



NYS Safe Schools Task Force

Agenda

1. Brief Overview of Task Force Actions to Date: Renee Rider
2. Panel Discussion: Priti Irani & Thomas O'Brien
 - » School Culture and Student Engagement
 - » Data Use and Reporting
 - » Building Security and Infrastructure
3. Recommended Next Steps for the Department: Renee Rider



NYS Safe Schools Task Force Actions

Date	Activity
January 2013	Board of Regents re-established the Task Force
May 8, 2013	Kick off Meeting
November 14, 2013	Established Workgroups and developed Preliminary Recommendations
Jan - April 2014	Workgroups met to refine Preliminary Recommendations
Feb 20, 2014	SED hosted a Student Forum to get student's perspective on promoting safe and healthy schools
April 15, 2014	Task Force members discussed school climate, data collection and reporting, and suspension policies with the National School Climate Center President
May 2014	Workgroup members finalized recommendations to present to the full Task Force
June 6, 2014	Full Task Force met to refine and prioritize recommendations



School Culture and Student Engagement

Major Points and Recommendations

- Social emotional health is critical to achieving optimal academic performance
- Balance positive mental health, mental health disorder prevention and crisis intervention approaches for *all* students
- Implement evidence-based and best-practice frameworks and interventions (*Social Emotional Development and Learning Guidelines, Positive Behavioral Intervention Services, among others*)



Ms. Irani is a member of the "Promote Mental Health and Prevent Substance Abuse" Prevention Agenda Priority as well as the New York State Department of Health sponsored "Quick Strike Proposal." Ms. Irani was a member of the NYS Safe Schools Task Force School Culture and Student Engagement Work Group.

School Culture and Student Engagement

Major Points and Recommendations

- Community involvement and engagement – bring community into school and school into community
- Use collaborative, cross-disciplinary cross-sector practices
- Align with and integrate into current practices
- Incorporate strong communications strategies
- Inclusiveness (assess who is included and who may feel excluded)
- Change in administrators and other stressors make positive school culture challenging



Data Use and Reporting

Major Points and Recommendations

- Data is key to helping demonstrate smarter not harder work
- Persistently Dangerous is a term that should link itself as a means to cure the problem not as a punitive measure
- The streamlining of reporting and the truncation of fields to capture data (DASA, VADIR, and BEDS) through a uniform data system would give us all the opportunity to dis-aggregate and end duplicitous reporting
- VADIR should move to a school climate index to capture more positive and broader themed elements of school culture

Mr. O'Brien is the current Superintendent of Roxbury Central School which is a rural community in the northern Catskills that has a population of roughly 350 students in grades prekindergarten-12. Mr. O'Brien was a member of the NYS Safe Schools Task Force Building Security and Infrastructure Work Group.

Building Security and Infrastructure Workgroup

Major Points and Recommendations

- In the eyes of parents, school safety and security are the most important factors of every school day
- Develop an intentional and lasting partnership with other agencies on state-wide and local levels (*health, mental health, 1st Responders, law enforcement, among others*)
- Safety plans should reflect other settings in addition to the physical building (*such as buses and field trips*)
- Require school transportation leaders to be part of district-wide school safety teams
- School Resource Officers should be given uniform training in areas such as restorative justice and social emotional development and learning
- Revise regulations to require two less fire drills and to add two emergency preparedness drills
- Do not require school district safety plans to be posted on-line

Recommended Next Steps for the Department

Modernize data collection and reporting:

- Ensure all required reporting is streamlined, where possible, to increase efficiency and accuracy and to decrease burdensome reporting for school districts
- Update the VADIR and DASA reporting structures and integrate both of them into a larger, more comprehensive, school climate index report to capture a broader—and more accurate—depiction of school culture

Recommended Next Steps for the Department

Provide Support and Ensure Accountability:

- Establish and administer an annual school climate survey and determine indicators for a School Climate Index
- Provide incentives for schools with the highest SCI
- Provide Professional Development opportunities for school personnel and for teacher preparation programs to include but not limited to:
 - Positive classroom environments and management
 - How to conduct effective investigations
 - incorporate FEMA's incident command system training
- Regional safety teams should be developed



Recommended Next Steps for the Department

Enhance Oversight with Regular Monitoring and Audits:

- Closely review and analyze data from school incident reporting mechanisms to identify districts with the greatest need for technical assistance
- Support and help conduct meaningful, uniform, and recurring professional development on building safety and security to school building and faculty leaders, school counselors, other support staff, Dignity Act Coordinators, and School Resource Officers, among others
- Create capacity to conduct regular monitoring visits and to conduct routine audits



