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TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.

DATE: September 27, 2016

SUBJECT: Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation Policy Update

Purpose

The purpose of this agenda item is to update *Maryland's Model Policy Prohibiting Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation* (Attachment I) required under §7-424.1 of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland. The update includes the expansion of the term *electronic communication* to include social media communication.

Background/Historical Perspective

In July, 2008 the Maryland General Assembly directed the Maryland State Board of Education, in consultation with local school systems, to develop and adopt a model policy prohibiting bullying, harassment, and intimidation in schools. *Maryland's Model Policy Prohibiting Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation* was approved by the State Board in February 2009.

Pursuant to House Bill 365 passed during the 2016 legislative session, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is required to update the Model Policy to expand the term *electronic communication* to include social media communication. MSDE worked in collaboration with local school systems to modify the policy. House Bill 365 requires the State Board to update the Model Policy every five years. By January 1, 2017 and every five years thereafter, each local school system is required to submit its updated policy to the State Superintendent.

Executive Summary

In consultation with local school systems, *Maryland's Model Policy Prohibiting Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation* expanded the language of electronic communication to include photographs, audio recording, video recording, or texted messages sent by way of the internet. The updated also introduces the term *cyberbullying*, which means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including the use of social media sites, telephone, cellular phone computer, tablets, or any electronic communication device.

Cyberbullying includes the use social media sites and those other means listed above, and any future applications that fall under "electronic communication". In order for school systems to intervene with cyberbullying, there must be evidence of the cyberbullying interfering with or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of a school with a "*nexus*" (a connection or series of connections linking two or more events) "*to school*".

Action

Approve the *Maryland's Model Policy Prohibiting Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation*, which expands the term *electronic communication* to include social media communication.

KBS:WJS

Attachment:

- Attachment I: *Maryland's Model Policy Prohibiting Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation*