



DASA Task Force Meeting Notes
July 10, 2017 (12:30-3:30)
New York State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY (Room 217)

Members present in Albany: Becky Carman, Laurie Cassel, John D’Agati, Lauren Frederico, Cynthia Gallagher, Mary Grenz Jalloh, Gloria Jean, Mary Jane Karger, Agatha Kelly, Terry McSweeney, Jeffrey Mongelli, Elizabethe Payne, Eòghann Renfroe, Renee Rider, Mara Sapon-Shevin, Ron Woo

Members on WebEx: Khin Mai Aung, Terry Reynolds, Michael Rosenberg, Christy Smith, Shirley Sommers

NYSED Staff: Laura Glass

Guest: Ann Horowitz, Counsel to New York Assemblymember O’Donnell

1. Introduction

- Laura provided an overview of the agenda. She also reviewed a handout with the notes from the June meeting that were reorganized by the following themes: gaps in the DASA syllabus, inservice teacher issues related to DASA, format of the DASA training, amount of time for the training, resources for the task force, and information to collect.

2. Review the DASA syllabus

The members engaged in a whole group discussion about the DASA training for preservice and inservice teachers.

- Lack of knowledge around issues of institutional discrimination in schools.
 - Elizabethe has done surveys of professional development programs on issues of racism/sexism/islamophobia/transphobia, etc.
- Training should be at different levels for preservice, novice, and professional teachers.
- What does the DASA legislation require? It includes entry level requirements, but not continuing education.
- Original task force recommended a full course, which was changed.
- Concern about fitting a new three-credit course into teacher preparation programs.
- More of a gap in DASA training at the inservice level than the preservice level.
- Could dedicate some of the CTLE hours for DASA training for professional teachers.
- Could look at the master’s degree for DASA training for novice teachers.
- How does DASA address culturally responsive pedagogy in the context of the Every Students Succeeds Act (ESSA)?
 - The new Professional Standards for Educational Leaders addresses diversity.
- ESSA addresses school climate.
 - Renee described the school climate index.
 - Chronic absenteeism is being used as measure for non-academic success. The school climate index will include chronic absenteeism.

- Elizabethe conducted a research study with novice teachers about their DASA training.
 - Teachers did not understand proactive approaches to bullying and the relationship to school climate.
 - They could describe intervention stories and reporting strategies, but not proactive strategies.
 - Need to give teachers the tools and language to be proactive.
- Where are the professional development plans for non-instructional staff?
- A member asked if the charge of the task force could be expanded to include inservice educators. John confirmed that the task force could draft recommendations related to them.
- Teachers first need exposure and information to DASA-related issues, but application in the classroom and having a toolkit is the most important.
- Important to conduct the training in person.
- We need to look at what programs are doing.
- How do we build systems of accountability into the DASA training so that it is not just neutral information, but is a set of skills and processes for proactively creating and maintaining an equitable learning environment?
- Elizabethe studied diversity course syllabi across the state.
 - There is almost no LGBR content in the syllabi and even less transgender content.
 - She was looking for readings on institutional racism from a critical theory approach. There was very little critical content.
- What should be in preservice versus inservice DASA training? It is very intertwined.

3. Identify specific gaps in the DASA syllabus

- Members engaged in small group discussions and shared their ideas with the whole group. The following group comments were made in addition to the notes in the table below.
 - Group 4. The syllabus is fine for preservice teachers and others. The curriculum should be different at different levels; the training should be expanded to the inservice level. Need evaluations on the workshop and of students for accountability. Also need understanding and compliance at all levels. What does an educator do if the individual at the top of the school/district does not believe in the practices promoted in the DASA training?
 - Group 3. The syllabus includes many good ideas, but it is not possible to cover everything in six hours; the important question is how to teach it. Classroom management practices can lead to bullying. Preservice teachers should learn pragmatic proactive and reactive strategies.
 - Group 2. The syllabus should cover all classes of students and address structural racism. The content should be framed around creating an inclusive learning environment.
 - Group 1. Not horrified by the syllabus, just not enough time.

<p>Group 1 (Agatha, Becky, Elizabethe, Jeff, John)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more than three hours. • Need to enumerate categories in DASA. • Need to tweak to different groups.
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Group 2 (Ron, Lauren, Laurie, Terry)

- Pre-service students should not be made scared of the law (“to report or not to report”) – what should be reported and what may not.
- Content should be framed in a strength-based manner
 - Framing it as “a teaching moment to create an inclusive learning environment”.
- The list of items is extensive
 - Consider clustering them into “buckets” (the depth of which to be determined) and then “prioritizing” them.

Recommendations as to content:

- Understanding of the DASA law and its reporting requirements
 - Focus on other classes of students not solely the “protected” classes of students identified in the law.
 - Understanding that bullying is a pattern of social behavior.
- Awareness of personal bias, power, and privilege
- Awareness of systemic, structural, and institutional racism
- Understanding the need to create an inclusive learning environment for all students
- Regarding strategies – we did not have time to fully discuss and develop our thoughts in this area other than there should be some basic strategies discussed and more developed/advanced strategies reserved for training beyond the six-hour pre-service workshop.

Group 3 (Cynthia, Mara, Mary Jane)

- Most of what’s on the DASA syllabus is wonderful and important --- it’s just not possible within the narrow time-frame.
- We think the focus should be on the pragmatic pro-active and reactive strategies for creating safe and respectful environments for all students.
 - Specifically, this means what can TEACHERS (and other professionals) do within their own sphere of influence to make students be kind to one another, etc. This includes social skills teaching, peer meditation, etc.
 - FOCUS ON: curriculum, pedagogy, classroom climate, teaching students to be active upstanders in the face of bullying and harassment.
 - What are the things that can be done relative to issues of grouping, competition, language about diversity, etc.
- The disciplinary/regulatory information can be handled without using valuable class time. Flipped classrooms: have students read these things and be responsible for rules, etc. OUTSIDE of class.
- MAKE ALL DECISIONS IN THE CLASSROOM BASED ON ITS EFFECT ON THE MOST VULNERABLE/MARGINALIZED CHILD IN THE CLASSROOM.

Group 4 (Eòghann, Gloria, Mary, Renee)

- Current DASA training may already be fine for pre-service training
 - Credit hours may still make it worth it to folks being trained
 - Is DASA training consistent? Is there a way to ensure consistency?
 - Do we need to move into curriculum?
 - Is there a way to ensure retention and understanding?
 - Pre-test and post-test?
- In-service DASA issues
 - Curriculum important – role plays, etc.
 - How do we ensure understanding, retention, and compliance?

- School board training is a missing element
- Title IX coordinator as method to coordinate, tying in with other requirements by law
- Non-instructional staff
 - Could schools do that themselves
- Re: Chronic Absenteeism (additional notes supplied by Eòghann)
 - LGBTQ students are often not captured in information collected on chronic absenteeism, contributing to “invisible” status
 - Student may not be out as LGB or transgender
 - Student may be out to some but not others
 - Student may be gender non-conforming without identifying as either trans or LGB
 - Student may be exploring or questioning sexuality or gender identity, and school climate can contribute to difficulty in coming to terms with identity
 - There is no real data collection on LGBTQ identity for students in schools
 - Lack of data collection on LGBTQ identity is problem for gathering information on how LGBTQ status affects housing, health, employment, etc. as well, - not just a school issue
 - Poverty is also a huge contributor to chronic absenteeism
 - Also may be “invisible” in data collection
 - Homelessness, having to support family during crises without safety net, lack of access to transportation to and from school, needing to work to help with rent, food, etc. can contribute to absences.
 - Re: transportation, regular K-12 school buses often do not address all challenges, especially if students cannot catch morning bus, or are caught between needing to catch afternoon bus and staying late to catch up on school work, access tutoring, access special programs, etc. (This was a problem I faced, and I often had to catch rides back home with friends’ parents or with teachers themselves --Eòghann).
 - Stigma contributes to erasure
 - Survival will always trump school attendance
- Assessment or Accountability measures are missing

- Ann Horowitz explained that the law has more to say about DASA training for preservice teachers. Inservice professional development is a different part of the statute and is decided by school districts. The statutory requirements are the minimum floor. The law was designed so that the content coverage is similar for preservice teachers and inservice teachers so that the trainings reinforce each other. There is an extra step for inservice recommendations before they can be proposed as changes for the Commissioner’s Regulations.

4. Review a draft of a possible survey for novice teachers about the DASA training for candidates
 - Elizabeth described her study with novice teachers on their experiences with the DASA training.

- She interviewed 15 teachers downstate and asked them to recollect the 6-hour training, narrate their experience/provide stories of engagement, and share stories of applying the training in their own work.
 - The teachers are not taking away much that is applicable and are telling stories of their responsibility to report.
 - The preliminary findings include that the teachers in general:
 - Did not talk about topics in the statute and did not understand bullying as a social pattern of harassment.
 - Did not talk about the enumerated categories.
 - Know that they are supposed to intervene, but they talked about reactive solutions and not proactive solutions.
 - Did not talk about a proactive, affirming educational environment, but talked about a bully-free environment.
 - Did have an idea of personal bias introduced during training. However, there was not a lot of reflection of how their own bias might be at play.
 - Recognize that LGBT children and youth get bullied a lot, but do not know why.
 - Use language around color blindness.
 - Are aware that bullying leads to dropping out, but not how a proactive, affirming environment leads to staying in school.
 - The preliminary results may be available by October. The interviews will inform questions for a survey.
 - The small groups reviewed a draft of a possible survey for novice teachers that included questions members proposed for a survey at the June meeting.
 - Groups 1-3 provided specific edits to the draft survey. Group 4 wondered about the purpose of the survey. Members discussed how the survey could be helpful in understanding what teachers take away from the DASA training.
5. Review the information that needs to be collected to inform decisions related to the DASA training
- a. The members did not discuss this item.