



Excellence in Education
St. Lucie Public Schools
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E. Wayne Gent

May 24, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians:

We are writing to make you aware of the Netflix television series **13 Reasons Why** (a series that deals with the difficult topic of suicide) and online challenges that promote unhealthy and risky behaviors such as the **Blue Whale Challenge**.

- **13 Reasons Why** – Netflix series based on a novel in which a 17-year-old girl commits suicide and leaves behind audio recordings for 13 people she says are in some way part of the reason why she killed herself
- **Blue Whale Challenge** – online challenge in which participants agree to tasks that become increasingly more self-harmful over a 50-day time period

The series and online challenges are raising concerns, and while many students are able to differentiate between television drama and real life and are able to understand the consequences resulting from risky behaviors, many children are not. Therefore, parents and guardians are encouraged to talk with their children to promote problem solving and coping strategies.

Below are resources that will assist when you sit down with your child. Please keep in mind that mental health professionals and resources are also available at your child's school. Working together, we can provide the guidance, care, and support that is needed to strengthen our children.

- The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) has published *13 Reasons Why* Netflix Series: Considerations for Educators' (see attachment), which provides cautions and guidance for educator and families. This and other suicide-related resources can be downloaded for the NASP website at <http://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/preventing-youth-suicide/13-reasons-why-netflix-series-considerations-for-educators>.
- The Suicide Prevention Resource Center has developed a list of the most common questions from parents, schools, media, and community leaders below, with resources to help talk about the series and suicide risk and prevention <http://www.sprc.org/13-reasons-why>.
- Teachable Moment: Using *13 Reasons Why* to Initiate a Helpful Conversation About Suicide Prevention and Mental Health. Hosted by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, the American School Counselor Association and the National Association of School Psychologists on May 2, 2017. Archived at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4CC-j73LnE&feature=youtu.be>
- The Student Support Services Project has a list of resources relating to suicide awareness and prevention at <http://sss.usf.edu/resources/topic/suicide/index.html>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "E. Wayne Gent".

E. Wayne Gent
Superintendent