

# Parkland School District Parkland High School



## Student Assistance Program In-School Services Brochure

### SAP Mission Statement

To empower students to overcome personal, social, and academic challenges by providing confidential support, resources, and guidance that promotes their well-being and success.

## Referrals

Anyone can refer a student to SAP when they are concerned about someone's behavior—any school staff, a student's friend, a family member, or community member. The students themselves can even go directly to the SAP team to ask for help. The SAP team contacts the parent for permission to proceed with the SAP process. Referral forms are completed using a Google Form. Once the form is submitted, it will be processed by the SAP team.

**[SAP Student/Parent Confidential Referral Form 2025-2026](#)**

# Mentor Program

## (SAP Permission Required)

- ★ A mentor is a caring and committed staff member in a young person's life. It is for the student who needs a caring staff member on standby if he or she needs light assistance with a school or social-related concern. This program enables your child to choose when he/she wants to meet with the staff. The student will message the staff member via email or Schoology. The staff member can also decide to request to see your child during a study hall to check in as needed.
- ★ Mentors can help children achieve success by spending time sharing activities, listening, encouraging, challenging, and building skills and self-reliance.
- ★ Depending on the recommended mentor program for your child, the following are potential strategies/skills that may be addressed;
  - Strategies to build social, emotional, and behavioral skills, including ways to deal with stressors that may adversely affect educational performance. These skills may focus on learning ways to cope with difficult emotions and ways to improve relationships. This may lead to discussions on important relationships in their lives.
  - Homework Strategies
  - Goal Setting
  - Joining School Activities
  - Decision-Making Skills
  - Strategies for Improving School/Class Attendance

### Mentoring Program Process

- ★ **Referral:** A staff member may refer your child for a mentor. The staff will determine the need. Parent and/or student requests are not a guarantee for this program.
- ★ **Parent involvement** is important and required for your child to participate in the program. Parents must provide an email address they check weekly in order to have effective communication with the mentor. Failure of parents to reply to the mentor's email in a timely manner could result in dismissal from the program.
- ★ **Your child's attendance** for their scheduled mentoring times is required. They could be dismissed from the program for not attending meetings.
- ★ **Please note that mentoring is not a confidential relationship.**
- ★ **Benefits of Mentoring include but are not limited to:** increased high school graduation rates, lower high school dropout rates, healthier relationships and lifestyle choices, better attitude about school, higher college enrollment rates and higher educational aspirations, enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence, improved behavior (both at home and at school), stronger relationships with parents, teachers, and peers, improved interpersonal skills, decreased likelihood of initiating drug and alcohol use

# Academic Coaching

## (SAP Permission Required)

- ★ Academic coaching is a **short-term service** provided to students who are having difficulty acclimating to the academic rigors of high school. This program aids in structuring a student to be successful in the classroom.

### Academic Coaching Process

- ★ **Referral:** A staff member may refer your child for an academic coach. The staff will determine the need. A parent request is not a guarantee for this program.
- ★ **Parent involvement** is important and required for your child to participate in the program. Parents must provide an email address they check weekly in order to have effective communication with the academic coach. Failure of parents to reply to the mentor's email in a timely manner could result in dismissal from the program.
- ★ **Your child's attendance** for their scheduled academic coaching times is required. They could be dismissed from the program for not attending meetings.
- ★ **Academic Growth:** If your child is not utilizing the skills learned in academic coaching, he/she may be removed from the program per staff choice. Additionally, your child will not be automatically enrolled in this program the following year as it is assumed that your child obtained the skills during their time in the program.
- ★ **Timeframe:** The amount of academic coaching meetings will be decided by the academic coach based on student progress.
- ★ **Benefits of Academic Coaching include but are not limited to:** gaining new organizational skills, gaining time management skills, learning how to schedule the day or week, creating to-do lists, increasing mental motivation.

# **Educational Peer Support Groups (SAP Permission Required)**

- ★ Educational peer support groups provide a space for students who are dealing with similar concerns to come together and support each other under the guidance of a SAP team member. Groups form as a result of student needs. If a group is organized that may benefit your child, a member of the SAP team will contact you.
  
- ★ **Benefits of Educational Peer Support Groups include but are not limited to:** children meet other students dealing with similar issues, peer support, strategies are provided to move them forward
  
- ★ **Please make note of the following in regards to Reportable Information:** the facilitator of the Educational Peer Support Group must report the following information in order to ensure the safety of your child or the safety of others. This will be explained to your child on the first day of the group.
  - child abuse
  - suicidal thoughts
  - homicidal thoughts
  - health issues that could lead to serious injury or death (i.e., seizures)
  - self-harm
  - intimate relationships deemed illegal due to age difference
  - gang involvement
  - firearm possession
  - parents providing drugs to child and/or child's friends; doing drugs with child
  - substance use that could lead to injury/death
  - impaired driving
  - any other behavior that could or has inflicted harm on the student or another student

# Mid-Atlantic Rehabilitation Services (MARS) Assessment

★ This is a confidential screening conducted by a member of MARS during school hours at Parkland High School. These recommendations will be shared with the SAP team. It will allow the SAP team to make appropriate referrals and necessary linkages to in-school and out-of-school supports for your child. Parents have the right to request to review the screening tool that will be used with their child and to have access to all information gathered pertaining to their child. If you are interested in a MARS assessment for your child, please [click here for our parent permission form.](#)

## What Is SAP?

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Student Assistance Program (SAP), which is administered by the PA Department of Education's Safe Schools Office in partnership with the PA Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs' Division of Prevention and Intervention, and the PA Department of Human Services Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, is designed to assist school personnel 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 (SAP) is to help students overcome these barriers in order that they may achieve, remain in school, and advance.

SAP team members are trained to identify problems, determine whether or not the presenting problem lies within the responsibility of the school and to make recommendations to assist the student and the parent.

When the problem lies beyond the scope of the school, the SAP team will assist the parent and student so they may access services within the community. ([www.pnsas.org](http://www.pnsas.org))

Jeffrey Marchese, MSW, LSW

826 Delaware Ave.  
Bethlehem, PA 18015

Ph: 610-419-3101 x213  
C: 484-661-6158

[jmarchese@marscare.com](mailto:jmarchese@marscare.com)  
[www.marsatp.com](http://www.marsatp.com)



## M.A.R.S. SAP Clinical Staff

Jeffrey Marchese, MSW, LSW  
SAP Coordinator  
[jmarchese@marscare.com](mailto:jmarchese@marscare.com)

Rachel Starmer, MACC  
SAP Clinical Assessor  
[rstarmer@marscare.com](mailto:rstarmer@marscare.com)

Laura Gordon, MA, MDiv, MACC  
SAP Clinical Assessor  
[lgordon@marscare.com](mailto:lgordon@marscare.com)

Michael Kon, M.Ed., CAADC  
SAP Clinical Assessor  
[mkon@marscare.com](mailto:mkon@marscare.com)

Betsy Martellucci, M.Ed., LPC, CAADC  
M.A.R.S. Clinical Director  
[bmartellucci@marscare.com](mailto:bmartellucci@marscare.com)

610.419.3101



826 Delaware Avenue  
Bethlehem, PA 18015

## Student Assistance Program (SAP)

*Behavioral Health Assessments*

# M.A.R.S.

Mid Atlantic Rehab Services  
MARSATP.COM

## SAP ASSESSMENT STEPS

### INITIAL PROCESS

After referral from your child's school counselor or administrator, a behavioral health assessment will be administered by a therapist from our agency. If the student already has private or public insurance, it will be utilized to cover services. Any costs or charges, dictated by the student's insurance, related to deductibles or co-pays, will be billed to the family at a later date. If the student is uninsured, coverage for the behavioral health assessment will be assumed by Lehigh County.

### ASSESSMENT PHASE

The behavioral health assessment is essentially an interview that seeks student perspectives in the areas of family relationships, academic performance, behavioral health, peer relationships, and substance use and/or abuse. A snapshot is developed, identifying potential need for additional support. The student is engaged through positive interaction and an interviewing style that places their needs as the primary focus.

### CLINICAL REVIEW OF NEEDS

After completion of the behavioral health assessment, a parent/guardian is contacted to discuss the general findings. However, some specific details shared by the student may be protected under federal privacy statutes, as is the case in any therapeutic setting. Adequate information will be shared to allow determination of safety and consequent steps.

### REFERRAL TO ADDITIONAL SERVICES

A behavioral health referral will be provided to the student who meets clinical criteria for this. These referrals will be to local behavioral health professionals who are in-network with the student's insurance. The SAP assessor will support the family in the process of securing a first appointment with the referred professional.

## Other Details of Services

Assessments provided on school premises with option of being conducted at our agency in Bethlehem.

Timely follow-up to parent/guardian provided by assessor who directly met with the student.

Assessment length is typically 45-60 minutes.

Student's confidentiality prioritized with only minimal assessment details provided to school district.

Therapists work to provide a positive and personalized connection to students.

Following SAP Assessments last year, our clinical staff referred students for additional support to over 30 different therapists/agencies in the Lehigh Valley.



## Why a SAP Assessment?

Our assessors look at an individual's needs, preferences, and strengths to determine what, if any, assistance is necessary for the student being assessed.

Upon completion of the assessment, an individual and their support system will be involved in determining the most appropriate referrals.

Clinicians completing the assessment are master's level counselors with a passion for connecting with and providing services with and for adolescents.

A SAP behavioral health assessment is often the first clinical tool applied to a student allowing for early detection of negative behavioral patterns that can be effectively managed or treated.



## The Starfish Story

--Adapted from the Star Thrower by Loren Eiseley 1907-1977

Once upon a time, there was a wise man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach before he began his work.

One day, as he was walking along the shore, he looked down the beach and saw a human figure moving like a dancer. He smiled to himself at the thought of someone who would dance to the day, and so, he walked faster to catch up.

As he got closer, he noticed that the figure was that of a young girl, and that what she was doing was not dancing at all. The young girl was reaching down to the shore, picking up small objects, and throwing them into the ocean.

He came closer still and called out, "Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?"

The young girl paused, looked up, and replied "Throwing starfish into the ocean."

"I must ask, then, why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?" asked the somewhat startled wise man.

To this, the young girl replied, "The Sun is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them in, they'll die."

Upon hearing this, the wise man commented, "But, young girl, do you not realize that there are miles and miles of beach and there are starfish all along every mile? You can't possibly make a difference!"

At this, the young girl bent down, picked up yet another starfish, and threw it into the ocean. As it met the water, she said, "It made a difference for that one."

