



April 27, 2017

Dear LPS Parents,

You may have heard about a new Netflix series titled *13 Reasons Why* based on the novel by Jay Asher. The series portrays the story of a 17 year old girl who takes her own life and leaves behind 13 recordings explaining the reasons (and persons) that caused her suicide. This show is rated TV-MA (not appropriate for children under 17) but we are aware that younger students are watching it as well. Even students who have not seen the show have likely heard about it. Due to the show's popularity and mature content which includes scenes involving drugs, bullying, rape and suicide, we felt it was important to inform parents of this social trend.

We strongly encourage you to find out what your student knows about this show and to consider the age and developmental stage of your student before allowing them to watch. While the makers of the show have expressed the goal of raising important issues, there are concerns that it glamorizes suicide. Be especially careful when considering whether students who have a history of suicidal thoughts, depression or mental health concerns should watch *13 Reasons Why*. If your child is watching this series, we recommend you watch it with them and discuss it afterward.

This conversation also provides a good opportunity to talk with your child about important issues such as stress, depression and suicide. This can include how to support a struggling friend, or about their own feelings. If your student is expressing warning signs, don't be afraid to ask them directly how they are feeling about suicide. We know that an open conversation is the most important factor in prevention.

In LPS, all of our schools and programs take student mental health very seriously and all staff are trained in warning signs. Our school psychologists, social workers and counselors are certified in the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and unlike some of the adults portrayed in *13 Reasons Why*, **we take all reports seriously**. Our schools also work hard to help students know how to find help for themselves or a friend, through Yellow Ribbon activities, classroom discussions, and advisories.

Attached are some resources for you regarding *13 Reasons Why* and youth suicide. Please see our [website](#) for additional resources. If you or someone you know is in need of assistance, please reach out to your school mental health staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nate Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Nate Thompson,
Director of Social, Emotional & Behavior Services
Littleton Public Schools