

## Empire State Opioid Epidemic Innovation Challenge

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Columbia University Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science



Laura R. Ficarra, Ph.D. is the Prevention Planning and Education Coordinator with the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) within the Bureau of Prevention Services. Dr. Ficarra earned her doctorate in Educational Psychology and Statistical Methodology as well as a Master's degree in Special Education. She taught for several years in the K-12 sector as well as in the college arena through the teacher preparation programs at Skidmore College and State University of New York at Albany. Laura has expertise in behavioral interventions and working with students that have Mental, Emotional and Behavioral (MEB) disorders. In her current position, Dr. Ficarra serves as a liaison between NYS OASAS and the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Important NYS legislation mandates that Heroin and Opioid content be included within Health Education drug and alcohol curricula. The recent law also offers provisions for guidance and resource support to assist teachers in addressing functional knowledge content and related skills. As such, guidance documents related to Health Education functional knowledge, instructional resource options, and other prevention topics are being developed. In addition, a multi-year pilot program in elementary schools and indicator data related to MEB disorders are associated with on-going collaborative work between these state agencies. Dr. Ficarra has presented at several national- and state-level professional conferences. Most recently, she presented at: the national Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) conference, Center for Scholastic Inquiry conference, the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities in New York conference, as well as the NYS Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance annual conference. She has also been an invited professional development speaker by school districts.