

# DASA Task Force Recommendations for the DASA Training Requirement for Certification

December 10, 2018



# Dignity for All Students Act

- The Dignity Act for All Students Act (DASA) Law became effective July 1, 2012 and the amendment to include cyberbullying became effective July 1, 2013.
- DASA seeks to **provide** the State's public elementary and secondary school **students** with a **safe and supportive environment free from bullying, harassment and discrimination** on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function.
- Boards of Education must include language addressing The Dignity Act in their **codes of conduct** and identify at least one employee in each school as the **Dignity Act Coordinator**.
- School employees who witness bullying, harassment, and/or discrimination or receive a report of such conduct must notify the principal, superintendent or their designee of such report. Upon receipt of a report of bullying, harassment, and/or discrimination, the principal, superintendent or their designee **must conduct a thorough investigation**.
- Schools must **collect and report data** regarding material incidents of bullying, harassment, and discrimination.
- **Dignity Act Categories:** actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender expression and gender identity), or sex.

# DASA Training Requirement for Certification

- DASA also requires prospective school professionals who apply for a certificate or license on or after December 31, 2013 to complete training on the social patterns of harassment, bullying (including cyberbullying), and discrimination.
- The DASA training must include instruction for:
  - the identification and mitigation of harassment, bullying, and discrimination;
  - those acts based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender expression and gender identity), or sex; and
  - strategies for effectively addressing problems of exclusion, bias, and aggression in educational settings.

# DASA Training Requirement Timeline

- The Department convened the DASA Task Force in 2013 to develop recommendations for the DASA training requirement for certification.
- In May 2013, the Board of Regents adopted a new regulation requiring candidates for a teacher, educational leader, pupil personnel services, or other service (e.g., coaching, teaching assistants) certificate or license to complete specific coursework or a workshop in harassment, bullying and discrimination prevention and intervention.

# DASA Training Objectives

- The 2013 Task Force established six specific learning objectives for all certificate applicants.
  - Understand the intent of the components and operational definitions present in the Dignity Act.
  - Develop and enhance awareness and sensitivity to the range of experiences of the specific student populations as named in the Dignity Act.
  - Understand how school climate and culture have an impact on student achievement and behavior.
  - Understand bullying, harassment and discrimination, including indicators, early warning signs, prevention and intervention and how to interact with families of victims and aggressors.
  - Enhance the understanding of diversity and multicultural environments and examine personal biases.
  - Articulate the Reporting Requirements for Educators as specified in the Dignity Act.

# DASA Training Syllabus

- The DASA training syllabus requires the following elements to be delivered:
  - In-person
    - Understanding diversity, multicultural environments, and examining personal biases.
    - Developing sensitivity to the experiences of specific student populations.
    - Understanding how school climate and culture have an impact on student achievement and behavior (specific topics).
    - Participants will learn intervention and prevention strategies including how to interact with families.
  - Either in-person or online
    - Introduction to the Dignity Act.
    - Understanding how school climate and culture have an impact on student achievement and behavior (other specific topics).
    - Participants will understand the indicators and early warning signs.
    - Reporting requirements for educators.

# DASA Training Providers and Completion

- The Department approves all DASA training providers.
- Currently, many organizations are able to become DASA training providers, such as BOCES, institutions of higher education, school districts, teacher or professional organizations, and social service agencies.
- Candidates for certification complete the DASA training through:
  - an approved educator preparation program, **OR**
  - a six-clock hour workshop that meets at least 3 clock hours in person.

# DASA Task Force Reconvened

- In 2017, the Commissioner reconvened the DASA Task Force in response to concerns regarding the effectiveness of the DASA training.
- The Task Force met seven times between June 2017 and February 2018.
- The 37 Task Force members represented the higher education community, the school community, and various community organizations.
  - Eight of the Task Force members served on the original DASA Task Force that created the DASA training syllabus.
- The Task Force members were charged with examining the content of the DASA training and various means to ensure that prospective school professionals receive effective training before they assume their respective responsibilities.



# DASA Task Force Recommendations

- The majority of reconvened Task Force members recommended requiring New York State teacher, educational leader, and pupil personnel services preparation programs include a three-semester hour multicultural education course that addresses and assesses candidates' knowledge and abilities related to the means for the prevention of and intervention in harassment, bullying (including cyberbullying), and discrimination.

# DASA Task Force Recommendations

- NYS educator preparation providers could meet the three-semester hour requirement if they can demonstrate that they have incorporated the multicultural education course content into their approved program.
- The multicultural education course or courses must include the components of the approved DASA syllabus, which would enable candidates who complete the course to fulfill the DASA training requirement for certification.
- For all candidates completing a NYS teacher, educational leader, or pupil personnel services preparation program, the six-clock hour DASA workshop would not be an option.

# DASA Task Force Themes

- Three additional themes emerged from the reconvened Task Force discussions and were supported at varying levels by Task Force members.
  - All certificate applicants should complete a two-clock hour online DASA training module that addresses the Dignity Act reporting requirements for educators and includes a built-in testing component.
  - Other service professionals (e.g., coaches, teaching assistants) should continue to be required to complete the six-clock hour workshop to satisfy the DASA training requirement for certification.
  - All other certificate applicants (e.g., reciprocity pathways, individual evaluation pathway) would need to complete a three-semester hour multicultural education course equivalent to the course required for NYS educator preparation programs that would address the components of the DASA training syllabus.

# Other Educator Preparation Program Recommendations

- The Department will work with educator preparation providers to incorporate other essential preparation topics into the multicultural education course or across the current program. These topics would keep the program curricula current with the needs and trends in schools and school districts.
- Topics include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - Culturally Responsive and Linguistically Appropriate Practices
  - Family and Community Engagement
  - Mental Health Education in Schools
  - Social Emotional Learning
  - Trauma-Informed Practices