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State Superintendent of Schools

BILL: SB 322 **DATE:** February 4, 2020

SUBJECT: Public Schools - Health COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and

Education - Gambling Dangers Environmental Affairs and Addiction

POSITION: Information Only

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EXPLANATION:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is providing information for your consideration regarding Senate Bill (SB) 322, Public Schools - Health Education - Gambling Dangers and Addiction, which requires MSDE to coordinate with other State agencies to develop a program on the dangers of gambling and gambling addiction for students in grades 6 through 12.

MSDE has established State Standards and a framework for Health Education which specify what every child should know and be able to do at each grade level, pre-kindergarten through grade eight, as well as at the high school level. Local school systems develop curricula that align to the State framework. Adding age-appropriate instruction on the dangers of gambling and gambling addiction in grades 6 through 12 in the local public schools would impact the health education program by reducing the instructional time or even forcing the elimination of instruction of other core concepts and corresponding student skill development to meet the new requirements.

Since 2014, the Maryland General Assembly has enacted four State Education laws that have impacted health education in Maryland public schools. These laws have mandated instruction related to consent, opioids, sexual abuse and assault, and hands-only cardiopulmonary resuscitation and automated external defibrillators. Maryland high school students are required to complete a half-credit of high school health, equating to approximately 67 hours of instructional time for the duration of their high school years which would not allow for the implementation of an additional prevention program on gambling addiction. There is even less instructional time in middle school to provide such instruction, which is arguably not age appropriate for grades 6 through 8. Further, Maryland's health education program develops the skills proven to lead to behavior change and prevent numerous harmful behaviors such as gambling. High-risk behaviors, decision-making skills, and addiction are all

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addressed throughout health education programs and would encompass gambling dangers and addiction.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **SB 322**. For further information, please contact Tiffany Clark, at 410-260-6028, or <u>tiffany.clark1@maryland.gov</u>.