

School-based prevention and intervention services

Overview

In 1989, the Washington State Legislature passed the Omnibus Alcohol and Controlled Substances Act authorizing state agencies to conduct a variety of programs addressing the public's concern about the level and consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. As a result, the Student Assistance Prevention and Intervention Services Program (SAPISP), operated by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), with a mix of local, state, and federal funds, places prevention and intervention specialists in schools to implement comprehensive student assistance programs addressing problems associated with substance use and violence.

SAPISP funds are distributed to each of the state's nine Educational Service Districts (ESDs). Funding amounts are allocated to ESDs to support 80% of one full-time position in each of the over 80 Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative (CPWI) communities. The CPWI communities or school districts provide a 20% match to support the prevention intervention specialist positions.

Universal prevention activities typically target classrooms or the entire school. Examples include supervising peer leadership clubs; providing prevention curriculum to students, staff, and families; and coordinating with community coalitions.

Direct intervention services involve identifying students who are:

- At risk of initiating substance use or antisocial behavior
- Coping with the substance use of significant others
- Using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs
- Developing a dependence on alcohol or other drugs

An array of education, peer support groups, social skills training, and individual and family interventions are employed to address the needs of each student. When the severity of use requires services that cannot be provided in the school setting, students are referred to community-based services such as substance use disorder treatment or mental health counseling.

Findings for the 2019-20 school year indicate significant change reported pre/post for students in grades 6-12 who engaged in selective and indicated services. Examples of these outcomes include:

- Decrease in 30-day alcohol use (from 66% to 55%) binge drinking (from 45% to 32%), marijuana use (from 87% to 68%), tobacco use (from 47% to 40%), and e-cigarette use (from 74% to 51%).
- Decrease in antisocial behaviors including a significant decrease in four of the six antisocial behaviors: getting in trouble at school, skipping school, getting into a physical fight, and hitting or trying to hurt someone.
- Significant increases in the perception of risk for experimenting with marijuana, regularly using marijuana, daily drinking and binge drinking, and for smoking a pack of cigarettes or more a day.

Eligibility requirements

The focus for SAPISP services in CPWI communities is within middle school(s) and in some cases within high school(s). All students are eligible in the schools serviced by the intervention specialist.

Authority

DBHR is authorized to receive and administer the grant that supports substance use disorder prevention and mental health promotion.



Budget

- Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, Substance Abuse Block Grant: \$4,018,097
- Washington State Dedicated Marijuana Account: \$560,000
- 2018 Partnership for Success grant: \$980,000
- State Opioid Response to the Opioid Crisis grant: \$1,312,500

Cost and people served

During the 2019-2020 school year, services were provided in 108 schools across Washington State and 2,307 students received selective/indicated services. Universal prevention activities were provided to:

- 3,807 students
- 235 parents/other family members
- 1,350 staff
- 739 community members

Partners

OSPI administers the prevention and intervention program through funding provided by DBHR and collaborates with ESDs, school districts, and schools across the state to provide prevention and intervention programming.

Oversight

ESSHB 1793 and RCW 28A.170 states that intervention specialists are to:

- Provide early alcohol and other drug prevention and intervention services to students and their families
- Assist in screening and referral to treatment providers
- Strengthen the transition back to school for students who experience suspension or expulsion due to violation of a school drug or alcohol policy

DBHR provides funds to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), which awards funds to ESDs for placing prevention intervention specialists in schools.

For more information

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Website: <https://www.hca.wa.gov/about-hca/behavioral-health-recovery/substance-abuse-prevention-and-mental-health-promotion>;
https://www.theathenaforum.org/cpwi_coalitions