



Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)

**Introduction and overview of the
Dignity Act and implementation at
BSCSD**

Denise Jones

***Assistant Superintendent for Human
Resources and Professional Development***

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Objectives

Provide overview of the Dignity Act, its requirements and implementation at BSCSD

- *Definitions*
- *Policy and Code of Conduct*
- *Role and Responsibility of Dignity Act Coordinator*
- *Student Instruction*
- *Staff Training*
- *Reporting Incidents*

Dignity Act Overview

Chapter 482 of the Laws of 2010 added a new Article 2 to the Education Law:

- No student shall be subjected to harassment by employees or students on school property or at a school function; nor shall any students be subjected to discrimination based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.
- Dignity Act intended to be preventative, not punitive



Harassment

Defined as:

“The creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance, opportunities or benefits or mental, emotional or physical well-being; or conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety.”

Discrimination

- Not specifically defined in the Dignity Act
 - *Would include the denial of equal treatment, admission and/or access to programs, facilities and services based on the eleven protected classes*



Bullying

- Not specifically mentioned in the Dignity Act
 - *Bullying is one form of harassment*
 - “Unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is generally repeated over time.
 - Imbalance of power
 - Intentional
 - Repeated
- Suggest NOT labeling students as bullies; but focus on correcting bullying behaviors

Code of Conduct/Board Policy

- Code of Conduct amended by counsel in spring of 2012 and adopted by Board of Education July 11, 2012
- Board Policy 3.4 Prohibition Against Discrimination and Harassment amendments to be adopted October 3, 2012



Dignity Act Coordinator

- At least one staff member in each school must be designated as the DAC and be thoroughly trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practices, disability, sexual orientation, gender and sex.
- Individual who is respected by school community and whose recommendations and counsel will be valued and heeded by all stakeholders.



Dignity Act Coordinators (continued)

- High School: Kim Bolster, Assistant Principal
- Middle School: Pam Motler, Principal
- Malta Avenue: Sharon D'Agostino, Principal
- Wood Road: David Blanchard, Principal
- Milton Terrace North: Kathleen Chaucer, Principal
- Milton Terrace South: Jeff Palmer, Principal

Student Instruction

- Instruction in civility, citizenship and character education
 - *Expanded concepts of tolerance, respect for others and dignity to include the 11 protected areas.*
 - *Raises awareness of discrimination and harassment & promotes environment free of discrimination and harassment*
 - *Themes should be integrated throughout the school day and across subject areas*

Staff Training


- Training on the Dignity Act provided 9/4 and 9/5/2012 to all staff, faculty meetings, transportation staff
- Duty to report
- Integrating Dignity Act principles into curriculum
- Collaborating with other school personnel to create consistent specific expectations
- Modeling of respectful behavior
- Building staff-student connections in and out of the classroom

Reporting of Incidents

- Staff must report any on-going harassment they witness or are told of to DAC/principal or through normal referral procedures
- Students taught to report to teacher or administrator. Cultural shift from “tattling or telling” to reporting.
- Online reporting available through parent resources page of bscsd.org
- All reports will be investigated
- Protection from retaliation for good faith reports

Reporting (continued)

- Year end reporting to NYSED: Material Incident of Discrimination & Harassment
- What we must report:
 - the type(s) of bias involved (actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, sex or other) – where multiple types of bias are involved, they must all be reported;
 - whether the incident resulted from student and/or employee conduct;
 - whether the incident involved physical contact and/or verbal threats, intimidation or abuse; and
 - the location where the incident occurred (on school property or at a school function).



Coming Soon- Cyberbullying Effective 7/01/2013

- Currently schools must address cyberbullying that occurs on campus (through school internet system, or students personal cell, camera, laptops, tablets, etc.)
- Off campus cyber conduct can be addressed if causes or threatens to cause substantial disruption at school.

Cyberbullying (continued)

- Effective 7/01/2013- Requires schools to act in cases of cyberbullying which may occur on or off campus, when it creates or would create a substantial risk to the school environment, substantially interferes with a student's educational performance or mental, emotional or physical well-being, or causes a student to fear for his or her safety
- New training requirements for current staff as well as additional coursework to be eligible for NYS teacher or administrative certifications





Roles and Responsibilities

- **Teachers:** respond to issues of D&H; report
- **Administrators:** train staff to respond to issues of D&H, investigate complaints, address incidents and ensure support provided to students; report material incidents
- **Other school personnel:** show support for all students regardless of actual or perceived....report incidents to admin or DAC
- **Board of Education:** develop appropriate policies
- **Parents/Guardians:** teach respect for all people regardless of actual or perceived...; communicate with teachers and administrators
- **ALL ADULTS:** model appropriate behavior that shows respect for ALL

Building level initiatives

- Current programs
- Curriculum
- Clubs, etc
- Planning ahead...

