

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Who is protected under the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)?

A: DASA applies to the protection of all public elementary and secondary school students. It prohibits the harassment and discrimination of students by students and by school personnel.

Q: How does DASA relate to bullying and hazing?

A: Bullying and hazing are forms of harassment and discrimination.

Q: What physical spaces are covered?

A: DASA applies to behavior on school property (including athletic fields, playgrounds, and parking lots), in school buildings, on school buses/vehicles, and at school-sponsored events or activities.

Q: Do anti-bullying programs exist in the ICSD?

A: Yes. The ICSD has many excellent programs in place that address the prevention of harassment, discrimination, and bullying. The requirements of DASA support and enhance the existence of these programs. DASA provides structures for comprehensive and consistent training and intervention to build a caring school climate in every building.

Q: What should I do if a student is being bullied, is bullying others, or has witnessed bullying?

A: Contact the Dignity Act Coordinator in your building or complete a Bullying Reporting Form, which can be downloaded from the district website, www.ithacacityschools.org.

Q: Does DASA require any training?

A: Yes. DASA mandates that schools provide training for all employees to increase awareness of and sensitivity to discrimination or harassment and civility in the relations of all people.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH DASA, THE ICSD HAS:

- revised and adopted policies intended to create school environments free from harassment and discrimination;
- created plain-language versions of both the elementary and secondary Codes of Conduct;
- coordinated with TST BOCES Youth Development to train all staff to raise awareness of and sensitivity to these issues, and to provide tools for appropriate responses to harmful incidents;
- developed a system for reporting incidents of discrimination and harassment;
- designated Dignity Act Coordinators who are responsible for receiving and investigating reports of discrimination and harassment in each building; designated an administrator to coordinate all district-wide DASA efforts and initiatives;
- created a DASA webpage directly linked from the ICSD homepage; and established a communication committee that educates the entire ICSD community.

ICSD ALSO PLANS TO:

- work proactively with our students to create a culture which values “upstanders” - those who will step up and speak out when an incident occurs; and
- share updates on trainings and initiatives in future editions of the *ICSD Insider*.

DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT

A Guide for Parents and Caregivers

The Ithaca City School District is committed to creating a safe and caring learning environment where ALL students can succeed.

Research indicates that there is a direct link between success in school and the school learning environment. Students are more likely to achieve their full potential in schools that have positive school cultures and environments in which students feel safe and supported.

In July of 2012, New York State leaders implemented the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA), which reads:

It is hereby declared to be a policy of the State to afford all students in public schools an environment free of discrimination and harassment. The purpose of this article is to foster civility in public schools and to prevent and prohibit conduct which is inconsistent with the school's educational mission.

No student shall be subjected to harassment by school employees or students on school property or at a school function; nor shall any student 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.

DASA PROTOCOL AT ICSD

Student, staff member or parent/caregiver experiences, witnesses or hears about bullying, harassment, discrimination, or hazing.

Witness or target finds a staff person if immediate help is needed AND if there is a safety issue. Alleged antagonist(s) is/are separated and intervention occurs to ensure safety.

Bullying Reporting Form is completed by student, staff, or parent/caregiver and given to the Dignity Act Coordinator listed in the chart on the right.

Investigation occurs. Target is interviewed separately from antagonist(s) and necessary supports are put in place to ensure safety. Witnesses and antagonist(s) are interviewed.

Parent/caregiver is notified (notification may occur earlier depending on the situation). If investigation deems that the event occurred, every attempt is made to permanently stop the bullying, harassment, discrimination or hazing by means of consequences, education, restorative practices and/or remediation. By law, the consequences to the antagonist(s) cannot be shared with the target without express written consent from the antagonist(s) and their parent(s)/caregiver(s).

BUILDING	DIGNITY ACT COORDINATOR	CONTACT INFORMATION
Belle Sherman	Jeffrey Tomasik	274-2206
Beverly J. Martin	Susan Eschbach	274-2209
Boynton Middle School	Lauren Wright / Daniel McGrath	274-2241
Caroline	Kristin Herman	539-7155
Cayuga Heights	Lisa Sahasrabudhe	257-8557
DeWitt Middle School	Carlan Gray / Donna Lucy-Lender	257-3222
Enfield	Keith Harrington	274-2221
Fall Creek	Caitlin Bram	274-2214
Ithaca High School	Jason Trumble / Martha Hardesty Corey Mitchell Sr. / Jacqueline Richardson	274-2143
Lehman ACS	Deborah Ptak	274-2183
Northeast	Liddy Coyle	257-2121
South Hill	Perry Gorgen	274-2129
Athletics	Samantha Little	274-2155
Pre-K	Laura Evans	274-2208
Transportation	Elizabeth Berner	274-2128
ADDITIONAL SUPPORT Amanda Verba, Chief Operations Officer, ICSD, 274-2121 Jennifer Astles, Youth Development Coordinator, TST BOCES, 257-1551		

DASA Documents and the Bullying Reporting Form can be found online at www.ithacacityschools.org.