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State Superintendent of Schools

BILL: House Bill 165 **DATE:** January 18, 2022

SUBJECT: Education – Sexual Abuse and **COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means

Assault Awareness and

Prevention Program – Human

and Sex Trafficking

POSITION: Information Only

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EXPLANATION:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is providing information for consideration regarding House Bill 165 – Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program – Human and Sex Trafficking, which would require MSDE and the State Board of Education to develop and implement material promoting the awareness and prevention of human and sex trafficking for students in grades 6 through 8.

MSDE supports the inclusion of human and sex trafficking prevention education in grades 6-8 as part of comprehensive health education, and has worked to include these concepts in the existing Health Education Framework. Safety and Violence Prevention is one of six core concepts that is part of the comprehensive skills-based health education program.

To that effect, 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. The Health Education Framework includes the indicators below related to human and sex trafficking in grades 6-8 (p. 32-34).

Grade 6

Identify and describe healthy relationships between children and others (e.g., persons in authority, coaches, teachers, and clergy). 1d.6.9

Identify verbal and/or non-verbal actions that constitute sexual mistreatment, grooming, harassment, abuse, assault, and exploitation. 1d.6.10

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Grade 7

Identify power differences in relationships between potential abusers and their victims. 1d.7.10

Identify a source of support that a student can go to if they or someone they know is being sexually mistreated, groomed, harassed, abused, assaulted, or exploited. 1d.7.11

Analyze laws, policies, and consequences related to sexual mistreatment, grooming, harassment, abuse, assault, exploitation, and human trafficking that are designed to protect young people. 1d.7.12

Grade 8

Identify situations including domestic violence where physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual abuse occurs in a person's family. 1d.8.11

Describe situations and behaviors that constitute sexual mistreatment grooming, harassment, abuse, assault, exploitation, and boundary violations. 1d.8.12

A robust group of educators, representatives from non-public agencies, and child abuse and assault prevention experts and advocates developed the framework. While all indicators for grades 6 and 8 do not explicitly include the words human trafficking, *sexual mistreatment, grooming, harassment, abuse, assault, exploitation, and boundary violations* were selected by the committee to represent age-appropriate instruction on abuse, assault, and exploitation. MSDE registers concerns that the additional requirements established in House Bill 165 may be duplicative of existing requirements and lead to unnecessary confusion for local school systems.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **House Bill 165**. Please contact Ary Amerikaner, at 410-767-0090, or ary.amerikaner@maryland.gov, for any additional information.