

# Middle School Guidance

## M.S.A.P.



September 2006

Volume 4, Issue 2

What do the initials M.S.A.P. stand for? (Middle School Student Assistant Program). The Commonwealth's Student Assistance Program, which is administered by the Department of Education in collaboration with the Departments of Health and Public Welfare, is designed to assist school personnel in identifying issues, including alcohol, drugs and others, which pose a barrier to a student's learning and school success. Student assistance is not a treatment program; rather, it is a systematic process using effective and accountable professional techniques to mobilize school resources to remove the barriers to learning, and, where the problem is beyond the scope of the school, to assist the parent and the student with information so they may access services within the community. The student assistance team members do not diagnose, treat or refer for treatment, but they may refer for an assessment for treatment.

The heart of the program is a professionally trained team, including school staff and liaisons from community agencies, who process issues based upon state guidelines, professional standards and policies and procedures adopted by the local school board of directors. Professional training for team members in all phases of the student assistance process, which is consistent with state guidelines and conducted by a training provider approved by the Departments of Education, Health and Public Welfare, is required to ensure the appropriateness of the recommended services, effective interagency collaboration and compliance with state and federal laws protecting the privacy rights of parents and students.

The rigorous training of team members, which results in a certificate from the 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 professional procedures. Guidelines for the Commonwealth Student Assistance Program Training System contain training standards and competencies for SAP core team professionals. A list of Commonwealth Approved SAP Training Providers is available on this site as well as a map of trainer locations and schedule of future SAP team trainings.

It is the parent's right to be involved in the process and to have full access to all school records under applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Involvement of parents in all phases of the student assistance program underscores the parent's role and responsibility in the decision-making process affecting their children's education and is the key to the successful resolution of problems.

The use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs and other related issues do impact upon a child's performance in school; however, it is neither the mission of the school nor its responsibility to resolve all problems which impact upon school performance. Student assistance team members are trained to identify problems, determine whether or not the presenting problem lies within the responsibility of the school and make recommendations to assist the student and the parent. In cases where the problem lies beyond the scope of the school's responsibility, it is the team's responsibility to inform the parent of the problem affecting the child's performance in school, provide information on community resources and the options to deal with the problem, and, where necessary, set up linkages with resources to help resolve the problem.

For those youngsters receiving treatment through a community agency, the team, in collaboration with the parent and the

agency, plans in-school support services during and after treatment. The team's effectiveness in helping the student and the parent remove the barriers to learning and improve student performance depends on the training of individual team members, maintenance of the student assistance process, level of administrative commitment and board support, active parent and student involvement and the available resources both in the school and the community. Sufficient time for the team members to carry out their responsibilities is essential.

SAP team members take their responsibility seriously to educate school staff, board members, parents, students and the community about its role, responsibilities and limitations in dealing with problems which affect children's performance in school. All segments of the community should be aware that the team does not provide diagnosis or treatment services nor does it replace the parents' decision-making responsibility relative to the resolution of their children's problems.

### Quote of the month

"Minds are like parachutes - they only function when open."

(Thomas Dewar)



**Good Luck  
Mountaineers!**

### Points of Interest:

- ✓ - Absent from school? Check out the teacher lesson plans by logging into the Logic House Parent Portal.
- ✓ - Excuses are due the day students return to school. A grace period of three days is allowed before becoming illegal.
- ✓ - Bullying information can be found at: <http://www.bbsd.com/bullying>

Contact Mr. Smith

Phone # 267-6931

E-mail - [msmith@bbsd.com](mailto:msmith@bbsd.com)

Webpage - <http://www.bbsd.com/ms/faculty/marksmith>

## Important Upcoming Events

The following are a listing of important dates to remember:

**September 1, 2006** - Individual school pictures for students in Kindergarten through twelfth grade.

**September 4, 2006** - Labor Day.

**September 13, 2006 - September 16, 2006** - Berlin Community Fair.

**September 19, 2006** - First Six Week Grading Mid-Term.

**October 10, 2006** - End of the First Six Week Grading Period.

**October 16, 2006** - Somerset County In-Service at North Star.

**November 1, 2006** - Second Six Week Grading Mid-Term.

**November 11, 2006** - Veteran's Day. Thank you to all who have served our country!

**November 13, 2006** - Parent/Teacher Conferences.

**November 22, 2006** - End of the Second Six Week Grading Period.

