

To: Maine School Administrators
Fr: Dr. Karen A. Barnes
Re: Behavioral Threat Assessment Training
Da: January 20, 2021



In my role as the Threat Assessment/Mental Health Officer for the Maine School Safety Center (MSSC) housed within the MDOE, I am sharing a free opportunity for staff in your school(s) to receive Behavioral Threat Assessment (BTA) training. Maintaining the safety of students and staff is of critical importance to the MSSC. One of the Center's main goals is to provide schools with a **problem-solving approach to systematically manage threats for the safety of students and staff while providing interventions at the earliest possible stage**. This training is in line with federal recommendations for K-12 schools to assist you with the development of threat assessment teams.

A pilot program for three districts was offered at the beginning of the 2020 school year. The Westbrook School Department, Calais School Department, and Mountain Valley High School in RSU #10 were the pilot sites. This training for these sites demonstrated BTA as a crucial component of ensuring safety and mitigating potential acts of targeted school violence by identifying students at risk of committing acts of violence and providing appropriate and timely interventions.

Several federal agencies recommend that schools address safety proactively by adopting a BTA approach as a violence prevention strategy, including the FBI [School Shooter](#) (1999), the USDOE [Threat Assessment in Schools](#) (2004), and the US Secret Service [Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model](#) (2018, 2019). Additionally, findings from a 2019 workgroup led by the U.S. Attorney of Maine recommend the development and implementation of multidisciplinary BTA teams in all schools to address threats to school safety.

So, your opportunity... The MSSC has secured funding for three people from every Maine school district throughout the state to be trained in conducting BTAs. We hope that you will take this opportunity to train a multidisciplinary team in your district consisting of school administration, law enforcement, and a mental health provider. The initial training consists of the following components:

- Level 1 - eight online modules to be completed asynchronously within a 2-week period, taking approximately 6 hours total to complete.
- Level 2- a four-hour synchronous training during which your team will gain practice working through possible school safety scenarios. (We anticipate conducting 2-3 additional rounds of training to accommodate all of you who wish to participate, with the first beginning within the next two weeks.)

Beyond the initial training, the MSSC will provide continuing education and support for BTA. Please reach out to me directly at karen.a.barnes@maine.gov or at (207) 446-0713 if you are interested, and I will get your team in on the next available round of training. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

If you, or someone from your school/organization, would like more information please also feel free to **attend a one-hour informational session on January 29th** where we will share our work with you thus far as well as our vision for the future to ensure safety in all Maine schools. The training will be conversational with ample opportunity for questions. You are invited to the following Zoom meeting:

