

Best Practice Rubric for Student Assistance Professionals (SAPs) in Schools

This rubric outlines key best practices and benchmarks for Student Assistance Professionals (SAPs) working in K-12 schools. SAPs are integral in supporting students with academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs, specifically as they pertain to substance misuse.. The rubric is organized into key areas of professional practice, with expectations for effective performance at varying levels of proficiency. It is designed to be used as a tool for administrators and supervisors.

1. Student-Centered Support

Level	Description
Exemplary (4)	Consistently demonstrates a deep understanding of each student's individual needs and works collaboratively with students, families, and school staff to create personalized interventions applicable to substance misuse.. Provides comprehensive support that addresses academic, emotional, behavioral, and social factors.
Proficient (3)	Regularly engages with students to identify needs and provides appropriate interventions. Works with families and school teams to coordinate support and follow up on student progress.
Basic (2)	Occasionally provides support for students but may need further development in understanding individual needs and coordinating with others for effective intervention.
Needs Improvement (1)	Rarely demonstrates a student-centered approach; may provide generic support without tailoring interventions to individual students' needs.

2. Collaboration and Teamwork

Level	Description
Exemplary (4)	Proactively collaborates with teachers, administrators, counselors, and other school professionals to develop and implement holistic, school-wide interventions. Regularly facilitates team meetings and is a key participant in multidisciplinary teams.
Proficient (3)	Actively participates in team meetings, provides valuable insights, and works cooperatively with other school staff to implement interventions.
Basic (2)	Occasionally works with other staff members but may struggle with active collaboration or may work in isolation rather than as part of a team.
Needs Improvement (1)	Rarely collaborates with others and often works in isolation. Struggles to contribute to team efforts or lacks awareness of collaborative resources.

3. Data-Driven Decision Making

Level	Description
Exemplary (4)	Consistently collects, analyzes, and applies student data (Youth Risk Behavior survey or other school behavioral surveys, academic, behavioral, attendance) to inform interventions and track progress. Uses a variety of data sources (e.g., assessments, observations, surveys) to make evidence-based decisions.
Proficient (3)	Regularly uses data to inform interventions and monitors student progress. May need support in analyzing more complex data or integrating diverse data sources.
Basic (2)	Occasionally uses data to inform decisions, but may lack consistency or depth in data analysis and application.
Needs Improvement (1)	Rarely uses data to guide decisions. Decisions may be based on anecdotal evidence or assumptions rather than objective data.

4. Confidentiality and Ethics

Level	Description
Exemplary (4)	Consistently adheres to ethical guidelines and confidentiality standards in all student-related matters. Demonstrates an understanding of legal and ethical requirements in handling sensitive information. Receives regular trainings regarding changing ethical guidelines as they apply to technology and school policies.
Proficient (3)	Generally adheres to ethical and confidentiality standards, with occasional reminders or clarification needed in handling sensitive information.
Basic (2)	Occasionally struggles with maintaining confidentiality or ethical standards, requiring oversight or further training.
Needs Improvement (1)	Frequently violates ethical or confidentiality standards, putting students or the school at risk. Requires immediate attention and corrective action.

5. Cultural Competence and Inclusion

Level	Description
Exemplary (4)	Demonstrates deep cultural competence, recognizing and addressing the diverse needs of students from various cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Ensures all students feel respected, valued, and supported.
Proficient (3)	Demonstrates cultural awareness and adapts support strategies to meet the needs of a diverse student population.
Basic (2)	Acknowledges cultural diversity but may struggle to integrate inclusive practices consistently or effectively in support interventions.
Needs Improvement (1)	Lacks awareness or understanding of cultural differences, potentially leading to unintentional biases in support or interventions.

6. Professional Development and Continuous Improvement

Level	Description
Exemplary (4)	Actively seeks out professional development opportunities, receives on-going clinical supervision, applies new knowledge and skills to practice, and engages in reflective practice to continually improve. Mentors colleagues and contributes to the growth of the SAP field.
Proficient (3)	Participates in professional development opportunities and applies knowledge to practice. Seeks feedback and strives to improve in areas of need.
Basic (2)	Participates in professional development when required but may not consistently apply new knowledge or skills.
Needs Improvement (1)	Rarely engages in professional development and may resist feedback or opportunities for growth.

7. Communication and Advocacy

Level	Description
Exemplary (4)	Demonstrates excellent communication skills, advocating effectively for students and their needs with all stakeholders (students, families, school staff, community partners). Provides clear, actionable updates and supports students' best interests.
Proficient (3)	Communicates regularly with students, families, and school staff. Advocates for students when necessary and ensures clear communication regarding needs and progress.
Basic (2)	Communicates with students and staff but may lack clarity, consistency, or frequency. Struggles with advocacy or may need guidance in communicating students' needs effectively.

Needs Improvement (1) Struggles with communication or advocacy, leading to confusion or misalignment between stakeholders.

8. Crisis Intervention and Student Safety

Level	Description
Exemplary (4)	Responds promptly and effectively to student crises, providing immediate support and connecting students to appropriate resources. Works proactively to prevent crises and ensures the school is a safe environment for all students. Is familiar with all crisis intervention policies and adheres to them consistently.
Proficient (3)	Responds appropriately to student crises and follows protocols to provide support. Contributes to creating a safe school environment.
Basic (2)	Responds to crises but may need additional training or support to handle complex situations effectively.
Needs Improvement (1)	Struggles to respond to crises appropriately, potentially compromising student safety or well-being. Requires further training.

Overall Performance Ratings:

- **Exemplary (4):** Exceeds expectations; consistently demonstrates outstanding professional practice.
- **Proficient (3):** Meets expectations; demonstrates solid professional practice and effectiveness.
- **Basic (2):** Partially meets expectations; requires development in specific areas.
- **Needs Improvement (1):** Below expectations; significant improvements needed.

This rubric provides a framework for evaluating the performance of SAPs while guiding their professional development. It can be used for self-assessment, peer evaluation, or formal performance reviews.

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