



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Robert R. Neall, Secretary

March 3, 2020

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Bldg.
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB0367 – State Department of Education – Guidelines on Trauma–Informed Approach– Letter of Information

Dear Chair Pinsky and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of information for Senate Bill 367 – State Department of Education – Guidelines on Trauma–Informed Approach (SB 367). This bill, if enacted, will establish the Trauma–Informed Schools Initiative within the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and requires MSDE, in consultation with the Department, the Department of Human Services (DHS), stakeholders and content experts, to develop guidelines on a trauma–informed approach, and to develop and offer training to staff at each local school system. The bill further requires MSDE to distribute the guidelines to each local school system, develop a website, and in consultation with the Department and DHS, study the results of a Trauma–Informed Schools Expansion Program to be established within MSDE. Lastly, SB 367 establishes the Trauma–Informed Schools Expansion Program Fund within MSDE.

While not specified as “guidelines” as referred to in the bill, there are many resources available to implement trauma informed practices within the school setting. The resources include a variety of strategies and frameworks endorsed or developed from nationally known experts and organizations, such as The National Child Traumatic Stress Network and the RAND Corporation.^{1,2} As part of the “Maryland School Safety Act” (Senate Bill 1265 (2018) and codified, in part, in Education Article § 7-1511 Annotated Code of Maryland) each local education agency must identify a Mental Health Services Coordinator, and these coordinators have received training on trauma-informed approaches.³ Also, the National Center for Safe and Supportive Learning Environments, with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, sponsors a website containing a compilation of information entitled “Trauma-Sensitive Schools

¹ <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/child-trauma-toolkit-educators>

² <https://www.rand.org/pubs/tools/TL272.html>

³ <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2018RS/bills/sb/sb1265E.pdf>

Training Packet.”⁴ MSDE also provides web resources for parents and teachers for students who have experienced trauma.⁵

The Department believes it is important for local school system staff to be informed of trauma informed approaches and trained to implement them among Maryland students. The Department is committed to continue working with MSDE to support safe and supportive learning environments for Maryland students including trauma informed approaches in schools using currently available national models and resources. Given the breadth of resources produced by national experts and currently available to schools, the requirement of this bill for guidelines to be developed by MSDE in collaboration with the Department and DHS is not necessary.

If you have additional questions, please contact Director of Governmental Affairs Webster Ye at (410) 260-3190 or webster.ye@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,



Robert R. Neall
Secretary

⁴ <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/trauma-sensitive-schools-training-package>

⁵ <http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/DSFSS/SSSP/TraumaResourcesTeachersParents.pdf>