



# The Student Assistance Team (SAT) Fact Sheet

Special education services are not the only source of assistance for students who struggle academically and/or behaviorally in the schools. Students can be proficient in the general education program if the school has a formal system to catch students early and provide them and/or their teachers support. In New Mexico, the group at each school who sets up and conducts this early warning system is known as the Student Assistance Team (SAT).

## Tell Me More

The SAT is a cooperative, school-based group of people that assists students, parents, and teachers in seeking positive solutions for concerns about individual students. Its purpose is to provide additional support to students who are experiencing difficulties that are preventing them from benefiting from general education, because they are either performing below or above expectations. The SAT's role is to be a support and a resource to the parents and the teacher—not to replace or relieve the teacher of his or her responsibility for educating the student.

## Who Makes Up the SAT?

The SAT is made up of a core group that anchors the team. Core team members may vary by school, but should include at minimum professional staff from school administration, regular education, and specialists and/or resource areas as needed. A varying number of other individuals may serve on the team, depending on the types of concerns and expertise needed. Parental permission is not required to conduct a SAT meeting, but parents are always invited to participate in a SAT meeting about their child. Students may be invited, as necessary.

## What Does the SAT do?

The SAT addresses problems found through screening of all students or those brought up as concerns by parents, teachers, or other staff through a cooperative team effort. The SAT designs interventions for those students who show need for individual consideration through what is called a *SAT Intervention Plan*.

## Is the SAT Special Education?

**No.** While the SAT may refer to a special education evaluation a student who has an obvious disability or one who does not show a significant response to a SAT Intervention Plan in the regular education setting, the SAT is **not** a special education evaluation or services. The SAT encourages and supports teachers in implementing and documenting interventions before considering a referral to special education. The SAT may also assist in reducing the number of students facing retention.

## Where Can I Learn More?

The New Mexico Public Education Department had published a SAT manual for schools and parents which includes official state guidance and a comprehensive model for the SAT. You can access the manual at <http://www.ped.state.nm.us> and then look for it under the A-Z Directory.

If you have questions about the SAT process at your child's school, or want to make a referral to the SAT, please contact the school principal.