



Executive Viewpoint

Kevin S. Casey, Executive Director

A Job Well Done

The year came to a close with a great deal of activity. It's not easy keeping up with the stream of information primarily coming out of the State Education Department (SED), but much of it is positive.

SED recently made its state aid proposal of an increase of \$2.1 billion. We all know that you don't always get what you ask for, but you rarely get what you don't ask for. Budget asks are essentially a reflection of priorities, and contained

within the proposal is a specification of four priorities with which we agree.

SED wants to consolidate and expand UPK. It wants to expand support for CTE and ELLs as well as create an instructional development fund for teacher and principal professional development. All worthy objectives.

With respect to expanded support for ELLs, SAANYS recently gave testimony to the Assembly Education Committee's hearing on ELLs and the impact of Part 154 of the Commissioner's regulations (see story on page 1). A special thank you goes out to Rich Loeschner, principal of

Brentwood High School and Tom Payton, principal of the Roanoke Avenue School in the Riverhead School District, for providing the Education Committee members the perspective of practitioners with significant ELL populations.

The professional development ask of \$30 million is one of three potential sources of new funds to focus on leadership development. No longer do we have to sell the idea to SED that this is worthy of investment. We now have to sell it to the governor and legislators to obtain the \$30 million.

The other two sources of funds are a recent Wallace Foundation grant to SED of \$500,000 to examine and restructure school building level leader preparation and the ESSA option to set aside up to 3 percent of the Title

IIA allocation for school administrator professional development. While this Title IIA source of funds is optional, Commissioner Elia has consistently voiced her support of the idea, and SAANYS recently submitted a letter to all members of the Board of Regents urging them to likewise support it.

Additional updates include \$10 million in state grants to certain districts to support programs and strategies to help boys and young men of color reach their full potential, the approval of new P-12 Science Learning Standards, along with a description of the process utilized to develop them, and the availability for participating in online tests for ELA and math this spring, with a test administration period of six days. SED will be conducting regional training

on giving and scoring exams on the computer in January, and will provide webinars as well.

What might be more burdensome is the ESSA requirement to track per pupil spending by school, accounting for local, state, and federal funding streams. This is scheduled to start with the 2017-18 school year with the first report due to the feds from the state on June 30, 2019.

There is a lot going on, and a fair amount of uncertainty as to what might change with a new budget in Albany and a new administration in Washington, but at the end of the day you will make it work for students and staff because that's what you do, and you do it well. ■

The Changing World of VADIR, DASA & Discipline

Sponsor Opinion Piece by Scott B. Crowder, CEO, Educational Vistas, Inc.

The proposed amendments to section 100.2 (gg) of New York education law have been released by the Regents and will go into effect on July 1, 2017, with some minor modifications. The recommendations from the Safe Schools Task Force are focused on two primary goals. The first is to refine the incident categories and align and combine the reporting of VADIR and DASA data. The second goal deals with providing schools with assistance on data collection, use, and reporting while also creating a Statewide School Climate Index to help

measure school building environments.

The reasoning for updating the requirements after over a decade of VADIR reporting is sound. When DASA reporting was added, it created additional complexities that districts are still grappling with. We spend much of our time in the field helping schools to improve their policies, procedures, personnel assignments, and training opportunities in regard to the continuum of VADIR-DASA-Discipline recording and reporting. The fine line that the new requirements will walk

is between the specificity that we currently have with 20 categories plus DASA, and the new reduced 9 categories including DASA. In fact, the public comment period produced concerns that some additional categories and/or flags needed to be added to accurately report the essence of particular incidents and specifics.

As the developer and provider of the leading VADIR, DASA, and Discipline management system in the state, SafeSchoolsNYTM, we will make necessary changes and post the relevant supportive materials for our districts, BOCES, and charter school clients well in advance for their review. We will also create a "cross-walk" training component (PD) to make the transition easier and seamless. Leading dis-

tricts have already completed a detailed reflection between their approved code of conduct, consequence consistency rules, VADIR and DASA reporting, and their policies and procedures of appropriate category determination along with material/non-material classification. This deep alignment, clarification, and classification process should be adopted by all schools. Only by this method may schools have confidence in the quality and accuracy of their reported incident data.

Finally, the process of "clicking" a single button

to produce the required report(s) once a year is just the beginning of the purpose of collecting this data. District access to "in-process" data and information should be used to identify and protect vulnerable students/groups and improve the school climate and culture of these learning environments! ■

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