

2024-2025 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DISTRICTS (AESD) STATEWIDE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (BH-SAP)

The **Washington State Behavioral Health Student Assistance Program (BH-SAP)** is a research-based, statewide model that places trained Student Assistance Professionals (SAPs) in schools to deliver prevention, early intervention, and referral support within Washington's **Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework**. Funded through a strategic legislative investment, WA BH-SAP increases early identification of behavioral health needs, expands the workforce pipeline, and strengthens school-community partnerships, providing support to thousands of students each year. Backed by strong statewide coordination and rigorous evaluation, BH-SAP reduces barriers to care and aligns with state priorities for youth mental health. Moreover, multiple years of data collection show the program measurably improves schools' capacity to respond to student needs, reaches far more students than traditional school behavioral health models, and demonstrably improves student well-being.

EXPANDING ACCESS AND REACH



9
ESDs



18
Districts



24
Middle & High
Schools



18
Student Assistance
Professionals



837
Students received
intervention

Tier 1 Spotlight *Tier 1 Services are provided to the whole school or all students at specific grade levels. When evidence-based practices are implemented with fidelity, Tier 1 supports meet the needs of 80% or more of students.*

371 Student Awareness
Events across **18 districts**

SAPs raised awareness of behavioral health concerns, including when and how to access support. Statewide Campaigns included: *Suicide Prevention, Bullying Prevention, Substance Use Prevention, and Mental Wellness.*

34 Behavioral Health
Leadership Clubs

SAPs coordinate peer leadership or behavioral health promotion clubs to encourage youth engagement, empowerment, and peer leadership.

421 evidence-based
lessons with **1,500**
students

Targeted grade levels and classrooms received the following curricula: *TRAILS Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Character Strong, and teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA).*

Tier 2 Spotlight *Tier 2 Services typically consist of group-based interventions provided to students who are at risk. When evidence-based practices are implemented with fidelity, Tier 1 and 2 meet the needs of 90% or more of students.*

144 Groups conducted
with **622 students**

The most common group was *TRAILS Coping Skills* (n=65 with 293 students). Built to address the heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and social isolation, this programming enables Student Assistance Professionals to provide their students with a range of effective coping and self-care skills.



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION



IMPACT ON STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS

School Partners overwhelmingly (90%) reported that having a **Student Assistance Professional (SAP)** available in their school was **very important or of the highest importance**. 98% reported services were **helpful for students and** 97% believe their school(s) **improved the ability to respond effectively** to students' behavioral health needs because of this program. Over 90% also agree SAP services **increased students' self-regulation and social skills** and the program **positively influenced school climate**.

In just one of many positive accolades received, a school partner shared: “[The SAP’s] influence has seen students dramatically improve and/or completely turn around their attendance, support [student] mental/emotional health, and collaborate with our Counseling team to coordinate care both on campus and off. [The SAP] is a known source for parents, students, and staff alike. With each group students attend, we in turn see an improvement in their ability to cope, make better decisions, and become more efficient learners.

Marked improvements for students with existing behavior problems:

79% decreased hitting/hurting others (N=134)

77% decreased physical fighting (N=115)

73% decreased suspensions (N=335)

61% decreased skipping school (N=214)

Elevated help-seeking and self-regulation:

51% of all students gained healthy strategies to calm down when experiencing negative emotions

47% improved help-seeking abilities

38% gained trusted adult (“I have at least one adult at school I can confide in”)

High satisfaction with services:

97% of students reported the program was somewhat or very helpful

96% reported being happy they participated

82% of students with low school attendance reported being more likely to attend school

Large reductions in substance use for those who used at baseline:

75% decreased tobacco use (N=55) and 55% decreased e-cigarette use (N=232)

64% decreased excessive alcohol drinking (N=55) and 64% decreased any drinking (N=100)

63% decreased marijuana use (N=182)

Improved mental and emotional wellness:

50% of students lowered anxiety symptoms (“can’t stop or control my worrying”)

44% lowered depression symptoms (“feel unhappy, sad, or depressed”)

43% increased self-worth (reduced feeling “worthless or inferior”)



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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