

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

Senate Bill 893

(Senator Hester)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Health and Government Operations

Public Health – Cyber Safety Handbook – Handbook Development and
Publication

This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), and the Behavioral Health Administration, by July 1, 2021, to jointly develop, publish, and post on their respective websites a handbook containing information and guidance on safe Internet, social media, and technology usage for students, parents, and teachers. The handbook must contain specified information and best practices, and it must be distributed to each local board of education. Professionals who specialize in child development and child psychology must be consulted when developing the handbook. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2020.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MSDE and MDH can jointly develop the handbook using existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The handbook must contain relevant information and best practices, including the following:

- evidence-based impacts of Internet, social media, and technology usage on an individual's behavioral, mental, and physical health;

- data and trends on social media and technology usage; and
- a list of safety recommendations for students, parents, and teachers.

Current Law: Each local school system must (1) provide in public schools a comprehensive health education program with sufficient frequency and duration to meet the requirements of the State curriculum for all students in prekindergarten through grade 8 and (2) offer in public schools a comprehensive health education program in grades 9 through 12 that enables students to meet graduation requirements and to select health education electives. State regulations require health instruction in the following topics: mental and emotional health; alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; personal and consumer health; family life and human sexuality; safety and injury prevention; nutrition and fitness; and disease prevention and control.

All students in Maryland’s public schools, without exception, have the right to educational environments that are safe, appropriate for academic achievement, and free from any form of harassment.

Background: MSDE has developed and provided training on digital learning standards for students and teachers, as well as best practices for digital devices. These and other related resources can be found on the [MSDE website](#).

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Department of Health; Department of Legislative Services

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