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October 7, 2016

The Honorable Larry Hogan  
State House  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.  
H-107 State House  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Michael E. Busch  
H-101 State House  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Youth Suicide Prevention School Program Report (MSAR #540)

Dear Governor Hogan, President Miller, and Speaker Busch:

This letter is intended to fulfill the reporting summary required by Sections §7-505 and §7-506 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland enacted by the Maryland General Assembly in 1986. Sections 7-501 through 7-504 require schools to establish youth suicide programs that include staff development, classroom programs of instruction, and crisis intervention. Sections 7-505 and 7-506 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland require MSDE to allocate funds to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) that submit proposals pursuant to certain criteria and to submit a summary of the LEA reports to the Governor and the General Assembly.

Section 7-505 (b) (4) directs MSDE to seek federal funds available under the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act. These federal funds are now managed by the Behavior Health Administration. Currently, there are no available funds through MSDE to support these programs.

MSDE has continually supported the development of Youth Prevention Programs within LEAs since the passage of Sections 7-501 through 7-504 authorizing schools to establish youth suicide programs, including staff development, classroom programs of instruction, crisis intervention, and other related policies and procedures. This is being accomplished through collaborations and partnerships with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), and various community agencies. These programs and support from MSDE & DHMH have become an

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integral part of school-wide and system-wide planning. As a result of this legislation, youth suicide prevention curriculum is now taught as a part of the comprehensive health program in our public schools. All local school systems have a designated point of contact that facilitates the implementation of the suicide prevention program.

The 24 local school systems and the Seed School continue annually to develop and implement youth suicide prevention and early intervention strategies. Many local school systems are using evidence-based programs to provide gatekeeper trainings to school staff and students. These include programs such as Yellow Ribbon, ASSIST K-12, Question, Persuade and Referral (QPR), and Self Talk. MSDE sponsors an annual suicide prevention professional development activity attended by the 25 local suicide prevention points of contact. This includes participation from Maryland's 24 school systems and The SEED School of Maryland. In addition, suicide prevention continues to be a topic at administrative meetings for local Directors of Student Services. The professional development highlights and disseminates best practices, resources, identification of programs and implementation strategies. Staff at MSDE, among their other duties, are assigned to work on youth suicide prevention in schools, and serve as members to the statewide Suicide Prevention Task Force. MSDE intends to continue these efforts.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Kristina Kyles-Smith, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Student, Family and School Support, at (410) 767-0275 or by email at [kristina.kyles@maryland.gov](mailto:kristina.kyles@maryland.gov).

Best Regards,



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.  
State Superintendent of Schools