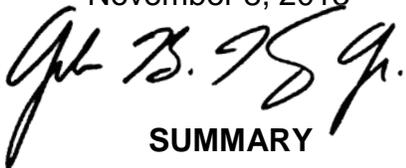




**TO:** P-12 Education Committee  
**FROM:** Ken Slentz   
**SUBJECT:** Safe Schools Task Force Update  
**DATE:** November 8, 2013  
**AUTHORIZATION(S):** 

**SUMMARY**

**Issue for Discussion**

The Committee will hear an update from the November 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Safe Schools Task Force.

**Reason(s) for Consideration**

For Information.

**Proposed Handling**

This issue will come before the Regents P-12 Education Committee at the November 2013 meeting.

**Background Information**

In January and March of 2013, based on the Newtown, CT school shooting incident, Department staff presented information to the Board on current state of school safety in New York State. As a result of these presentations, the Board of Regents directed the Department to reestablish the Safe Schools Task Force which was to be chaired by the Vice Chancellor and Commissioner and was charged with advising the Department in the following areas:

- The effectiveness of the current regulations and guidance governing school building safety and positive learning environments;
- How to reframe the existing Violent and Disruptive Incident Reporting System (VADIR) in combination with the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) reporting requirements to better identify key safety issues and establish a safe school

climate for effective teaching and learning (including potential recommendations for legislative changes regarding VADIR);

- The design and effectiveness of District and school building safety plans in preparing students and educators for emergency events;
- The use of the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) to examine school climate and culture; and
- The role and responsibility of the New York State Center for School Safety (NYSCSS).

On May 8, 2013 the Safe Schools Task Force held its first meeting. After hearing from three school districts who had made strong progress in creating a safe and healthy school climate, the following workgroups were identified to move this important agenda forward: Engaging Students in Building Positive School Climate; School Reporting (DASA/VADIR); Legislative and Regulatory Issues; Building Security and Infrastructure.

On November 14, 2013, the second meeting of the Task Force will be held and co-chaired by Vice Chancellor Bottar and Deputy Commissioner Slentz. After opening remarks by the co-chairs, representatives of the New York City School-Justice Partnership Task Force will present recommendations from a report released in May 2013 entitled *Keeping Kids In School and Out of Courts*. Although this Task Force focuses on New York City, it will help set the stage for the work to be accomplished by the Safe Schools Task Force at its November 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. The goal of the meeting is to charge the respective workgroups with reviewing the current state of their area, developing proposals for improvement relative to the larger task of creating safe and healthy school climates, and preparing to present those proposals at the next full group meeting.

### **Next Steps**

Workgroups will continue to meet throughout the winter and will reconvene in late winter to present their proposals to the larger group. Department staff will subsequently provide a progress report to the Board.