



New York State Safe Schools Task Force: Status Update

New York State Board of Regents
P-12 Education Committee
October 26, 2015

Agenda

- o **NYS Safe Schools Task Force Actions to Date**
- o **Overview of Input Gathered From National, State, and Local Experts**
- o **Highlights of Several Recommendations:**
 - o Recommendation #1: Invest In and Expand Support Staff, including School Counselors, Social Workers, Psychologists, Nurses
 - o Recommendation #10: Amend Education Law § 807 re: Fire Drills to include Emergency Drills
 - o Recommendation #26: Amend Commissioner's Regulations § 155.17 re: School Safety Plans and Automate Plan Submission
 - o Recommendation #7: Support School Climate Frameworks that Enhance the Learning Environment, such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
 - o Recommendation #2: Measuring School Climate Using a School Climate Index
- o **Next Steps**

NYS Safe Schools Task Force Actions

Date	Activity
January 2013	Board of Regents re-established the Safe Schools Task Force
May 8, 2013	Kick-off Meeting
November 14, 2013	Full Task Force Meeting with Workgroups Established
January – April 2014	Workgroups met to Develop and Refine Preliminary Recommendations
February 20, 2014	Student Forum Held to Hear the Students' Perspectives on Promoting Safe and Healthy Schools
June 2014	Full Task Force Met to Refine and Prioritize Recommendations
September 2014	Task Force Recommendations Presented to the Board of Regents
October 2014 – present	Department staff work on Implementing Recommendations

Gathered Input from National, State, and Local Experts

- o California Department of Education
- o Georgia Department of Education
- o Rhode Island Department of Education
- o National School Climate Center
- o American Institute of Research (AIR)
- o New York State Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children
- o University of Rochester Researchers on Promoting Positive School Climate
- o School Safety Improvement Team: New York State Police, Division of Criminal Justice Services, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, Governor's Office, NYS Education Department

Gathered Input from National, State, and Local Experts (continued)

- o School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS)
- o School Districts: New York City, Schenectady, Albany, Troy, East Greenbush, Ballston Spa, Roxbury, and Berkshire
- o New York State United Teachers
- o Conference of the Big 5 School Districts
- o Regional Information Center Directors and Program Managers
- o NYS PBIS Technical Assistance Center
- o NYS Center for School Safety (Measurement, Inc.)
- o NYSED: Information and Report Services, Accountability, Information Technology; Teacher and Leader Effectiveness; Special Education, Office of Bilingual and World Languages and Higher Education.

Recommendation #1: Invest In and Expand Support Staff in Schools

In September 2015, the Department presented to the Board amendments to Commissioner's Regulations on school counseling:

- o Currently, 60% of schools in New York State have School Counselor-Student Ratios greater than 1: 350,
- o Statewide, there are approximately 1600 school counselors needed for NYS to attain a statewide 1:350 School Counselor-Student ratio, and
- o The American School Counselor Association recommends a maximum ratio of 1:250.
- o The Department has begun discussions with other Pupil Personnel Services staff in schools.

Recommendation #10: Amend State Education Law § 807 re: Fire Drills to include Emergency Drills

Recognizing that there are threats to schools that are not fire-related, the Department and the NYS School Safety Improvement Team* recommend the following changes to Education Law § 807:

- o Reduce the number of fire drills required each year from twelve to eight, and
- o Require four lockdown drills each year.

Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services Office of Fire Prevention and Control supports these proposed amendments

*NYS Education Department, NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services, NY State Police, NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, and Governor's Office

Recommendation #26: Amend Commissioner's Regulations § 155.17 re: School Safety Plans and Automate Plan Submission

- o Amend Commissioner's Regulations § 155.17 re: District and Building Safety Plans to:
 - o Retitle Building-Level School Safety Plans to Building-Level School Emergency Response Plans and align with FEMA emergency preparedness guidelines, and
 - o Change the due date for Plan submission to SED from July 1 to October 1 to allow school districts to plan in the summer
(However, plans must be in place at the start of the school year).
- o Create an automated database and corresponding uniform template for School-Building Emergency Response Plans for 2016-2017 school year.

Recommendation #7: Support School Climate Frameworks that Enhance the Learning Environment such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

When schools implement PBIS with fidelity, results include:

- o Improved school climates;
- o Increased use of engaging, responsive, preventive and productive approaches to problematic behavior;
- o Effective use of positive and individualized supports for students whose behaviors require more specialized intervention;
- o Improved academic outcomes;
- o Reductions in behavior problems, disciplinary referrals, suspensions and expulsions; and
- o Increased parental engagement in school programs.

Data Source:

National PBIS Technical Assistance Center

Recommendation #7: Support School Climate Frameworks that Enhance the Learning Environment, such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

- o 40 Behavior Specialists located in 10 regions of the State:
 - Support approximately 1,200 schools statewide through regional training/coaching, and
 - Provide differentiated support and embedded professional development and technical assistance to over 400 schools;
- o Statewide PBIS Technical Assistance Center.

**Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Center (RSE-TASC)*

Recommendation #2: Measuring School Climate using a School Climate Index

1. *School Climate Surveys* -implement evidenced-based, valid and reliable surveys to:

- o Students
- o Parents/Guardians
- o School Personnel

2. *VADIR/DASA* categories would be revised and included in the SCI. The current School Violence Index would be revised and refined. The VADIR and DASA incident reports would be combined into the measurement.

3. *Chronic Absenteeism* - Attendance data will be used to capture chronic absenteeism at the student level and at the building level.

Additional Recommendations addressed by the School Climate Index:

#s 2, 4, 5, 7, 18, 20, 21, 25, and 30 plus 3 of the Students' Recommendations

Recommendation #2: Measuring School Climate using a School Climate Index

1. School Climate Surveys:

- o implement evidenced-based, valid and reliable school climate surveys to:
 - o Students
 - o Parents/Guardians
 - o School Personnel

By the end of this year, NYSED will have access to USDOE's evidenced-based, valid and reliable school climate survey instruments and a survey platform for collection and reporting of school climate data.

Recommendation #2: Measuring School Climate using a School Climate Index

2. VADIR/DASA

- o The Department already gathers information for each school building via the School Violence Index (SVI), which would be one component of the School Climate Index (SCI).
- o Incident categories and definitions have been revised for reporting the School Climate Index—and reducing the number of reportable categories from twenty to eight.

Recommendation #2: Measuring School Climate using a School Climate Index

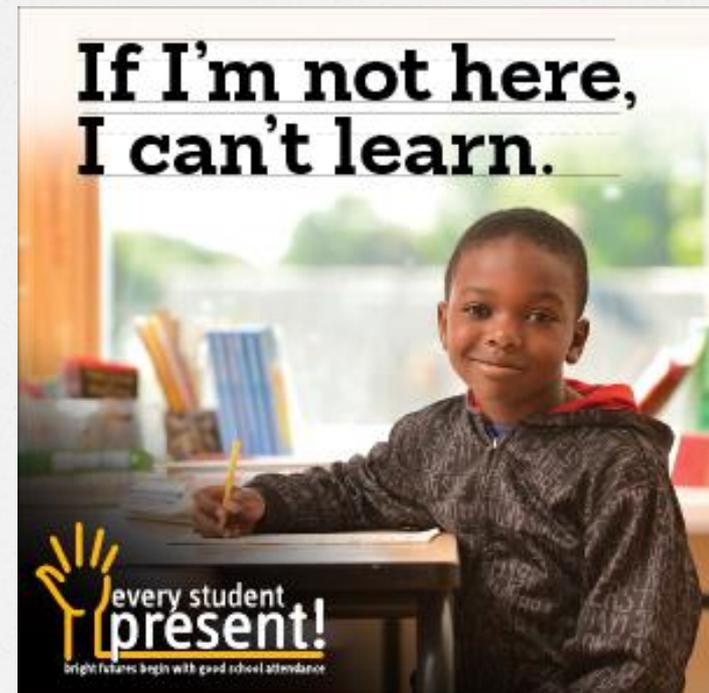
3. Chronic Absenteeism

A. School districts will create and implement chronic absenteeism policies with appropriate **intervention strategies for students** by:

- o Flagging students who miss between five and nine percent of school days;
- o Flagging students who miss ten percent or more of school;
- o Assess the needs of students missing between five and nine percent of school days and provide services where appropriate; and
- o Assess the needs of students missing ten percent or more of school days and provide necessary services.

B. Using attendance data submitted to the Department, **school building and district chronic absenteeism rates** would be calculated as follows: percent of students in the school building missing more than ten percent of school days that school is in session.

Media Campaign to Inform Parents that Every Student Must Be Present In School



Next Steps

- o Amend Education Law § 807 to Reduce the Number of Annual Fire Drills and Add Emergency Drills;
- o Bring Amendments to Commissioner's Regulations to the Board re:
 - o School Building-Level Emergency Response Plans (§ 155.17), and
 - o VADIR Categories and Reporting (§ 100.2(gg));
- o Distribute Policy Guidance to the Field to:
 - o Define Chronic Absenteeism and Explain How It Will Be Calculated, and
 - o Measure School Climate Using a School Climate Index;
- o Work with SED's Information and Reporting Services to Make Changes to the VADIR Database Categories To Reflect Amended Regulations;
- o Increase Professional Development and Technical Assistance to Support School Administrators re: Implementation of Task Force Recommendations;
- o Continue Implementing the Safe Schools Task Force Recommendations.

