

State Superintendent of Schools

BILL:	Senate Bill 282	DATE:	February 8, 2022
SUBJECT:	Workgroup on Screening Related to Adverse Childhood Experiences	COMMITTEE:	Finance
POSITION:	Information Only		
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EXPLANATION:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) offers this letter of information for Senate Bill (SB) 282 – *Workgroup on Screening Related to Adverse Childhood Experiences*, which establishes the Workgroup on Screening Related to Adverse Childhood Experiences. The charge of the Workgroup is to update, improve, and develop screening tools that primary care providers can use in a primary care setting to identify and treat minors who have a mental health disorder that may be caused by or related to an adverse childhood experience.

As the committee considers this legislation, MSDE requests that it also consider the ongoing efforts at the Department and with other entities to address trauma and adverse childhood experiences. MSDE, along with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and the Maryland Department of Human Services (MDHS), was required to develop guidelines on a trauma-informed approach to assist schools with implementing a comprehensive trauma-informed policy, the identification of a student, teacher, or staff member who has experienced trauma, the appropriate manner for responding to a student, teacher or staff member who has experienced trauma, and becoming a trauma-informed school. The guidelines, *A Trauma-Informed Approach for Maryland Schools*, were published in March 2021¹.

Some elements of SB 282 also could be incorporated into the work of the Maryland Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports, which was established in 2021 through the *Blueprint for Maryland's Future*. One of the charges of the Consortium is to develop a model for expanding behavioral health services to all students in each local school system. Under that charge, the Consortium may be able to:

- study and make recommendations on the actions a primary care provider should take after screening a minor for a mental health disorder that may be caused by or related to an adverse childhood experience and finding that the minor shows signs of trauma;
- study best practices in Youth Risk Behavior Survey data summaries and trends reports from across the country, including those that report on adverse childhood experiences and positive childhood experiences; and
- develop a Youth Risk Behavior Survey template for a State and county level data summary and trends report on adverse childhood experiences.

¹ <u>https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/DSFSS/SSSP/MSDE-Trauma-Informed-Guidance.pdf</u>

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All of the above are also charges of the Workgroup on Screening Related to Adverse Childhood Experiences defined in SB 282.

Using federal grant resources, MSDE is working to provide training and technical assistance to local school systems in initiatives such as trauma-informed approaches, mental health first aid, restorative approaches, and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) to address the mental health needs of students and improve overall school climate. MSDE is providing ongoing support to school systems to implement the guidelines and integrate these initiatives to create and enhance a trauma-informed environment in schools.

Additionally, the MSDE has partnered with the University of Maryland School of Medicine National Center for School Mental Health to launch the Maryland School Mental Health Response Program to provide consultation and support to school systems as they address student and family mental health concerns. This program will enrich and enhance the work of school-based student support services personnel, including school psychologists, school counselors, pupil personnel workers, social workers, and school health services professionals.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **House Bill 282**. Please contact Ary Amerikaner, at 410-767-0090, or <u>ary.amerikaner@maryland.gov</u>, for any additional information.