

**STATE OF MAINE
122nd LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION**

**Final Report
of the
Citizenship Education Task Force**

March 21, 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Citizenship Education Task Force was formally created on May 6, 2004 when Legislative Resolve 2003 chapter 143 was signed, thereby implementing the recommendations of the “Commission” (the Commission to Study the Scope and Quality of Citizenship Education). Currently, the Task Force is comprised of over fifty education, community, and policymaking stakeholders who are committed to making students’ civic learning and engagement a priority in every school, community and higher education institution in Maine (see Appendix E). The Task Force is guided by the belief that it is necessary, but not sufficient, for youth to acquire *knowledge* through the study of history and government. It is equally vital that youth gain effective *skills* to act on civic knowledge, develop *attitudes* and *beliefs* that predispose them to civic engagement, and have *authentic opportunities* to participate in the civic and political life of their schools and communities.

This report serves as an update to the Commission’s nine original recommendations. The pages that follow summarize the original recommendations of the Commission report, and provide a corresponding review of the accomplishments and recommendations from the Task Force. The Citizenship Education Task Force recommendations reflect a period of work from November 2004 to December 2005, with four meetings of the full Task Force: January 13, 2005; February 28, 2005; May 18, 2005; and September 15, 2005; and over sixty smaller meetings among the six subcommittees.

Additionally, on August 19, 2004 Maine became one of six coalition states to receive a \$150,000 grant from the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, a major national initiative to renew and restore civic learning among America’s schools (see Appendix G). Since November of 2004 the work of the Task Force has been supported by the two-year grant. The labors of Task Force and the grant will not be fully completed until November of 2006.

In order to ensure long-term sustainability, the Task Force urgently recognizes that a permanent position within the Department of Education must be provided for and supported if the mission of restoring civic learning and engagement in Maine schools is to be taken seriously. For more than a year Task Force members have championed the effort. However, a Task Force has limited influence to ensure change and can only advocate for change. At this point in time, policy recommendations are ready to be adopted and on-the-ground work is ready to be implemented. Staff support is needed. Providing permanent support within the Department of Education is integral to moving each one of the following recommendations forward:

- Integrate civic learning and engagement with Maine’s system of *Learning Results*;
- Implement promising practice approaches in K-12 and in higher education;
- Provide professional development to Maine educators;
- Infuse civic learning and engagement into the Maine Readiness Campaign and other initiatives;
- Develop youth opportunities in civic engagement of their communities;
- Promote early youth registration and voting;

- Monitor civic engagement;
- Sustain the work of the Task Force.

The Task Force is committed to making students' civic learning and engagement a priority in Maine. However, the Task Force also needs the support of the Legislature and the Department of Education to make this a reality.

INTRODUCTION

The following paragraphs outline a brief background on the Commission to Study the Scope and Quality of Citizenship Education, and provide the national context for the collaboration between Maine's Citizenship Education Task Force and the national Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. Detail is also given about the design and structure of the Task Force.

Summary of Study Commission Report

Resolve 2003, chapter 85 enacted by the 121st Maine Legislature authorized the formation of the Commission to Study the Scope and Quality of Citizenship Education ("Commission"). The Commission was comprised of 15 members and included representatives of the Legislature, the Maine Department of Education, local education agencies, public school educators and students, college administrators and students, the nonprofit education sector, and the business community. The Commission convened in November 2003 to clarify problem statements, assets, and potential solutions related to the scope and quality of citizenship education in Maine.

The Commission's conclusions read as follows: (1) that it is necessary, but not sufficient, to acquire knowledge through the study of history and government; and (2) that building effective *skills* to act on civic knowledge, developing *attitudes and beliefs* that provide a personal context supportive of civic engagement, and having opportunities to participate in the civic and political life of their communities, are as important as gaining *knowledge*. Three core aspects of citizenship education are central to the Study Commission's Report: (1) **knowledge and skills**, (2) **attitudes and beliefs**, and (3) **political and community participation**. The Commission issued nine recommendations for enhancing the scope and quality of citizenship education in Maine:

- Integrate civic learning and engagement with Maine's system of *Learning Results*;
- Utilize resources and promising practices for citizenship education in Maine's K-16 education systems;
- Provide more support for pre-service educator preparation programs and post-certification training and guidance for educators;
- Elevate the civic mission of Maine's colleges and universities and citizenship engagement opportunities for Maine students;
- Establish a shared responsibility and shared ownership of citizenship education;
- Engage students in authentic experiences across the civic spectrum of their communities;
- Integrate voter education and voter registration in Maine's secondary schools;
- Develop an index to monitor civic engagement;
- Convene a new Task Force to continue the work.

The National Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools

The work of the Task Force took place against a backdrop of significant work at the national level. We call your attention to several national reports that highlight the lack of civic knowledge and participation among Americans, particularly its youth. All argue the importance of restoring civic education as the core mission of public schools to ensure that America produces informed, participatory citizens. A few of these key reports are:

- *Every Student A Citizen: Creating the Democratic Self*, by the Education Commission of the States, 2000.
- *The Civic Mission of the Schools*, by the Carnegie Corporation and the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, 2003.
- *Developing Citizenship Competencies from Kindergarten Through Grade 12: A Background Paper for Policymaker and Educators*, by the National Center for Learning and Citizenship and the Education Commission of the States, 2004.
- *From Classroom to Citizen: American Attitudes on Civic Education*, by the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools and the Alliance for Representative Democracy, 2004.
- *Future of the First Amendment: What America's High School Students Think About Their Freedoms*, by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, 2005.
- *Restoring the Balance Between Academics and Civic Engagement in Public Schools*, by the American Youth Policy Forum and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2005.

Concurrent with establishment of the Task Force, the Maine Department of Education applied for and was successfully awarded a \$150,000 grant from the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. The Campaign for the Civic Mission of the Schools is a nationwide effort funded by the Carnegie Corporation and Knight Foundation to renew and restore a core purpose of public education – preparing young people to be informed and active citizens in American democracy. Maine was just one of six states to receive this award on August 19, 2004, and since November of 2004, the work of the Task Force has been supported by the two-year grant.

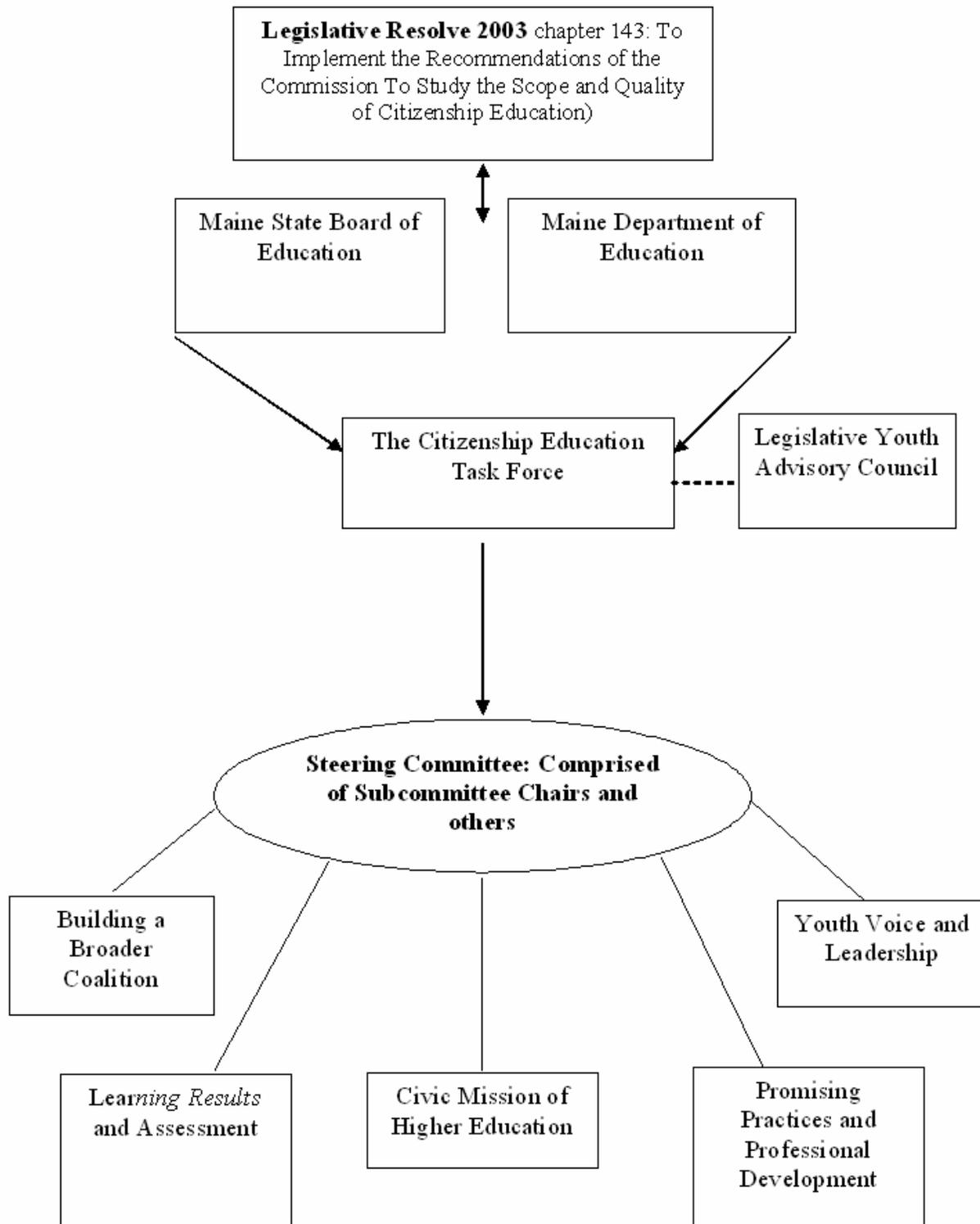
The Citizenship Education Task Force

On May 6, 2004, Governor Baldacci signed the Legislative Resolve 2003 chapter 143, creating the Maine Citizenship Education Task Force. The Maine Citizenship Education Task Force became a coalition of over fifty education, community, and policymaking stakeholders (three state representatives and three state senators) committed to making students' civic learning and engagement a priority in every school, community and higher education institution in Maine, as well as in comprehensive school reform (see Appendix E).

The Task Force met four times from November 2004 to December 2005: January 13, 2005; February 28, 2005; May 18, 2005; and September 15, 2005. The Steering Committee and each of the five subcommittees met more frequently for a cumulative total of over sixty smaller

meetings throughout the same time period. The chart on the next page illustrates the arrangement of the Task Force.

Citizenship Education Task Force Organizational Flow Chart



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE

For more than a year Task Force members have championed the effort of making civic learning and engagement a priority for Maine schools. However, a Task Force has limited influence to ensure change and can only advocate for change. At this point in time, policy recommendations are ready to be adopted and on-the-ground work is ready to be implemented. Task Force members recognize that for their work around civic learning and engagement to be taken seriously full-time staff support is needed. Providing permanent support within the Department of Education is integral to moving each one of the following recommendations forward:

- Integrate civic learning and engagement with Maine’s system of *Learning Results*;
- Implement promising practice approaches K-16;
- Provide professional development to Maine educators;
- Infuse civic learning and engagement into the Maine Readiness Campaign and other initiatives;
- Develop youth opportunities in civic engagement of their communities;
- Promote early youth registration and voting;
- Monitor civic engagement;
- Sustain the work of the Task Force.

Therefore, the Task Force urges the Department of Education to create a full-time position, enabled by legislative creation of a position allotment, so that civic learning and engagement in all Maine schools can continue to be strengthened.

1. Integrate Civic Learning and Engagement with Maine’s System of *Learning Results*

The Maine *Learning Results* seeks to “identify the knowledge and skills essential to prepare Maine students for work, higher education, citizenship, and personal fulfillment.” The review process will conclude in 2007 with a set of recommendations for the Department of Education and final approval by the State Legislature. Currently, the Maine *Learning Results* Review Advisory Committee is reviewing the following eight content areas:

- career preparation;
- english language arts;
- health/PE;
- math;
- modern and classical languages;
- science and technology;
- social studies;
- visual and performing arts.

The second phase of the review process will focus on grade levels. This is where the Task Force will present their work on exemplars.

In April 2005 members of the Task Force drafted a report with global recommendations for the Maine *Learning Results* review panel. The following June and July two Task Force members were appointed to the following review panels: Social Studies Content Panel, and the Instructional Classroom Context Committee. Additionally, Bates College students conducted a review of the existing state standards relative to other states, and presented a set of recommendations to the Maine *Learning Results* Social Studies Content Panel (December 6, 2005) and to the Maine *Learning Results* review committee (December 13, 2005) (see Appendix A).

Task Force Recommendation:

The Task Force recommends continued participation in the Maine *Learning Results* review process, and to advocate for a standards revision that strengthens civic learning and engagement for all Maine students. The Task Force is committed to making students' civic learning and engagement a priority in every school, community and higher education institution in Maine. Consistent with the core Task Force recommendation, full integration with the Maine system of *Learning Results* hinges on the presence on a staff person to oversee that there is a civic learning and engagement strand in each of the Maine Learning Results content areas.

2. Implement Promising Practice Approaches for Citizenship Education in Maine's K-12 Education Systems

The Task Force has compiled comprehensive civic learning exemplars from Maine's K-12 schools and from the national resource bank established by the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. These exemplars will be featured on the Task Force's Web Site (www.mecitizenshiped.org).

Exploratory conversations to strengthen civic learning and engagement in the curricula are beginning to take place among Maine's superintendents. A group of 4-6 superintendents have begun meeting on a regular basis to develop plans for using civic learning and engagement as an organizing principle for district-wide reform. Plans are underway to bring teams from these districts together for discussions and action planning over the next year. Funds from Maine's Civic Mission of School's grant will be used to support this deeper exploration by Maine districts. This work will form the foundation for future professional development recommendations.

On June 1, 2006 the Task Force will host a statewide forum, entitled "Educating for Democracy: K-16 Civic Learning and Engagement in Maine," on Bates College campus in Lewiston, Maine. Agenda items include sharing promising practices, discussing how to effectively embed civic learning in curricula, professional development, and the creation of mutually beneficial connections for K-12 and higher education (see Appendix B).

Task Force Recommendation:

The Task Force recommends that the Department of Education strategically partner with the Maine Readiness Campaign (for college, career and citizenship) with a focus on citizenship in order to further the above work with school district and community partners. Consistent with the core Task Force recommendation, full implementation of on-the-ground work with these promising approaches is solely dependent upon further funding and staffing within the Department of Education.

3. Provide Professional Development to Maine Educators

In May 2006, the Department of Education will submit a National Learn and Serve Grant. If awarded, this three year award would support the equivalent of one full-time position within the department, or possibly subcontracted with an outside organization, to support service learning.

The grants to small states are intended to provide sufficient resources for State Educational Agency (SEA) capacity building to ensure that sufficient technical assistance from the State is available to support district-level work (see Appendix B).

Task Force Recommendation:

The Task Force recommends that the Maine State Board of Education and the Maine Department of Education place greater emphasis on civic learning and engagement in program approval, certification, and professional development. Consistent with the core Task Force recommendation, prioritizing civic learning and engagement is dependent upon further funding and staffing within the Department of Education.

4. Implement Promising Approaches in Higher Education

The Task Force drafted eight “promising approaches” to citizenship education in higher education. The eight were adapted and expanded from the six promising approaches to civic learning that the National Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools endorses. The eight “promising approaches” were used as guiding criteria in a survey that identified civic learning exemplars in Maine’s higher education institutions. The exemplars include internships, research, projects, program exchanges, and specialized curricula that will be featured on the Task Force’s Web Site (www.mecitizenshiped.org).

On June 1, 2006 the Task Force will host a statewide forum, entitled “Educating for Democracy: K-16 Civic Learning and Engagement in Maine,” on the Bates College campus in Lewiston, Maine. Agenda items include sharing promising practices, discussing how to effectively embed civic learning in curricula, professional development, and the creation of mutually beneficial connections for K-12 and higher education (see Appendix C).

Task Force Recommendation:

(1) The Task Force recommends that there be continued support in identifying more exemplars in higher education; (2) that the legislature encourage the leadership of higher education institutions to graduate civically-prepared students who are not only ready to work, but also participate in their communities; (3) that the legislature encourage higher education institutions to attend to the mission of civic education; and (4) that the legislature consider creating a position within the department of education that focuses on teacher preparation in higher education. Consistent with the core Task Force recommendation, prioritizing civic learning and engagement among Maine's higher education institutions is hugely dependent upon further funding and staffing within the Department of Education.

5. Infuse Civic Learning and Engagement into the Maine Readiness Campaign and Other Initiatives

The Task Force has engaged in three major areas of activity: (1) the creation of a community toolkit; (2) partnerships in statewide conferences; and (3) development of a public engagement plan.

The Task Force has created a community toolkit to help community leaders and businesses facilitate the civic engagement of youth in their community. Topics cover:

- Developing a youth training / leadership program;
- Creating youth recognition awards / scholarships;
- Encouraging youth philanthropy;
- Appointing student representatives to school and municipal boards / panels;
- Mentoring students and visiting schools;
- Setting up internship programs.

The toolkit, presented at the Communities for Children and Youth Conference in October of 2005, inspired the creation of a Belfast Youth Council. The toolkit will also be featured on the Task Force's Web Site (www.mecitizenshiped.org).

In 2005 the Task Force partnered with statewide organizations to help develop a stronger focus on civic learning and engagement at their conferences. These organizations and conferences include:

- KIDS Consortium, "From Classroom to Community: Preparing a New Generation of Active Citizens" (June 27-28, 2005);
- University of Maine Education Law Conference (July 25-29, 2005);
- Communities for Children and Youth, "More Reasons for Hope" (Oct. 19, 2005).

The Task Force also made a presentation to the Maine State Board of Education meeting in July of 2005.

The Department of Education, in participation with the National Governor's Association "Redesigning the American High School" state grant program (funded by the Gates Foundation), will embark on a "Maine Readiness Campaign," focusing on preparation for college, career, and citizenship in the 21st century. The Task Force has become a formal partner to this effort in order to strengthen the citizenship component of the campaign.

Task Force Recommendation:

The Maine Readiness Campaign for College, Career, and Citizenship will kick off in 2006. The Task Force will play an active role. Additional staff support from the Department of Education is vital to ensuring the third 'C' of this campaign does not get overlooked.

6. Develop Youth Opportunities in Civic Engagement of Their Communities

The Task Force would like to preface this section with an acknowledgment of the logistical difficulties that are often involved in fostering youth engagement during normal business hours. The Task Force process did not reflect its own aim of greater youth engagement. Adults commonly take for granted the ability to travel independently and do not always consider a student's school schedule when arranging meetings. The Youth Voice and Leadership subcommittee of the Task Force scheduled its working meetings in the late afternoon to accommodate youth schedules and travel time.

The Task Force charged the Legislative Youth Advisory Council with holding four statewide public forums on issues important to Maine youth. Two hearings were held in 2005, one at Oxford Hills High School on January 28th, and the other at Caribou High School on March 25th, 2005. Two more will be scheduled for 2006.

On May 23, 2005 the Task Force completed a survey assessing youth involvement on school boards. The research project gathered information on opportunities for meaningful youth involvement on district school boards and committees, and other decision-making bodies in a student's school district (see Appendix D).

The Task Force created a Web Site to further its work and increase youth involvement (launched September 15, 2005, www.mecitizenshiped.org, see Appendix F).

Legislative Youth Advisory Council member Kala Clark attended the 3rd Annual National Congressional Conference on September 24-26, 2005 in Washington D.C. Maine is the only state to bring a youth delegate for the past two consecutive years. Task Force co-chair Patrick Phillips, co-facilitator Kathryn Hunt, Gorham Schools Superintendent Ted Sharp, Representative Jackie Norton, and Representative Stephen Bowen also attended.

The Task Force created a community toolkit to help community leaders and businesses facilitate the civic engagement of youth in their community. It was presented at the Communities for Children and Youth Conference in October of 2005 and inspired the creation of a Belfast Youth

Council. The toolkit will also be featured on the Task Force Web Site (www.mecitizenshiped.org).

In accordance with the Maine *Learning Results* Review process, Bates College students conducted a review of existing state standards relative to other states, and presented a set of recommendations to the Social Studies Content Panel (December 6, 2005) and to the Review Committee (December 13, 2005). Bates College students also contributed to the analyzation of promising practice exemplars in higher education, and they analyzed and gathered promising practice exemplars for the K-12 topic area.

One aspect of the Task Force involvement in the Maine Readiness Campaign for College, Career, and Citizenship entails collecting stories of youth involvement for the media campaign and regional leadership trainings to be carried out in 2006.

Task Force Recommendation:

The Task Force recommends that the Legislature continue adequate support for the Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council, particularly with long-term, consistent staffing and funding. To ensure that the Council is reflective of Maine demographics in terms of geography, ethnicity, and gender, the Task Force recommends that a nomination process be established and enforced. It is the responsibility of the legislature to help members of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council understand the process of American democracy, and to facilitate the role of youth in authentic leadership and policymaking experiences.

The Task Force also recommends that the Legislature support youth civic engagement in general. State agencies should invite youth to participate in public meetings. The Task Force also recommends that a legislative committee be developed to enhance student engagement and education about the Maine State Legislature. Involvement helps youth learn community processes and helps them to understand the impact they can have on public policy decisions. Active youth engagement will also help them to develop leadership, communication, problem solving, and teamwork skills. Consistent with the Task Force's main recommendation, staffing support within the Department of Education is vital to ensuring greater youth engagement.

7. Promote Early Youth Registration and Voting

Studies indicate that when individuals vote at a young age it becomes a lifelong habit. Relationships have also been made between voting and other forms of civic engagement. Chapter 577, Public Laws of 2003 "An Act to Reduce the Voting Age Qualification for State Primary Elections for Voters Who Will Reach 18 Years of Age by the Time of the General Election" was signed March 26, 2004. The June 2006 primary election will mark the first time the law is applied. A 17-yr old who will be 18 by the time of the general election in November may vote on the primary ballot.

Chapter 387, Public Laws of 2005 “An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Political Caucuses and Committees” was signed on June 13, 2005. This permits 17-yr olds who will be 18 by the date of the next General Election to participate in party caucuses.

The Secretary of State’s Office and Task Force members will partner in 2006 to carry out a voter education campaign to encourage eligible 17-year-olds (and the general public) to participate in Maine’s primary elections and to participate in party caucuses.

Task Force Recommendation:

The Task Force recommends that these new laws serve as a catalyst to focus attention on the importance of voting generally, and to highlight the benefits of people becoming active voters early in life. Consistent with the Task Force’s main recommendation, staffing support within the Department of Education is vital to ensuring greater youth engagement.

8. Monitor Civic Engagement

The Commission to Study the Scope and Quality of Citizenship Education designed two surveys assessing how well Maine’s schools and colleges prepare students to be “Responsible and Involved Citizens” (as outlined in the guiding principles of Maine’s *Learning Results*). At the time of the Study Commission’s legislative report, survey responses were still being collected.

On May 23, 2005 the Task Force completed a survey measuring youth involvement on school boards. The research project gathered information on opportunities for meaningful youth involvement on district school boards and committees, and other decision-making bodies in a student’s school district. The findings concluded that about 26% of school districts involve students on their boards and committees.

In 2006 the Task Force will work with the Maine Development Foundation (who publishes the Maine Economic Growth Council’s *Measures of Growth* report), and the Children’s Cabinet, and the University of Southern Maine collaborative known as “Maine Marks” to develop a civic index.

Task Force Recommendation:

The Study Commission’s surveys were deemed critical in making informed recommendations to the Legislature about the *scope and quality* of citizenship education. Accordingly, the Task Force recommends that the Department of Education complete and update the surveys with the addition of new information concerning the status of civic education and youth civic engagement. The Task Force also recommends that the Maine Readiness Campaign develop and monitor indicators of youth civic engagement. Consistent with the Task Force’s main recommendation, staffing support within the Department of Education would help ensure that civic learning and engagement is monitored and tracked.

9. Sustain the Work of the Task Force

The Task Force was established on May 6, 2004. However, the funding period of the National Campaign for the Civic Mission of School's grant extends through November 2006.

Task Force Recommendation:

In order to continue to bring public awareness to the issue of civic learning and engagement across Maine schools, and communities, the Task Force recommends that its work be sustained and that a permanent structure be established. In particular, the Task Force encourages the Legislature to direct the Department of Education's Commissioner to establish an advisory committee or another permanent body so that on-the-ground work can begin to take shape in Maine. Consistent with the main recommendation, permanent staffing within the Department of Education would enable the Task Force mission of civic learning and engagement to be sustained and developed across Maine schools.