

## ***FROM the District.....***

Dear Parents,

In 2009, NYS passed the Dignity for All Students Act, "DASA," that goes into effect on July 1, 2012 and protects students from harassment, discrimination and bullying by other students or school employees. It provides that no student shall be subjected to discrimination based on his or her actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, weight, sexual orientation, sexual identity, or sex. DASA explicitly states that bullying, taunting and intimidation on these protected grounds are all forms of harassment.

### **Harassment under DASA**

Harassment under DASA is the creation of a hostile environment by:

- conduct or 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;
- conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for their physical safety

Note that under DASA, conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse includes but is not limited to that based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.

### **What the Shenendehowa doing to create a nurturing environment where all students can learn**

The District's Director of Policy and Community Development Rebecca Carman is representing the Shenendehowa on the state-wide DASA Task Force. This year, she will be in charge of collecting data to determine where and what the issues are to evaluate what needs to be done. The district's Character Education Committee will play a vital role by incorporating character building activities in classroom and school programs. The schools have plans to prevent bullying and encourage positive behavior.

- Two elementary schools (Okte and Orenda) will be implementing the OLWEUS Bullying Prevention Program. It is the most researched and best known bullying prevention program known today that has been proven to prevent or reduce rates of bullying throughout a school setting.
- Three elementary schools (Arongen, Shatekon, and Orenda) will be implementing the Peaceful School Bus Program, a school wide program whose purpose is to create a climate of cooperation and respect on the school bus and to decrease inappropriate behavior. It is designed to change the social dynamics on the bus by building strong relationships among students and the bus driver.
- The Middle Schools are implementing CAPE (Coalition for Achieving a Positive Environment) This committee has shown an overwhelming commitment to making the middle school a safer, more positive place to learn and work.
- At the High School, PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support) is a systems approach to preventing and responding to school and classroom discipline problems. It aims to reduce behavioral problems to create and maintain safe learning environments.

For further questions, contact the Director of Policy & Community Development, Rebecca Carman 881-0611.