

<p><b>Subject:</b>  <b><i>Suicide Prevention Education Act</i></b></p> <p><b>Date issued:</b> <b><i>September 28, 2022</i></b></p>	<p><b>Legal Reference –</b>  <b><i>SB 282 (2019-2020 Legislative Session)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>RSA 193-J</i></b></li> </ul> <p><b><i>SB 234 (2021-2022 Legislative Session)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>RSA 193-J:2-a</i></b></li> </ul>
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*This Technical Advisory continues the New Hampshire Department of Education’s communication regarding new legislation, which was passed during the 2021-2022 legislative session. SB 234 adds a new section, RSA 193-J:2-a, to chapter RSA 193-J, Suicide Prevention Education, which was created during the 2019-2020 legislative session. This Technical Advisory explains the requirements of the newly created section and updates the TA which was previously issued on October 17, 2019, on the pre-existing chapter, RSA 193-J.*

*Chapter RSA 193-J has been effective since July 1, 2020, and the new section, RSA 193-J:2-a, became effective **July 31, 2022**.*

[RSA 193-J—Suicide Prevention Education](#) (passed during the 2019-2020 Legislative Session):

By way of relevant background, SB 282 was passed during the 2019 legislative session to address the critically important issue of suicide prevention of school-age children in New Hampshire. The sole purpose of this new law is to reduce the number of suicides that are occurring in New Hampshire’s school-age population. As such, SB 282 was created out of a recognition that suicide is a complex issue which necessitates resources from schools, families, and the community to all be harnessed in an appropriate and timely fashion to prevent suicide. This bill is applicable to all **public schools** and **chartered public schools** across the state.

The new law is written in two parts. The first part of the bill requires that districts and chartered public schools develop a policy which guides the development and implementation of a coordinated plan to prevent, assess the risk of, intervene in, and respond to suicide. The bill provides the basic parameters of what each policy must address but allows each respective school—traditional public and chartered public schools—to add in additional areas as they deem appropriate.

Each policy must include the following provisions:

- (a) The training of school faculty and staff, to include contracted personnel and designated school volunteers, in youth suicide risk factors, warning signs, protective factors, response procedures, referrals, post-intervention, and resources available within the school and community;

- (b) Educating students in the importance of safe and healthy choices and coping strategies, recognizing risk factors and warning signs of mental disorders and suicide in oneself and others, and providing help-seeking strategies for oneself or others, including how to engage school resources and refer friends for help;
- (c) Identifying within the school the person or persons who serve as the point of contact when a student is believed to be at an elevated risk for suicide;
- (d) Making referral, crisis intervention, and other related information, both within the school and the community, available for students, parents, faculty, staff, and school volunteers; and
- (e) Promoting cooperative efforts between school districts, chartered public schools, and community suicide prevention program personnel.

The law also requires that each school district and chartered public school mandate that all school faculty and staff, to include contracted personnel, receive a minimum of 2 hours of training in suicide awareness and prevention every year. This requirement may be applicable to some school volunteers in accordance with individual school district policy. The training may include the following topics: youth suicide risk factors, warning signs, protective factors, response procedures, referrals, post-intervention, and resources available within the school and community. The training requirement may be accomplished within pre-existing, in-service training programs or offered as part of ongoing professional development activities. Districts and chartered public schools must allow the use of self-training materials to fulfill this training requirement and each individual district and chartered public school may determine how to administer and ensure that the annual training requirements are met.

*Resources and Information:*

The New Hampshire Department of Education's Bureau of Student Wellness, Office of Social and Emotional Wellness (OSEW), provides resources and technical assistance to school districts to work collaboratively with their community to respond to the needs of students through toolkits as well as an integrated multi-tiered system of support for behavioral health and wellness. Prevention works best when strategies are part of a comprehensive planning process. There are resources and tools to support comprehensive planning as well as a variety of free trainings offered throughout the state and across the nation which specifically relate to suicide prevention including:

- youth suicide risk factors;
- aggregated data;
- Model policy for school boards;
- warning signs;
- protective factors;
- response procedures;
- referrals; and
- post-intervention.

Access to these resources and tools are provided below. These resources can aid districts in the development of the policy and training as required by the new law. The resources available through OSEW are not intended to be exclusive of other state and national resources.

*Resources:*

[OSEW Support for Districts and Educators \(instructure.com\)](https://nhdoe.instructure.com)

Or

<https://nhdoe.instructure.com/courses/37>

[SB 234](#), *Requiring Student Identification Cards to Include the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (RSA 193-J:2-a)*:

RSA 193-J was amended during the 2021-2022 legislative session with the passage of SB 234. Specifically, SB 234 created a new section—RSA 193-J:2-a—which requires that student ID cards include the telephone number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. This requirement is applicable to **traditional public schools** and **chartered public schools** and requires that any school which has students in grades 6 through 12, issue student identification cards which include the number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline—1-800-273-8255 or 988. The inclusion of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number is applicable to ID cards which are issued for the first time or for replacement cards that have been lost or damaged after the July 31, 2022 effective date of the law. Schools—**traditional public** and **chartered public**—must certify to their respective governing bodies that the contact information is being included on the student ID cards and that such contact information is accurate and current. This certification requirement must be done on an annual basis and prior to the start of each school year.

**For questions related to this Technical Advisory, please contact:**

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