

Ohio Student Assistance Programs (SAPs): Program Evaluation Toolkit



**Ohio School
Wellness Initiative**

**Miami
University**



Introduction

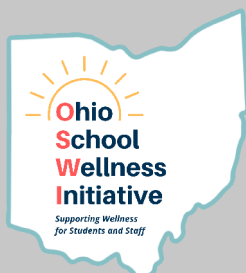
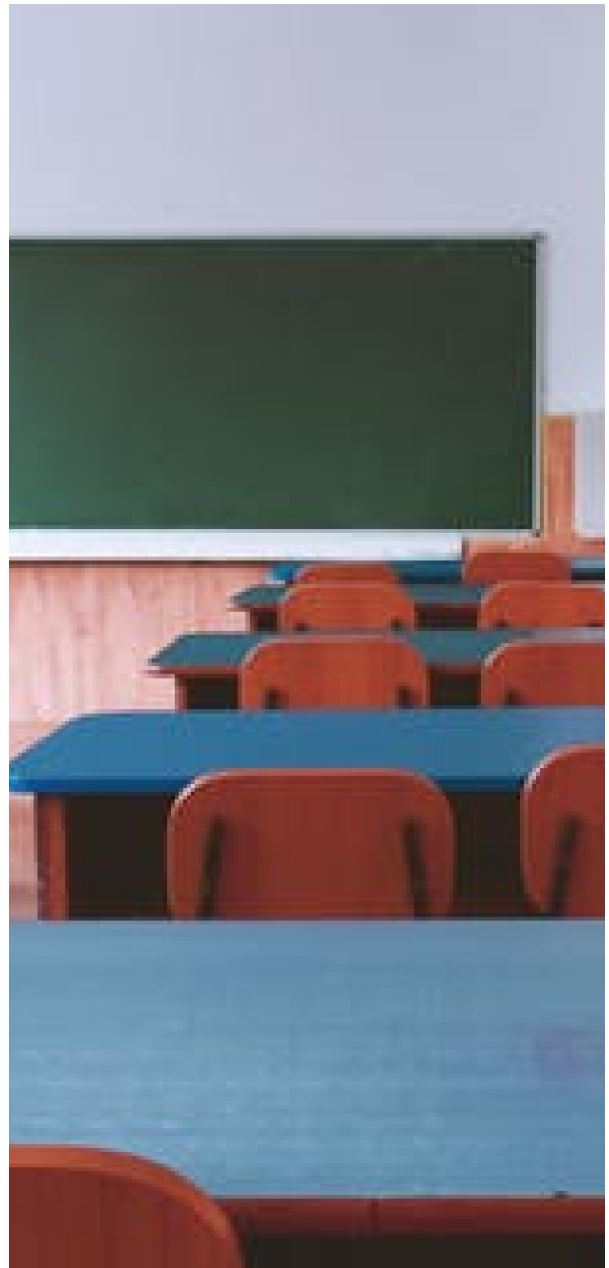
Toolkit Overview: The Program Evaluation Toolkit provides steps on how Student Assistance Teams (SATs) can plan and implement evaluations, share results, and examine and adjust as needed. The evaluation process is an essential part of Student Assistance Programs (SAPs).

Intended Audience: Ohio SATs.

Toolkit Goal: Provide resources and tools to help facilitate the program evaluation process for school teams to use.

This guidance document, developed by Miami University's Center for School-Based Mental Health Programs (CSBMHP) in partnership with the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS), was funded by Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funds under Ohio's share of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) funds.

For more information, check out the OSWI website (<https://www.ohioschoolwellnessinitiative.com/>) or contact the OSWI team at info@ohioschoolwellnessinitiative.com.



Suggested Citation: Noltemeyer, A., Brann, K., Brattland, K., & Rumford, E. (2022). Ohio Student Assistance Programs (SAP): Program evaluation toolkit. Ohio School Wellness Initiative.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

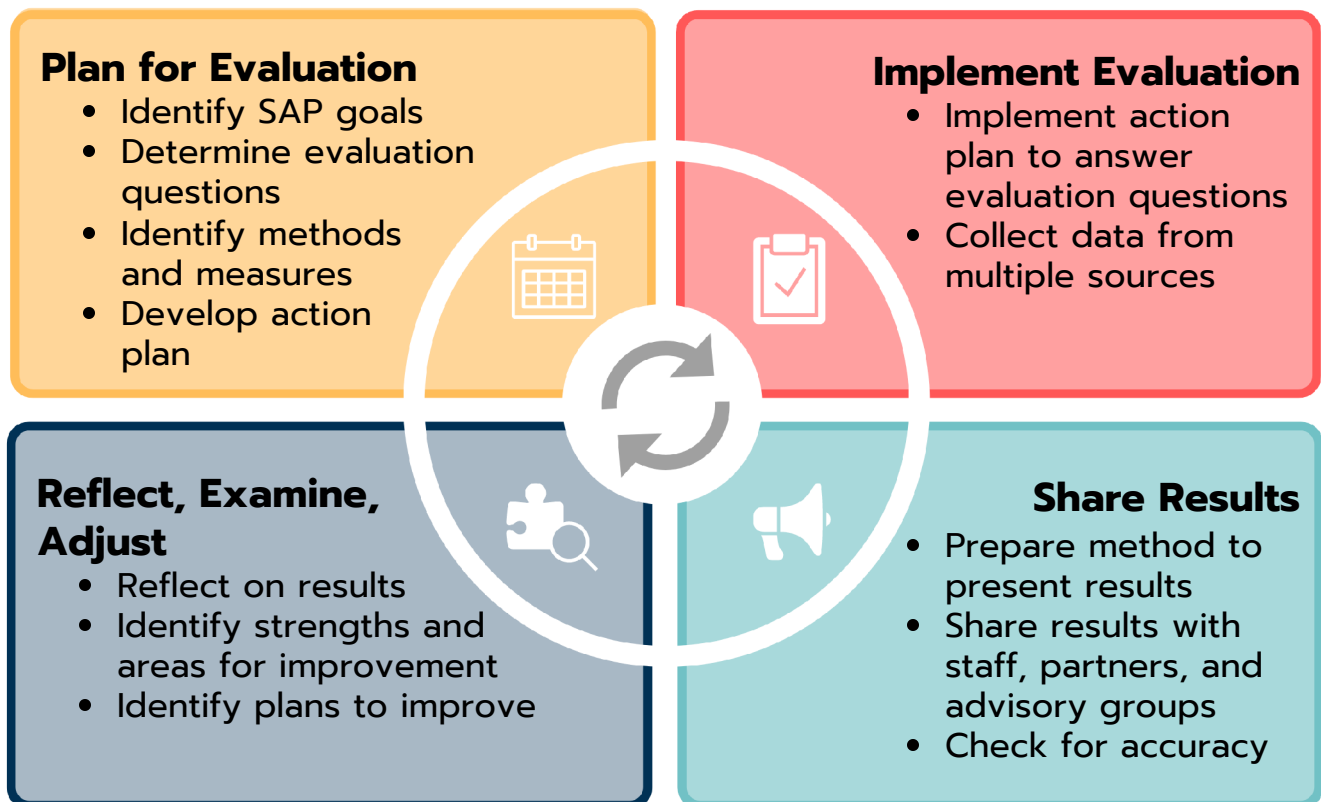
| Section | Page |
|--|-------------|
| <u>01 Evaluation Overview</u> | <u>4</u> |
| <u>02 Plan for Evaluation</u> | <u>5</u> |
| <u>03 Implement Evaluation</u> | <u>8</u> |
| <u>04 Share Results</u> | <u>9</u> |
| <u>05 Reflect, Examine, & Adjust</u> | <u>11</u> |
| <u>06 Summary & Additional Resources</u> | <u>12</u> |
| <u>07 Appendix</u> | <u>13</u> |
| <u>08 References</u> | <u>14</u> |

01 Evaluation Overview

Program evaluation is a systematic process that involves assessing the implementation and outcomes of a program or initiative, in order to determine the degree to which it is effective and how it can be improved (Stewart et al., 2021).

When adopting and implementing a Student Assistance Program (SAP), it is important to plan for and engage in program evaluation processes, such as the Ohio Improvement Process, in order to learn from ideas that work and identify changes needed to improve student outcomes. In fact, program evaluation and improvement is one of the nine SAP components identified by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2019).

There are many models and frameworks for program evaluation (e.g., CDC, 1999; IES, 2001). In this program evaluation toolkit, we suggest one framework adapted from the Ohio Improvement Process that Student Assistance Teams (SATs) can consider to guide this work. As shown in Figure 1, the four-phase process includes: (1) **plan for evaluation**, (2) **implement the evaluation**, (3) **share the results**, and (4) **reflect, examine and adjust**.



02 Plan for Evaluation

Program evaluation should not be an afterthought; it should be planned for intentionally, and ideally before implementation begins. When planning for evaluation, SATs should consider the following steps:

1 Identify SAP goals

What is it that you hope will be achieved, accomplished, or changed as a result of SAP implementation?

2 Determine evaluation questions

- Questions should be considered in order to meet the needs of SAP participants, families, partners, and other relevant parties (e.g., funding organizations).
- Questions often address one or more of these areas: reach, process, capacity, fidelity, outcomes, and satisfaction (see Figure 2 and the Appendix for examples).

3 Identify methods and measures

What information do you need to answer the questions, and how can you gather or access it?

- Determine process indicators and measures:
 - Fidelity measures, satisfaction measures, etc
 - a. [OSWI Fidelity Checklist and Action Planning Template](#)
 - b. See Table 2 for example satisfaction surveys
- Determine outcome indicators (see Table 1 below for example) and measures.

Outcome Indicators → reveal if the desired outcome has been achieved from the SAP process.

Process Indicators → show what was done to achieve those outcomes.

4 Develop action plan

How will you implement procedures that will result in obtaining the data and measures decided upon?

- Create a list of steps that includes who, where, when, and how the information will be collected/accessed.

02

Plan for Evaluation

Table 1. Example Outcome Indicators

This table shows an example of the desired outcome from the SAP process including two indicators (adapted from Grunenfelder et al., 2012).

| Outcome #1 | To delay onset or reduce levels of substance abuse |
|-------------------|--|
| Indicator 1a | By the end of the school year, the percentage of students reporting the onset of substance use before age 14 will decrease from 20% to 15% as measured by the schoolwide annual behavioral health survey. |
| Indicator 1b | By the end of the school year, 50% of 12-18 year old youth participating in the SAP will show a reduction in substance use for those that have an intervention goal of substance reduction use as compared to program entry. |

Table 2. Satisfaction Surveys

This table provides a variety of surveys used to evaluate student, staff, and caregiver satisfaction. It also includes a survey for improving SAP team functioning

| | |
|---|---|
| <u>SAT Members Survey: Improvement of Team Functioning</u> | Example: "I believe the Student Assistance Team (SAT) has a sufficient data review process in place to identify students in the building who need support." |
| <u>SAP Staff Satisfaction Survey</u> | Example: "The Student Assistance Program seems to be helping students." |
| <u>SAP Student Participation Satisfaction Survey</u> | Example: "The Student Assistance Team (SAT) was available for me." |
| <u>SAP Caregiver Participant Satisfaction Survey</u> | Example: "I felt the reason(s) my child was referred to SAP were clearly explained to me." |

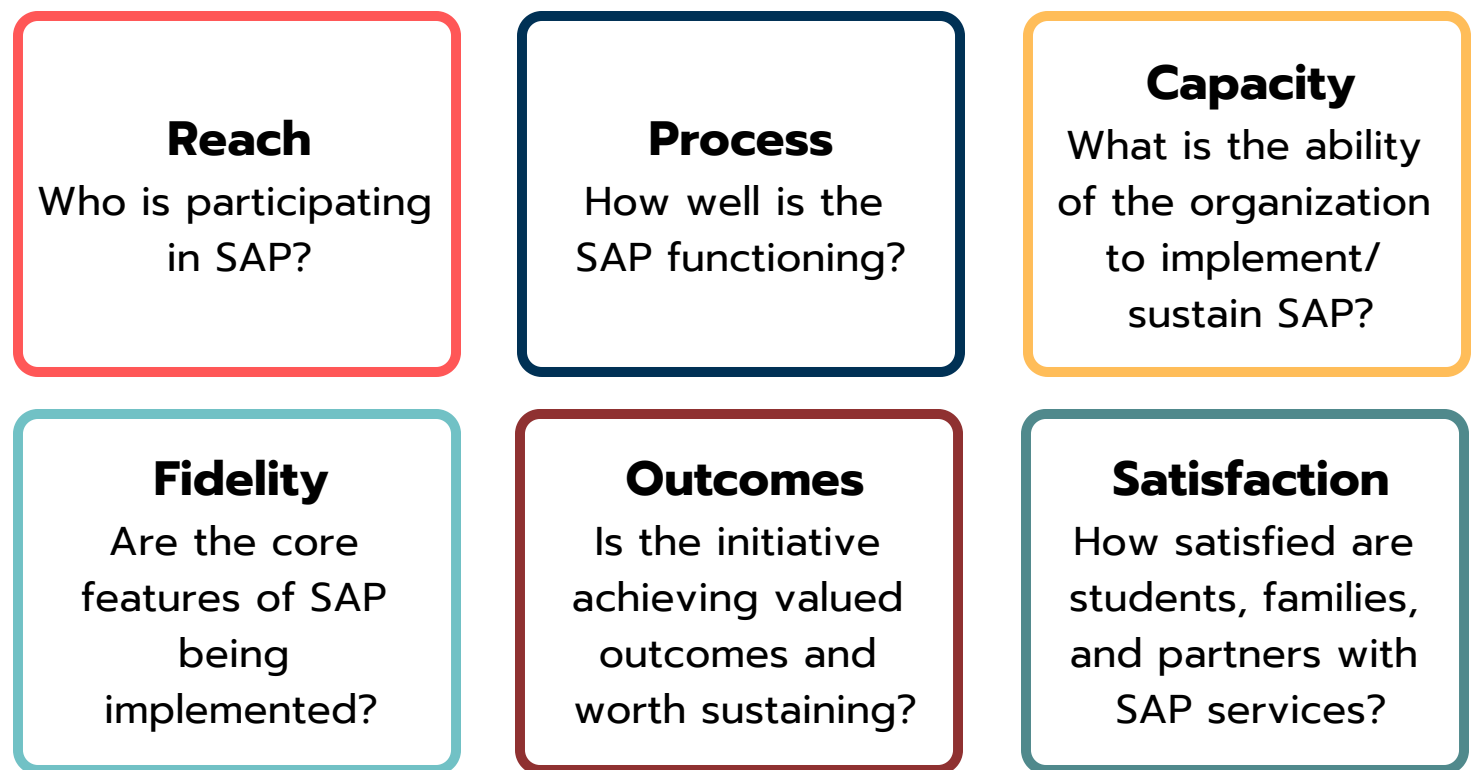
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Plan for Evaluation

Figure 1. Common Evaluation Questions by Area (See Appendix for more information)

This figure outlines common evaluation questions based on different areas and measures (Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports [2020]).

The SAT involved in planning efforts should be a diverse and representative team, and should seek outside input or feedback from diverse stakeholders and partners as appropriate.



Tips for Evaluation

- Take a pre-test / baseline measure prior to evaluation
- Give adequate information on data gathering to outline assessment plans
- Use instruments that measure features related to desired results
- Use structured evidence and data to determine indicators
- Report activity outcomes and not just numbers
- Plan many data points to measure outcomes

03 Implement Evaluation

Once a clear plan has been established, it is time to put it into action. Steps include:

1 Implement action plan to answer evaluation questions

- It should be confirmed that all measures are directly related to the questions used for evaluation.

2 Collect data from multiple sources

- If using measures with standardized administration procedures, ensure adequate training and reliability prior to data collection.

3 Monitor implementation of the action plan, and adjust if needed

- As an example, if response rates are lower than expected on survey administration, determine if any changes are needed to recruitment procedures, incentives, ease of completion, etc.

4 Analyze the data

- Procedures for data analyses should have been determined in the planning phase, and may include quantitative and/or qualitative approaches. Now is the time to implement the procedures!
- Spot-check all data entry and analyses for accuracy prior to reporting.

04 Share Results

In order for the results to be useful, it is important to share them with relevant audiences. Steps include:

1 Prepare method to present results

A) Multiple reports with data and results can be created for different audiences. Consider the information each audience would benefit from.

Example audiences include:

- Collaborating agencies and organizations
- Community at large
- Funding sources (current, potential)
- Local advisory council
- School boards
- Caregivers of students
- Teachers
- Superintendent and other school division administrators
- SAP staff/supervisory personnel
- Ohio Department of Education

B) Remember that not all audiences may want or need a formal written report; infographics, presentations, and other methods of sharing the information should also be considered

2 Share results with staff, partners, & advisory groups

A) The SAT should review data at least quarterly

B) Data should be shared with partners at least annually



Tips for Equity

- Involve diverse and representative community members or partners in planning the evaluation
- Reflect on how the positionality of those conducting and sharing the evaluation may impact interpretation of the results
- Disaggregate and report data by subgroups, particularly when equity issues may be relevant (unless the subgroups are so small that the data may be individually identifiable)
- Ensure results are shared in a way that is accessible for diverse audiences (e.g., tagged, captioned, accessible fonts, in multiple languages, alternate text, appropriate reading level for audience)

04 Share Results

- 3** For a formal annual report, consider the sample outline in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2. Example Report of Results of Evaluation

This figure gives an idea of what an evaluation report should entail from the introduction to the conclusion (Virginia Department of Education, 2013 - see page 79 for more detailed guidance).

Example Report

- I. Executive Summary
- II. Introduction of Report
 - Purpose of the evaluation
 - Overview of report contents
- III. Focus of the Evaluation
 - Description of program being evaluated
 - Evaluation questions
- IV. Evaluation Plan and Procedures
 - Design of the evaluation
 - Description of data collection strategies and instruments
 - Overview of data analysis
- V. Presentation of Evaluation Results
 - Summary of evaluation findings
 - Interpretation of evaluation findings
- VI. Conclusions and Recommendations
 - Implications of evaluation findings for program
 - Specific recommendations for program modification/ improvements

05 Reflect, Examine, & Adjust

After sharing the results, the most important phase involves using them to improve practice. In this stage, SATs should consider the following activities:

- 1 Reflect on results**

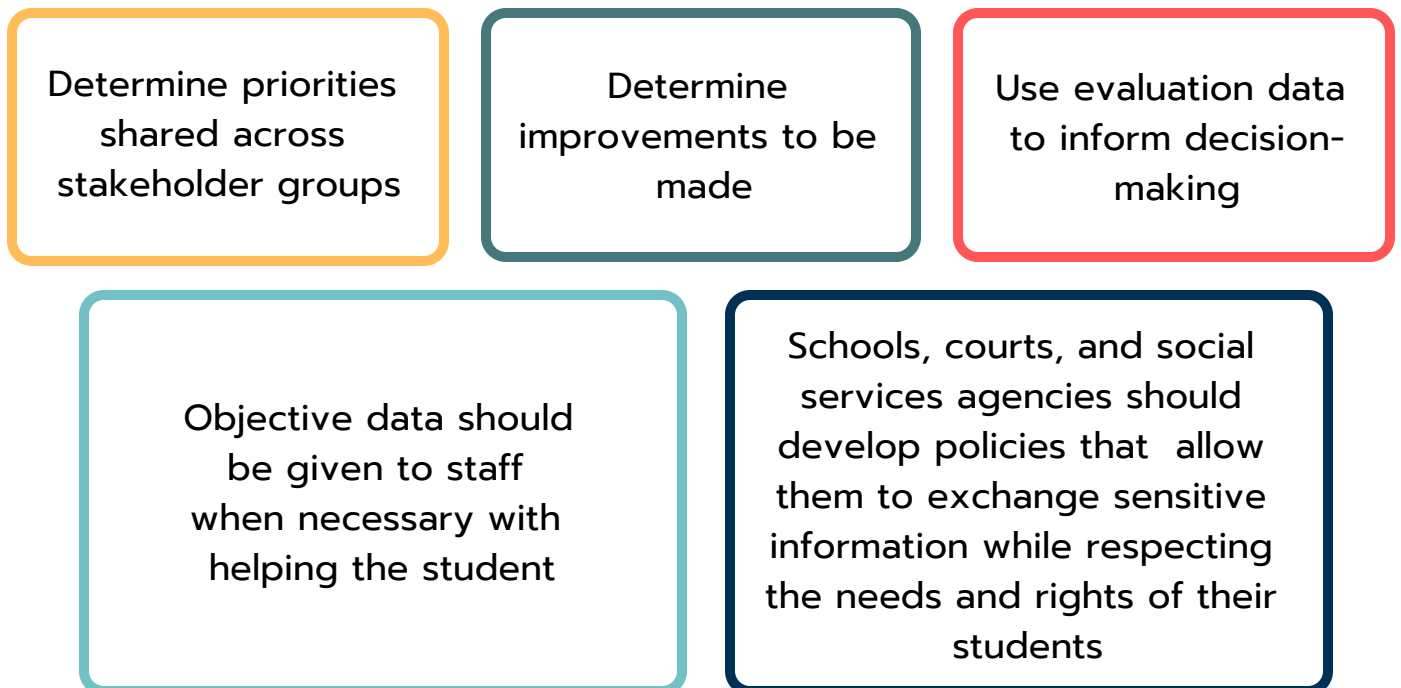
A) Make sure to allow time to reflect individually and as a group. Questions to consider might include: What do the results mean? Were there any surprises? Were we able to answer the questions we set out to answer?
- 2 Identify strengths and areas for improvement**

A) List 2-3 strengths and 2-3 areas for improvement that emerged from the evaluation.
- 3 Identify plans to improve**

A) For the areas identified for improvement, create specific and actionable plans for improvement. In the plans, ensure there is an accountability mechanism and timelines for completion.
B) Schedule a follow-up meeting to examine how the improvement plan is working.

Figure 3. Tips for Program Evaluation

(OSWI Manual, 2021)



06

Summary & Additional Resources

From the outset of planning for SAP implementation, schools should plan for evaluating, sustaining, and innovating their SAP practices. Implementation of SAP will be less impactful when plans have not been made to ensure its long-term goals can be met through its continuation and improvement in the face of potential changes and obstacles. This toolkit outlines the key steps in planning, implementing, reflecting, and sharing evaluation results. For more information and tools, see the additional resources below.

PBIS Evaluation Toolkit

- Guide to planning and executing evaluations for schools who implemented PBIS
- Key steps include: planning evaluation, conducting evaluation, sharing evaluation results, and using results for continuous improvement (PBIS, 2021)

Student Assistance Program Best Practices Formative

Assessment Tool

- Worksheets and checklists for identifying indicators, benchmarks, and creating a plan of action (Student Assistance Center at Prevention First, 2006)

Prevention First's SAP Guidebook

- Chapter 3: Program Planning, Implementation and Evaluation Steps to implement and evaluate SAP (Student Assistance Center at Prevention First)

Washington's Student Assistance Prevention-Intervention

Services Program Manual

- Section 10: Program Evaluation
 1. Provides an overview of why evaluation matters and how to assess outcomes based on goals (Washington's Student Assistance Prevention-Intervention Services Program)

07 Appendix

Figure 1

Common Evaluation Questions by Area and Measures

Reach → Who is participating in SAP?

- How many students receive SAP awareness training?
- How many self, teacher, peer, caregiver, and community SAP referrals are received?
- What are SAP participation and decline rates?
- What are reasons for caregivers or students declining SAP participation?

Capacity → What is the ability of the organization to implement and sustain SAP?

- What is the organization's capacity to implement and sustain SAP?
- What resources are available to support SAP adoption, installation, and sustained implementation?
- To what extent has SAP implementation improved capacity for the organization to replicate, sustain, or scale up SAP?

Outcomes → Is SAP achieving valued outcomes and worth sustaining?

- To what extent do schools implementing SAP with fidelity show desired changes in student outcomes (e.g., discipline rates, academic achievement, graduation, social-emotional outcomes, student satisfaction, equity)?
- To what extent do schools implementing SAP with fidelity show desired changes in other areas of schooling (e.g., adult perception, staffing, policies)?

Process → What is being implemented with the SAP?

- What Student Assistance Team (SAT) activities have been completed?
- What SAP professional development training has been delivered?
- How many staff have been trained in SAP?
- To what extent was the professional development delivered with fidelity?

Fidelity → Are the core features of SAP being implemented?

- What percent of implementing schools in the district measured fidelity of implementation?
- To what extent is SAP implemented as intended?
- Are the specific SAP practices being implemented as intended?
- Which practices have the lowest and highest implementation?
- What schools can serve as model schools for implementing SAP with fidelity?

(adapted from Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports [PBIS], 2020)

08

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