



**DASA Task Force Meeting Notes**  
**September 14, 2017 (12:30-3:30)**  
**New York State Education Department**  
**Room 217, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY**

**Members present in Albany:** Khin Mai Aung, John D'Agati, Laura Geraci, Gloria Jean, Agatha Kelly, Marina Marcou-O'Malley, Terry McSweeney, Jeffrey Mongelli, Elizabeth Payne, Eòghann Renfro, Renee Rider, Bernice Rivera, Michael Rosenberg, Mara Sapon-Shevin, Andrew Shanock, Christy Smith, Toni Smith-Thompson, Shirley Sommers, Kathleen Hayes Sugarman, Jolynn Thaickal, Ron Woo, Tricia Zupan.

**Members on WebEx:** David Cantaffa, Natasha Capers, Mary Grenz Jalloh, Terry Reynolds

**NYSED Staff:** Laura Glass

**Guests:** Ann Horowitz, Counsel to New York Assemblymember O'Donnell; Melissa Schieble, CUNY Hunter College

1. Presentation on DASA and bullying (Elizabeth Payne, Director, Queering Education Research Institute and Distinguished Lecturer, CUNY Hunter College)
  - Two ways of understanding bullying behavior
    - Common understanding of bullying focuses on individual acts of violence and individuals involved and views bullying as an anti-social behavior that normalizes violence.
    - The sociological response looks at the cultural context of bullying as a highly social act that reproduces norms and maintains peer boundaries. We need to look at low level acts before they escalate.
  - Reframing bullying behavior
    - Difference is the target of bullying behaviors. Most anti-bullying programs ignore patterns of targeting and fail to address how difference is marked as "less than".
    - Attention on behavior and attitudes places blame on individuals, not on culture.
    - Policies on bullying that focus on behavior fail to create accountability for recognizing and addressing patterns of structural bias.
    - Bullying is a highly social behavior. Marking others is a strategy to assume a power position and claim privilege through association.
    - The use of hate speech terms has an impact on the whole social system by marking out who is "less than" through association with those terms.
    - We need to develop interventions. The goal of interventions should not only be ending violent acts, but also addressing dominant cultural norms.
  - DASA
    - Laws that enumerate categories of protected classes are more effective than those that do not do this.

- DASA includes protections for queer and transgender youth and allows for the incorporation of the enumerated categories into the school curriculum.
  - The law provides the opportunity for effective anti-bullying policies.
  - The group discussed the importance of professional development for school administrators and school board members to be trained and supportive of DASA. We need to empower administrators.
2. Presentation on teacher education and diversity (Melissa Schieble, Assistant Professor, English Education, CUNY Hunter College)
- Many teachers are not prepared to work with diverse student populations, leaving teachers vulnerable to perpetuating racist, sexist, and classist messages.
  - Why is teacher preparation for diversity uneven?
    - It is uneven due to different ideologies: professionalization agenda through national accreditation (e.g., CAEP), deregulation agenda that views teacher's knowledge of content over pedagogy, and social justice education agenda.
    - Some teachers are immersed in concepts and strategies for diverse learners, while others are prepared in other areas.
    - Teacher preparation programs are slow to change.
    - Teacher preparation programs may be created primarily by middle class white educators who have not studied or experienced issues of class, race, culture, and/or gender identity.
    - There is an emphasis on skills-based, clinically focused preparation.
    - Benefits of teachers being prepared to know about diversity
      - Being able to put aside widely held myths such as color-blindness ("I don't see race"), meritocracy ("if all students just worked harder, they would do better"), cultural norms/conflict (certain cultures are seen as better, more professional/prepared), implicit bias/othering.
      - Encourages reflection in action.
      - Reduces cultural conflicts and helps to dismantle the need for student punishment based on difference, which would help address school to prison pipeline issues.
      - Become aware of personal biases.
      - Reframe curricula that leaves students disenfranchised and not try to "fix" the student.
      - Normalize a culture of difference and see difference over deficit.
  - Why multicultural education is key to successful DASA implementation
    - DASA training seen as a mandated add-on for certification purposes and not integrated into teacher preparation.
    - Teachers candidates say DASA information is important, but they need more ways to implement it into the classroom.
    - A 3-credit course would send a message of priority.
  - Task force members asked questions and made comments related to the presentations.
    - Why are we hammering on this for only teachers when we are hearing this is a cultural issue that goes beyond teachers?

- We could create a 3-credit course in other areas, such as mental illness. What do we drop? Programs are full.
  - We could integrate these ideas across general education for all college students, not only teacher education candidates. However, sometimes when things are supposed to be everywhere, they're nowhere.
  - We could have the 6-hour training and then create a 3-credit course at the graduate level. One member suggested having the training be a professional certification requirement. Another member raised the issue of letting new teachers "experiment" on students for the first five years instead of properly preparing teachers on issues such as implicit bias, racism, sexism, and homophobia.
  - We want to fix this, but we also don't want to change anything. What can we cut that teachers don't necessarily need as soon as they start teaching?
  - Some attrition in the first years of teaching due to not being prepared for their environment. Teachers are largely middle class white women, and most students do not come from this background. The training cannot wait until a master's degree.
  - Can we operationally make this happen? There is no room for three more credits and there are so many add-ons.
  - The focus is too narrowly on the education of individual teachers and not the rest of the school institution (e.g., principals, social workers, other staff).
  - How do we build lessons into the DASA training for teachers about implementing systems of accountability within their classrooms and their schools? The lessons would be similar in how to engage in mandated reporting, but would address issues of creating a proactively inclusive learning space. We need teachers to be aware of the procedures and why they are important (and make sure they actually follow them).
  - How much feedback can we give in terms of regulations? We can make any recommendations that we want. We are charged with reviewing the content and length of the six-hour DASA training.
  - Districts have authority for professional development guidelines.
  - Multicultural education is fundamental to all other courses and would be easier to spread within courses. However, some members believe that it should be a separate course.
3. Update on the draft of the DASA survey for educators and approved DASA training providers
- Gloria Jean, Terry McSweeney, Elizabethe Payne, and Shirley Sommers responded to Laura's invitation to the task force in August about having an additional meeting to revise the DASA survey and met on August 31. Becky Carmen also provided Laura with feedback on the survey individually.
  - The group decided that the purpose of the survey should be to collect data on educators' perspectives on how well they learned the topics outlined in the six objectives in the DASA syllabus. They also created a survey for approved DASA training providers.
  - Members gave feedback on the DASA survey for educators.

4. Refine the DASA syllabus (if needed)
  - The group discussed the possible idea of forming subcommittees. Two possible subcommittees are 1) DASA training syllabus and length of time, and 2) resources for approved DASA training providers.
  - For a 3-credit course, would they need or could they use a syllabus? A course description would list the topics that need to be covered.
  - We could create an electronic DASA training repository that includes sample syllabi and supporting resources, such as videos.
  - A member proposed to design the course and then figure out how to deliver it. Another member disagreed, saying that this idea is a step backwards.
  - A member offered that there is group consensus that six hours is not enough time to cover the DASA syllabus. Another member countered that the syllabus overreaches what should be covered.
  - The task force could propose a new regulation for programs. Currently, the DASA training is a certification requirement, not a program requirement.
  - All educators need to complete the DASA training, including teacher assistants and coaches.
  - Approximately 40-50% of certificate holders do not go through the approved teacher preparation program pathway for certification, so they would need the equivalent training.
  - The group agreed to have three subcommittees where two of the subcommittees are described above and a third subcommittee would be on the format of the DASA training.
5. Adapt the DASA syllabus for school administrators and educators in pupil personnel services
  - The members did not discuss this item.