

Friday, December 8, 2017 (continued):

10:15 A.M. **Break**

School Climate and Culture in the Social Media Era (continued)

- **Communication with Parents and Students-** Managing parent (and student) expectations while investigations are pending, handling requests for information (or details) from the complainant, the alleged offender, parents, inquiring staff, etc., and making sure that you are abiding by FERPA, IDEA, 504, Privacy Rights and other confidentiality provisions is another key issue. The outcome of the investigation matters, but how the student (and parents) were dealt with during the process is what can make the most impression. Respect, setting a proper tone, validating their perception and recognizing that the issue (to them) may feel overwhelming, even if we may see it as something situational or temporary. Perception becomes reality, and resilience is not something that students seem to have in spades, so making sure that there are check and connect, and the students who complain, or who are complained about, understand that you are there to support them, that you are also monitoring the situation, and what you expect from them in terms of self-regulation and self-advocacy.
- **Students with disabilities** are also a "hot button" issue - we are facing some novel territory with claims that as a result of bullying or harassment, students are losing educational opportunities or being denied access to FAPE. Recent OCR guidance and case law serve as a clear warning bell for Districts to be prompt and responsive, to make sure that they are monitoring for questions that FAPE is being impacted, and to be sure that the student is receiving appropriate supports and interventions, both in regular and special education areas. Otherwise, the District may open itself up to litigation based on negligent supervision, or denial of civil rights, and/or tuition reimbursement suits. Although DASA does not provide access to individual relief, there are many civil rights statutes which can be used (and are being used, based on the latest wave of school bullying cases).
- **School-Wide Messages-** The way the District communicates its policies, practices and access to complaint forms, policies and DASA coordinators is key. The District needs to be using its website and bulletin boards, signs and signage in the school, as well as in school communications, daily announcements, promoting special events and activities, etc., to make sure that every opportunity to promote the positive and tolerant school environment is happening, and that it is clear that we do not tolerate harassment or bullying, and that retaliation against those who complain or are involved in an investigation will not be tolerated.

11:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M. **Lunch (FEH and CVES jointly)-Grandview B**

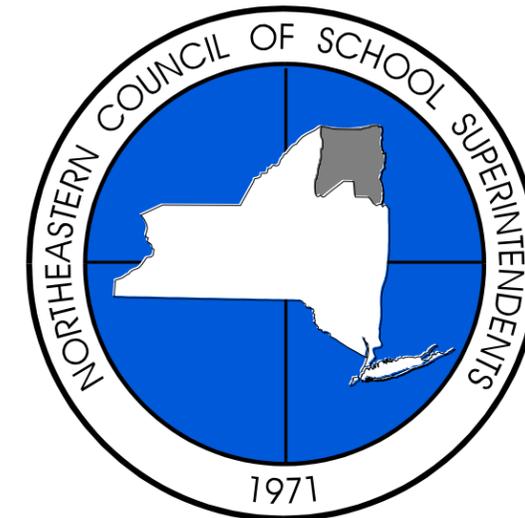
Conference Committee

- Teri Calabrese-Gray..... Champlain Valley Educational Services
- Roger P. Catania Lake Placid Central School
- Cheryl A. Felt..... Franklin-Essex-Hamilton BOCES
- Jerry E. Griffin Malone Central School
- John C. McDonald.....Ticonderoga Central School
- Paul D. Savage Ausable Valley Central School

Ex-Officio Members

- Mark C. Davey, District Superintendent, Champlain Valley Educational Services
- Stephen T. Shafer, District Superintendent, Franklin-Essex-Hamilton BOCES

Northeastern Council of School Superintendents



**47th Annual Conference
December 7 & 8, 2017**

Crowne Plaza Resort
Lake Placid, New York

**Northeastern Council of School Superintendents
47th Annual Conference**

Thursday, December 7, 2017:

- 8:30 A.M. **Registration** – Grandview A
- 8:45 A.M. **Welcome and Opening Comments – Grandview B**
Stephen T. Shafer, District Superintendent, Franklin-Essex-Hamilton BOCES
- 8:50-10:45 A.M. **Separate Superintendents’ Meeting**
Franklin-Essex-Hamilton BOCES-**Kate Smith Library**
Champlain Valley Educational Services-**Grandview B**
- 10:15 A.M. Break
- 10:45 - 11:15 A.M. **Q & A with Regent Ouderkirk**
(*Stephen Shafer*)
- 11:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M. **Lunch** – MacKenzie’s
- 12:30-2:00 P.M. **NYSCOSS Update with Bob Lowry-** Grandview B
(*Cheryl Felt*)
- 2:00 P.M. **Break**
- 2:15-3:30 PM **Legislative Update with Jennifer Lunt, Educational Analyst for
Senator Little and Molly Ryan, Chief of Staff for Assemblyman
Jones-**Grandview B
(*Paul Savage*)
- 3:30-4:30 PM **Conversations & Connections**-Roundtable discussion
- 5:00 P.M. **Networking Session – Adirondack Great Room**
- 6:00 P.M. **Conference Dinner – Kate Smith Library**

Friday, December 8, 2017:

Conference Breakfast: Begins serving at 7:00 a.m. – **Adirondack Great Room**

9:00-11:30 A.M. **School Climate and Culture in the Social Media Era with
Tara Moffet, Esq. and Ryan Mullahy, Esq., Girvin & Ferlacco, PC**
(*Teri Calabrese-Gray*)

This presentation will focus on the following:

- **DASA legislation-** there has not been any legislative changes recently, but we can offer a comprehensive overview and cover the basics of what is required by the District’s DASA policy, and how it is communicated and circulated widely.
- **The practical approaches to investigation** and addressing **support needs of students** during the process, then following the **conclusion of the investigation-** we can offer strategies on how to investigate, the documentation process, writing up the investigation summary, making the determination and communicating the outcome and appeal rights.
- **Social Media Era-** You hit the nail on the head with social media era changing the dynamics of the school bully scene- between face book, twitter, social feeds, texting, electronic devices and the constant flow of electronic communication, we are facing a whole new world, and not everyone is as tech savvy as our students with this new frontier. We deal with issues happening on line or out of the school setting, but which can percolate and impact the day to day for kids at school, and their access to programs and services. The speed of which social media confers a message is also a problem- because you can try to stop the disclosure as fast as you can, but someone can always click and send faster. Developing good in-school technology practices, providing social media and anti-cyberbullying training, and raising awareness of students (and parents, staff and the community) that online harassment is just as serious as any other form of bullying, and that hiding behind anonymity is not an option. The police are taking social media comments and threats very seriously, and so should our students, because the consequences are far reaching.
- **School Climate-** The importance of developing a positive, accepting and tolerant school culture cannot be overstated. We can cover some “new” trends and approaches (such as restorative justice, using mediation support organizations, developing theme weeks and pro-social postings, competitions and anti-bullying groups) as well as tried and true practices of ongoing presence of staff in high risk areas, being visible and identifying/recognizing students, raising awareness to aspects of harassment and bullying, understanding when to report and how, and really working on communicating positively with students, setting up a community feel in school, and being sensitive to changing dynamics and how it may impact school climate. Programs like Best Buddies, Peer Friend Ambassadors, Lunch Bunches and other inclusive activities can send the right message, and are rewarding for those who are involved, both as supporters or recipients of these approaches.