



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

October 16, 2019

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

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.  
President – Senate of Maryland  
H-107, State House  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones  
Speaker – Maryland House of Delegates  
State House, H-101  
Annapolis, MD 21401

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

Dear Governor Hogan, President Miller, and Speaker Jones:

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

As currently written, Section 7-506(c) of the statute states that the Governor shall include funds in the budget designated for the Youth Suicide Prevention Program. From 1986 to 2006, funds were distributed through the MSDE to LSSs to support youth suicide prevention programming in schools. Additionally, Section 7-505(b)(4) directs the MSDE to seek federal funds available under the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act. These federal funds are now managed by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), Behavioral Health Administration. Currently, there are no available funds through the MSDE to support these programs.

The MSDE has continually supported the development of youth prevention programs within LSSs since the passage of Sections 7-501 through 7-504 authorizing schools to establish youth suicide prevention programs of support that include staff development, classroom programs of instruction, crisis intervention, and other related policies and procedures. This initiative is being accomplished through collaboration and partnerships with the MDH and various community agencies.

As a result of Sections 7-501 through 7-504, youth suicide prevention curriculum is now taught as a part of the comprehensive health program in public schools. In addition, on July 24, 2018, the State Board of

The Honorable Larry Hogan  
The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.  
The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones  
Page 2

student trauma, student safety, and other topics related to student social and emotional well-being; and  
(3) identify professional resources to help students in crisis.

The MSDE sponsors an annual suicide prevention professional development activity attended by all local suicide prevention points of contact. All LSSs have a designated point of contact that facilitates the implementation of the suicide prevention program. The 24 LSSs and the SEED School of Maryland continue to annually develop and implement youth suicide prevention and early intervention strategies. Many LSSs utilize evidence-based programs to provide gatekeeper trainings to school staff and students. Evidence-based programs include Yellow Ribbon; Signs of Suicide; ASSIST K-12; Question, Persuade and Referral; Self Talk; Youth Mental Health First Aid; behavior threat assessment; and mental health services available through Maryland's School Based Health Centers.

Suicide prevention continues to be a topic at administrative meetings for local Directors of Student Services, school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, school social workers, pupil personnel workers, and school safety supervisors. The professional development emphasizes and disseminates best practices, resources, identification of programs, and implementation strategies. Professional development also highlights available resources to assist students in crisis in LSSs across the State. Staff at the MSDE, among their other duties, are assigned to assist youth suicide prevention initiatives in schools and serve as members of the statewide Governor's Commission on Suicide Prevention. The MSDE intends to continue these efforts.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Tiffany Clark, Director of Government Relations by phone at 410-767-0090 or by email at [tiffany.clark1@maryland.gov](mailto:tiffany.clark1@maryland.gov).

Best Regards,



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

c: Sarah Alber