in the district.		
2. SAP assesses case management and utilization data to assure appropriate support groups are in place to match student need.		
3. Other:		

20. Team members participate in appropriate entry level SAP training

Rt. Wt.

1. All SAP core team members have been trained in Student Assistance process as well as		
2. All SAP core team members have been trained in barriers to learning and intervention strategies.		
3. All SAP core team members have been trained in appropriate referral to community resources and support processes.		
4. Other:		

21. Team members participate in a maintenance and development training program.

Rt. Wt.

1. Team members attend trainings to enhance the effectiveness of team functioning.		
2. Team members have personal wellness plans.		
3. The team has a written maintenance plan for the year that is followed.		
4. Other:		

22. Team has adequate training schedule and budget.

Rt. Wt.

1. Training schedule is based on ongoing need assessment.		
2. SAP staff development is integrated with district and individual teacher Professional Development Plans.		
3. Team members attend trainings that focuses on reducing barriers to learning that affect student's social and academic performance, appropriate identification and referral procedures, and awareness of intervention strategies.		
4. Other:		

Rt. Wt.

23. SAP monitoring and improvement mechanisms are in place.

1. The SAP maintains a student data management system.		
2. The SAP maintains a service participation and utilization information management system.		
3. Program assessment includes process evaluation on an annual basis.		
4. Program evaluation includes student outcomes and system change outcomes.		
5. Program evaluation includes input from administrators, staff, students, parents and community members.		
6. Program evaluation includes methods for communicating program results to administrators, staff, students, parents and community members.		
7. Program evaluation includes developing a plan with short and long term goals with appropriate time lines, implementation strategies and identified funding sources.		
8. Program changes are based on evaluation results.		
9. Student interventions, recommendations, and outcomes are regularly assessed for quality and goal attainment.		
10. Other:		



Notes



Section Two – Identify Top Priorities

A. Considering the items weighed as '3', your available resources, and rating as a 1, 2, or 3, list your top 3 priorities.

B. Select one of the above items, and brainstorm a list of strategies that would assist you in improving that area.

c. Choose the top two strategies that you would like to implement. Then, list your available resources for accomplishing those strategies and potential roadblocks.

Strategy One:
Resources:
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Strategy One:
Threats
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Strategy Two
Resources:
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Strategy Two:
Threats
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Section Three: Plan of Action

Strategy One:

State your desired outcome: _____

_____.

List the steps that need to be done to accomplish this outcome along with who will accomplish and by what date.

_____	_____	_____
step	who	date

_____	_____	_____
step	who	date

_____	_____	_____
step	who	date

_____	_____	_____
step	who	date

Strategy Two:

State your desired outcome: _____

_____.

List the steps that need to be done to accomplish this outcome along with who will accomplish and by what date.

_____	_____	_____
step	who	date

_____	_____	_____
step	who	date

_____	_____	_____
step	who	date

_____	_____	_____
step	who	date