

# THE DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT

## APW FACT SHEET – “The Dignity Act”

The goal of the Dignity Act is to create a safe and supportive school climate where students can learn and focus, rather than fear being discriminated against and/or verbally and/or physically harassed. All public elementary and secondary students have the right to attend school in a safe, welcoming, considerate, and caring environment.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### What is The Dignity Act?

The New York State Dignity For All Students Act (The Dignity Act or DASA) was signed into law on September 13, 2010 and took effect on July 1, 2012. DASA was established with broad legislative intent to provide a school environment free of discrimination and harassment. This legislation amended State Education Law by creating a new Article 2.

#### Who is protected by The Dignity Act?

All public elementary and secondary school students are protected by The Dignity Act.

#### What does The Dignity Act prohibit?

The Dignity Act prohibits the harassment and discrimination of students by students and by school personnel.

#### How does The Dignity Act define “Harassment?”

Harassment is defined as “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...”

#### How does The Dignity Act relate to bullying and hazing?

Bullying and hazing are forms of harassment and discrimination.

#### What physical spaces are covered by The Dignity Act?

The Dignity Act applies to behavior on school property (including athletic fields, playgrounds, and parking lots), in school buildings, on a school bus/vehicle, as well as at school-sponsored events or activities.

#### Why is The Dignity Act necessary?

The Act provides a legislative response to the large number of harassed and stigmatized students skipping school and engaging in high risk behaviors by prohibiting discrimination in public schools and establishing the basis for protective measures.

#### Who has to Report Incidents of Harassment and/or Discrimination?

- Staff who know or have reasonable knowledge must take immediate action to report and such incidents to the Building DASA Coordinator.
- Students who have witnessed acts of discrimination and/or harassment must report such incidents to the Building DASA Coordinator or other school staff.

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