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THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

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Senator Joseph Rafferty Testimony presenting

**LD 587 "An Act to Require Cardiac Emergency Response Plans and Athletic
Emergency Action Plans for Schools and School Athletic Events."**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

May 5, 2025

Good morning, Chair Murphy, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, I am Senator Joe Rafferty. I am pleased to present **LD 587, "An Act to Require Cardiac Emergency Response Plans and Athletic Emergency Action Plans for Schools and School Athletic Events."**

Please note that this bill as written has been amended to read **An Act for Athletic Emergency Action Plans for School Sponsored Athletic Events**. Hopefully, you have that amendment in your possession. If not, I will forward that prior to the Work Session.

Seacoast online reported that "On November 16, 2024 just prior to the 8-Man Football Championship game, quick action by RSU 21 athletic staff and first responders saved a person's life when they experienced cardiac arrest. With hundreds of spectators already in the stands and hundreds more waiting to get in. RSU 21 Athletic Department personnel, including an athletic trainer intern, immediately activated their Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Local EMTs, already present at the event, responded rapidly.

Athletic trainers and emergency medical personnel administered CPR and utilized a defibrillator three times, successfully reviving the individual who was then transported to Maine Medical Center".

Athletic Administrator Joe Schwartzman said "We saved a person's life. Our policies and procedures were followed precisely, and our team worked with incredible efficiency.

He stated that his team is constantly reviewing its emergency response procedures and encourages other athletic departments to develop robust emergency action plans.

The bill requires that such action plans be developed. A school board approves an athletic emergency action plan that addresses the appropriate use of school personnel in response to an individual experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or similar life-threatening emergency at a school-sponsored athletic event and requires that each school athletic venue have available an automated external defibrillator.

Knowing that our committee is very fiscally responsible, the bill allows a school board to accept gifts, grants and donations, including in-kind donations designated for the purchase of an AED that meets the standards established by the United States Food and Drug Administration and for the costs for maintaining the automated external defibrillator and training school personnel on its use.

The Maine Principals' Association Coaches' Eligibility Policy states that every coach must have successfully completed a basic CPR/AED program and must maintain/carry a current CPR-AED card. The coach must have successfully completed a coaching eligibility course.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

An Act for ~~Require Cardiac Emergency Response Plans and Athletic Emergency Action Plans for Schools and School-sponsored Athletic Events~~

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §1001, sub-§16, as amended by PL 2023, c. 254, §1, is further amended to read:

16. Comprehensive health and safety and emergency management plan. Each school board shall annually approve a comprehensive health and safety and emergency management plan that meets nationally recognized practices ~~and is developed by the school unit administration working collaboratively with appropriate stakeholders and includes an athletic emergency action plan as described in section 6304-A, subsection 3.~~ The approval of a comprehensive health and safety and emergency management plan under this subsection is public information. At the request of any school board member or full-time school employee, the school board shall form a steering committee composed of school employees, including a school employee designated by that employee's school as having oversight regarding school safety, school board members, parents and others. A majority of the school employees must be chosen by the local representatives of the applicable bargaining unit if the school employees are covered by a collective bargaining agreement. The steering committee shall regularly review and refine the comprehensive health and safety and emergency management plan. The following information pertaining to a comprehensive health and safety and emergency management plan is public information:

- A. A description of the scope and purpose of the comprehensive health and safety and emergency management plan and the process used for developing and updating the plan;
- B. General information on auditing for safety and preparedness;
- C. Roles and responsibilities of school administrators, teachers and staff and the designated chain of command during an emergency; and
- D. Strategies for conveying information to parents and the general public during an emergency.

Except as provided in paragraphs A to D, release of the contents of a comprehensive health and safety and emergency management plan approved under this subsection is subject to the limitations set forth in Title 1, section 402, subsection 3, paragraph L.

Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §6304-A is enacted to read:

§6304-A. ~~Cardiac emergency response plan; a~~Athletic emergency action plan

1. Definitions. For the purposes of this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Athletic emergency action plan" means written guidelines or templates for documentation of emergency planning to help prepare a person for a catastrophic injury situation in an athletic or sports setting.

(1) A plan must require that school officials work directly with local emergency service providers to integrate a cardiac emergency response plan into the local community's emergency medical services protocol.

B. "Cardiac emergency response plan" means a written document that establishes specific steps to reduce incidents of death from sudden cardiac arrest or a similar life-threatening emergency.

C. "Economically disadvantaged students" has the same meaning as in section 15672, subsection 3.

2. Cardiac emergency response plan in schools. ~~Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, a school administrative unit must develop a cardiac emergency response plan in accordance with this subsection.~~

~~A. A cardiac emergency response plan must address the appropriate use of school personnel to respond to incidents involving an individual experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or a similar life-threatening emergency while on school grounds.~~

~~B. A plan must require that school officials work directly with local emergency service providers to integrate a cardiac emergency response plan into the local community's emergency medical services protocol.~~

~~C. A cardiac emergency response plan must integrate evidence-based core elements, such as those recommended by the American Heart Association or a nationally recognized heart health organization. A cardiac emergency response plan must include, but is not limited to:~~

~~(1) Establishment of a cardiac emergency response team;~~

~~(2) Activation of the cardiac emergency response team in response to an incident of sudden cardiac arrest or a similar life-threatening emergency on school grounds;~~

~~(3) Placement of automated external defibrillators in occupied school buildings~~

~~And the oversight of necessary routine maintenance;~~

~~(4) Distribution of the cardiac emergency response plan to all school personnel;~~

~~(5) Organization of ongoing personnel training on cardiopulmonary resuscitation, use of automated external defibrillators and annual practice drills for each; and~~

~~(6) A process for annual review and evaluation of cardiac emergency response plan.~~

~~D. A cardiac emergency response plan must specify the appropriate placement of automated external defibrillators in accordance with guidelines set by the American Heart Association or other nationally recognized heart health organization. An automated external defibrillator must be identified with appropriate signage and be made available in an unlocked location on school property that enables a person to place the automated external defibrillator on an individual experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or a similar life-threatening emergency within three minutes.~~

~~E. A plan must require that coaches, school nurses, and athletic trainers participate in the training organized pursuant to paragraph C, subparagraph 5.~~

3. Athletic emergency action plan. A comprehensive health and safety and emergency management plan approved pursuant to section 1001, subsection 16 and must include an athletic emergency action plan based on recommendations from the American Heart Association or a nationally recognized heart health organization that address the appropriate, venue-specific use of school personnel to respond to an individual experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or a similar life-threatening emergency while attending or participating in an athletic practice or event on school grounds.

4. Automated external defibrillator in athletic venues. ~~In addition to placement of automated external defibrillators pursuant to a cardiac emergency response plan pursuant to subsection 2, paragraph D, a~~An automated external defibrillator must be placed in available to each athletic venue on school property in an unlocked location. An automated external defibrillator in an athletic venue must be accessible during the school day and at any school-sponsored athletic event or team practice in which students are participating. An automated external defibrillator must be tested and maintained according to the manufacturer's operational guidelines. Notification must be provided to the appropriate first aid, ambulance, rescue service, or other appropriate local emergency medical service providers of the location and type of automated external defibrillator acquired.

5. Funding.~~The department shall provide funding to school administrative units for the implementation of cardiac emergency response plans and athletic emergency action plans with funding priority given to schools in which at least 50% of the students are economically disadvantaged students.~~

A school board may accept gifts, grants and donations, including in-kind donations designated for the purchase of an automated external defibrillator that meets the standards established by the United States Food and Drug Administration and for the costs of maintaining the automated external defibrillator and training school personnel on its use.

6. Rulemaking. The commissioner may adopt rules to implement this section and to develop a procedure for monitoring adherence to this section. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2A.

Sec. 3. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF

School and Student Supports Z270

~~Initiative: Provides one-time funds to school administrative units to implement a cardiac emergency response plan. Funds may be used for activities and equipment such as the purchase and maintenance of automated external defibrillators, cardiopulmonary resuscitation training for faculty and personnel and basic first aid training and educational materials.~~

GENERAL FUND	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$1,800,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$1,800,000

SUMMARY

~~This bill requires school administrative units, beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, to develop cardiac emergency response plans, which must address the appropriate use of school personnel to respond to incidents involving an individual experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or a similar life-threatening emergency on school grounds. A cardiac emergency response plan must include the establishment of a cardiac emergency response team, the activation of the team in an incident of sudden cardiac arrest or a similar life-threatening emergency, placement of automated external defibrillators in school buildings, distribution of the plan to school personnel, organization of personnel training on cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of automated external defibrillators and annual practice drills of each and a process for annual review and evaluation of the plan.~~

~~The bill also requires that a school board approve an athletic emergency action plan that addresses the appropriate use of school personnel in response to an individual experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or a similar life-threatening emergency at a school-sponsored athletic event and requires that each school athletic venue have available an automated external defibrillator. The bill requires the Department of Education to provide funding for the implementation of cardiac emergency response plans and athletic emergency action plans with priority to schools in which at least 50% of the students are economically disadvantaged.~~