



**Department of
Education**

Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

Danya Labban
Auditor General

June 13, 2019

Mr. Kenrick Sifontes
Audit Director
Office of the State Comptroller
Division of State Government Accountability
123 William Street
New York, NY 10038

**Re: Status Update on Recommendations in the OSC's Audit Report
of the Department's Implementation of the Dignity for All Students
Act (Report 2017-N-6)**

Dear Mr. Sifontes:

This letter constitutes the New York City Department of Education's (Department) status update on recommendations made by the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) on the Department's Implementation of the Dignity for All Students Act.

The Department is providing the following update on the status of these recommendations:

- 1. Institute proactive measures to identify schools at risk of underreporting bullying incidents and/or incorrectly categorizing incidents as "other," and take corrective actions. Such measures could include analyzing incident data, considering student population as well as school survey results.**

The Office of Safety and Youth Development (OSYD) shares the School Safety & Climate dashboard monthly with the Borough Citywide Offices (BCO) Student Services Directors who provide direct support to schools. The dashboard includes many climate indicators including the number of bullying complaints and substantiated material incidents as well as the Preventing Bullying survey measure compiled by the School Performance team. The dashboard allows school support staff to identify schools with high numbers of complaints and material incidents as well as those with no complaints or material incidents as a means to provide targeted supports and trainings to schools. In addition, OSYD monitors data throughout the school year and reaches out to schools on a regular basis to provide additional supports when schools appear to have a high number of material incidents or appear to be underreporting. OSYD is exploring other avenues for sharing this data with additional stakeholders for SY 2019-20 to touch as many school support staff as possible.

Date implemented: 2/1/2018

2. Maintain and utilize real-time data on material incidents to identify schools that may require DOE intervention. Such information should be shared periodically with the public to provide a more current picture of school environment.

In addition to the School Safety & Climate dashboard, OSYD will be adding reports specific to material incidents by fall 2019 with the launch of the Parent Reporting tool. These reports will be hosted on the OSYD Portal and will allow schools and school support staff to monitor complaints and material incidents in real time. Under Local Law 51, the Department currently shares complaints and material incidents by administrative district and for individual high schools. The report is posted on the Department's website and is available to the public. Beginning in May 2020, the Department will also have to report the total number of notices provided to parents, the average and median number of days between the receipt of a complaint and provision of notice related to a complaint. Beginning in November 2020, the Department will have to provide the number of students involved in two or more material incidents and the number of students identified for follow up action.

Date implemented: 2/1/2018 (Dashboard), Fall 2019 (Parent Reporting tool), Local Law 51 (every May 31 and November 30)

3. Align the Discipline Code definition of bullying with the NYCRR§100.2 definition.

While the Department has not yet updated the definition in the Discipline Code to align with the state definition, the definition of a material incident as defined by the State Education Commissioner and the state is part of Chancellor's Regulation A-832. In addition, the Department has updated all training modules and resources to include the expanded definition. In addition, the expanded definition adopted by the state was shared with school principals via a P-Weekly announcement on March 26, 2019. The updated definition is also available to all staff on the Respect for All page on the Infohub.

Date Implemented: Ongoing. *P-Weekly Date: March 26, 2019, RFA Info hub*

4. Require more frequent mandatory RFA training and track whether such training took place.

The Department currently offers RFA training throughout the year and tracks these trainings in OSYD's Professional Development application. RFA Liaisons are identified in the school's Consolidated Plan and are required to be trained. Schools must confirm this as well in their Consolidated Plan which is updated annually. RFA Liaisons are not currently required to be formally trained more than once, but resources are made available to all staff on the Respect for All page of the Department's Infohub including but not limited to the *Kognito: Building Respect: RFA Conversation Skills* which is available as a webinar on the RFA Infohub page and can be viewed as many times as a user would like. Staff are strongly encouraged to take advantage of professional development opportunities to expand their skills in identifying and responding to these types of behaviors. OSYD reaches out to all RFA Liaisons identified in the school Consolidated Plan annually to share all available resources that can be used to support their work in their critical role.

Date Implemented: Ongoing.

5. Ensure all school employees responsible for entering incidents into OORS have had appropriate training to adequately and accurately document incidents.

OORS training is currently offered to school principals as part of the biennially required Emergency Readiness training. Borough Safety Directors also provide OORS training upon request. OSYD also trains staff and is also working on creating an OORS webinar so that staff can take the training in their schools at their convenience. Principals are also strongly encouraged to review who they provision to document OORS reports throughout the school year and to ensure that all staff provisioned have received formal training.

Date Implemented: Ongoing.

6. Ensure that schools comply with timeliness requirements established by the Chancellor's Regulations.

In addition to sending daily reminders to principals to update their reports following their investigation of potential material incidents and providing monthly reports to the BCO Student Service Directors and Borough Safety Directors regarding outstanding incidents that require follow-up, OSYD works very closely with the Office of Compliance Services (OCS) to ensure that schools are held accountable for complying with all regulations under our purview, including A-412. While principals are no longer rated on their compliance with the regulations, compliance with A-412 is still monitored via the Compliance Checklist under CL26. OSYD provides compliance data to OCS on a monthly basis and Compliance Officers use the data to follow up directly with schools, provide targeted support and resources, and suggest relevant trainings.

Date Implemented: Ongoing.

The Department's efforts outlined above effectively address the report's recommendations.

Sincerely,



Danya Labban
Auditor General