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SDE offers educators, others ‘Gatekeeper’ training for suicide prevention

(BOISE) – Up to 10,000 Idahoans can receive free online training to identify and respond to the warning signs of students in crisis through QPR (Question, Persuade and Refer) Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention funded by the State Department of Education.

“Reducing Idaho’s teen suicide rate, providing preventive services and helping students are major goals for educators and families throughout our state,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra said. “I’m thrilled that the State Department of Education can make this important training available to teachers, parents, administrators, school staff, grandparents, coaches – anyone who interacts with students at home or at school.”

“We want as many caring adults as possible prepared and trained to connect students with support and resources,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “Suicide has a devastating effect on everyone, including our school communities.”

Interested [Idahoans are invited to apply](#) as soon as possible, but there is no deadline. The training takes an estimated hour to two hours to complete.

Suicide prevention efforts are a key part of Superintendent Ybarra’s emphasis on social-emotional health and student safety as ways to improve conditions for learning and student success.

“As part of a safety gap analysis last year, the SDE asked 450 educators across Idaho whether they had ever received suicide prevention training,” said Eric Studebaker, the SDE’s director of Student Engagement and Safety Coordination. “Roughly half of those surveyed said they never had, which motivated efforts to make QPR Gatekeeper training widely available.”

In the most recent Idaho Youth Risk Behavior Survey, about 22 percent of surveyed students said they had seriously considered attempting suicide, the highest level in 10 years. And more students reported feeling sad or hopeless (39 percent) than at any time in the past decade.

The Idaho Legislature passed a law in 2018 calling for schools and districts to provide suicide prevention training, but provided no funding for that training.

Licenses for the QPR Gatekeeper training are offered through the SDE's [Idaho Lives project](#), a collaboration with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Many contractors with Idaho Lives have gone through the Gatekeeper training,

SAMHSA includes the training on its National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices. The Suicide Prevention Resource Center describes the training as “a program with evidence of effectiveness.”

Find out more about the QPR Gatekeeper training at [the organization's website](#). The training offers a three-step strategy:

- Question the individual's desire or intent regarding suicide,
- Persuade the person to seek and accept help, and
- Refer the person to appropriate resources.

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