

Frequently Asked Questions

Suicide Awareness and Prevention in Maine Public Schools

Provided by the
Maine Suicide Prevention Program and Maine Department of Education

LD 609, An Act to Increase Suicide Awareness and Prevention in Maine Schools, was signed into Law by Governor Paul LePage on April 25, 2013 following unanimous passage in the legislature. The statutory revisions are reflected as Public Law 2013, Chapter 53, which required rulemaking. The revised statute within School Approval, Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §4502, sub-§5-B, requires a 1-2 hour Suicide Prevention Awareness Education training be completed by all school personnel in each school administrative unit (SAU), island, charter, CTE Region and public school that is not in a school administrative unit. It also requires all school administrative units and each island, charter, approved private and public schools that are 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.” A CTE Region must have at least one school personnel member who has successfully completed the full-day suicide prevention and intervention training on site. The second school personnel member could be either on site or the CTE Region could have a legal agreement with one of the sending schools assigned to their region. Rulemaking for Chapter 38, Suicide Awareness and Prevention in Maine Public Schools, was completed on June 29, 2014.

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. School personnel means a person required to be certified, authorized, or approved by the department under chapter 501 or 502 of Title 20-A. This includes, but is not limited to, administrators, teachers, educational technicians, support staff, custodians, school counselors, school nurses, 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?

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 of Trainers” sessions (www.namimaine.org/?page=TrainingCalendar) to individuals who have taken Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training in order for people to be able to provide the Suicide Prevention Awareness Training. The Training of Trainers (TOT) 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 the Maine Department of Education Regulation, Chapter 38. An online version of the Suicide Prevention Awareness Training video and supporting toolkit was developed by NAMI Maine in consultation with the Maine DOE using resources from the Maine Suicide Prevention Program and is available at www.namimaine.org/?page=LD609ToolkitVideo. 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. A CTE Region must have at least one school personnel member who has successfully completed the full-day suicide prevention and intervention training on site. The second school personnel member could be either on site or the CTE Region could have a legal agreement with one of the sending schools assigned to their region. 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. <http://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. The online training video is designed to support new hires that were not available for the district trainings.

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?

Training may be offered through the Maine Suicide Prevention Program or other trainers at a no cost or a minimal fee. A listing of available trainings for school staff is available on NAMI Maine's [training website](#). Schools can use professional development funds when needed.

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. Sample tracking tools are in development.

If you have more questions about the law and its implementation, contact Susan Berry at the Department of Education (207) 624-6695. For information about specific training programs, contact the Suicide Prevention Training Coordinator (mspp@namimaine.org) , at NAMI Maine 1-800-464-5767 or 207-622-5767.

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