CAMPAIGN FOR THE CIVIC MISSION OF SCHOOLS

Educating for Democracy

A Periodic Newsletter of the Maine Citizenship Education Task Force **Winter 2006**

The Maine Citizenship Education Task Force is a coalition of more than 50 individuals and organizations committed to promoting and strengthening civic learning and engagement across Maine.

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.

Task Force Meeting Dates

- ✓ April 11, 2006 (1pm-4pm)—Maine Readiness Campaign and the role of the Task Force
- ✓ July 11, 2006 (1pm-4pm)—Civic learning & engagement and district reform
- ✓ October 10, 2006 (1pm-4pm)—The sustainability of the Task Force beyond the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools

-Locations are all in Augusta, Burton Cross Building, room 105

Highlights from September 15, 2005 meeting

The Maine Citizenship Education Task Force looks forward to another productive year in 2006. Before forging ahead, we would like to take a moment to recognize the accomplishments from 2005. Read further for details.

Products:

- Website
- Community Toolkit
- Higher Education Exemplars
- K-12 Exemplars

Items of Special Mention:

- National Constitution Day
- Legislative Youth Advisory Council
- Noyce Award

Partnerships:

- Readiness Campaign
- Statewide Conferences
- Conversations with School Districts

Products:

Website—The Website for the Citizenship Education Task Force is up and running! Go to http://www.maine.gov/education/mecitizenshiped/ to learn more.
Community Toolkit— A toolkit to help community leaders and businesses facilitate the civic engagement of youth in their community is complete and available online. Presented at the Communities for Children and Youth Conference in October of 2005, the toolkit inspired the creation of a Belfast Youth Council (http://www.cityofbelfast.org/Belfast%20Youth%20Council%20Home%20Page.shtm).
Higher Education Exemplars— Best practice data on service learning and civic engagement programs across Maine higher education institutions is finished and will also be released to the website.
K-12 Exemplars—Research on education exemplars across Maine public schools is nearing completion, and will be made available online.
Youth Stories (yet to come)—The Youth Voice and Leadership subcommittee is collecting youth involvement stories that will also be a resource for the Readiness Campaign. Stories will be collected until March 15th, 2006 and made available online.

Items of Special Mention:

National Constitution Day—Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia passed this law, designating September 17th as Constitution Day. Schools and federal agencies are required to hold educational programs in observance of the day. Visit http://www.constitutionday.us/ to learn more.
The Legislative Youth Advisory Council—The Council is now staffed by the Office of Legal Policy and Analysis (LD 1511). LYAC held its first official meeting of the season on January 6, 2006.
The 2005 Noyce Award (administered by the Maine Community Foundation)—This year's Noyce Award was inspired by the work of the Task Force. First Lady Karen Baldacci presented the Noyce Award to Youthlinks, a non-profit that provides community service learning and enrichment programs for youth ages 11-17 throughout midcoast Maine. The ceremony, following a Task Force meeting, was held in the Hall of Flags with Robert Woodbury, Chair of the MCF Board, Henry Schmelzer, MCF president, and Patrick Phillips, a member of the Maine Citizenship Education Task Force participating.

Partnerships:

The Maine Readiness Campaign—In December 2005, the Citizenship Education Task Force formed a strategic alliance with the statewide Maine Readiness Campaign. The Readiness Campaign is an outgrowth of a group originally convened by Patrick Phillips, Deputy Commission of Education, to design a statewide public information campaign to promote readiness for college, career and citizenship. Through the Department of Education this group has received $600,000 from the Gates Foundation and, with additional contributions from the Mitchell Institute and Maine Coalition for Excellence in Education, is preparing to launch a major campaign that includes four components:

- A media campaign directed at young people, grades 6-12 and their parents;
- Leadership engagement workshops to be conducted in regions across the state;
- Community engagement to provide technical assistance to local groups developing "readiness" initiatives within their area;
- Formation of a statewide stakeholders group to bring ongoing, high-level attention to the issue, and to promote policy change.

Recently, the Steering Committee of the Readiness Campaign hired Kay Rand, former Chief of Staff to Governor King, to serve as campaign manager. Kathryn Hunt has joined the Readiness Campaign Steering Committee, representing the Citizenship Education Task Force (Patrick Phillips will continue to be involved as well.). Our Youth Voice and Leadership group will be helping to develop the media portion of the campaign. The Readiness Campaign will be conducted throughout 2006. Stay tuned for

future developments!

Secretary of State's Office— The Secretary of State's Office and the Youth Voice and Leadership subcommittee 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. http://www.maine.gov/sos/youth/index.htm

Statewide Conferences—The Task Force had a prominent presence at three major statewide conferences in 2005: KIDS Consortium, From Classroom to Community: Preparing a New Generation of Active Citizens (June 2005); University of Maine Education Law Conference (July 2005); and the Communities for Children and Youth, More Reasons for Hope (October 2005). The Task Force also made a presentation to the Maine State Board of Education meeting in July of 2005. *Currently, the Task Force is planning a conference in June, called "Educating for Democracy: K-16 Civic Learning and Engagement in Maine," on Bates College campus in Lewiston, Maine. See the web site for more details.*

School Districts & District Level Implementation—Exploratory conversations with school district superintendents, who are committed to school and district reform around the central concepts of students' civic learning and engagement, are beginning to take place. Two goals being pursued involve: (1) developing innovative and mutually enhancing programs that bridge school and community; and (2) developing pilot programs that engage students in substantial decision-making related to the operation of their schools and in the development of academically-rooted programs designed to involve students in a wide array of community activities.

Online Resources

- Go to http://janus.state.me.us/house/h_video.htm to watch the Maine House of Representatives Live Video Broadcast!
- The ECS National Center for Learning and Citizenship (NCLC), in collaboration with the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools and the Center for Civic Education, has launched a Web site (http://www.ecs.org/qna) that contains a database of civics assessment items and instruments and a school climate assessment instrument
- The above mentioned database aligns with the civic knowledge, skills and dispositions competencies discussed in the paper, "Developing Citizenship Competencies from Kindergarten Through Grade 12: A Background Paper for Policymakers and Educators." (http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/51/35/5135.pdf)
- The growing archive of the Civic Mission of Schools Practice Examples is now organized by grade level, the CMS learning approach, as well as by CMS coalition states, national programs, and alphabetically.(http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/resources/matrix.html)
- The Academy for Educational Development has developed, "Advancing the Civic Mission of Schools: What Schools, Districts, and State and Federal Leaders Can Do"—clear action steps that schools, districts, and state and federal leaders can do to meet the challenges of civic learning. (http://www.aed.org/ToolsandPublications/upload/advancing%20v2.pdf)
- The Corporation for National & Community Service has released a new study, "Youth Helping America – Building Active Citizens: The Role of Social Institutions in Teen Volunteering." 15.5 million teenagers volunteered during 2004—a rate of 55% compared to the adult volunteer rate of 29%. http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/role_impact/performance_research.asp)

Next Steering Committee Meeting Dates

April 11, 2006	11am-12pm	Cross Bldg, Rm.501
May 16, 2006	9am-12pm	Cross Bldg, Rm.501
June 13, 200	9am-12pm	Cross Bldg, Rm.501

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The Citizenship Education Task Force Membership

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Representative Stephen Bowen
Steve Bromage, Maine Historical Society
Gale Caddoo, Maine School Board
James Carignan, State Board of Education
Amanda Coffin, University of Maine at Farmington
Susan Corrente, Maine Department of Education
Representative Glenn Cummings
Representative Gerald Davis
Senator Neira Douglass
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Susan Savell, Communities for Children and Youth
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Michael Starn, Maine Municipal Association
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