



Youth Suicide Prevention Program

Education Article §7-505 and §7-506

October 2025



MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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October 1, 2025

The Honorable Wes Moore
Governor
State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Bill Ferguson
Senate President
H-107
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Adriene A. Jones
Speaker of the House
H-101 State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Report required by Education Article §7-505 and §7-506 (MSAR #540) Youth Suicide Prevention Program

Dear Governor Moore, President Ferguson, and Speaker Jones:

This letter is intended to fulfill the reporting summary required by Sections 7-505 and 7-506 of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland enacted by the Maryland General Assembly in 1986. Sections 7-501 through 7-504 require schools to establish youth suicide prevention programs that include staff development, classroom programs of instruction, and crisis intervention. Sections 7-505 and 7-506 of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland require the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to submit a summary of the local education agency (LEA) reports to the Governor and the General Assembly.

As currently written, Section 7-506(c) of the statute states that the Governor shall include funds in the budget designated for the Youth Suicide Prevention Program. From 1986 to 2006, funds were included in the budget and distributed through MSDE to LEAs to support youth suicide prevention programming in schools. As of 2006, the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), Behavioral Health Administration, now receives and manages these federal funds.

As a result of Sections 7-501 through 7-504, youth suicide prevention curriculum is taught as a part of the comprehensive health program in public schools. In addition, on July 24, 2018, the State Board of Education granted permission to adopt COMAR 13A.07.11 – *Student Suicide Prevention and Safety Training*, which requires each LEA to provide annual training to all certificated school staff to: (1) understand and respond to youth suicide risk; and (2) identify professional resources to help students

in crisis. Effective July 1, 2021, that same legislation was updated to include and recognize student behavioral health issues; recognize students experiencing trauma or violence out of school and refer the student to behavioral health services; and if the school is a community school, support students needing the services at a community school.

MSDE has continually supported the development of youth prevention programs within LEAs since the passage of Sections 7-501 through 7-504 authorizing schools to establish youth suicide prevention programs of support that include staff development, classroom programs of instruction, crisis intervention, and other related policies and procedures.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future requires that all certificated school personnel who have direct contact with students on a regular basis complete annual training to understand and respond to youth suicide risk, identify professional resources to help students in crisis, recognize student behavioral health issues, and recognize students experiencing trauma or violence out of school and refer the student to behavioral health services.

At the department and LEA level, suicide prevention continues to be a topic for sharing best practices at administrative meetings for local Directors of Student Services, school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, school social workers, pupil personnel workers, behavioral health coordinators, and school safety supervisors. The Division of Student Support and Federal Programs developed materials that can be used by LEAs to provide annual training as required by COMAR 13A.07.11. These professional learning materials outline best practices, resources, identification of programs, and implementation strategies. Staff at MSDE are also assigned to assist youth suicide prevention initiatives in schools including providing technical assistance and serve as members of the statewide Governor's Commission on Suicide Prevention.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Dr. Akilah Alleyne, Executive Director, Government Affairs, Education Policy, and External Relations by phone at (410) 767-0504 or by email at akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carey M. Wright". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.

State Superintendent of Schools