



DASA Task Force Meeting Notes
October 4, 2017 (12:30-3:30)
New York State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY (Room 5 A/B)

Members present in Albany: Khin Mai Aung, David Cantaffa, Becky Carman, Laurie Cassel, Grant Cowles, Cynthia Gallagher, Gloria Jean, Mary Jane Karger, Agatha Kelly, Marina Marcou-O'Malley, Gina Miller, Jeffrey Mongelli, Elizabeth Payne, Renee Rider, Melissa Schieble, Andrew Shanock, Toni Smith-Thompson, Jolynn Thaickal, Ron Woo, Tricia Zupan

Members on WebEx: Gregory Berck, Natasha Capers, Mary Grenz Jalloh, Eòghann Renfroe, Mara Sapon-Shevin

NYSED Staff: Laura Glass, Kelly Grace, Ann Jasinski

Guests: Ann Horowitz, Counsel to New York Assemblymember O'Donnell; Ali Michaels, Director, Race Institute for K-12 Educators

1. Presentation on DASA and bullying (Elizabeth Payne, Director, Queering Education Research Institute and Distinguished Lecturer, CUNY Hunter College)
 - Elizabeth interviewed Dignity Act Coordinators (DACs) in 2014-2015.
 - 231 schools were contacted and 52 DACs were interviewed
 - Findings:
 - 20% of DACs reported no training on DASA and 80% reported some training that mostly focused on legal issues (24% on prevention and 76% on legal).
 - Many DACs do not remember their training and no one reported professional development focused on proactively creating supportive environments.
 - 43% of DACs reported that LGBT topics were not covered in their training.
 - Implementation issues:
 - DAC training is too focused on legal issues and reactive approaches.
 - DASA is focused on proactive approaches. Understanding of proactive strategies that address school culture, diversity, inclusion, representation, stigma, and language before incidents occur was absent.
 - We need to develop an understanding of school climate in preservice preparation because we cannot do it through inservice professional development. We also need to think about how bias affects the implementation of DASA.
 - DAC responsibilities vary by area (urban, suburban, rural). Reporting is the greatest focus in urban areas.
 - DAC could not name "diversity" content. Characteristics are the targets of bullying are not discussed.
 - Niceness does not reduce the stigma of being LGBT or gender non-conforming.

- Barriers to effective implementation: need for more education on issues of diversity, which cannot be done in a few hours.
 - A multicultural education course would provide substantial education on gender and race issues, including LGBT issues.
 - We need to maximize the potential of DASA, which specifically covers individuals who identify as transgender.
2. Presentation on race in education (Ali Michaels, Director, Race Institute for K-12 Educators)
- Ali is the winner of the 2017 Society of Professors of Education Outstanding Book Award for *Raising Race Questions: Whiteness, Inquiry and Education*.
 - The presentation title is, “Why Teacher Racial Proficiency Matters for Schools.”
 - Diversity education prepares teachers for a life-long journey towards racial and cultural competence, teacher anti-bias education to students, engage in cross cultural communication, and develop self-awareness.
 - Multicultural competencies in counseling: knowledge, skills, and self-awareness.
 - Multicultural skills include assessment and diagnosis, practicing how to raise multicultural questions, building a strong therapeutic alliance, knowing how to repair ruptures in this alliance, and knowing how to remain empathetic.
 - Multicultural self-awareness: communication style, awareness of social dynamics, how one’s culture impacts behavior, studying one’s triggers, and consciousness of bias.
 - Mismatch of whiteness between teachers (more than 80%) and NYS students of color (more than 50%).
 - White racial socialization includes trying to be colorblind, thinking being white does not have an impact on lives, seeing whiteness as the “norm”, only talking about race when it is a problem, and not knowing the right words to use. A lot of teachers do not know the right words to use because they grew up with schools not talking about race.
 - Bias is a natural human phenomenon. It impacts teaching through grading, discipline, recommendations, honors, special education assignments, and mandated reporting of families (gate keeping activities).
 - Negative outcomes due to lack of racial proficiency: increased misunderstandings between teachers, students, and families; teacher attrition; underrepresented in gifted education; more severe punishments; alienation of families of color from schools; and acceleration of the school to prison pipeline.
 - Benefits of racially proficient teachers: higher academic achievement, ability to temper a biased environment, and offer social-emotional support. Students do not get skills if teachers do not have them.
 - The ways teacher racial proficiency connects to successful implementation of DASA: recognition skills, intervention skills, self-awareness, overcoming early racial socialization, and making unconscious bias conscious. You need to know what your bias is.

- NYS should require a semester of diversity education because racial competency is a skills-based competency, teachers want racial competency, and a commitment to equity will determine our future.
 - Questions and comments from the audience and Ali.
 - It sounds like a semester course should be as interactive as possible in a format with opportunities for proactive role play. Ali: Yes, this may be scary for new, young teachers. Look at counseling multicultural training as a model.
 - It is a regressive relationship when a child has a better racial identity than the teacher.
 - A lot of words are increasingly loaded racially. Stay away from the word “privilege” because it sounds like talking about money; use words such as mainstream and margin. Privilege is when U.S. society is constructed around your existence and designed with your needs in mind.
 - Faculty make a difference. If there are more diversity courses, then there are more faculty representing marginalized groups.
 - Teachers are struggling or they could be doing it. It is important not remain in the realm of interpersonal self-awareness. Teachers need to study systematic racism, including actions we need to take and looking at structures.
 - Faculty who teach multicultural education courses typically receive lower evaluation scores. Ali: Consider co-teaching situations.
 - In order to diversify the curriculum, teachers need to feel competent to do it.
 - This has a lot to do with inservice teachers and administrators too. Unless the school focuses on cultural competence, teachers will not get what they need. Focusing on preservice leaves people out. Where are the hours for all of the topics (e.g., content, mental health)? Ali: This underlies so many other competencies; it is not an add-on.
 - The charge of the task force is to decide if 6 clock hours of DASA training is enough for all certificate applicants.
 - How do we give practicing teachers the tools to implement DASA? Elizabeth explained that in her pilot study with novice teachers, the skills based piece is missing where they need practice and do not know how to implement the ideas from the DASA training.
3. Finalize the draft of the DASA survey for educators and approved DASA training providers
- Members could provide comments on a Google Doc containing the drafts of the DASA surveys that was posted since the last meeting. The group reviewed each suggestion provided on the Google Doc and revised the survey accordingly.
 - Laura shared that Elizabeth is replicating her pilot study with novice teachers about their experience with the 6-hour DASA training and will have some findings in December. Would the group be open to making their recommendations regarding the DASA training after hearing the findings in December (at the last scheduled meeting), or, would the group be interested in scheduling another meeting in January? The group did not reach a consensus.
4. Discuss the DASA training options from a legal and regulatory perspective
- The members did not discuss this item.