

Legislative Youth Advisory Council
Draft Meeting Summary
August 8, 2007

Wednesday, August 8th, 2007
10:00 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Room 427, State House
Augusta, Maine

Youth Members and Legislative Members Present: Mary Beth Moyer, Lewiston; Hannah Lennett, Litchfield; Ian Engdahl, Winthrop; Alex Cornell du Houx, Brunswick; Benjamin Goodman, Kennebunk; Will Colan, Readfield; Meg Richardson, Kents Hill; Rep. David Farrington, Gorham; Rep. Roberta Muse, Fryeburg; Sen. Paula Benoit, Phippsburg; Sen. Joseph Perry, Bangor.

Youth Members and Legislative Members Absent: Grace Wright, Brunswick; Hannah Stein, Portland; Dave O’Heir, Waterville; Brandon Mazer, Brunswick; Claire Howard, South Portland; Heather Pratt, Chelsea.

Staff and Others Present: Larry Littlefield, Superintendent of Kittery Schools; Shelly Reed, Truancy, Dropout, Alternative Education and Homeless Coordinator, Department of Education; Jennifer Thompson, former LYAC Co-Chair; Patrick Norton, Director, Office of Policy and Legal Analysis; Brenna Byrne, Legislative Researcher, Office of Policy and Legal Analysis.

1. Meeting Called to Order, Approval of July 18th Meeting Summary, Review of Agenda
Meeting called to order

Rep. Farrington convened the third meeting of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council by requesting introductions from members and guests.

Approval of July 18th Meeting Summary

Council members reviewed the July 18th meeting summary.

Motion: Ian Engdahl motioned and Hannah Lennett seconded his motion to approve the July 18th meeting summary. The Council voted unanimously in favor of approving the July 18th meeting summary as submitted by staff.

Review of agenda and subsequent meeting materials

Staff reviewed the agenda and a packet of supporting meeting materials requested at the July 18th Council Meeting. *Key documents in this packet are referenced in parentheses below when relevant to Council discussions and actions.*

2. Continued discussion on the criteria for selecting youth members to serve on the State Board of Education

Representative Farrington briefly updated the Council on the background and current state of LYAC’s ongoing discussion about the criteria for selecting youth members to serve on the State Board of Education. Using a summary of the Council’s July 18th discussion on this matter (page

9 of info packet), the Council continued its discussion with the intention of developing specific suggestions for the State Board of Education to consider at its August 14th conference at Bates College in Lewiston. The Council's discussion focused on the following thoughts and suggestions:

- Using the criteria as guidelines rather than as strict standards to allow more flexibility in the selection process
- Demonstrated qualities of the selected candidate should include community service experience, leadership skills and independent student voice, commitment and dedication
- Requiring candidates to submit a personal written statement
- Providing candidates with the option to submit a peer and/or community member recommendation (i.e. to allow non-teacher recommendations)
- Minimum GPA requirements

The Council requested from staff a summary of its suggestions for discussion at the State Board Conference next week. Mary Beth Moyer, Meg Richardson, Hannah Lennett, and Will Colan agreed to represent LYAC at the conference. Brenna Byrne will attend as staff support.

Representative Farrington raised the Council's attention to the fact that in addition to the criteria for selecting youth members to serve on the State Board, the conference's second objective is to gather youth input on what the structure of student engagement should look like to ensure that student voices influence public policy in Maine. Council members raised questions about whether or not the State Board has a plan in place to engage its selected youth members. Representative Farrington spoke to his awareness of the State Board looking to precedents set in other states, its accountability to the National Association of State Boards and having a plan in place for engaging student members. Representative Farrington reminded the council that current law does not allow voting rights for youth members selected to serve on the Board and asked the Council to think about whether or not this is something they would like to recommend.

3. Continued discussion on LD 1254, An Act to Modify the Student Code of Conduct

Representative Farrington introduced the topic as having evolved through discussion into two closely related but separate policy issues: 1) enforcing the student code of conduct for activities taking place off school premises, which applies to all students, and 2) enforcing student co-curricular contracts, which largely focus on drug and alcohol use and applies to a subset of student involved in co curricular activities. LD 1254 (page 15 info packet) as originally proposed would have required the school boards to establish policies and procedures to limit student participation in co curricular activities for behavior that is unlawful. The amendment to LD 1254 (page 17) would have allowed law enforcement to share student information with school administrators in cases where a student has been involved in criminal activity for the purpose of enabling schools to enforce their student codes of conduct.

Legislative members were largely concerned with the issue of schools enforcing restrictions on student behavior off school premises and viewed the proposed bill and amendment as mechanisms to allow school to take the law in to their own hands. Council members also expressed concern about students' right to due process and the risk of removing privileges before the student is adjudicated. Youth members agreed that student codes of conduct and co curricular

contracts are ineffective in preventing illegal behavior. Many shared the perspective that a student's motivation in staying drug and chemical free (and thus honoring the typical requirements of a co curricular contract or athletic code) is to maintain good performance, not to obey the law or the contract itself. The Council discussed the possibility of incorporating confidentiality waivers into student codes of conduct, but members were generally uncomfortable with the idea of requiring students to waive their rights as a condition of being involved in co curricular activities.

Lunch

4. Briefing on the history and origin of LD 1254

Larry Littlefield, Superintendent for Kittery Schools, shared his perspective on LD 1254. The idea behind what LD 1254 attempted to address was initiated by an incident in a Kittery high school wherein the school had no legal basis to remove a student involved with illegal behavior from playing on the school's basketball team. Mr. Littlefield's primary concern is for schools to have the ability to choose who represents them and argued that this is a state-wide issue. Title 20-A of the Maine Statutes (pages 23-24 info packet) requires all schools to adopt a student code of conduct and specifies that the code must accomplish certain objectives, including the establishment of guidelines and criteria for information sharing between school administration and law enforcement. Because a school code of conduct applies to all schools, this was the only avenue sought to address the issue state-wide.

5. Continued discussion on LD 1254, An Act to Modify the Student Code of Conduct

The Council's discussion focused on whether there is a role for the Legislature to encourage conformity across school co curricular contracts that broadens illegal behavior beyond substance abuse. Many felt that much of the bill's intent is to preserve school image rather than to protect school safety and were not supportive of the bill's current language. Council members agreed on the general premise that schools' priority should be the students' wellbeing, intervention and rehabilitation, not punishment. Representative Farrington challenged the Council with thinking about suggestions it might make for language in a model co curricular contract schools could use that would promote healthy student behavior and state more clearly the consequences for violation. The Council agreed to keep this focus on a continued discussion and prioritize the issue at the MYAN conference in November.

6. Maine Youth Action Network (MYAN) 24th Annual Peer Leadership Conference

At the July 18th meeting, LYAC requested Staff to meet with MYAN and report back options for LYAC's participation at this year's Peer Leadership Conference. Patrick Norton met with Deb Bicknell and presented the council with a summary of ideas generated at this meeting (page 131-132 info packet). Council members expressed interest in participating in a key note speech to raise awareness about LYAC, facilitating a workshop to get input on the issues around LD 1265, and creating a survey or suggestion box to gather input from the youth audience on LD 1254 and other issues of importance to youth. Council members agreed that planning for the MYAN conference would be the focus of its next meeting scheduled for October 25th.

7. 2007 Schedule/Work Plan, Other Business, Announcements

Schedule/Work Plan: The Council's revisited its schedule of meeting for 2007 and made no significant changes. The 2007 Schedule of Meetings is as follows:

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| 1) Wednesday April 4 th | Work Meeting (in Augusta) |
| 2) Wednesday, July 18 th | Work Meeting (in Augusta) |
| 3) Wednesday, August 8 th | Work Meeting (in Augusta) |
| 4) Thursday, October 25 th | Work Meeting (in Augusta) |
| 5) Fri, Nov 16 th & Sat, Nov 17 th | Public Hearing (at MYAN Conference - Bar Harbor) |
| 6) Late Nov/Early Dec | Work Meeting (in Augusta) |

Other Business:

Nancy Birkhimer from the Maine Center Disease Control has requested time on the next meeting agenda to receive LYAC's input on a newly developed survey designed to replace multiple youth behavior surveys such as the Maine Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Use Survey, the Youth Tobacco survey and the Search Institute's Youth Behaviors and Assets Survey. Several years ago LYAC spent time considering the issues around surveys in schools, specifically the Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Survey and developed specific recommendations in the 2003 Legislative Youth Advisory Council's Annual Report. The Council agreed to allow time on the October 25th meeting agenda to revisit this issue, review the progress, and provide input.

Announcements: Recent changes to Council membership since the last meeting on July 18th include the resignation of Henry Beck of Waterville.

8. Adjournment

Representative Farrington adjourned the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenna Byrne, Legislative Researcher
Office of Policy and Legal Analysis