Student Assistance Program Outcomes 2010

VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Agency of Human Services

Student Assistance Programs (SAP) are prevention and intervention programs provided by trained professionals within Vermont schools. These professionals are available to all students and staff in a school and provide services to prevent substance use through evidence based programs, screen and refer students using substances. In addition, the SAP also:

- Consult with community resources to develop services for students
- Develop policies and procedures around substance use in schools
- Train school staff to deal with troubled students
- Meet with concerned families
- Increase awareness of substance use problems in the community
- Allow teachers to concentrate on education instead of having to address substance use
- Run educational support groups

Substance-related issues are not the only issues discussed by the students involved in SAP's. The SAP counselors assist students in a wide variety of issues they may not feel free to discuss elsewhere.

Vermont Department of Health Statistics unit summarized Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data for schools with a Student Assistance Program for 2003 to 2007. This was compared to the results in schools that did not consistently have an SAP.

From 2003 to 2007 there was an increase in the proportion of 12th grade students at full SAP coverage schools with grades of B or higher. During the same time, at lower SAP use schools, the proportion remained the same. The increase at constant SAP use schools brought it up to the same level as that at the lower use schools (82%). It's possible that there is a "ceiling" on the proportion getting A's and B's, making it harder for lower SAP use schools to improve this percentage during the five year time span. Regardless, the improvement is important to note.

The use of marijuana in the last 30 days showed no change in marijuana use among 12th graders at schools with a limited SAP presence; schools with a constant presence showed a significant decrease in this measure during the same time frame.

There was a decrease in driving and riding with a driver under the influence of marijuana from 2003 to 2007 among 12th graders at schools with a constant SAP presence. Schools with a lesser presence showed either no change or an increase in the practice of riding with a driver under the influence.

Over time we expect the proportion of students reporting it is wrong or very wrong for their peers to smoke cigarettes to increase. From 2003 to 2007, that proportion did increase among 12th graders at full SAP coverage schools. During the same time frame, there was a decrease in support among students a lower SAP coverage schools.

In 2003, 5% of 12th graders and constant and low SAP use schools said there is someone at school they could talk to if they had an alcohol, tobacco, or drug problem. This percentage decreased in 2007 among the low SAP use schools but remained constant at

In the 2009-2010 school year, 97 schools reported student assistance data and provided nearly 43,000 students with in-school substance abuse prevention and intervention services. More than 4,600 (10.8%) students received more in-depth services. SAP professionals provided over 19,000 hours collaborating and providing substance-related teaching around substance abuse issues. In addition, they made over 2100 student referrals for both substance abuse and mental health evaluations.

Students participating in the SAP receiving one on one or group support make progress:

- 80% reported improvement in the issues bringing them to the program.
- Only 4% of students receiving services had alcohol, tobacco, or drug violations after participating in the program.

The cost of providing SAP services average $38.63 in ADAP funding per student in schools with state-funded counselors.

"We do not have a formal middle school counseling program, so our SAP is our support system for our students and our staff. She knows our kids better than our school counselors and our kids seek her out whenever she is in the building." - Harwood Middle School Principal

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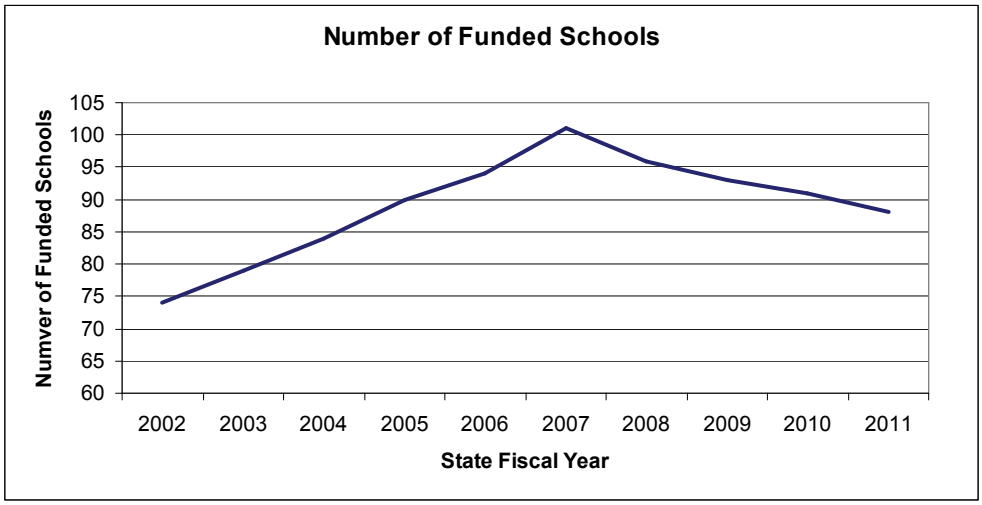
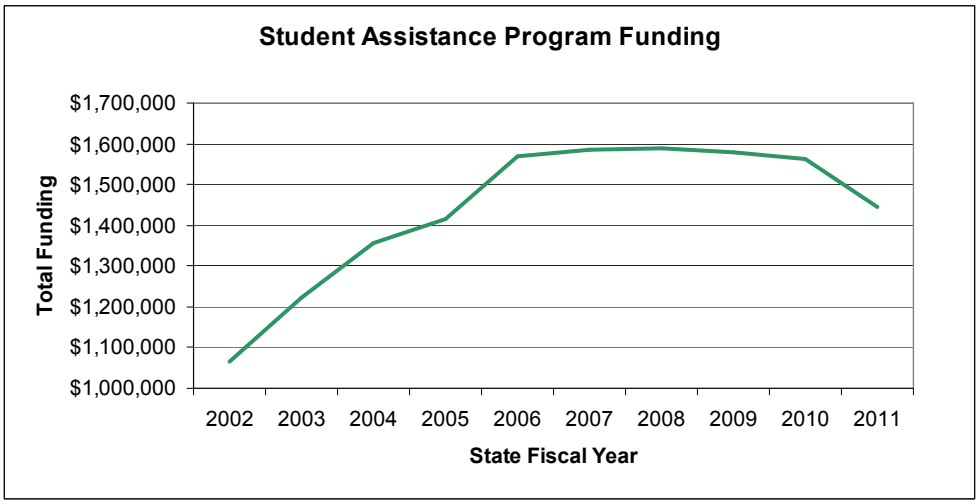
Student Assistance Program funding for schools peaked in the 2007-2008 school year. The Vermont Department of Health funding provided nearly 58% of the total funding for the program; the remainder of the cost was borne by the school districts. As school budgets tightened due to the economy, some schools decreased funding. In the following years, ADAP recalled some funding due to budget recessions and this decreased the number of funded schools.

In FY11, ADAP funded 88 schools with a total cost of $1,444,058.





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Unique Services Provided by Student Assistance Programs

Expertise on alcohol and other drugs, and the continuum of care for substance abuse

- Have **accurate** and **up to date** information through continued education
- Are an **Information resource** for students, families, school staff and the community
- Because of expertise, able to assess a broad range of student problems and determine underlying issues

Accessibility to **ALL youth** in schools

- Sole job is to support the student, advocate for the whole being and be available to every student **at their point of need**
- Do not have limited caseload (unlike social worker)
- SAPs are a known source of help among students. Most students come to an SAP on their own accord.

Prevention, **early intervention** and **referral to services** for substance abuse

- Encourage **wellness** and healthy decisions around substance use
- Administer research based **screens** to determine need for and appropriate level of care.
- Maintain **close relationships** with providers and community services
- **Link** to community resources for substance abuse treatment, mental health or other needs. This linkage is extremely important for schools in rural communities with few resources.
- Increase **treatment readiness** and youth's **comfort** with receiving services

Flexibility- Immediately responsive to individual, group or school-wide problem or need

- Can perform individual and group therapy, and classroom education, prevention, intervention, and other tasks depending on need (substance abuse, bullying, suicide prevention…)
- Fill in the gaps, especially important for schools that have few resources
- Are referred students with the highest mental health needs from other school staff because they have the flexibility to manage these needs

Safety planning for youth and families

Run **peer leadership groups** such as VTLSP, OVX, VKAT

Point person for **school policy violations**, and not just violations involving ATOD

SAPs have historically provided **Integrated Services**