THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

TO: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

FROM: Beth Berlin

SUBJECT: Safe Schools Task Force Recommendations – Update on School Data Reporting

DATE: July 2, 2014

AUTHORIZATION(S):

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

As a follow-up to the June 2014 presentation to the P-12 Education Committee on the work of the Safe Schools Task Force, should the Board direct Department staff to recommend changes to the current New York State Violent and Disruptive Incident Reporting (VADIR) and Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) reporting processes.

Reason(s) for Consideration

For action.

Proposed Handling

This issue will come before the Board of Regents at the July 2014 meeting.

Background Information

In January 2013, the Board directed the Department to re-establish the New York State Safe Schools Task Force which began meeting in May 2013 and continues to work toward the development of a set of recommendations to promote a safe and healthy school environment. The Task Force is co-chaired by the Vice Chancellor and the Commissioner. Over the past school year, presentations by experts from across

New York State and the nation have been conducted to help guide the work of the Task Force. Using this information and the knowledge and expertise of the Task Force members, the Task Force developed a set of preliminary recommendations which was presented by Department staff to the Board at the June 2014 meeting. One recommendation, in particular, includes developing a single comprehensive data reporting system to track both the data required for Violent and Disruptive Incident Reporting (VADIR) and for the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) in lieu of the two separate reporting requirements that are currently in place. Pursuant to VADIR, schools are required to record and submit information on violent and disruptive incidents as well as to maintain a record on each reportable violent or disruptive incident. Each school must then provide a summary of these incidents by using a Summary Form for Reporting Violent and Disruptive Incidents that is submitted annually to the Department by September 30 of the following school year. Meanwhile, DASA requires that schools also collect and record material incidents of discrimination and/or harassment. This information is collected in a report called the Report of Incidents Concerning School Safety and the Educational Climate and is required to be submitted to the Department following the conclusion of the school year.

The Safe Schools Task Force has reviewed the current VADIR and DASA reporting processes and recommends the Department change the process to ensure that, in addition to the data and indicators required by law and regulation, key indicators for positive school climates are also included.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Regents take the following action:

VOTED: That the Board direct Department staff to work with the Task Force to develop a recommendation to implement a single comprehensive data reporting system to track both the data required for Violent and Disruptive Incident Reporting (VADIR) and for the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) in lieu of the two separate reporting requirements that are currently in place. Such system should identify data reporting elements necessary to promote and measure positive school climates. Department staff recommendations should include the development of budget requests for appropriate monitoring of and technical assistance to school districts as well as the expansion of the Center for School Safety. Department staff is directed to report back to the Board in September 2014.