

Parent/Student information Regarding Dignity For All Students Act (DASA)

What is the Dignity For All Students Act?

The Dignity For All Students Act (DASA) was signed into law by Governor Paterson on September 13, 2010. This legislation amended New York State Education Law by creating a new Article 2 – *Dignity For All Students*. The intent of DASA is to ensure that elementary and secondary school students have the right to attend school in an environment that is free of discrimination, harassment, and bullying. September 2012 is the effective date of this law.

DASA also amended Section 801-a of Education Law regarding instruction in civility, citizenship, character education, tolerance, respect for others, and dignity. This includes an awareness and sensitivity in the relations of people of different races, weights, national origins, ethnic groups, religions, religious practices, mental or physical abilities, sexual orientations, genders, and sexes.

Why was DASA enacted?

Students have the right to attend school in a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment where they can focus on their education. The underlying goal of DASA is to create a safe and supportive school climate where education is the focus, rather than a fear of being verbally or physically harassed or bullied.

A 2008 literature review noted that bullying victimization is estimated to affect 15-20% of the U.S. student population. DASA is a direct response to students who have been harassed and bullied to the point that they become disengaged, depressed, are truant, or engage in high risk behaviors, such as alcohol and drug use or even suicide. The prohibition of harassment, discrimination, and bullying in schools is a significant measure toward the development of safe and supportive school climates.

DASA prohibits behaviors that create a hostile environment at school and at school-sponsored events. These activities may include aggressive conduct, threats, intimidation, or abuse that substantially interferes with another student's educational performance. DASA also creates a framework for promoting a more positive school climate through professional development and classroom curricula.

How is LKMS/South Colonie in compliance with DASA?

Lisha Kill, along with Sand Creek and the five elementary buildings, adopted the Olweus Anti-Bullying program during the 2009-10 school year as a means of addressing the needs of our students faced with any harassment/bullying issues. Olweus is a research based program that follows specific guidelines and is designed for all students to have a method to report bullying-type challenges. The district has made the appropriate changes to the code of conduct/policies that meet the DASA requirements. For further information please visit any of these links;

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact>

<http://www.southcolonieschools.org>

<http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/index.page>

