



THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

600 Southeast Third Avenue • Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301 • Office: 754-321-2600 • Fax: 754-321-2701

**ROBERT W. RUNCIE**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

The School Board of  
Broward County, Florida

Abby M. Freedman, Chair  
Nora Rupert, Vice Chair

Robin Bartleman  
Heather P. Brinkworth  
Patricia Good  
Donna P. Korn  
Laurie Rich Levinson  
Ann Murray  
Dr. Rosalind Osgood

May 8, 2017

Dear Parents:

In the past few weeks, several different types of media have released information on disturbing trends involving teen mental health, self-harm and suicide, prompted by the Netflix series *13 Reasons Why*. This series focuses on the struggles of a teenage girl and her ultimate, tragic decision to commit suicide.

In addition to the Netflix series, web-based games that appear to be fun and harmless, are also being cited for leading students to engage in dangerous and/or lethal activities. One example is *Blue Whale*, which is described as an online pressure group that encourages users to engage in self-harming behaviors.

Many parents may not be aware of the popularity of the Netflix series and online game, or their potential negative impacts on our youth and their decisions to engage in dangerous behaviors. **We encourage you to monitor your child's viewing choices and online activities, and to talk with your child daily about his or her experiences.**

Education is crucial for understanding students' social emotional development and perceptions. Mental health professionals are available at your child's school to provide you with guidance – as well as support for your child, if necessary. Community resources are also listed below.

Resources:

- Suicide Warning Signs – [youthsuicidewarningsigns.org/parentscaregivers](http://youthsuicidewarningsigns.org/parentscaregivers)
- Tips for Parents – [http://afsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/TipsForParents\\_2017.pdf](http://afsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/TipsForParents_2017.pdf)
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1-800-273-Talk
- Crisis Text Line – Text 741741, text the word "Home"
- 24-Hour Helpline – <http://211-broward.org/>
- Youth Emergency Services – (954) 677-3113

If you believe your child is in immediate danger, please call 911.

It is my hope that this information will help you be informed and open doors of communication with your child. If you should require any further assistance, contact the District's **Student Support Initiatives Department at 754-321-1660.**

Sincerely,

Robert W. Runcie