

Legislative Youth Advisory Council
123rd Legislature, 2nd Regular Session
July 30th, 2008 Meeting Summary

Wednesday, July 30th, 2008
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Room 220, Cross Office Building
Augusta, Maine

Youth Members and Legislative Members Present: Rep. David Farrington, Gorham; Rep. Roberta Muse, Fryeburg; Sen. Paula Benoit, Phippsburg; Sen. Joseph Perry, Bangor; Dave O’Heir, Benjamin Goodman, Kennebunk; Ian Engdahl, Winthrop; Will Colan, Readfield; Meg Richardson, Kents Hill; Mary Beth Moyer, Lewiston; Maureen Quinn, Portland; Zoë Baker, Kennebunk; Alex Cornell du Houx, Brunswick; Caleb Davis, Solon .

Youth Members and Legislative Members Absent: Grace Wright, Brunswick; Hannah Stein, Portland; Brandon Mazer, Brunswick; Claire Howard, South Portland.

Special Guests, Staff and Others Present: Secretary of State. Mathew Dunlap; Deputy Secretary of State, Julie Flynn; Presiding Officers of the Maine Legislature, Senate President Beth Edmonds and House Speaker Glen Cummings; David Stockford, Maine Children’s Cabinet Senior Staff and Director of Special Services; Patrick Norton, Director, Danielle Fox, Legislative Analyst and Brenna Byrne, Legislative Researcher, Office of Policy and Legal Analysis.

1. Meeting called to order, approve last meeting summary, review agenda.

Call to Order

LYAC Chair Rep. David Farrington convened the second Legislative Youth Advisory Council meeting of 2008 at 10:15 a.m. by requesting introductions from members, staff and guests.

Agenda

Danielle briefly reviewed the agenda. The primary purpose of this meeting is to identify the issues and challenges LYAC faces in effectively serving the Legislature and develop recommendations to address these issues and better prepare the next Council for the 124th Legislature.

Approval of July 30, 2008 Meeting Summary

Motion: Ian Engdahl motioned to approve the January 29th 2008 draft meeting summary. Will Colan seconded the motion.

Vote: The Council unanimously approved the meeting summary as submitted by staff.

2. Presentation from Ben Goodman on Lessons Learned from other Youth Councils around the Nation.

Ben Goodman, LYAC’s youth Co-Chair, attended a national conference in New Orleans on youth councils organized by the Forum for Youth Investment in collaboration with the National Conference of State Legislatures. Using a power point presentation to share his notes from

discussions with other state youth councils, Ben enlightened the Council with details about the wide range of membership structures, attendance policies, term and age limits, and recruitment procedures among other state youth councils.

Ben also offered some suggestions for LYAC to consider in its discussion on potential structural changes to LYAC including implementing a process for affirming membership appointments, instituting annual appointments in place of the current biennial appointments and adopting and enforcing a member attendance policy.

3. Discussion: LYAC Organizational and Structural Issues – Quorums, Attendance and Recruitment

Representative Farrington asked Council members review Zoe's memo to the Council (sent Feb 27, 2008), which highlights the issues and concerns previously discussed by LYAC members regarding the productivity and effectiveness of LYAC meetings. Rep. Farrington then opened the discussion by asking council members what makes attendance difficult. Meeting location, timing and other commitments were cited as barriers. However, the Council generally agreed that the discussion should not focus on making things more flexible, but rather on recruiting and appointing members who are committed and want to make LYAC a priority.

Members discussed the role of an attendance policy as a means of addressing LYAC's difficulty in meeting quorum requirements to conduct business. With the intention of conveying clear expectations for new members about mandatory attendance at LYAC meetings, the Council considered what LYAC's attendance policy should constitute and the process by which it would be established.

Danielle advised the Council on the pros and cons of establishing such a policy through Council rules versus making a statutory change and offered to draft two different proposals for the Council to consider at its next meeting.

Members also discussed at length the possibility of establishing an application process as additional way of emphasizing the level of commitment expected of LYAC members. Council members were in agreement about the importance of eligible youth understanding and recognizing the commitment required by LYAC membership prior to appointment. Council members offered different opinions on what such an application process would require. The Council opted to table their discussion until later in the afternoon and present their ideas with the Presiding Officers for feedback before making a decision.

4. Presentation from Secretary of State on Youth Voter Registration Materials and Dissemination

Secretary of State, Mathew Dunlap, and Deputy Secretary of State, Julie Flynn reviewed with the Council current voter registration laws and their requirements for disseminating voter registration materials to youth throughout the state. They took questions from Council members about the exchange of youth voter registration information between the Secretary of State's office and high schools and colleges and the guidelines for disseminating this information to

students. The Secretary of State stressed that they have no enforcement authority over how schools disseminate voter registration information but offer to do outreach at schools.

As a follow up to LD 2130, *An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council to Allow Youth to Pre-Register to Vote upon Reaching 16 Years of Age* (Resolve 2007, Chapter 164), Mr. Dunlap told the Council that his office plans to focus more on new ways of targeting Maine's youth demographic and present voter registration information more effectively. He expressed the need to examine the possibility of using Facebook and YouTube and other internet-based media as possible means to reach out more effectively to youth about Maine's voting laws. LYAC agreed to serve as a liaison in the Secretary of State's effort to continue engaging Maine youth in the voting process.

5. Continued Discussion: LYAC Organizational and Structural Issues – Quorums, Attendance and Recruitment

Motion: After reviewing what had been previously discussed, Alex Cornell du Houx made a motion to adopt a rule and/or statutory change that expresses the following attributes of an attendance policy agreement:

- LYAC members may not be absent from more than 2 consecutive meetings.
- LYAC members in violation of this policy:
 - Will receive a written notice from the Chairs regarding his/her pending membership status and an invitation to appear before the full Council to state his/her case for continued membership; and
 - Will have ___ number of days to respond to the Chairs' invitation; or
 - Will automatically surrender his/her membership on LYAC.
- LYAC Chairs may consult with the Council regarding their decision to terminate or re-instate membership.

Zoë Baker seconded the pending notion. Representative Farrington called for a vote in favor of or against the pending motion.

Vote: The Council voted unanimously in support of the motion to adopt the above attendance policy agreement with the understanding that they will review and approve a written draft of this policy at the next meeting.

Continuing its earlier tabled discussion on establishing an application process, Council members weighed the pros and cons of Council members reviewing potential appointees. While some members expressed the importance of LYAC members reviewing applicant information for screening purposes, others expressed concerns about fairness and screening as a potential conflict of interest. Others questioned whether screening applicants is an appropriate use of the Council's time. Members agreed that a screening process should ensure fairness, be simple, and consider geographic representation of youth around the state. Members also recognized that outreach will be required to generate interest among both engaged youth and youth who wish to be more engaged. Finally, the Council agreed upon implementing some form of application

process and to discuss the details once the Council has gained necessary input from the Presiding Officers.

6. Discussion: Improving LYAC Constituent Communication and Representation

Representative Farrington began this discussion broadly by asking Council members what kinds of things they would like to see happen to make LYAC function better. The Council discussed the need for LYAC to increase its awareness among Maine's youth in order to engage youth and get their input. Youth members named several other youth groups that they would like to see LYAC network with such as Model State/UN, Maine Youth Action Network, Forum for Youth Investment, who might help to provide venues or opportunities to get the word out about LYAC. Members also discussed the practicality of reaching out to youth through high schools, press coverage, and websites such as Facebook to increase awareness and engage youth for input.

Several members expressed concern about reaching out to not only engaged youth but youth who wish to become more engaged. The Council agreed that LYAC's communication efforts should target all youth and consider geographic representation.

Ben Goodman asked the Council to consider Washington State's example of electing a communications director to maintain contact and communication with its youth constituency.

7. Special Guests Senate President Beth Edmonds and House Speaker Glen Cummings – A Discussion of LYAC's Successes and Challenges.

Danielle summarized the Chairs' invitation to the Presiding Officers to share recent successes and discuss several issues and challenges LYAC faces in effectively serving the Legislature. Senate President Beth Edmonds and House Speaker Glen Cummings joined the Council for discussion. Ben Goodman called for an introduction of Council members, summarized LYAC's recent Legislative successes and addressed the challenges LYAC has been discussing with respect to quorums and representation. On the Council's behalf, Ben asked the Presiding Officers for their thoughts on LYAC's idea to establish an attendance policy and an application process.

Senate President Beth Edmonds described the appointment process, her reliance on recommendations from others, and the difficulty encountered with finding people to serve. She expressed support for having a pool of candidate to draw from when making LYAC appointments.

House Speaker Glen Cummings thanked the Council for its work and expressed pride in Maine for leading the nation in establishing a legislative youth advisory council. He also expressed his desire to see LYAC's greater potential realized and the need for the Legislature to reach out more often to LYAC for input. The Speaker also recognized the Legislative members' service and defense of the need for LYAC.

The Speaker expressed support for an application process for the purposes of providing the Presiding Officers with list of candidates who are interested or who meet specified criteria. He

suggested that the Presiding Officers work with their staff to encourage the appointment of LYAC members earlier in the session and to ensure the message of mandatory attendance is passed along clearly to LYAC appointees. Lastly, the Speaker expressed support for changes to LYAC's statutes that would help LYAC to function more effectively. In addition to establishing an attendance policy, he suggested the Council consider staggered terms for LYAC members to maintain institutional memory, adjusting the number of Council members and/or redefining the number of members that would require a quorum.

Council thanked the Presiding Officers for their suggestions and support.

8. Other LYAC Business

Next LYAC Meeting Scheduled

The Council scheduled its next meeting for Wednesday August 13th, 2008.

Lewiston Youth Advisory Council Invitation

Ian Engdahl, Ben Goodman, Zoë Baker, and Will Colan volunteered to attend the Lewiston Youth Advisory Council's orientation meeting on August 15th, from 11:30 to 12:00.

LYAC Member to Serve on Pre-K through Adult Advisory Council

The Council endorsed Meg Richardson to serve as the LYAC representative on the Pre-K through Adult Advisory Council to Plan and Coordinate a Seamless Public Education System in Maine, established by the Governor's issuance of Executive Order 12 FY 08/09.

9. Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,

Brenna Byrne, Legislative Researcher
Office of Policy and Legal Analysis

Unanimously approved on Wednesday, August 13, 2008.