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Dear Elementary School Parents:

Much to the dismay of educators, community members, and you, too, child sexual abuse has become more widespread than what any of us would like to acknowledge. Statistics such as the following prove just how much child sexual abuse affects our children: Every 6 minutes, a child is sexually assaulted in the United States. Only 1 in 10 sexually abused children tell someone. In 90% of child sexual abuse cases, the child knows and trusts the person who sexually abuses them, i.e., friend, neighbor, clergy, teacher, family member, coach, babysitter, etc. One in three girls and one in seven boys are sexually abused before the age of 18.

In an effort to educate students, parents, teachers, community leaders, etc. about the dangers of child sexual abuse, Governor Robert Bentley signed into legislation on June 11, 2015, what is known as Erin's Law. This legislation requires all public schools in the state of Alabama to provide child sexual abuse prevention education to students in grades K-12. By so doing, it is our hope to shatter the silence and stigma around child sexual abuse and to educate children and to empower them to recognize and to report abuse.

Through our continued partnership with the Baldwin County Child Advocacy Center, the Baldwin County Public School System is able to provide the *Safer, Smarter Kids* curriculum to students in grades K-5. Developed by Lauren Book, M.S.Ed., a child abuse survivor, child advocate and educator, and founder and CEO of the Lauren's Kids Foundation, this curriculum is designed to provide critical safety information to children, parents, and teachers.

The *Safer, Smarter Kids* curriculum (Grades K-5) follows a developmentally appropriate sequence of instruction for elementary school students, thereby helping children to develop skills to stay safe as their world expands. Each grade level program in the curriculum includes five to eight lessons that are designed for easy integration into the classroom.

The curriculum is designed to empower elementary school-aged children to protect themselves in situations where someone could abuse them. Children are armed with protective principles and vocabulary to express their feelings and to talk to a trusted adult. The following safety topics are covered: Safety awareness; Respecting yourself and others; Developing self-esteem; Assessing safe vs. unsafe situations; Understanding rules and responsibilities; Identifying and protecting body boundaries; Listening to a guiding