


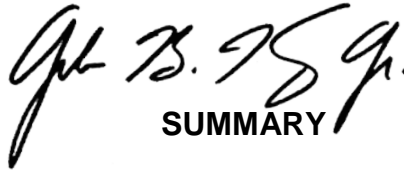


THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

TO: P-12 Education Committee
FROM: Ken Slentz 
SUBJECT: Safe Schools Task Force

DATE: October 11, 2013

AUTHORIZATION(S):


SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

This is a follow-up discussion item from the March 2013 Board of Regents meeting.

Reason(s) for Consideration

For Information

Proposed Handling

This issue will come before the Regents P-12 Education Committee at the October 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 next meeting of the Task Force will be held and will be charged by the Vice Chancellor with specific tasks to be accomplished by each workgroup and a general timeline for reporting out.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Regents direct Department staff to co-chair each of the workgroups with an outside organization and/or agency representative. The goal of the work groups will be to recommend changes to current practice, supports, guidance and regulations to better ensure safe buildings and safe and healthy school climates.

The Department may also propose to the Board of Regents potential recommendations for legislative changes regarding Violent and Disruptive Incident Reporting (VADIR) requirements.

Timetable for Implementation

Following the November 14, 2013 meeting, workgroups will be established to include specific goals and timelines for each objective.