

**Student Assistance Program (SAP) &
Student Success Team (SST)
Frequently Asked Questions**

1. What is the difference between the Student Assistance Program and the Student Success Team, or are they one in the same?

The **Student Assistance Program** is a “learning support” umbrella structure at the school that develops and monitors programs and linkages that enhance prevention and intervention efforts contributing to student success. The Student Assistance Program develops and coordinates programs reflective of needs of identified students and their families. The SAP plans strategies, develops assistance plans and monitors students who have been identified in the school. The SAP is an adult meeting structure made up of site support staff such as counselors, deans, school nurses, administrators, peer resource coordinators, parent liaisons and others. The student and family representatives are not in attendance. Individuals may be assigned to follow-up with the student and family to join with them in developing a “case management” plan. SAP teams meet on a weekly basis to plan strategies for several students, to identify and address program needs as they arise, as well as to coordinate existing programs and resources.

The **Student Success Team** is a problem solving and coordinating structure that assists students, families, and teachers to seek positive solutions for maximizing student potential. It provides an opportunity for school staff, family members, community agencies, and other important people in the life of the student to present their concerns about individual students and through discussion and study, to plan a positive course of action, assign responsibilities and monitor results. The SST focuses in depth on one student at a time. Members of the SAP most likely will participate in the SST meetings with the addition of other individuals who would not be in attendance at an SAP meeting. Members of the SST typically assign roles, that include the meeting facilitator, the recorder, and other roles determined by their relationship to the student.

2. When would a student be referred for an SAP or SST meeting?

A **student should be considered for referral to the SAP** when there is concern related to academic success, attendance, physical or mental health, or behavior. Initial referral to the SAP will allow students to be linked to on-site and/or community services. This process will also inform site support staff of trends within the school community. Students can be referred by completion of the referral form 1.0 by any site staff member.

A **student should be considered for an SST meeting** when there are significant concerns about him/her, be they related to the progression of their education, emotional issues, social adjustment, when retention is being considered or has occurred, chronic truancy, etc. The SST is also responsible to look at those students who may be referred for formal assessment and consideration for Special Education

services. Students can be referred through the SAP, directly by their parent/guardian, or by their classroom teachers through the on-site SST facilitator.

In the past, many have perceived the SST process as a vehicle for expediting students into Special Education. In reality, the SST is intended to assist students in becoming more successful so as to avoid Special Education whenever possible. This is typically done through joining together a network of support that involves the school, the home and the community. The Student Success Team works with all partners in an attempt to bring this about.

3. What about all that paperwork? How much do I have to complete?

All of the SST forms have been modified this year to hopefully lessen the confusion. There are essentially four main forms and a log form used to track the students who go through the process at each site. **Form 1.0 is the Request for Assistance form** that is completed either by a teacher, a group of teachers, or a counselor. This is used to **initiate the SST process, as well as the Student Assistance Process at the secondary level**, and to record certain background information along with prior attempts to assist the student and the results of those “interventions”. It is also useful for the 2.1 Teacher Input Form to be completed by each teacher prior to the actual SAP or SST meeting. **Essentially, this is the only paperwork needed to start the process.**

Form 2.0 is the First Meeting Summary Form which is completed during the SST meeting. It is essentially a recording of what transpired in the actual meeting and is completed either by the recorder or the facilitator. Many schools use the 6' long wall chart, which is essentially a larger version of the 2.0, and record the meeting on either a blackboard under the chart or on large pieces of butcher paper which are attached to the wall chart, or banner. The information can be later transferred to the 8 ½ by 14” form if this was not done during the actual meeting. Form 2.0A is the Summary Form used for follow-up meetings. Form 3.0 is the Observation of the Student form. This form is used when the SST feels it would be useful to have someone designated by the team to observe the student in the classroom situation as well as outside of the classroom situation for the insights that might be gained. It is an optional form unless the student is being referred for Special Education assessment, in which case it must be included in the packet of information that is sent forth. Form 4.0 is the Developmental and Family/Home Study. Again, this form is to be used when the SST believes it useful for a member of the team to meet with a family representative to gain understanding into the health history and growth and development of that youngsters life, as well as any significant issues or stressors may have impacted the youngster. This form is optional to the work of the SST unless the student will be sent on for Special Education assessment. In that case, this form would also be part of the required packet that is sent on. (The 4.0 form is available in Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish and Tagalog in addition to English). There is one additional form that is to be completed for English Language Learners. This form is the SFUSD Language Survey. Once again, the completion of this form can be very useful to the work of the SST and would represent good practice. It would be required if an ELL student was being considered for a Special Education assessment.

Try to keep in mind that the SST is **first and foremost a people process**. The process utilizes certain forms when and if indicated. The forms do not drive the process.

4. The school day is so hectic; when do we have time to meet?

FLEXIBILITY is the key. Those who believe in and support the SAP and SST process are usually able to work out some accommodation that meets the scheduling needs of the majority of team members. Needless to say, the team member who sets up and schedules SAP and SST meetings has to be a bit of a juggler. Remember, prioritizing time for SAP and SST meetings can, in the long run, reduce the lost time in dealing with problem behaviors, academic achievement and attendance concerns. Support staff need to be able to communicate with each other to better serve the needs of the school community.

Trying to find a convenient time that both school staff and the student's family can meet can be a real challenge. Many schools schedule SST meeting before or after school, however, if the meetings are held before school it is important to allow enough time so that the meeting is not too rushed. At the elementary school level, there may be a time in the day when administrators and resource personnel are available, (e.g., after lunch or after recess), and when coverage is available to the classroom teacher by a colleague, (e.g., a kindergarten teacher who teaches in the morning may be available in the afternoon). At the secondary level many schools are moving to a common prep or planning time for grade level teachers. This would be an excellent time if the student's parent/caregiver can be available at this time. Some schools have late start days each week to allow for special meetings.

5. How can our school speed up the SAP and SST process?

It may have taken many years for a student to develop a problem and it will take some time to solve it. However, there are ways to make the process more efficient. **Well-trained teams and a clearly defined referral process will assist in speeding up the SAP and SST process.**

The SST process may necessitate an expansion to multiple teams at the school. Schools can achieve the goal of running multiple teams by training all staff members in the process annually. For more efficient scheduling, teams may consist of core members with common grade levels, departments, or conference schedules.

It is also important to schedule a follow-up meeting at the end of the initial meeting to ensure that an agreed upon time is set. Having a school calendar and having core SST members bring their planners to meetings will assist in this task.

Appointing or assigning a "case manager" can aid SAPs/SSTs in monitoring the effective implementation of interventions and keeping to timeliness.

It is important to note that the time between the initial meeting and the follow-up meeting may vary depending on the types of positive interventions agreed upon by the team. But, in any case, there must be time allowed for the plan to work (generally 4-6 weeks).

It is important to adhere to time frames and establish them at the outset of an SAP/SST meeting. An initial meeting should run approximately 30-45 minutes, making sure to allow time for each section listed on the 2.0 form to be covered. The follow-up meeting should run approximately 15-20 minutes, updating new information, evaluating the effects of interventions, and developing any new interventions, if necessary. The SST 2.0A Summary Form for Follow-up Meetings is used to record the follow-up discussion. Please allow double this time if an interpreter is needed for this meeting.

6. Why should I refer a student to SAP and/or SST?

Remember, the purpose of the SAP and SST is to bring a group of people together who all possess different talents, knowledge and expertise. The function of the team is to support the referring teacher, caregiver and student by looking at the strengths and concerns from each team member's unique viewpoint. The expectation is that teachers and other referring staff have attempted a variety of interventions prior to SAP/SST referrals. The goal is to provide the referring parties with new interventions that address the concerns and tap into student strengths. Therefore, each SAP/SST team member accepts some responsibility in assisting the students through their ideas, strategies, or hands-on support. It is critical that schools explore new prevention and intervention ideas in an ongoing manner.

7. When are students not appropriate at an SST meeting?

The State model that supports the Student Success Team process requires that students and their caregivers be at each meeting. There are a few exceptions. At the caregiver's discretion, younger children may be asked to step outside for part of the data gathering while the caregiver discloses information which the parent may wish to keep from the child. This information can be so important for the team to hear that it can justify removing the child from that part of the meeting. Certainly every child should be present for the recitation of the student's strengths because of its obvious effect on the student. As a rule, however, meetings without the student and the caregiver are not valid SST meetings. Yes, most people who have used the process believe that even young children can benefit from being part of the discussion. After all, they know that their parent is at the school and are most likely wondering what all those grown-ups are talking about. By including them, we are demystifying this meeting for them. Of course, discretion should be used with very young children, particularly between grades K-2, who may feel somewhat overwhelmed by what is going on.

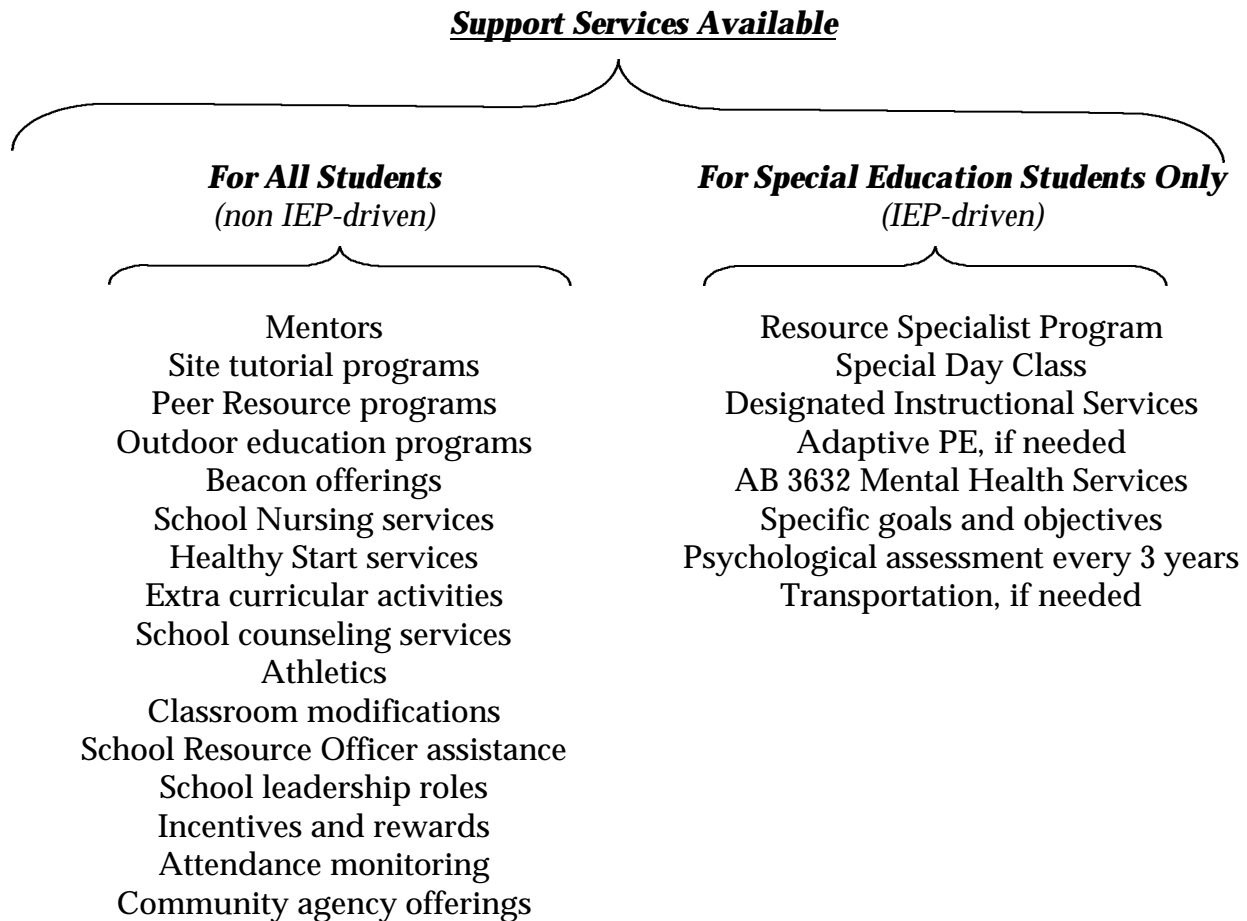
8. As a facilitator, how do I handle sensitive, confidential issues that may arise during an SAP or SST meeting?

The facilitator must be careful in handling confidential or other sensitive issues that may emerge in the SAP or SST meeting. It is important to gain permission from team members as well as from the parent/caregiver or students in relation to confidential issues. Team

members must clarify and agree on the meaning of confidentiality. It's best to look for verbal or non-verbal cues from the caregiver or student as to whether or not they are comfortable in pursuing a particular discussion point in front of the SST meeting. At times, it is useful to designate a member of the team who will meet with the student or parent individually to discuss these issues. This then becomes an action item listed in the group memory, (Form 2.0).

9. Can Special Education students be served by the SAP/SST process?

Of course, and here is the reason why. Special Education students receive some supportive services that are IEP driven, as stated below. However, they can also benefit from the supportive services that are available to all students, irrespective of their Special Education status. This is consistent with the Inclusive Education philosophy and plan that the District is implementing. It would be important to involve the Special Education teacher responsible for monitoring the IEP as a participant in any SAP or SST meeting on behalf of a Special Education student.



10. We don't have all of the answers...can you guide us to some useful resource guides that we can use at our site?

Yes, there are many useful publications that can help with suggestions for the classroom, such as instructional and curricular modifications and accommodations, strategies to deal with various behaviors that present themselves in the classroom, as well as community resource guides to assist families in accessing the resources and services of the larger community. Some of these include:

- SFUSD *English/Language Arts Content and Performance Standards and Core Curriculum* - contains an entire chapter of strategies and another on authentic assessment
- SFUSD *Mathematics Content and Performance Standards*
- *Strategies for Teaching: ELD Curriculum Guide*, BELA (Bilingual and Language Academy) SFUSD
- *Adapting Curriculum and Modifying Instruction for Students: A Guide for All Educators* SFUSD Special Education Services and the Curriculum Improvement and Professional Development Department (CIPD)
- *Effective Instructional Strategies for Addressing Learning Needs of Diverse Students* Curriculum Improvement and Professional Development (CIPD)
- SFUSD Web Page: *Strategies Data-Base* (<http://www.sfusd.edu/SST/>)
- *School Health Programs Department Secretary's Binder*
- *School Health Programs Department Crisis Response Manual*
- *Pre-Referral Intervention Manual*, by McCarney, Wunderlich and Bauer, is available from Hawthorne Press, (573) 874-1710 for a cost of \$36.00. Also available from the same company is *The Teacher's Guide to Behavioral Interventions*, by Wunderlich, for a cost of \$28.00. The *Emotional or Behavior Disorder Intervention Manual* is available for \$24.00. They will gladly send you their catalog, which lists other publications that might be useful to you
- 1999 edition of HELPLINK, a directory of human services for the City and County of San Francisco, is available through HELPLINK, 50 California Street, Suite 200, San Francisco, 94111-4696, Phone 772-HELP. The cost of this publication is \$45.00. The cost of the 2000 edition, to be available December, 2000, is \$65.00. The directory contains loads of useful information that should serve as a resource to any SST.
- *Providing Hope*, an Overview/Directory of San Francisco's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services is available through Community Substance Abuse Services, 1380 Howard St. 4th Floor, Phone 255-3500 for \$5.00.
- *Adolescent Provider's Guide*, is published by Health Initiatives for Youth (487-5777). The cost is \$10.00. This would be a useful guide for any middle or high school.

11. **What happens after the meeting? What about the follow-up?**

Follow-up to referring party should be part of the SAP or SST process. If students are case managed the team should have a system in place to monitor and keep the referring individual informed of student progress.

Those interventions decided in good faith during the SAP and SST meeting process are only as good as the follow-up that occurs to actually implement them. The process/method of "gluing" together those needs, interventions, modifications, strategies, and actions with the individuals and programmatic resources that have been identified to

address and implement them, is frequently referred to as “case management”. In reality, service coordination may be a more appropriate and user-friendly term.

It is wonderful if the school actually has someone designated as a case manager, but unfortunately, most schools can not afford this luxury. Therefore, it is very important to clearly define on the SST summary form (2.0), who is responsible for each “action item”. This creates an accountability system that will be monitored when the team comes together again for the following SST meeting(s). The issues presented by a particular student were most likely a long time in the making, and one meeting alone will not magically change things. It will take a conscientious effort on everyone’s part to see that the ideas generated in the meeting process are actually implemented.

12. We’ve heard about 504. What is that and how is the SST involved?

504 refers to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which is monitored and enforced by the Federal Office of Civil Rights. There are some students who are not eligible for Special Education services but who nevertheless are deemed “disabled” under Section 504, and to whom the district may therefore have responsibilities.

If their disorders or conditions substantially limit their ability to function at school, they are disabled within the meaning of 504, and must be provided the accommodations and special services necessary to benefit from a free and appropriate public education.

The district must then develop and implement a plan for the delivery of all needed services.

A group of persons knowledgeable about the student determines what services are needed. The group reviews the nature of the “disability” and how it affects the student’s education, whether specialized services are needed, and if so what services are needed. The group’s decisions about 504 eligibility and services must be documented in the student’s file and reviewed periodically.

Procedure:

1. The SST (possibly with information from SAP) will evaluate the nature of the student’s disability and the impact of the disability upon the student’s education. This evaluation will include consideration of any behaviors that interfere with the regular participation of a student who otherwise meets the criteria for participation in the educational program and/or activities.
2. For a student who has been identified as qualified within the meaning of 504, the SST shall be responsible for determining what special services are necessary to ensure that the student receives a free appropriate public education, and shall write an accommodation plan for the student. (Refer to SFUSD Resource Guide for Educators, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.)

District administrator responsible for 504 is Ms. Chiung-Sal Chou, Associate Superintendent, Student Support Services.

