



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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April 10th, 2023

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Raegan LaRochelle and I represent House District 59, which is part of Augusta. I am here to present LD 291 with the amended title: “Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services in conjunction with the Department of Education to study the feasibility of establishing a Recovery High School in the state.”

This bill seeks to initiate a conversation about the creation of recovery high schools in Maine. Recovery High Schools are secondary schools specifically for students with substance use disorder that provide access to recovery-oriented secondary education while maintaining young people’s connection to their natural support relationships and environments.

In 1989, the first recovery high school, Sobriety High, was established in Minnesota. Today there are 43 recovery high schools in operation across the United States, with the closest ones to Maine located in Massachusetts. Staff at Recovery High Schools typically include administrative staff, teachers, substance use counselors and mental health therapists.

In 2019, Good Will- Hinkley and Day One put together a proposal to develop Maine’s first Recovery High School on the campus of Good Will-Hinkley. The goal of the proposal was to establish a comprehensive secondary school program that would lead to the awarding of a secondary school diploma while providing intensive support for students recovering from a substance use disorder or co-occurring disorder (including both substance use and mental health) such as anxiety, depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder or other mental health condition. Also included in that proposal were services to support the families of the teens enrolled at the high school. The proposal was shelved during the COVID-19 pandemic. I have included their proposal with my testimony. (Learn more about the proposal [here](#).)

While this proposal might need to be updated, we do have the organizations that are interested in having a conversation about how to bring recovery high schools to Maine. That is really what LD 291 seeks to do.

Proposed Amendment to LD 291

Committee: HHS
Date: 4-6-23 (RPM)

LD 291 – An Act to Support Young People Affected by Substance Use Disorder

Amend the title of the bill to read as follows:

Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services in conjunction with the Department of Education to study the feasibility of establishing a Recovery High School in the state.

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the enacting clause and before the summary and inserting the following:

Sec. 1. Directive to study the feasibility of establishing a recovery high school in the state. Resolved: That the Department of Health and Human Services in conjunction with the Department of Education, shall convene a working group to study the feasibility and issues related to the establishing of a recovery high school in the state.

1. Membership. The working group shall consist of 11 members, as follows:

- A. The Commissioner of Health and Human Services or the Commissioner's designee;
- B. The Commissioner of Education or the Commissioner's designee;
- C. One member from the Department of Education who is an expert in mental health and or school counseling;
- D. One member who as expertise in recovery high schools or other residential programs that provide educational services to adolescents recovering from substance use disorder;
- E. One member who is a representative of an organization that provides services for adolescents with substance use disorder;
- F. One member who is a representative of a statewide organization that advocates for individuals in substance use disorder recovery and their families;
- G. One member who is a licensed Social Worker who has worked with youth suffering from substance use disorder or co-occurring disorders;
- H. One member who is a representative of an organization that provides residential services to youth experiencing social, behavioral or substance abuse challenges;
- I. One member who is a representative of state wide organization representing teachers in Maine; and
- J. One member who is a representative of a statewide organization representing school administrators in the state.
- K. One member who is a young person impacted by substance use disorder.

Proposed Amendment to LD 291

2. Compensation. Members of the working group may not be compensated for their work on the working group.

3. Duties. Duties of the working group include:

A. Identify and review the need for establishing a recovery high school or another educational model that is designed specifically for students in recovery from substance use disorder or co-occurring disorders. Factors should include the need present in the state, an understanding of both services and staffing required for such a facility, optimal location for such a facility, what entity would be best equipped to operate and manage a facility, and any other matter the working group believes is relevant to the establishment of a recovery high school or other facility.

B. Identify and consider mechanisms that could be utilized to address any obstacles or challenges in establishing a facility identified in paragraph A including, but not limited to, state funding, state licensure, workforce needs; facility construction or adaptation; or any other issue that arise and

C. Conduct a review of states that have recovery high schools or similar facilities and examine which of those states could be a useful model for a Maine facility.

4. Staff Assistance. The Department of Health and Human Services with assistance when appropriate from the Department of Education shall provide necessary staffing services to the working group, within existing budget resources.

5. Report. The working group shall report by January 15th, 2024 the findings and recommendations of the working group to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services and the Joint Standing Committee on Education. The Joint Standing Committee Health and Human Services and the Joint Standing Committee on Education may introduce legislation for presentation to the Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature based on the recommendations in the report.

SUMMARY

This amendment directs the Department of Health and Human Services in conjunction with the Department of Education to convene a working group to study the feasibility and issues related to the establishing a recovery high school in the state, establishes the membership and duties of the working group, and requires the working group to submit its report to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services and the Joint Standing Committee on Education by January 15th, 2024.



GOOD WILL-HINCKLEY
We change lives



**MAINE'S RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOL
PROPOSAL
MAY 24, 2019**

OVERVIEW: The goal of this proposal is to develop Maine's first Recovery High School based on the campus of Good Will-Hinckley in Hinckley, Maine, located in Somerset County. A collaboration between Good Will-Hinckley and Day One will establish a comprehensive secondary school program that will lead to the awarding of a secondary school diploma while providing intensive support for students recovering from a substance use disorder or co-occurring disorder (including both substance use and mental health) such as anxiety, depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder or other mental health condition. Also included in this proposal are services to support the families of the teens enrolled in this program.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: This project will establish an approved secondary school program with cottage-style housing for 16 students initially. The academic program will be associated with the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (an approved charter school program in the State of Maine), located at Good Will-Hinckley or Regional School District #18 (Messalonskee). In addition to a secondary school program that will focus on life skills, decision-making, and relevant life experiences, students will have on-the-job experiences working in Good Will-Hinckley's greenhouses, world-class museum, and sugar shack. Students will also have the opportunity to attend Early College classes and develop employment skills by working in the barn and greenhouse at Kennebec Valley Community College (KVCC), located adjacent to the Good Will-Hinckley campus. Additional quality work-experience opportunities may be provided by Jobs for Maine Graduates (JMG), which has expressed interest in collaborating to augment the academic program.

Clinical staff, already experienced in working with teenagers with substance use and co-occurring disorders, will provide intensive and comprehensive support to each student. Efforts will be made to engage families in the successful recovery and transition of these teens. Housing for visiting families will be provided by Good Will-Hinckley, enabling families to engage and visit with their students, while participating in family-centered therapy.

This program will be modeled after other Association of Recovery Schools programs located all across the country. Their resources and supports will be sought to assure the successful creation and execution of Maine's first Recovery High School.

The profile of a student in need of a Recovery High School will include some or all of the following:

- a. Substance Use Disorder and/or Co-Occurring Mental Health Diagnosis
- b. Experiencing unsettled home situation or living in a homeless situation
- c. Potential to drop out and not complete their high school education
- d. Having experienced trauma in their or their family's life
- e. Teen parent
- f. Coming from a low-resourced family
- g. Living in a situation of intergenerational dysfunction or SUD/Co-occurring Mental Health diagnosis
- h. Able to function on their own (possibly with difficulty)
- i. Between the ages of 13 and 20 (inclusive)

Each of the agencies and programs listed below has agreed to help develop and implement needed transition and aftercare services for these teens:

- Project Rebound (Oakland Police Department in partnership with the Alford Youth Center)
- Wayfinder School's Teen Parent Program (Passages)
- Kennebec Valley Community College
- Southern Maine Community College
- Maine Children's Home for Little Wanderers
- Jobs For Maine's Graduates
- University of New England

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS: Day One and Good Will-Hinckley are the lead organizations that will develop and implement the Recovery High School.

Day One will provide the treatment framework and clinical services for the Recovery High School. Day One has extensive experience providing these services in a variety of settings, including in its residential and outpatient locations. In fact, Day One provides the most complete continuum of youth and family-based services in the State of Maine. Day One's mission is to improve the health of Maine by providing substance use, mental health and wellness services to youth and families. Its vision is that all Maine youth will have opportunities to realize their full potential to live productive, healthy and rewarding lives.

As a long-recognized leader in the prevention and treatment of youth substance use and mental health disorders, Day One has built a culture of excellence in all that it does. Its programs are designed to provide interventions regardless of where the adolescent and family are in their

substance use and/or recovery. Prevention, screening, early intervention, and treatment interventions are essential to give Maine youth the chance to achieve their full potential. Day One's treatment approach is informed by the traumatic histories and complex needs of each client. Day One is successful because of the exceptional quality of its staff and the strength of its collaborations, enabling them to create opportunities for youth to build a brighter future. By providing integrated care for youth and families, they give teens with substance use disorder and mental health needs the tools and skills they need to break the cycle of substance use experienced by generations of Mainers.

The clinical philosophy for the Recovery High School is a harm reduction model. Day One will work to create a recovery community focused on providing support and treatment to students and their families as they learn skills and strategies to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Clinical services will include peer recovery services; case management; mental health and substance use treatment via group, individual, and family therapy; as well as psychiatric services. Day One will collaborate with University of New England's (UNE) health professionals program to integrate other health professions into the clinical and educational framework.

Day One will collaborate with the educational staff to develop psycho-educational components that are integrated through all classes. This would ensure all curricula is trauma-informed and supports the individual needs of students in recovery. All students will be encouraged to work on their social/emotional issues by properly accessing abundant therapeutic resources. For example, treatment and educational goals are interwoven with art, music, physical education, and other activities.

At admission to the program, each student will be assessed by clinical staff. Clinical and educational staff will work in partnership to create an individual recovery plan. Clinical assessments will include GAD-7, PHQ-9, AC-OK, and ACEs screenings.

Individual recovery plans will include assessments for both the students' needs and family needs. Family needs could include substance use and/or mental health treatment for parents/caregivers, food insecurities, housing instability, and/or vocational/educational needs.

Case management services will be available to all students and their families to help address these needs. During the initial meeting students would also create a contingency plan which would provide them the names and phone numbers of the next referral source at the time of their enrollment, such as crisis, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA), and nearby outpatient services. Drug testing will be connected to the student's individual recovery plan. Drug testing will be done on a random basis. Using substances while attending the

Recovery High School does not mean immediate dismissal, however it will initiate a therapeutic conversation on how to best support the student in their recovery.

Based on the individual recovery plan and/or identified needs of students, students will also be able to access individual counseling as part of their school day. Family therapy will be included when appropriate and available during evenings and weekends as needed. Weekend housing for visiting families will be available through Good Will-Hinckley's Alumni House.

Each day, students will attend a psycho-educational group as part of their school curriculum. This group will address substance use, trauma, relationships, accountability, transitions, grief and loss, healthy choices, self-esteem, bullying, stigma, and co-occurring disorders.

Each student will also be connected to a peer recovery support person. Peer support will be able to meet with students and their families and work to assist students in staying engaged in their educational and treatment processes. This will include exposure to AA and NA meetings and peer recovery groups such as Young People in Recovery (YPR).

Students' individual educational and clinical goals will be evaluated on an ongoing basis to determine progress toward their next steps. At the time that it is determined a student will transition, a support plan will be created with his/her clinical and educational team.

Day One is currently considering behavioral health home status, and the agency believes this model, when extended to both students and families, would provide the greatest level of support both pre- and post-graduation. Day One will also ensure the availability of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) services to any family member in need, either internally or through partnership with local providers.

It is assumed for purposes of this concept paper that the majority of enrolled students and their families will be MaineCare eligible. We believe the clinical services described above will be delivered and reimbursed under sections 65, 13, and/or 92.

A budget placeholder of \$150,000 is requested for the initial hiring and training of clinical, case management and peer recovery staff as well as for on-going psycho education and clinical supervision resources which may not be readily covered through existing rate structures.

Good Will-Hinckley (GHW) will provide the housing and support services for students. For over 125 years the Good Will idea to provide a home and helping hand to boys and girls in need has stood tall and proud on the beautiful sprawling campus of Good Will-Hinckley, just outside of

Fairfield, Maine. The purposes of this organization are to provide a home for the reception and support of needy boys and girls who are in need of a home and a helping hand, to maintain and operate a school for them and to attend to the physical, industrial, moral and spiritual development of those who shall be placed in its care; its spirit to be evangelical without being sectarian. Their current programs include the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences, the Campus Living Program, the LC Bates Museum, College Step-Up, The Glenn Stratton Learning Center and the Roundel Residential Program.

Additional details of GWH's involvement are noted below:

1. GWH will offer two cottages: Keyes and Winthrop Cottages. Keyes would be set up for boys and Winthrop for girls. Each cottage will be set up for 8 students for a total of 16 students.
2. GWH will provide staff coverage in each cottage with two full-time Family Teachers and a full-time Assistant Family Teacher for a total of 120 hours per week of coverage in the residential setting for all 52 weeks of the year.
3. GWH will offer transportation to and from school and to all appointments as necessary.
4. GWH will provide food and snacks for all students when in the residential setting.
5. GWH will provide life skills classes and opportunities for all students in the program.
6. GWH will provide recreational opportunities on and off campus for all students.
7. GWH will be working to secure work study jobs on campus for students who qualify. In addition, when appropriate, students will transition to jobs in the greater community as they approach discharge from the program.
8. The residential programming will be integrated into the campus life activities on campus.
9. The residential program will have full access to the Kennebec Valley Community College campus and if eligible, attend activities.
10. Access to all of GWH's programming and activities.
11. Access to drivers' education through area providers. Residential staff would work with the students to get the necessary driving time to prepare for driver's tests.

A budget placeholder of \$625,000 is requested for the facility and programming items noted above as well as an allowance for administrative management and support.

COLLABORATOR: The University of New England (UNE) will be a university-based collaborator, providing Day One and Good Will-Hinckley with a range of resources and services. UNE is the primary educator of health professionals in Maine.

The following resources will be offered to help develop programming and implement services for Maine's Recovery High School (RHS):

1. **Workforce/Community training and development:** The UNE School of Social Work has a strong track record of providing workforce training in multiple areas including but not exclusive to: trauma-informed practice; substance use screening; motivational interviewing, team facilitation, cognitive behavioral therapies, and Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT), an evidence-based practice used to identify, reduce, and prevent problematic use, abuse, and dependence on alcohol and illicit drugs.
2. **Clerkships/Internships:** UNE has 15 different health professions as well as students from the fields of psychology and education available to be interns at RHS. Interns provide in-kind service to programs under the supervision of faculty and on-site clinical staff. UNE is committed to making sure that its students graduate with exposure, knowledge, and skills in substance use identification and treatment.
3. **Grant Stewardship, Evaluation, and Partnerships:** UNE's Center for Excellence in Health Innovation (CEHI) collaborates with UNE faculty and community partners in the nexus of health care, public health, and education, creating innovative interprofessional learning opportunities, research, and evaluation opportunities and community engagement. CEHI and The Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC) both have experience and motivation to help RHS seek funding support. In addition, CEHI is well staffed with professional evaluators who can assist in determining instruments and assessing identified program outcomes for RHS.
4. **Pipeline Opportunities:** UNE's 15 health professions provide opportunities for RHS students to be exposed to careers in the health profession and related fields. IPEC and CEHI have collaborated with the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) on a number of pipeline projects with middle and high school students, particularly those from vulnerable and underserved populations. In collaboration with the community colleges, UNE can engage RHS students in thinking about future careers and aspirations.

FUNDING: It is our hope that initial start-up funding for this program will be provided by the Maine Departments of Corrections, Education, and Health and Human Services. Grant funds to help augment the programs and facilities will be sought as well.

After the initial 16 students are enrolled, a process will be implemented that adds additional students as appropriate personnel and housing are found. The ultimate goal would be to build a program that would accommodate 40 to 50 students.

Future sources of funding might include:

- School subsidy
- Maine Academy of Natural Sciences Thresholds Program
- John T. Gorman Foundation
- Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation
- Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- Private funding sources such as the Harold Alfond Foundation
- Maine Department of Health and Human Services Funds
 - Section 13 (MaineCare Targeted Case Management Funds)
 - Section 65 (MaineCare Outpatient Services Funds)
 - Section 92 (MaineCare Behavioral Home Health Funds)
- McKenney-Vento Homeless Funds (Maine Department of Education)