

Dear Parent/Guardian,

On October 11th, Ms. Oliver and Mrs. Fockler-LaBute will be presenting material on Erin's law to your child. Here is an overview on what we will be discussing and some resources for parents.

What is "Erin's Law"? "Erin's Law" is named after childhood sexual assault survivor, author, speaker, and activist Erin Merryn. Merryn is the founder and President of Erin's Law, which is registered with the State of Illinois and the IRS as a 501 (c)(4) non-profit social welfare organization. The legislation was introduced in Merryn's home state of Illinois, and caught on nationwide. It was passed in Maryland in 2016, with a mandate that schools implement it beginning in Fall 2017.

"Erin's Law" requires that all public schools in each state implement a prevention oriented child sexual abuse program which teaches:

- Students in grades prekindergarten through 12th grade age-appropriate techniques to recognize child sexual abuse and tell a trusted adult.
- School personnel about child sexual abuse.
- Parents and guardians the warning signs of child sexual abuse, needed assistance, and referral or resource information to support sexually abused children and their families.

Why is it important that children receive this instruction in school? Schools provide a safe place where children can learn what to do in unfamiliar or uncomfortable situations. Trusted adults will provide students with an opportunity to practice handling these situations so that the first time a young person is faced with an unsafe situation, he or she will know what to do and have had practiced doing it. Students will identify trusted adults, both inside and outside of the school, where they can go for help.

Are there resources parents can access to help them recognize warning signs and talk with their child(ren) about how to keep themselves safe? Yes. The Erin's Law website (<https://www.erinslaw.org/>) has tips for parents about recognizing warning signs and what a parent should do if he/ or she learns/suspects that a child has been/is being sexually abused. Similarly, the Barbara Sinatra Foundation has many resources for parents on the topic of child sexual abuse. The National Sexual Violence Resource Center has a number of good resources for parents. If you have specific questions or concerns regarding secondary Erin's Law lessons, feel free to contact your child's health educator.

If you have specific concerns regarding the lessons, please contact your child's school counselor.

Sincerely,

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