

Legislative Youth Advisory Council
123rd Legislature
Meeting Summary for October 25th, 2007

Thursday, October 25th, 2007
9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Room 427, State House
Augusta, Maine

Youth Members and Legislative Members Present: Benjamin Goodman, Kennebunk; Will Colan, Readfield; Meg Richardson, Kents Hill; Dave O’Heir, Waterville; Maureen Quinn, Portland; Zoë Baker, Kennebunk; Rep. David Farrington, Gorham; Sen. Paula Benoit, Phippsburg.

Youth Members and Legislative Members Absent: Mary Beth Moyer, Lewiston; Hannah Lennett, Litchfield; Ian Engdahl, Winthrop; Alex Cornell du Houx, Brunswick; Grace Wright, Brunswick; Hannah Stein, Portland; Brandon Mazer, Brunswick; Claire Howard, South Portland; Heather Pratt, Chelsea; Rep. Roberta Muse, Fryeburg; Sen. Joseph Perry, Bangor.

Staff and Others Present: Deborah Bicknell, Maine Youth Action Network; David Stockford, Maine Children’s Cabinet Senior Staff and Director of Special Services; Susan Berry, Maine Children’s Cabinet; Nancy Birkhimer, Teen and Young Adult Program (MCDC); Lauren Sterling, Maine Children’s Cabinet; 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 August 8th Meeting Summary, Review of Agenda

Meeting called to order

LYAC Youth Co-Chair Benjamin Goodman convened the fourth meeting of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council by requesting introductions from members and guests.

Approval of August 8th Meeting Summary

Council members reviewed the July 18th meeting summary.

Motion: Meg Richardson motioned and Will Colan seconded his motion to approve the August 8th meeting summary.

Vote: The Council voted unanimously in favor of approving the August 8th meeting summary as submitted by staff.

Review of agenda and subsequent meeting materials

Staff reviewed the agenda and subsequent meeting materials including a “Conference Planning Packet” containing several tools to assist Council members in planning the specifics of LYAC’s agenda at the MYAN Conference, an updated contact list and 2007 Schedule of Meetings.

2. 24th Annual Peer Leadership Conference – LYAC’s Agenda

A primary objective of this meeting was to plan LYAC’s participation at the 24th Annual Peer Leadership Conference as approved by MYAN’s Youth Planning Team. Recognizing this Conference as an opportunity to raise awareness among its youth constituency about LYAC and

its role in the Legislative process as well as to gain youth input on policy issues the Council has been considering, Council members committed to these opportunities through three unique venues: a keynote presentation, a workshop, and a survey, which in combination, make up LYAC's 3-part agenda for the Conference. This section of the meeting summary outlines the details of this agenda, which reflect a series of Council decisions related to LYAC's goals for the Conference, the policy issues chosen to address with Conference participants, and how LYAC will carryout its agenda.

PART 1: KEYNOTE SPEECH (with audience break-out session)

When: Friday November 16th, 2007 3:00 p.m. (20-30 min)

What: The keynote speech is the kick off event for the conference and will involve an oral presentation, and a skit played by all LYAC members.

Goal: The goal of the keynote speech is to introduce LYAC and engage the full audience on the following policy question about the jurisdiction of school authority:

Should schools have the authority to hold students accountable for unacceptable behavior outside of school? Why or why not?

Plan: Council members agreed the keynote speech would include the following:

- Introductory skit (2-3 minutes, principal's office scenario, played by LYAC members) to capture the audience's attention and introduce the school jurisdiction policy issue.
- An oral presentation (6-8 minutes) that will address:
 - What is LYAC?
 - LYAC's role in the Legislature
 - How to get involved with LYAC
 - Introduce school jurisdiction issue (how did it come to LYAC?)
 - Display school jurisdiction policy question on power-point slide
- Audience break-out session (5-10 minutes)
 - Ask audience to break into small groups for 5-10 min, brainstorm the policy question, and write their answers down on paper provided at each table
 - Explain what LYAC will do with their answers
- Introduce LYAC survey, why it is important and what LYAC will do with the information (1-2 minutes)

PART 2: WORKSHOP - "Making Your Voice Matter: Youth Input Into Legislative Policy" (Session 4, Room 813)

When: Saturday, November 17th, 2007 11:15 a.m. (1 hour)

What: The workshop will involve 2 parts: 1) An introduction to what LYAC does with examples of recent legislation passed that effect youth, and 2) a mock LYAC meeting focusing on the school jurisdiction issue. Two LYAC members will facilitate the

workshop, while other LYAC members will be in the room to listen and ask questions of audience members. One LYAC member will document the discussion.

Goal: The goals of the workshop are to 1) educate participants about how LYAC serves to bring youth voice to the legislature, and 2) to gain input from participants on the issue of school jurisdiction.

Plan: Council members agreed on the following plan for the workshop:

- Facilitators will introduce LYAC, and explain how youth can provide input to impact legislative decisions that effect youth.
- Facilitators present examples of recently passed legislation that effect youth in Maine
- LYAC members create a mock Council meeting setting to discuss the issue of school jurisdiction with participants and demonstrate how LYAC brings youth input into the legislature's decision-making process. The mock Council meeting will involve:
 - LYAC members seated in a horseshoe facing a podium
 - LYAC Co-chair/Facilitators present the school jurisdiction issue to audience and ask audience members to address the Council (using the podium) with thoughts, ideas, concerns, questions they have about the issue.
 - Facilitators/LYAC members probe audience with related policy questions (use Item 2 of planning packet)
 - Note taker documents key points of the policy discussion
- Facilitators conclude with an explanation of what LYAC plans to do with the information participants provided.

PART 3: SURVEY/SUGGESTION BOX

When: Introduced during keynote; distributed to all youth conference participants.

What: A one-page questionnaire to be distributed and completed by all youth conference participants as part of LYAC's keynote presentation.

Goal: The goal of the survey is to collect information from conference participants that LYAC can use to better understand their youth constituency and their level of awareness about LYAC, how LYAC can improve and maintain communication with its youth constituency, and what bill proposals it should focus on next year.

Plan: Staff will create the one-page survey and distribute to LYAC for review. LYAC members agreed upon the following topics for survey questions:

- Awareness about LYAC
- How to improve and maintain contact between LYAC and youth constituency
- Rank which bills proposed that LYAC should focus on next year
- Demographic information: age, gender, town/school

3. Conference Logistics

Expectations

Deb Bicknell of MYAN, who has been involved with planning the Peer Leadership Conference for several years, provided the Council with information about what to expect at the conference. About 450 participants, including 100 volunteers and 50-60 groups from around Maine are expected to attend the Conference. Workshops are expected to have audiences of about 20 participants. With all 8 LYAC members present in the room, an audience of about 12 workshop participants can be expected.

Registration

The following LYAC members are registered Conference participants:

1. Ian Engdahl
2. Zoë Baker
3. Ben Goodman
4. Meg Richardson
5. Will Colan
6. Mary Beth Moyer
7. Hannah Stein
8. Representative Roberta Muse

Each LYAC member attending the Conference can expect to receive a confirmation email from Brenna with additional information about the conference and the expectations of participants.

LYAC members agreed to meet at the Conference registration area on Friday at 12:00 noon to re-group and rehearse for the Keynote presentation.

Permission Slips

Representative Muse has agreed to be the ‘advisor’ for LYAC members while at the Conference. Each LYAC member will be provided with a permission slip, naming Representative Muse as his/her advisor, which must be signed by a parent or guardian, and submitted at the conference registration table.

4. Other LYAC Business

Schedule/Work Plan: The Council scheduled its last meeting of the year for Wednesday, November 28th 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the State House in Augusta. The revised 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 | Keynote/Workshop (at MYAN Conference - Bar Harbor) |
| 6) Wednesday, November 28 th | Work Meeting (in Augusta) |

The final meeting will focus on developing LYAC's biennial report to the Legislature.

Changes in Membership: Since the last meeting on August 8th, changes in Council membership include two new appointments by the Senate President: Zoë Baker of Kennebunk and Maureen Quinn of Portland, both appointed on August 24th, 2007. This leaves one House-appointed vacancy for a student, 16 years of age who is enrolled in an equivalent instruction program under Title 20-A Chapter 211(1-A).

5. Integrated Youth Health Survey

Nancy Birkhimer from the Maine Center Disease Control presented the Council with an update on the Integrated Youth Health Survey, 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. In 2003, LYAC considered the issues around surveys in schools, specifically the Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Survey and developed specific recommendations in its annual report to the Legislature, which Nancy addressed specifically in her presentation to the Council.

Input from online surveys and focus groups have continued to inform the draft development process. From a list of 400 survey questions, Nancy and her team have narrowed the list down to 230 so far. Her team is now focused on selecting from this list questions that will generate much needed school-level and state-level data on Maine's youth. Nancy presented the council with a list of 52 proposed school-level questions and 18 selected proposed state-level questions her team believes schools will want data for and asked the Council for its input on the subject matter, of these questions and effective ways of asking them. Council members re-iterated past concerns about the reliability of the data generated from the survey and made suggestions about simplifying question responses and avoiding repetition. The Council offered to be a continued source of input in the final stages of the survey's development.

6. Best Practices in Bullying and Harassment

Lauren Sterling presented the Council with an update on the Maine Children's Cabinet's work on bullying and harassment prevention policy. As a result of an executive order by the Governor to study the high rate of suicide among Maine's youth, the Maine Children's Cabinet was called on to look at school climate and the occurrence of bullying and harassment in Maine schools. LD 564, passed in 2005, required school administrative units to establish or modify policies and procedures to address bullying, harassment and sexual harassment that are consistent with Maine's Best Practices in Bullying and Harassment Prevention, developed by the Maine Children's Cabinet. This sample policy acts as a comprehensive guide for schools and communities to more consistently address the occurrence of bullying and harassment as well as foster social climates that focus on preventing such occurrences.

The Maine Children's cabinet is actively engaged in pilot studies at 3 schools in Maine to study the implementation of its sample policy. Gathering data through online surveys, evaluating the effects of on-site training supports and coordinating with funding sources are tasks the Children's Cabinet is focused on currently and will share with LYAC when results become available.

When asked about whether the issue of ‘cyber-bullying’ had been factored into the best practices sample policy, Lauren explained that the issue arose after the best practices policy was published but that she is currently looking for funding to focus on cyber-bullying.

7. Adjournment

Representative Farrington adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenna Byrne, Legislative Researcher
Office of Policy and Legal Analysis

This meeting summary was unanimously approved on November 28th, 2007.