Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

BILL:	House Bill 771	**DATE:**	February 12, 2021
SUBJECT:	Public Schools – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Surveys – Revisions	**COMMITTEE:**	Ways and Means
POSITION:	Information Only		
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EXPLANATION:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is providing information for consideration regarding House Bill (HB) 771 *Public Schools – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Surveys - Revisions* which specifies that Youth Risk Behavior Survey(YRBS))/Youth Tobacco Survey include all tiers and questions related to adverse childhood experiences and positive childhood experiences.

The Maryland State Department of Education works collaboratively with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), which is responsible for the development of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Youth Risk Behavior/Youth Tobacco Survey. The MDH, pursuant to statutory requirements, and in collaboration with stakeholders, selects and recommends specific survey questions for consideration by the MSDE. The MSDE considers all questions on both the middle and high school survey and only requests removal of those very few questions that may be deemed as too intrusive by students, parents, and communities served by the schools.

Parents and other constituent groups have shared their concerns with the MSDE about a select few questions over the years, and those questions are considered seriously by the MSDE. Questions such as those regarding forced sexual encounters, which constitute a crime, create concern. The survey would yield data reflecting knowledge of a crime but not allow for the support needed to help the victim of that crime since all responses are anonymous. Including all Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) questions, with no way to support victims, can cause secondary victimization and harm.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends no more than ninety-nine questions on the survey and provides free analysis for these ninety-nine questions. Additional questions amass a separate charge for analysis. Inclusion of all 16 Adverse Childhood Experiences and Positive Childhood experiences questions may affect the finances of the MDH. If the MDH and MSDE determine to keep the survey at ninety-nine questions, then questions on other topics may be eliminated in order to accommodate the ACEs questions.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **HB 771.** For further information, please contact Zachary Hands, at 410-767-0504, or Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov.