

Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.

State Superintendent of Schools

BILL: Senate Bill 243 DATE: January 20, 2021

SUBJECT: Public High Schools – Health **COMMITTEE:** Education, Health, and

Education – Gambling Dangers Environmental Affairs

and Addiction

POSITION: Information Only

CONTACT: Zachary Hands

410-767-0504

Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov

EXPLANATION:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is providing information for consideration regarding Senate Bill (SB) 243– Public High 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 9 through 12.

MSDE, in collaboration with local school system leaders and experts in the field of Health Education, revised and published an updated Maryland Framework for Comprehensive Health Education in July 2020. This Framework specifies what every child should know and be able to do at each grade level, Prekindergarten through grade eight, as well as at the high school level. Local school systems develop curricula that align to the State Framework. The responsibility for making specific curriculum decisions resides with local school systems (LSSs) in accordance with §4-111(a) (1) of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland.

MSDE supports addiction awareness and prevention education as part of Comprehensive Health Education. Instruction aligned to the Health Education Framework will address all types of addiction (alcohol, drugs/substances, food, gambling, sex, pornography, video gaming, etc.) as part of mental and emotional health education instruction. The Health Education Framework includes the indicators below related to addiction (p.12, 14):

Grade 6

Recognize when a behavior or habit has a negative consequence on self or others. 1a.6.19

Grade 7

Identify factors that contribute to addiction. 1a.7.21

Grade 8

Identify addiction as long-term compulsive behavior despite negative consequences. 1a.8.24

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High School Health

Identify the effects of addiction on self and others. 1aHS1.19 Identify sources of support for people who suffer from addiction. 1aHS1.20 Identify community services for addiction treatment. 1aHS1.21

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. Requiring instruction focused solely on the dangers of gambling and gambling addiction will force the elimination of other core concepts or corresponding skills. Health Education must be relevant as our world changes.

In skills-based Health Education programs, the goal is for students to recognize addiction and seek guidance from a trusted adult or helping professional. The skills associated with this goal would include decision-making, accessing valid and reliable information, analyzing influences, and advocacy related to all types of addiction, including gambling.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **SB 243**. For further information, please contact Zachary Hands, at 410-767-0504, or <u>Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov</u>.