

Frequently Asked Questions

LD 609: “An Act to Increase Suicide Awareness and Prevention in Maine Public Schools”

Provided by the

Maine Suicide Prevention Program and Maine Department of Education

LD 609 was signed into Law by Governor Paul LePage on April 25, 2013 following unanimous passage in the legislature. The law requires all school staff in public, island, charter, and approved private schools to complete a 1-2 hour Suicide Prevention Awareness Training. It also requires all school administrative units and each island, charter, approved private and public school that is not in a school administrative unit to have at least two staff trained in a one-day course in suicide prevention and intervention training commonly referred to in Maine as Gatekeeper Training. The Maine Department of Education (DOE) is currently working through the rulemaking process which will guide and inform the implementation of this law.

Who needs to attend the Suicide Prevention Awareness Training?

All school personnel and anyone receiving a check from a school system (see list of schools above) must receive a 1-2 hour Suicide Prevention Awareness Training. This includes, but is not limited to, administrators, teachers, educational technicians, support staff, custodians, bus drivers, duty monitors, coaches, food service staff, etc... It is recommended that volunteers working in schools receive the training as well.

What is the timeframe for schools to complete initial training?

Training will occur incrementally starting 2014 through 2016. High schools are expected to complete training by the start of the 2014-15 school year then middle and elementary schools by the start of the 2015-16 school year.

Who can train the staff?

A qualified trainer is a person who is trained using national guidelines adopted by organizations that offer research-based training in best practice, and who actively delivers trainings at least once every three years. The Maine Suicide Prevention Program provides training (www.namimaine.org/?page=TrainingCalendar) to individuals who have taken Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training in order to be able to provide the Suicide Prevention Awareness Training. The Training of Trainers is offered around the state at a variety of locations. Once a person has taken this training and shows competence they are able to provide the Suicide Prevention Awareness Training to fulfill LD 609. The Maine Suicide Prevention Program is in development of an online version of the Suicide Prevention Awareness Training to be released in 2014. Additional trainings that address suicide prevention awareness education or meet the one-day course in suicide prevention and intervention training (similar to Gatekeeper Training) that follow approved national guidelines, may be acceptable for compliance with the law, such as the ASIST Model.

How many people need to be Gatekeeper trained?

Each school administrative unit is required to have a minimum of two personnel trained as Suicide Prevention Gatekeepers. For school administrative units with more than 1000 students, for every additional 500 students another Gatekeeper will be needed. (This is detailed in the Basic School Approval law Title 20-A, 4502. sec 5-B. (www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec4502.html)

How long is training valid?

Both the awareness and the Gatekeeper trainings need to be renewed every five years. New hires need to receive awareness education within six months of hire.

If I have already attended a Suicide Prevention Awareness Training, what should I do?

School personnel who have received suicide awareness education or who have completed Gatekeeper training within the past five years will be considered in compliance with the law but will need to renew when 5 years has passed.

Is there funding available to help with the cost of training?

Most training offered through the Maine Suicide Prevention Program are offered without cost for participants. A listing of some additional training specifically for school staff is available on NAMI Maine's training website (www.namimaine.org/?page=TrainingCalendar). Availability of no cost training is limited.

Who does the school district report to?

School Districts are required to track the training of staff and keep clear records. Compliance to the law will be monitored by the Maine Department of Education as part of school approval reporting.

If you have more questions about the law and its implementation, contact the Department of Education (207) 624-6600. For information about specific training programs, contact Shelley O'Brian, sobrian@namimaine.org, at NAMI Maine 1-800-464-5767 or 207-622-5767.

*Information on MSPP training opportunities can be found at www.namimaine.org/?page=TrainingCalendar.