A REPORT TO THE
123rd LEGISLATURE
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

Report
of the
LEGISLATIVE YOUTH
ADVISORY COUNCIL
Public Forums

January 15, 2007

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Executive Summary

The Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council ("LYAC") advises the Legislature on policy issues of importance to Maine youth. Section A-3 of Public Law 2005, Chapter 616 directed the LYAC to convene two public forums to solicit input, suggestions and ideas for "enhanced civic education" in the State's secondary schools, including student perspectives on issues of importance to youth in the State. While the law required the LYAC to submit a report to the Legislature summarizing its findings, LYAC members also decided to use comments and recommendations received from youth at the public forums to inform its 2007 legislative agenda.

LYAC Public Forums

After contacting school officials and discussing the expectations for hosting the public forums, the LYAC selected Ellsworth High School and Kennebunk High School as the host sites for the 2006 public forums. Educational leaders at Ellsworth High School and Kennebunk High School agreed to recruit a local team of students to work together with the LYAC youth members and the LYAC Public Forum partner organizations to craft plans to carry out the public forums.

The focus of the public forums was to invite students to share their perspectives on issues of importance to Maine youth in "peer-to-peer" discussion groups that were facilitated by LYAC youth members and the "host" high school team members. LYAC staff was directed to develop a series of policy "issue briefs" on issues that the LYAC identified as being important to youth in the State. The student teams at Ellsworth High School and Kennebunk High School selected the specific policy issues as topics for discussion at their respective public forums.

- Alcohol and drug policies, including enforcement of school policies;
- Anti-bullying and harassment initiatives;
- School nutrition policies;
- School safety policies;
- Suicide prevention initiatives; and
- Youth civic engagement initiatives in Maine schools and communities.

LYAC Public Forum at Ellsworth High School

The first LYAC Public Forum was convened at Ellsworth High School on November 2, 2006. A team of 14 student leaders from Ellsworth High School hosted the forum and facilitated the discussion sessions with three LYAC youth members. A total of 63 participants attended the "northern" regional forum, including 49 students from six high schools in the region.

LYAC Public Forum at Kennebunk High School

Kennebunk High School hosted the second LYAC Public Forum on November 14, 2006. Two rounds of discussion sessions were facilitated by 9 student leaders from Kennebunk High School and 7 LYAC youth members. The "southern" regional forum engaged 109 participants, including 83 students from 11 high schools and community-based youth programs in the region.

Potential Solutions from LYAC Public Forums

The report provides a summary of the "peer-to-peer" policy discussions held at the two public forums. As part of the LYAC public forum held at Kennebunk High School, student teams were asked to participate in a "synectics" exercise that focused their attention on the concept of "youth voice." Participants were shown a slide that projected an image of rock climbers ascending difficult mountain terrain. Among the responses generated was the following which captures the essence of the benefits of "youth voice": "Listening to youth voices is a lot like rock climbing because … you get a better view." With this perspective in mind, the following potential solutions from the discussion sessions present a chorus of "youth voices" that were heard in Ellsworth and Kennebunk at the LYAC public forums.

Enforcing School Alcohol & Drug Policies

With respect to school drug and alcohol policies in general, participants expressed a common belief that they should be standardized statewide and enforced by schools -- not by school boards. Participants expressed the opinion that such policies should focus on safety and education, rather than prevention because it's more effective to provide youth with a safe environment to "experiment" than to try and prevent experimentation all together. Potential solutions included:

- Standardize school drug and alcohol policies statewide to ensure consistency;
- Direct schools to focus school drug and alcohol policy more on safety and education and less on prevention;
- Require schools to enforce drug and alcohol policy in coordination with law enforcement;
- Punishments for violating school drug and alcohol policies should be harsher; and
- Ensure that punishment is consistent for all individuals regardless of extracurricular involvement.

Bullying & Harassment

Several themes emerged from the discussions, which highlighted many key aspects of anti-bullying and harassment policy. Specific ideas and opinions about what anti-bullying and harassment policies should include, what existing policies are working, and what is not working are summarized in the form of potential policy solutions. Potential solutions included:

- Revise the definition of bullying to include "cyber-bullying" as a method of bullying and to make it clear that bullying is a negative intention directed *at* the victim;
- State should mandate education for students, teachers and parents to increase awareness about the prevalence and consequences of bullying;
- Anti-bullying and harassment policies should be developed by individual schools; and schools need to establish norms and expectations for peer interaction;
- School support services should include the availability of students who are trained to talk to and serve as allies to victims of bullying; and

- Punishment for bullying and harassment violations should be consistent for all students, without exception.

Civic Engagement

The breakout sessions on civic engagement centered on the issues of increasing awareness about civic engagement, improving civic education through existing coursework, and developing better communication between government, schools and students to foster a state-wide infrastructure that will support youth civic engagement. Potential solutions included:

- State and local government should be more involved with increasing opportunities for youth civic engagement; regarding civic engagement opportunities for students;
- Exposure to current events and participation in civic activities in history and civics classes should be mandatory and incorporated into existing curricular requirements;
- Political leaders should visit schools to discuss issues and speak about civic awareness;
- Schools should provide and ensure funding for student-led political clubs; and
- Youth representation in state government should be increased.

School Nutrition

Participants in the school nutrition discussion contemplated policy questions related to the nutritional value of food and beverages provided to students through the school's food service program and vending machines, as well as the rights and responsibilities of parents, students and schools in educating students about making healthy decisions about the food they consume and their level of physical activity. Potential solutions included:

- Provide state-funded, mandatory nutrition education in the school curriculum as part of health and physical education classes;
- The purpose of nutrition education should be to inform and raise awareness, not to limit choices or control behavior;
- Schools should build strong links among resources -- including parents, schools, teachers and peers -- to educate and raise awareness about nutrition education;
- Make nutrition facts on labels more understandable and address false claims about food's nutritional value; and
- Raise public awareness about healthy food choices via a campaign using television, public radio and newspapers.

School Safety

The discussion of school safety was largely dominated by participants sharing differences in the need for and the enforcement of school safety policy at their respective schools. Pointed out early on in the discussion was the fact that Maine schools have not yet experienced the kind of random acts of violence by students or intruders that have recently occurred at other schools around the country. Potential solutions included:

- School safety policy should focus more on student behavior and their potential to cause harm than preparedness for unlikely events such as a bomb;
- Require that all school safety policies contain an emergency response plan, regular drills to ensure students know what to do in an emergency, and visual displays of emergency response plans in high-traffic common areas across school campuses;
- MEMA should be held accountable for ensuring that each school has an emergency response plan in place;
- Law enforcement officers should be used to patrol on and near school campuses for suspicious or dangerous activity; and
- Require schools to review their current student conduct codes and assess the extent to which they are consistent with school safety policy.

Suicide Prevention

The sessions on suicide prevention focused mainly on the question of how to lower the rate of suicide rate both in Maine and nationally. The main themes emerging from this discussion included the need for education about the risk factors and indicators of suicide among youth and increasing awareness about the issue and about support services available at school and through community sources. Potential solutions included:

- Require schools to incorporate suicide prevention education into the curriculum and provide funding for implementation;
- Better publicize existing support services, (i.e., suicide hotline); and direct schools to review and commit to eliminating barriers that may prevent any students from accessing available support services;
- Require schools to host a student-led awareness day to raise awareness about suicide, regional support and services, and mental or emotional wellness;
- Train students, as well as adults, in suicide support so students have an option when seeking help; and
- Require schools to provide service options for students to choose from, including but not limited to, peer support services, adult support services, faith-based services, hotline information, and referrals to community services outside of school.

LYAC Member Survey Results: Preliminary Recommendations for 123rd Legislature

The report also presents the responses of LYAC members who participated in a web-based survey that was designed to encourage individual LYAC members to reflect on the potential solutions that were proposed by the participants who attended the policy forums in Ellsworth and Kennebunk and to develop preliminary policy recommendations for the 123rd Legislature and the 2007 session. Selected results from the survey are presented below.

Summary of Key Findings from LYAC Member Survey

For the purpose of summarizing the survey results, "key findings" were selected for discussion on the basis of three criteria. For the purpose of this report, "key findings" represent those

potential solutions proposed by forum participants that gained unanimous support of LYAC member respondents. Figures 1 below provides a graphical representation that summarizes the "key findings" from the LYAC member survey for those potential solutions that received unanimous support.

Figure 1. Potential Solutions with Unanimous Support

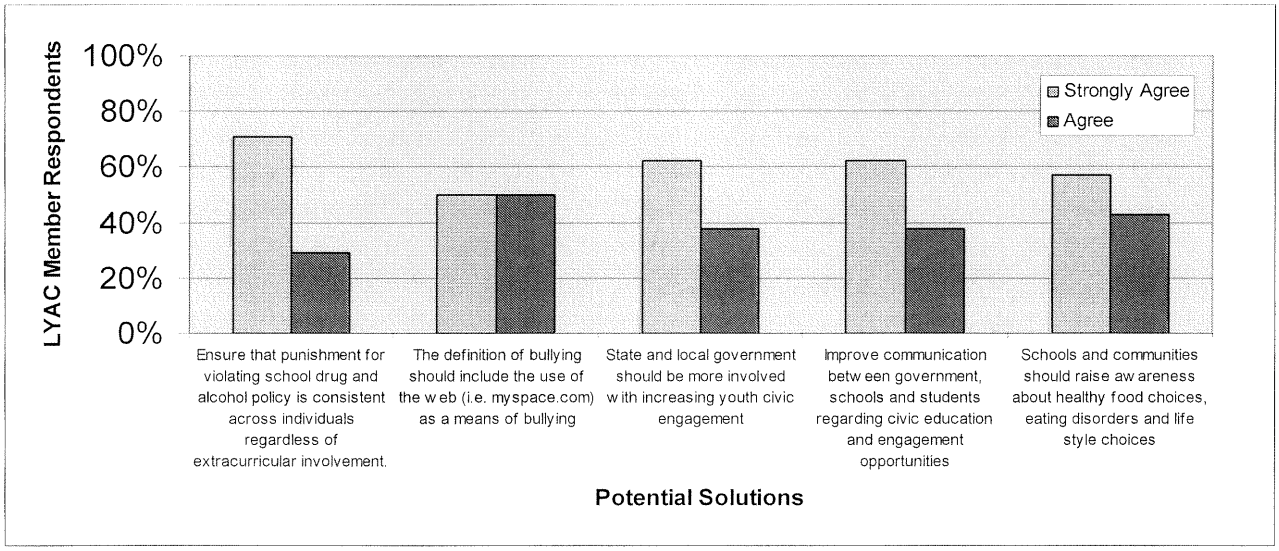

Figure 1 (above) displays the potential solutions with which all member respondents either agreed or strongly agreed. They represent ideas that LYAC members unanimously support.

LYAC Member Priorities for the 123rd Legislature, 1st Session

The table below provides the results of the LYAC member responses to a question asking them to rank order -- or prioritize -- which topics they thought should receive the highest or lowest priority in the next legislative session. Respondents ranked each topic on a scale where "1" was their "highest priority" and "6" was their "lowest priority."

Priority	Policy Topic	Response Average
1	Bullying and Harassment	2.43
2	Civic Engagement	2.86
3	Enforcing School Drug and Alcohol Policies	2.93
4	Suicide Prevention	3.43
5	School Safety	4.14
6	School Nutrition	5.21

Note: A rank of 1 = "highest priority"; and a rank of 6 = "lowest priority."

I. INTRODUCTION

The Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council ("LYAC") was the first youth council in the nation to have both an advisory relationship with a state legislature and the statutory authority to submit legislation. Established in 2002, the LYAC is a 20-member advisory council comprised of 16 youth members and 4 legislators. The purpose of the council is to advise the Maine Legislature, legislative leadership and legislative committees about policy issues of importance to Maine youth. The council is authorized to meet up to six times each year, including at least two public hearings. The LYAC is required to report biennially to the Legislature and may submit legislation to implement its recommendations

Public Law 2005, Chapter 616, Part A, section A-3 directed the LYAC to convene two public forums to solicit input, suggestions and ideas for "enhanced civic education" in the State's secondary schools, including student perspectives on issues of importance to youth in the State. The law also directed the Department of Education ("DOE") to fund the public forums with grant funds received to support the Maine Citizenship Education Task Force ("CETF") in order to fulfill the duties of the DOE and the LYAC pertaining to public forums required under Resolve 2003, Chapter 143, Part A, sections A-2 and A-3. While Chapter 616 required the LYAC to submit a report to the Legislature summarizing its findings, the LYAC members also decided to use comments and recommendations received from youth at the public forums to inform its 2007 legislative agenda. Copies of the relevant provisions of the authorizing legislation related to these public forums are attached as **Appendix A**.

LYAC Public Forum Planning Process

During its May 2006 meeting, the LYAC members developed a list of high schools that they felt were ideal locations for the public forums. After contacting school officials and discussing the expectations for hosting the public forums, the LYAC selected Ellsworth High School and Kennebunk High School as the host sites for the public forums. Educational leaders at both Ellsworth High School and Kennebunk High School agreed to recruit a local team of students to work together with the LYAC youth members and the LYAC Public Forum partner organizations to craft plans to carry out the public forums.

The focus of the public forums was to invite students to share their perspectives on issues of importance to Maine youth in "peer-to-peer" discussion groups that were facilitated by LYAC youth members and the "host" high school team members. LYAC members directed its staff to develop a series of policy "issue briefs" on issues that the LYAC identified as being important to youth in the State. Copies of the policy "issue briefs" prepared by the LYAC staff for the public forums are attached as **Appendix B**. The student teams at Ellsworth High School and Kennebunk High School selected the following policy issues as topics for discussion at their respective public forums:

- Alcohol and drug policies, including enforcement of school policies;
- Anti-bullying and harassment initiatives;

- School nutrition policies;
- School safety policies;
- Suicide prevention initiatives; and
- Youth civic engagement initiatives in Maine schools and communities.

Participants also received information on the LYAC, as well as a "public policy toolkit" with selected resources on youth civic engagement and influencing state policymaking that was prepared by the LYAC staff, in conjunction with DOE and CETF partners. A raffle drawing was held at each public forum to give away a "free" iPod nano. A list of the public forum partners and key resource people is attached as **Appendix C**.

LYAC Public Forums

LYAC Public Forum at Ellsworth High School

The first LYAC Public Forum was convened at Ellsworth High School on Thursday, November 2, 2006. A team of 14 student leaders from Ellsworth High School hosted the forum and facilitated the following breakout discussion sessions with LYAC youth members: anti-bullying and harassment initiatives, school safety initiatives, school nutrition programs, and an "open forum" where students discussed enforcement of school alcohol and drug policies, suicide prevention initiatives, and youth civic engagement initiatives. A total of 63 participants attended the "northern" regional forum, including 46 high school students, three LYAC youth members, six high school educators, three Department of Education officials, one legislator, two researchers from the Margaret Chase Smith Center at the University of Maine, and two LYAC staff members. Student teams represented the following schools: Ellsworth High School, Hampden Academy, Hermon High School, Jonesport-Beals High School, Maine Central Institute and Narraguagas High School.

LYAC Public Forum at Kennebunk High School

Kennebunk High School hosted the second LYAC Public Forum on Tuesday, November 14, 2006. Participants had the opportunity to take part in two breakout discussion sessions that were facilitated by 9 student leaders from Kennebunk High School and 7 LYAC youth members. The following four topics were discussed at the Kennebunk forum: anti-bullying and harassment initiatives, enforcement of school alcohol and drug policies, suicide prevention initiatives, and youth civic engagement initiatives. The "southern" regional forum engaged 109 participants, including 83 students and 26 educators and advisors. Student teams represented the following schools and community-based youth programs: Gorham Youth Advocacy Program, Greely High School, Kennebunk High School, Marshwood High School, The New School (Kennebunk), Massabesic High School, Poland Regional High School, The School at Sweetser (Acton), Waynefleet School, Windham High School and York High School. State agency officials represented the Department of Education, the Department of Health & Human Services; and youth advocates from the Maine Youth Action Network, the Southern Maine Advisory Council on Transition and the AdCare Educational Institute of Maine also participated in the forum.

Analysis of Findings and Recommendations from LYAC Public Forums

Section A-3 of Public Law 2005, Chapter 616 required the LYAC to report a summary of the public forums, including any recommendations, to Legislative Council by January 15, 2007. The law also directed the Legislative Council to provide a staff person to attend each public forum and likewise required the Commissioner of Education to provide at least one staff person to attend each public forum and to prepare written summaries of the meetings. In order to meet the requirement that the LYAC members present any recommendations resulting from the public forums, the LYAC staff designed a web-based survey so that LYAC members could review the forum discussion summaries and potential solutions proposed by youth participants. The following section of this report presents a summary of the "peer-to-peer" discussions of the six policy issues addressed at the public forums. The final section of the report provides the results of the survey of LYAC members regarding the potential solutions proposed during the LYAC public forums, as well as the preliminary, policy recommendations identified by the LYAC members who responded to the web-based survey.

II. DISCUSSION SUMMARIES: POLICY ISSUES and POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

This section of the report provides a summary of the "peer-to-peer" policy discussions held at the two public forums. While Legislative Youth Advisory Council ("LYAC") youth members and host high school team members from Ellsworth High School and Kennebunk High School facilitated the discussions and took notes on flip charts, laptop-equipped "scribes" also summarized the discussions and noted the comments and suggestions offered by the student participants. LYAC public forum partners, including officials from the Maine Department of Education ("DOE"), the Citizenship Education Task Force, and the Maine Youth Action Network provided assistance in the note taking effort. LYAC staff then transcribed and analyzed these raw notes and produced the following discussion summaries.

"Listening to youth voices is a lot like rock climbing because..."

As part of the LYAC public forum held at Kennebunk High School, student teams were asked to participate in a "synectics" exercise that focused their attention on the concept of "youth voice." Participants were shown a slide that projected an image of rock climbers ascending difficult mountain terrain. Here are the responses generated by the student team discussions when participants were asked to respond to the following prompt:

"Listening to youth voices is a lot like rock climbing because..."

- There are a lot of challenges along the way... but in the end, it's worth it!
- It's easier said than done.
- It's a challenge that requires peer support.
- Sometimes the inexperienced may be cautious, but can still do great things.
- You get a better view.
- You have to keep trying and working at it, and it takes time and teamwork to get to the top and be heard.
- You can't climb without a belayer (the person who supports and helps the climber... holds the rope). The belayer is our "listener."
- Getting people to listen to you is an upward battle (just like rock climbing)! It feels good when you get to the top!!
- You have to use carabineers. (To connect the age gap.)
- I don't understand this metaphor. Listening to youth should not be a challenge.
- You start at the bottom and work your way up.
- Every step brings new obstructions to reaching the goal.
- If you come across a challenge, you may have to find new solutions.
- It's easier said than done and when done well, it looks easy.
- Every voice is different, just like the rocks you climb.

With these perspectives as context, the following discussion summaries present the chorus of "youth voices" that were heard in Ellsworth and Kennebunk at the LYAC public forums.

Policy Issue #1: Enforcing School Alcohol & Drug Policies

Overview

The break-out discussion sessions that focused on enforcing school drug and alcohol policies are better characterized by "policy debate" and "consensus building" rather than by a set of discrete themes *per se*. Participants took the approach of discussing pros and cons of existing policies rather than developing alternative policy solutions.

Two statements made repeatedly throughout both discussion groups formed key assumptions under which participants reasoned with and debated each other over enforcement of school drug and alcohol policies: "you can't prevent kids from drinking" and "kids will always find a way to get (alcohol and illegal substances)." Under these two assumptions, the discussion centered on existing policy approaches that work and policies that aren't working. Several themes emerged from these discussions:

- Education and awareness – especially for adults and parents;
- Punishment – severity, equity, and consistency;
- Access – too easy for minors; and
- Safety – in that it's more important than prevention.

Policy Debates

Facilitators prompted the participants with two policy questions that generated thoughtful debates highlighting the importance of "punishment equity" and "enforcement accountability" with respect to school drug and alcohol policies:

- Is "guilty by association" (a.k.a. "in the presence of" clause) a fair policy?

Proponents articulated the belief that it is a good way of preventing youth from being around illegal substances in the first place -- thereby reducing the opportunities to partake as well as get caught. On the other hand, opponents expressed the views that it is unrealistic to assume youth will stop hanging out with their friends because they are in the presence of illegal substances; and to be considered guilty by association is unfair and may even create the perception that individuals "might as well partake" if they are going to be punished anyway.

- Should enforcement of drug and alcohol policies be standardized statewide or be school-specific?

Proponents conveyed the belief that statewide standardization of enforcement would eliminate the inequity created by enforcing different policies with various levels of punishment severity. However, opponents expressed the opinion that the problem of drug and alcohol abuse is a characteristic of the school and its social environment, (this is supported by a considerable

discrepancy in participants' experiences with fellow students being intoxicated at school), and that what goes on in other schools doesn't really affect them.

What's working, what's not working?

Both discussions centered, in large part, around an agreement on existing policies and strategies that are working to prevent and enforce school drug and alcohol policies and those approaches that are not working. Policy approaches and strategies that participants have experienced and believe are working -- at least to some extent -- include:

- Random breathalyzer tests, (e.g., before proms);
- Chemical/drug free-committed school organizations, (i.e., leading by example, providing abstainers with a place to go);
- Involvement in sports, (i.e., sportsmanship motivates and avoidance of punishment consequences);
- Awareness about health consequences, (e.g., picture of smokers lung);
- Law enforcement officer patrolling school campus; and
- Personal testimony -- such as stories about the loss of a loved one -- by someone the audience can relate to and take seriously.

Approaches that participants generally agreed do not work include:

- Surveys, as a means of raising awareness and measuring use, are not taken seriously;
- Lectures from teachers, administrators and councilors, (i.e., those who are not considered by students to be "close" to them);
- Suspension as a punishment, (i.e., only provides suspended students more time to "hang out and use");
- No penalty by school, (e.g., for those not involved in sports, etc.);
- Scare tactics, (e.g., particularly when authorities don't follow through on threats or stated intentions;
- Stigmatization, or labeling alcohol and drugs as evil, makes students want to rebel; and
- DARE is informational, but not motivational and is not taken seriously.

Potential Policy Solutions for Enforcing School Alcohol and Drug Policies

Several opinions emerged from the "peer-to-peer" discussions that provide some direction for LYAC consideration as they develop their policy recommendations for the upcoming legislative session.

Policy Structure and Focus

With respect to school drug and alcohol policies in general, participants expressed a common belief that they should be standardized statewide and enforced by schools -- not by school boards. Participants expressed the opinion that such policies should focus on safety and

education, rather than prevention because it's more effective to provide youth with a safe environment to "experiment" than to try and prevent experimentation all together.

Potential Solutions:

- Standardize school drug and alcohol policies statewide to ensure consistency across schools, districts and geographic regions; and
- Direct schools to focus school drug and alcohol policy more on safety and education and less on prevention.

Education

Under the premise that youth often follow their parents' lead, participants also unanimously agreed that policies should require education for parents about the prevalence of alcohol and substance abuse among minors, school policies and punishments, and the short- and long-term consequences of illegal drug and alcohol abuse.

Potential Solutions:

- Require schools to ensure that parents are educated about school drug and alcohol policies as well as the prevalence and consequences of drug and alcohol abuse among youth.

Enforcement

Despite the feeling that schools haven't done the best job at enforcing drug and alcohol policies, most participants felt it important that each school be responsible for enforcing punishments, and should do so in consultation with law enforcement. It was agreed that this would instill seriousness into the situation, as well making it clear that violating school drug and alcohol policies also violates state law.

Potential Solutions:

- Require schools to enforce drug and alcohol policy in coordination with local law enforcement.

Punishment

In general, participants expressed the belief that the punishment for violating school drug and alcohol policies should be harsher, with the intention that this might make students who are considering use think "three times" before acting on such thoughts. There was also a general consensus that punishment should be consistent for all individuals, regardless of involvement in sports or extracurricular activities. This evolved from a repeated discussion about how those who are not involved with sport teams are often not subject to the same severity of punishment.

Potential Solutions:

- Make harsher the existing punishments associated with violating school drug and alcohol policies; and
- Ensure that punishment is consistent for all individuals regardless of extracurricular involvement.

Policy Issue #2: Bullying & Harassment

Overview

Participants spent much of their time grappling with how to define bullying and harassment, comparing differences in experiences with bullying across schools, and sharing ideas about how to stop bullying and harassment from happening. Two underlying assumptions governed the nature of the discussions: 1) victims of bullying and harassment do not typically report it; and 2) bullies "do not care about punishment" or consequences.

Several themes emerged from the discussions, which highlight many key aspects of anti-bullying and harassment policy. Specific ideas and opinions about what anti-bullying and harassment policies should include, what existing policies are working, what is not working are summarized in the form of policy recommendations below each of the following "thematic" summaries of the forum discussions

Definitions

In an effort to define bullying and harassment, participants quickly asserted that bullying is no longer thought of in the traditional sense of a bigger boy beating up on a smaller boy, but that, in fact, it happens more commonly between girls. Participants also agreed unanimously that online bullying -- or "cyber bullying" -- through websites such as "myspace.com" is a big problem and should be considered in the definition. One participant expressed that the definition should make clear that bullying is an action directed *at* someone, to differentiate between the casual use of words in conversation such as "gay" or "retarded" that are not intended to offend anyone, but could if directed towards an individual. Participants also wrestled with the differences between bullying and harassment, with some suggesting that harassment -- such as sexual harassment -- can be more clearly defined as inappropriate behavior than bullying. Others felt that harassment was defined as constant bullying or inappropriate behavior that is repetitive.

Potential Solutions:

The definition of bullying:

- Should include the use of the web, (e.g., "myspace.com"), as a method of bullying;
- Should make clear that bullying is a negative intention directed at the victim; and
- Should be developed by individual schools to capture differences in social norms.

Accountability

Participants had mixed feelings about what authority should be accountable for enforcing student codes of conduct, which prohibit bullying. Some expressed strong sentiments against leaving the authority with the school boards, who "do not interact with schools" and who "don't know what's going on in our hallways." Most felt that schools should be accountable for enforcing student conduct policy. Some participants expressed a need for teachers to be held accountable for contributing to bullying by gossiping with students, for example.

Potential Solutions:

The accountability for enforcing school anti-bullying policy:

- Individual schools should be held accountable for enforcing anti-bullying policy; and
- Teachers should be held accountable for ignoring and/or contributing to bullying.

Awareness and Education

On more than one occasion, participants spoke of the need for increased awareness and better education about bullying among students, teachers and parents. Participants agreed that education about bullying should be "mandated by schools." It was also the general consensus that education about bullying should come from trained students rather than adults, and should be provided through small-group training rather than large assemblies, which are not perceived as effective. Participants explored the roles that student leadership, (e.g., student council or civil rights teams), could play in raising awareness about bullying through "leading by example." Community education groups for parents were also suggested as a means to address specific problems with bullying.

Potential Solutions:

- The State should mandate education for students, teachers and parents to increase awareness about the prevalence and consequences of bullying as part of each individual school's anti-bullying policies;
- Schools need to establish norms and expectations for peer interaction; and teachers should communicate positively about the behavior expected of all students;
- Education for students should include small-group, peer-to-peer training on how to recognize, report and cope with bullying; and
- Education should not come in the form of traditional assemblies and lectures.

Policy

The discussions touched on key aspects of policy design. Highlighting the need to consider the role of support services when thinking about bullying policy, one participant took

the liberty of describing the dilemma she believed most victims of bullying find themselves in at her school:

> "Victims of bullying don't have an outlet, or person to talk to because many refuse to tell an adult. Telling an adult is like tattling. Victims usually won't confront the bully either, because it can make things worse. Telling a friend can create gossip and make things worse as well. So in most cases, they tell no one and the bully goes unpunished while the victim goes unnoticed."

In response, participants discussed the need for victims of bullying to have a place or person to go to in order to report bullying. The presence of a well-trained "school resource officer" was suggested as an asset to students in this regard. Participants also shared examples of support services at their own schools, such as trained peer mediators, and discussed the pros and cons of this being part of a policy solution. One student described the symbolic efforts of her school's civil rights team in handing out "red" flags to bullies and "green" flags to the victims of bullying. Participants reached the consensus that it would be more effective to have trained peers -- like Resident Assistants in college -- rather than adults made available to victims of bullying.

Lastly, participants agreed that bullying and anti-harassment policy should be developed by the schools, and that a statewide policy would need to accommodate "too many exceptions."

Potential Solutions:

- School support services should include the availability of students who are trained to talk to and serve as allies to victims of bullying; and
- Anti-bullying and harassment policy should be developed by individual schools.

Enforcement of Punishment

Participants made the observation that appropriate punishment depends greatly on how bullying is defined. Several statements were made about the lack of consistency in the way teachers within and across schools enforce student conduct rules. Participants expressed a need for teachers to follow a standardized protocol in response to acts of bullying, which they recognized, would require pre-requisite training. Participants also expressed strong sentiments for bullying policy to ensure punishment is consistent across individuals -- without exception.

Potential Solutions:

- Punishment for bullying and harassment violations should be consistent for all students without exception; and
- Teachers should be trained to follow a standardized protocol for responding to acts of bullying.

Policy Issue #3: Civic Engagement

Overview

The breakout sessions on civic engagement centered on the issues of increasing awareness about civic engagement, improving civic education through existing coursework, and developing better communication between government, schools and students to foster a state-wide infrastructure that will support youth civic engagement. Through animated discussions about how to make history and civics classes more interesting, the theme that emerged was to incorporate current events and civic engagement into history and civics classes.

Awareness and Education

Education about what civic engagement means and the need to increase awareness about civics was identified by participants as an important policy issue. When asked by a facilitator, "How can Maine promote civic engagement in schools?" a student responded that civic action should be a part of civics classes. Another said that Maine isn't using civic education classes as civic engagement and that civics classes should be more interesting and interactive. Another student related that it is boring sitting in classes listening to lectures; and that they should be more interesting and engaging. "Discussion-based classes are the most interesting" was one comment. One student expressed frustration about the lack of relevancy. Her response was, "The difference between a teacher and a great teacher is a great teacher will teach all subjects relative to what is happening today." One positive comment came from a student who had to write a policy paper showing both sides of an issue and citing multiple sources. He said, "It made me learn about the issue."

In reaction to the question, "Do history classes foster civic engagement; and, if they were more interactive, would more students vote?", responses included "Raising the level of awareness among youth leads to youth becoming more active"; and "Having a current events class requirement would make youth more aware of what's going on and lead to more involvement." It was also mentioned that environment has a lot to do with engagement. If peers, parents or teachers are involved, that increases the probability that youth will also be. One student said that there should be government programs that educate all people with the purpose of creating more involved citizens.

When asked about interest in political or civic organizations that meet after school, students in the second discussion session said they are too busy and that involvement with these issues should take place in history or civics classes. There seemed to be more receptivity to this idea in the first discussion session. One student said that "being introduced to an interesting topic in high school, I may want to continue learning about it in college. I might be more aware and active in college as a result." Another said, "Kids not involved now won't be involved after high school. Show them how they can change things."

In response to the question, "How can legislators get more students involved?", participant consensus was that political leaders should visit high schools to discuss issues and speak about civic awareness.

Potential Solutions:

- Exposure to current events and participation in civic activities in history and civics classes should be mandatory and incorporated into existing curricular requirements;
- Political leaders should visit high schools to discuss issues and speak about civic awareness; and
- Schools should provide and ensure funding for student-led political clubs.

Accountability

Most students had never heard of programs such as "Model State." When it was explained by a facilitator, many students expressed interest and felt that the state should do a better job communicating about programs that involve civic engagement. One of the policy solutions mentioned improved communication between government, schools and students. One student said that there should be more groups like the LYAC.

Potential Solutions:

- State and local government should be more involved with increasing youth civic engagement; and
- Communication should be improved between government, schools and students regarding civic education and engagement opportunities.

Voting

Much of the discussion centered on voting. In response to a facilitator's question, "If more issues on ballots were interesting, would you vote?" one student responded, "Youth are such a small demographic, politicians do not cater to us." Another said that the state should send out information to schools that show both sides of every issue in order to better inform students. Students see the media as a venue outside of school that informs, but that political commercials only show one side of an issue. For example, one student noted, "I didn't know what TABOR was all about, despite all the advertising. It gets lots of commercials, but no straight answers." In response to the query, "What types of media would be more effective?", one student explained that maybe if the state had its own *Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, young people would watch. Another mentioned *South Park* as a place where students learn about issues.

It was mentioned that voter turnout is also a problem among adults, and not just with youth. Participants suggested that policy proponents need to show that every issue on the ballot has relevance to youth, "Minor decisions will affect us; we need to know how they affect us." One participant expressed the feeling that there should be more representation of young people in government, "Most people are in their 40s, 50s, and 60s. If there was a representative of young

people in state government, youth would feel like they are being represented, and then they would vote."

Potential Solutions:

- Political advertisements should include youth as part of their target audience so that youth can be better informed about political issues; and
- Increase youth representation in state government.

Policy Issue #4: School Nutrition

Overview

Participants in the school nutrition discussion contemplated policy questions related to the nutritional value of food and beverages provided to students through the school's food service program and vending machines, as well as the rights and responsibilities of parents, students and schools in educating students about making healthy decisions about the food they consume and their level of physical activity. Students also recognized the different factors, particularly the role of advertising, which influences personal decisions about healthy nutrition and physical activity. Participants also discussed ways to provide education and awareness and the different roles that government, schools, the private sector and families play in providing programs and funds that promote good nutrition and health.

Policy Debates

Participants were prompted by facilitators to focus on addressing the policy questions from the "issue brief" prepared for the public forum. Students considered the following themes in thinking about how state or local education officials should address school nutrition policies.

- What role should schools play in educating students about the costs and benefits of nutrition and personal health versus regulating individual choice or decisions regarding food consumption and physical activity?

While participants felt that it is appropriate for schools to provide health education to students, many students argued that policymakers need to recognize that there is a limit to what schools can and should do. One student gave an example of the school taking food from a student's lunch box because it was not deemed to be nutritious.

- Who -- schools, teachers, parents, students -- should be responsible for educating students about making healthy choices regarding nutrition and physical activity?

Students appeared to agree giving schools "full responsibility" for nutrition and health education removes the role of parents to teach their children and be responsible for their development and behavior. As one participant stated, "schools are there to educate, not to fill in parental gaps."

Students also recognized the role of government in requiring that nutritional information be provided to consumers and noted the influence of food producers and the media in advertising food and beverages to the youth market. Participants further recognized that parents and schools can inform and guide youth about making good choices, but that it is ultimately up to the individual to apply what they have learned and make good choices.

- Should state officials work with local schools to educate students and raise public awareness about the health risks associated with being overweight and obese?

Participants supported raising awareness about health risks in our schools and communities, but again suggested that -- instead of restricting food that is deemed to be non-nutritional from cafeterias and vending machines -- schools should keep food choices available to students and educate them with healthy alternatives and nutritional facts. Similarly, students advocated for raising awareness about health risks, but advocated that the role of schools should be about raising awareness of good nutrition and physical activity in maintaining health and fitness. Participants stopped short of proposing mandated "body mass index" (or "BMI") screening for all students.

- What is the fiscal impact of mandated requirements for nutrition education, posting caloric information, etc.; and who should pay for new or expanded programs?

Participants recognized that expanding nutritional education programs will also increase costs; and that either the state would need to fund the program expansion or local taxpayers would be required to pay for them. Forum participants also discussed the political reality that health care costs compete with education costs in state budget, yet were unsure of the "cost-benefit" implications of increased spending for health and fitness programs. Students were hesitant to agree with the suggestion that raising awareness would increase health benefits and actually result in future cost savings.

Potential Solutions for School Nutrition Policies

Several proposals surfaced from the participant discussions that provide some direction for the LYAC as they consider policy recommendations for the upcoming legislative session.

Policy Focus and Accountability

Students agreed that schools should be responsible for teaching school nutrition as part of health and physical education; and also acknowledged that public health officials should have some level of regulatory oversight over the health and safety of food products. Yet, participants concluded that parents and students also have a responsibility to become informed consumers and should be held accountable for their decisions. While schools can inform students, at the end of the day, individuals have personal choice. Schools can educate, but teachers cannot make decisions for students or control their behavior.

Potential Solutions:

- Provide state-funded, mandatory, nutrition education in the school curriculum as part of health and physical education classes;
- The purpose of nutrition education should be to inform and raise awareness, not to limit choices or control behavior;
- Schools and communities should raise awareness about healthy food choices, eating disorders and life style choices; and
- Make nutrition facts on labels more understandable and address false claims about food's nutritional value.

Awareness

Students recognized that there are a myriad of factors that influence their decisions about what they eat and drink. While the media and the advertising industry have their influences, Maine families, school and communities can and should promote greater awareness of health and fitness. As one student suggested, "health is not just about how to live well, but how to eat well." Public forum participants suggested that communities can organize public health forums and can also offer classes to adults and students.

Potential Solutions:

- Build strong links among resources -- including parents, schools, teachers and peers -- to educate and raise awareness; and
- Raise public awareness about healthy food choices via a campaign using television, public radio and newspapers.

Fiscal Impact

Students felt that if state government mandates an expansion of nutrition or fitness programs in Maine schools, then the State needs to pay for the new or expanded educational programs. Participants preferred that the State use its authority and resources to support nutritional health in our schools and communities; and students also suggested that state funding is the preferred way to distribute resources to ensure that students in all schools and in every community are benefiting from the state commitment to fund these expanded nutrition and fitness programs.

Potential Solution:

- The State should provide funding for any mandated nutritional or fitness programs in our schools and communities.

Policy Issue #5: School Safety

Overview

The discussion of school safety was largely dominated by participants sharing differences in the need for and the enforcement of school safety policy at their respective schools. Pointed out early on in the discussion was the fact that Maine schools have not yet experienced the kind of random acts of violence by students or intruders that have recently occurred at other schools around the country. Despite their recognition of national media coverage of such violent events experienced at schools in other parts of the country, a general sense of "not in Maine" was present throughout the discussion. As a result, participants were unable to talk in depth about the issue of school safety from a policy perspective as none had any personal experiences to reflect upon. Participants made the important distinction however, between their desire for stronger leadership and their desire for stronger rules, with their preference being for the former.

Definitions: What is School Safety?

A lengthy exchange of ideas about what school safety means highlighted various elements of school safety policy that forum participants had experience with, including security cameras, locks on doors, random searches, and emergency drills. Many participants felt that the safety precautions taken at their school served little purpose and are more of a nuisance than a benefit to students. Other expressed the view that school safety is relative to a school's environment. As one participant said, school safety is "really dependent on the type of school you go to." One student believed that most safety precautions were just a façade citing the cameras at her school, which "everyone knows are fake." Another asserted that "Safety isn't so much about creating the aura of safety as much as it is doing things about safety."

Potential Solution:

- Participants offered no proposed solutions or policy recommendations pertaining to the definition of school safety.

Elements of School Safety Policy

Although participants were unable to reach consensus about how to define school safety, they did agree upon what they believe should be basic elements of any school safety policy:

- A basic emergency plan;
- Posters displaying key aspects of the emergency plan in highly visible places; and
- Regular drills to ensure student knowledge of what to do in an emergency.

In response to how they felt about strangers coming into their schools, students expressed that their respective schools had policies, but they were not aware of a need to enforce them. Participants felt that it is more important for policy to focus on student behavior -- in so far as they believe it is more likely that a student, rather than a stranger, would commit an act of

violence at school. In a discussion around one school's policy of random searches, a participant expressed, "the law permits this . . . it stinks . . . it makes people feel less safe, but I would rather have to empty my pockets than have some one enter the school with a gun." Several participants mentioned their knowledge of other students who bring their hunting guns to school.

Potential Solutions:

- Recommend that school safety policy should focus more on student behavior and their potential to cause harm than preparedness for unlikely events such as a bomb; and
- Require that all school safety policies contain an emergency response plan, regular drills to ensure students know what to do in an emergency, and visual displays of emergency response plans in high-traffic common areas across school campuses.

Accountability and Enforcement

When asked who should be held responsible for enforcing school safety policies, participants spoke to the effectiveness of having a law enforcement officer on campus; and also suggested that the Maine Emergency Management Agency ("MEMA") should be accountable for ensuring that safety measures and emergency plans at each school are in place. The group also discussed the merits of using school and community based surveys or dialogues to assess the degree to which existing safety measures are enforced as a source of information to evaluate their effectiveness and the possibility of introducing new measures. Recognizing the relationship between student conduct and school safety, participants suggested the need for schools to review their student conduct codes to ensure they are consistent with school safety policy.

Potential Solutions:

- Use law enforcement officers to patrol on and near school campuses for suspicious or dangerous activity;
- MEMA should be held accountable for ensuring that each school has an emergency response plan in place;
- Authorize the use of school and community based surveys or dialogues as means to gather information about the extent to which school safety policy is enforced and to gauge stakeholder interest in the potential for implementing new safety measures; and
- Require schools to review their current student conduct codes and assess the extent to which they are consistent with school safety policy.

Policy Issue #6: Suicide Prevention

Overview

The break-out session on suicide prevention focused mainly on the question of how to lower the rate of suicide rate both in Maine and nationally. The main themes emerging from this discussion include:

- The need for education about the risk factors and indicators of suicide among youth;
- Increasing awareness about the issue and about support services available at school and through outside sources;
- Ways to provide better support for students dealing with or thinking about suicide;
- Ideas about the types of services that should be made available; and
- Barriers to accessing support services.

Education

Participants reached a general consensus that suicide is a complex issue and one that is "not talked about." Students also expressed a need to be more educated about suicide, particularly with being able to recognize risk factors and knowing what to do in the event of being exposed in some way to suicide. One participant expressed that suicide prevention education should happen in the classroom but that it is equally important for schools to provide "space [outside the classroom] to talk about what you care about, your feelings…an outlet to learn and share emotions" suggesting that emotional development should be a required component of suicide prevention education. Part of the problem, as one participant expressed, is that "people are afraid to speak up and ask for help because even though they might not admit it, they want help." Another expressed that as a result, "people seem to take suicide a lot less seriously than they should….not paying attention to warning signs." Another participant asserted that comprehensive suicide prevention should be a component in health class, but that other materials and tools, (in addition to textbooks), should used to share information and facts related to suicide.

Potential Solutions:

- Require schools to incorporate comprehensive suicide prevention education into required curriculum; and
- Require schools to provide emotional development tools and resources to all students.

Awareness

In addition to being more educated about suicide prevention, participants expressed the need to increase student awareness about existing support services, in part, to help eliminate the stigma of seeking help. As one participant put it, "We need to make youth know that they are not alone," but also to make sure that students ". . . know exactly where to go and who to talk to." Several participants expressed openly that they knew nothing about suicide and did not know where to go or who to talk to for help. One participant mentioned being aware of a "crisis intervention team" at their school but not knowing who they are or what they do. The group agreed that it is important to know who is helping.

Participants also expressed a desire to be more aware of the warning signs of suicide and to become knowledgeable of how to identify with and relate to other problems and risk factors

associated with suicide. Recognizing the limited role of legislation, participants unanimously agreed that although, "The law is there, awareness is not."

When prompted with the question of how to increase awareness about suicide, one participant suggested that guest speakers sharing their personal experiences with students is an effective way of raising awareness. Another participant suggested representatives from regional support groups to come and speak to students about their support services and techniques. Another asserted that statistics and numbers "don't mean much" and are not an effective way of raising awareness among students. Some suggested that teachers should be more aware of suicide attempts among their students. Several participants stated that the suicide hotline needed to be better publicized among youth in the state. Although it was generally agreed that awareness needs to be included as a component of required curriculum, the group proposed to require that all schools host a suicide awareness day that is organized and produced by students in partnership with adults. The event would serve as an opportunity to address "all kinds of problems that schools and youth face" in addition to showcasing regional support services and suicide prevention initiatives. It was suggested that there needed to be some degree of accountability for having to go to the event. One suggestion, for example, was to have the awareness day happen right before the prom or some other big event so that attendance at the awareness day would be required in order to participate in the other event.

Potential Solutions:

- Better publicize existing support services, (i.e., suicide hotline); and
- Require schools to host a student-led awareness day to raise awareness about suicide, regional support and services, and mental or emotional wellness.

Support

The theme of support services for suicide prevention emerged from a discussion about the types of support participants felt would be most useful to students. While some felt that peer support, (i.e., people of a similar age who are available to talk to), was more important, others felt that "adult support was really important because they don't have to worry about gossiping, etc." Among the key components participant felt should be part of a school's suicide support philosophy were trust, confidentiality, and acceptance. Some participants called attention to the need for school-based and community-based support efforts to be closely linked or part of a coordinated network. The group agreed that students need a support system that helps all students cope with stress in general, and not just those who may suffer from suicide-related issues. As one participant stated, "Emotional intelligence allows you to become an active citizen and to be involved because how can you take information in and be involved if you can't take care of yourself?"

Potential Solutions:

- Direct schools to review and commit to eliminating barriers that may prevent any students from accessing available support services;

- Train students, as well as adults, in suicide support so students have an option when seeking help; and
- Trust, confidentiality and acceptance should be major components of a school's philosophy for providing emotional support.

Services and Access

The majority of participants said their schools do not have any detection or prevention efforts that they know about. Under this premise, most felt that suicide prevention services should be provided by qualified people who are not only educated about suicide, but can relate to suicide. As one participant stated, ". . . someone not connected to the school, but who is in the school often enough and makes themselves known." Some felt it was important that suicide support services include the provision of published resources to students, either to hand out or post on bulletin boards. One participant re-emphasized the need for different options for help-seekers to go to, including students, adults, hotlines and outside resources. Another re-emphasized the need to publicize these services and make sure students are knowledgeable about their options and who they can talk to, (i.e., who is trained). It was also suggested that schools review the law about needing to have a "crisis team" and having funding available to the "crisis team." Lastly, one participant asserted that services should include . . .

> ". . . places you can go to just relax … not necessarily issue-focused or where people go if you have problems, but just a place where you can go and relax and de-stress . . . community- or school-based, but have someone in this space that is trained to talk about issues such as suicide."

Potential Solutions:

- Require schools to provide service options for students to choose from, including but not limited to, peer support services, adult support services, faith-based services, hotline information, and referrals to community services outside of school;
- Require schools to provide stress management and emotional support as part of its crisis intervention and suicide support service; and
- Direct schools to review the laws governing the provision of crisis intervention services and to provide funding for implementation.

The final section of the report presents the responses of those LYAC members who participated in a web-based survey that was designed to encourage individual LYAC members to reflect on the potential solutions that were proposed by the participants who attended the policy forums in Ellsworth and Kennebunk.

III. FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

This section of the report summarizes the results of a survey of LYAC members to the potential solutions that were presented in the preceding section. The survey was specifically designed to gauge member responses to the "proposed solutions" offered by forum participants, to determine how LYAC would collectively prioritize the policy topics addressed at the forums, and to obtain feedback regarding the planning process and outcome of the public forums.

LYAC Member Survey Results: LYAC Member Responses to Potential Solutions and Policy Recommendations for the 123rd Legislature

In the first part of the survey, members were asked to rate, on a 5-point Likert scale, the extent to which they agree or disagree with each of the "potential solutions" proposed by forum participants. A detailed breakdown of the survey questions and cumulative member responses to each proposed solution can be found in **Appendix F**. The survey received an 87% response rate, with a total of 14 completed surveys out of a possible 16. The key findings discussed below were selected based on the following criteria:

1. The potential solution has the unanimous support of LYAC members, meaning all LYAC members either "strongly agree" or "agree" with the potential solution; or
2. The potential solution resulted in considerable disagreement among the LYAC members, meaning at least 29% of LYAC members either "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with the potential solution; or
3. The potential solution resulted in significant majority support on the level of agreement among LYAC members, meaning at least 62% of the LYAC members selected the same level of agreement in rating a potential solution.

The survey also asked LYAC Members to consider the proposed solutions included in the "draft" report, as well as their own knowledge, opinions, and expertise, in identifying three policy recommendations that they would like the LYAC to make to the 123rd Legislature. A total of 11 LYAC members responded to this portion of the survey. The results from the survey are presented below by policy topic. These results report both the LYAC member responses to the potential policy solutions identified by public forum participants, as well the LYAC member preliminary recommendations for the 123rd Legislature.

Enforcing School Alcohol & Drug Policies

Proposed solutions to the issue of enforcing school drug and alcohol policies produced distinct LYAC membership response. "Ensuring that punishment for violating school drug and alcohol policies is consistent across individuals regardless of extracurricular involvement" gained unanimous support of member respondents with a clear majority (71%) who "strongly agree" and the other 29% who "agree." On the other hand, the LYAC members responded with varying levels of agreement to the proposal directing schools "to focus school drug and alcohol policy more on safety and education than on prevention," the most noteworthy being the 42% who

either "disagree" or "strongly disagree." Members also expressed a divided response to "requiring schools to ensure that parents are educated about school drug and alcohol policies" as well as the "prevalence and consequences of drug and alcohol abuse among youth," with 36% who "disagree." Results generally reveal a divided council on the issue of enforcing school drug and alcohol policies, but also indicate a mutual interest in equal punishment.

The survey question that asked the LYAC members to indicate the three policy recommendations that they would like to make to the 123rd Legislature in 2007 yielded the following comments:

- Review the effectiveness of drug and alcohol prevention programs, eliminate those that are ineffective, and shift funding to those that work.
- The consequences for illegal use of drugs and alcohol should be consistent statewide.
- A statewide policy should be made that prohibits drug and alcohol abuse among student athletes. Oftentimes, schools have differing policies. If we had a statewide policy, it would lead to less confusion; and it would also send a message to the state's youth that our state does not tolerate this illegal behavior.
- In my own school and neighboring schools, educators are misinformed about what they can do to stop illegal substance use and abuse; and are focusing on all the wrong methods listed under the category "approaches that participants generally agreed do not work." On a statewide level, parents and educators need to be informed about the solutions proposed at these forums, and the information they are given should be consistent throughout the state.
- Policies should be similar across schools in regards to drug and alcohol, but I do not think that schools should be limited if they want to go beyond the suggested requirements.
- Direct schools to focus school drug and alcohol policy more on safety and education, and less on prevention.

Bullying & Harassment

The proposal to "include the use of the "web" (e.g., "myspace.com") as a means of bullying" gained unanimous support of the LYAC member respondents with 50% who "strongly agree" and the other 50% who "agree." Members expressed a divided response, however, to the proposal that "bullying and harassment punishment be consistent for all students, without exception," with 43% who "strongly agree," 21% who "agree" and 29% who "disagree." Lastly, a significant majority exists among respondents who "strongly agree" that education on bullying and harassment should not come in the form of traditional assemblies or lectures (64%), suggesting a need for new, more effective methods of educating students about bullying and harassment. These findings describe a council whose membership is in favor of reviewing and updating the definition of bullying and effective education methods, yet divided on the issue of punishment.

The survey question that asked the LYAC members to indicate the three policy recommendations that they would like to make to the 123rd Legislature in 2007 yielded the following comments:

- As far as bullying and harassment are concerned, focus on mandating that teachers are trained in [responding to] bullying situations and understand the consequences of not acting within these expectations.
- The State should establish and pay for statewide, standardized awareness courses on bullying.
- School support services should include the availability of students who are trained to talk to and serve as allies to victims of bullying. Anti-bullying and harassment policy should be developed by individual schools. The approaches previously used at my school and neighboring schools do not match up with these proposals. Although schools should develop their own individual harassment policies that are applicable to their own situations, I feel it would be pertinent to create a statewide awareness program to inform schools about the definition of bullying and effective ways to deal with it.
- Evaluate school's implementation of bullying and harassment policies; and revise state standards as necessary (e.g., cyber-bullying).

Civic Engagement

The responses to two potential solutions to the issue of enhancing civic engagement stood out among survey responses. The proposal for "state and local government to be more involved with increasing youth civic engagement" received unanimous support with 100% of members who either "agree" or "strongly agree." Additionally, a significant majority exists among members who "strongly agree" (62%) and those who "agree" (38%). The same results describe member responses to "improving communication between government, schools and students regarding civic education and engagement opportunities" with 38% who "agree" and the remaining 68% who "strongly agree." It is clear from these results that LYAC is in support of linking state and local government with schools to provide new and increase awareness about existing opportunities for civic engagement.

The survey question that asked the LYAC members to indicate the three policy recommendations that they would like to make to the 123rd Legislature in 2007 yielded the following comments:

- Students should be added to more boards and commissions like the State Board of Education.
- The state government, not schools, should make funds available for student-led groups. If the Maine Learning Results are reinstated, standards for civic engagement and civic education should be required.
- Statewide, concerted efforts to promote civic awareness and involvement of youth in government should be made among state, schools, communities and elected officials.
- Government classes should be required in all schools. This will help with the civic engagement component.
- State funding for political clubs, just having some funding available, even just a small stipend for faculty facilitators of school groups, would be phenomenal for promoting civic engagement.

- Advocate more meaningful civic education as part of the high school curriculum, including standards for civic engagement in schools and communities.

School Nutrition

The proposal to "provide state-funded, mandatory nutrition and fitness education in the school curriculum as part of health and physical education classes" received mixed results with 29% of members who "strongly agree," 29% who "agree" and 29% who "disagree." Yet, on the other hand, a significant majority exists among respondents who "agree" (64%) that "the purpose of nutrition education should be to inform and raise awareness rather than limiting choices or controlling behavior." These results indicate that while the majority of the LYAC respondents agree on the purpose of nutrition education, the group is divided with respect to whether it should be mandatory and incorporated into school curriculum, as well as who should fund it.

The survey question that asked the LYAC members to indicate the three policy recommendations that they would like to make to the 123rd Legislature in 2007 yielded the following comments:

- All snack and soda machines should be turned off during normal school hours and only available after school hours.
- More than any other topic, I hear students at my own high school complain about how nutritional issues are mishandled by our school administration attempting to control behaviors and severely limit cafeteria choices. While rising rates of obesity, (especially in children), are an extremely important health issue, the approach my school has taken to deal with it has proved extraordinarily ineffective. It seems like educators at my school are not properly informed about how to handle the situation; and measures to educate and raise awareness about health, nutrition, and fitness within schools and communities seem like a good alternative approach to this issue.
- Provide guidelines, training and incentives to encourage schools to provide more time and effort to physical activity each school day.

School Safety

LYAC member responses to the potential solutions offered by forum participants on the subject of school safety did not meet the criteria established for selecting key findings. This is not surprising given the lack of exposure participants have with experiences that would require consideration of the different aspects of school safety. Though there are no key findings reported here, member responses to the potential solutions offered in the discussion of school safety can be found in **Appendix F**. Likewise, none of the LYAC members mentioned the issue of school safety in response to the request to indicate their three policy recommendations for the 123rd Legislature in 2007.

Suicide Prevention

A good deal of consensus was found in the LYAC member responses to the proposed solutions addressing the issue of suicide prevention. Members tended to respond with similar agreement levels on several potential solutions. More than two-thirds (64 %) of members responding "agree" with the following three proposed solutions:

- "Better publicize existing support services, (i.e., hotline)";
- "Train students, as well as adults, in suicide support so students have an option when seeking help"; and
- "Require schools to provide service options, including but not limited to, peer support, adult support, faith-based support, hotline information, and referrals to community services outside of school."

Additionally, 71% of respondents "agree" with the following two proposed solutions directing schools to:

- "Review and commit to eliminating barriers that may prevent a student from accessing available support services"; and
- "Review the laws governing the provision of crisis intervention services and to provide funding for implementation."

These results suggest that the LYAC membership views suicide as an important issue and generally support increased awareness, education, and training for suicide prevention purposes, ensuring the provision of effective support services and better utilizing exiting services.

The survey question that asked the LYAC members to indicate the three policy recommendations that they would like to make to the 123rd Legislature in 2007 yielded the following comments:

- Schools should be directed to have an effective policy in place; and all schools must review policies and support services that can assist in suicide prevention.
- Statewide, standardized awareness courses on the causes of suicide among young people and the signs of possible suicide [should be encouraged].
- Suicide prevention needs to be addressed "head on." Schools don't talk about it. Suicide is almost like "taboo." Schools should incorporate it [suicide prevention] into the required curriculum.
- Training students in suicide prevention is a wonderful idea, perhaps through workshops where students are trained rather than "talked at."

Summary of Key Findings from LYAC Member Survey

As mentioned above, for the purpose of summarizing the survey results, key findings were selected for discussion on the basis of three criteria. For the purpose of this report, "key findings"

represent those potential solutions proposed by forum participants that gained unanimous support of LYAC member respondents, that resulted in a high level of disagreement among members, or that resulted in the same level of agreement among a significant majority of respondents. Figures 1, 2 and 3 below provide a graphical representation that summarizes the "key findings" from the LYAC member survey.

Figure 1. Potential Solutions with Unanimous Support

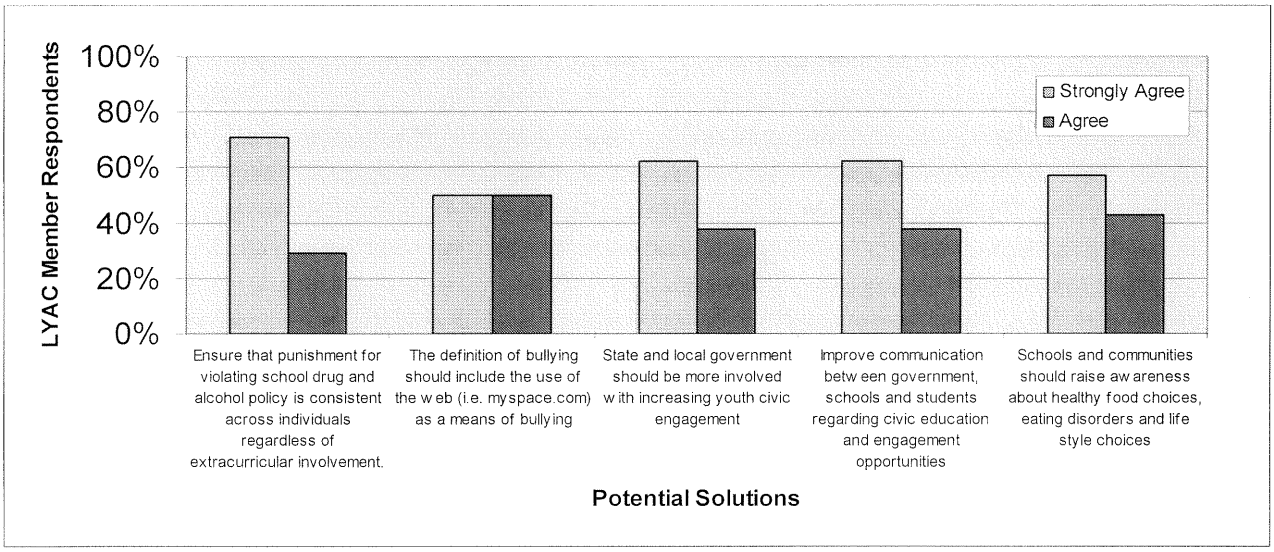

Figure 1 (above) displays the potential solutions with which all member respondents either agreed or strongly agreed. They represent ideas that LYAC members unanimously support.

Figure 2. Potential Solutions Resulting in Disagreement

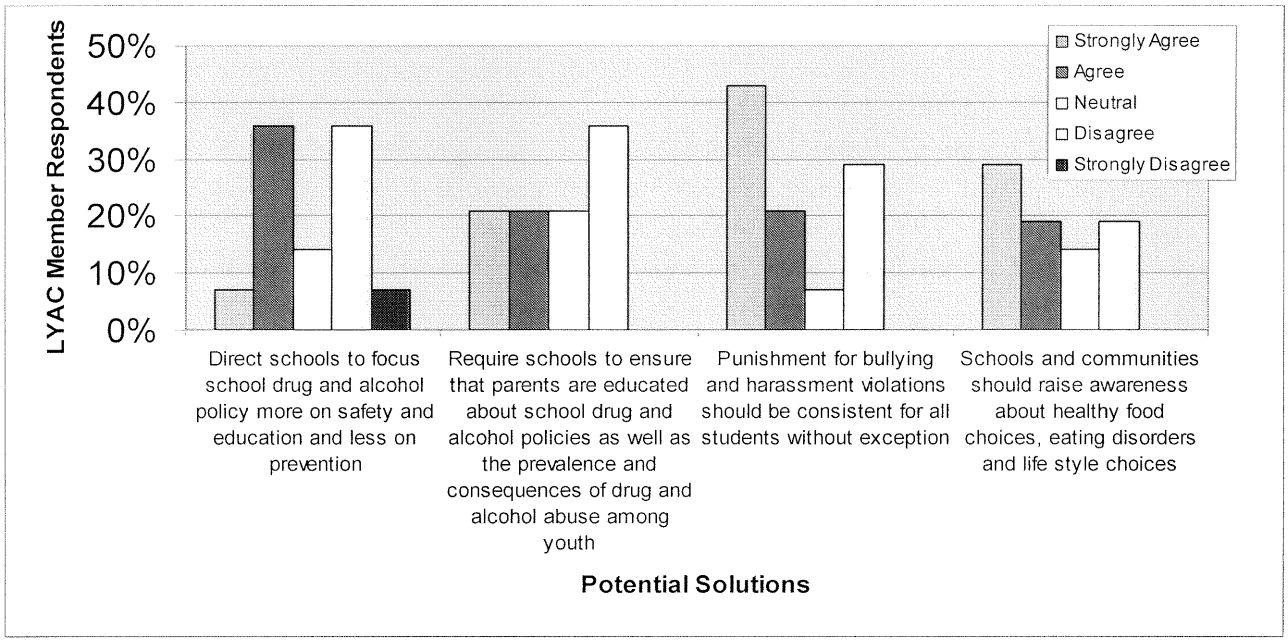

Figure 2 (above) displays the potential solutions which resulted in varying levels of agreement among LYAC member respondents. These are ideas which some members clearly do not support, warranting further discussion and debate.

Figure 3. Potential Solutions Resulting in a Majority Consensus

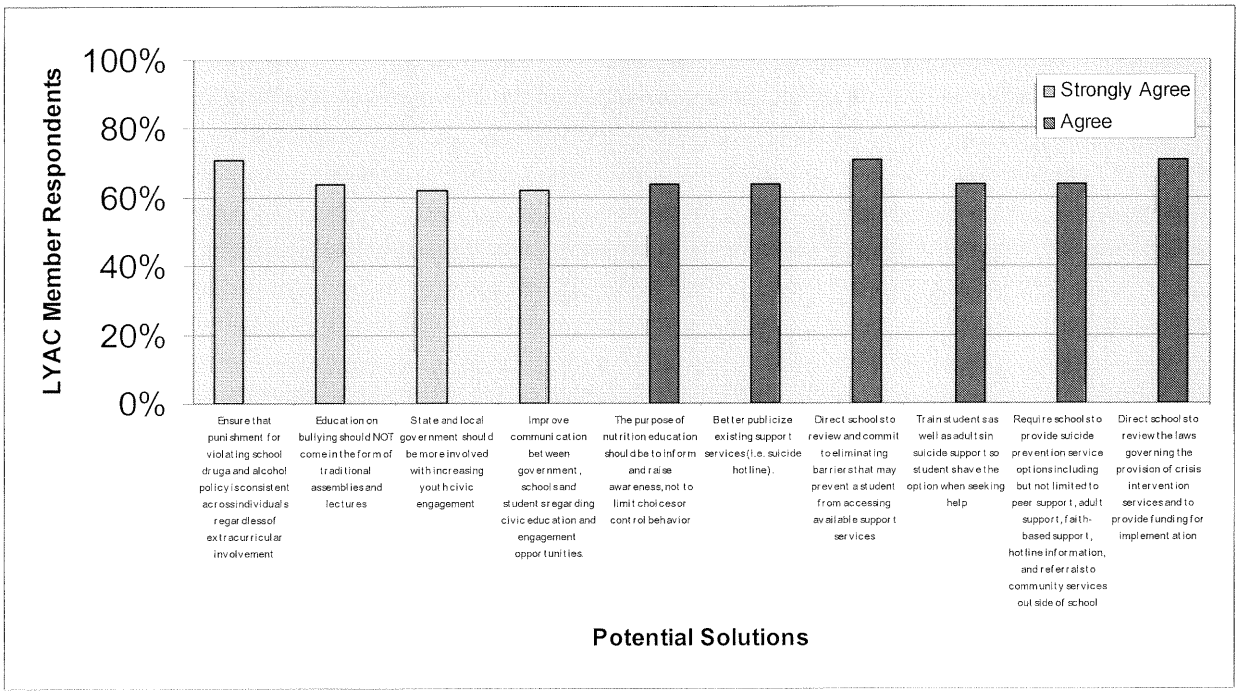

Figure 3 (above) displays the potential solutions for which the majority of respondents (62%) selected the same level agreement. In each case, respondents either agreed or strongly agreed on the potential solution. Notably, half of the potential solutions reflect discussions about suicide prevention. These potential solutions represent ideas that the majority of LYAC members feel similarly about.

LYAC Member Priorities for the Upcoming Legislative Session

This section reports the findings related to LYAC member responses to a question asking them to rank order – or prioritize -- which topics they thought should receive the highest or lowest priority in the next legislative session. Respondents ranked each topic on a scale where "1" was their "highest priority" and "6" was their "lowest priority." The total number of respondents was 14. The table below provides the results of the LYAC member responses to this question.

Priority	Policy Topic	Response Average
1	Bullying and Harassment	2.43
2	Civic Engagement	2.86
3	Enforcing School Drug and Alcohol Policies	2.93
4	Suicide Prevention	3.43

5	School Safety	4.14
6	School Nutrition	5.21

Note: A rank of 1 = "highest priority"; and a rank of 6 = "lowest priority."

LYAC Member Feedback on Public Forum Planning and Implementation

The final part of the survey asked the LYAC members to indicate the extent to which they were satisfied with certain aspects of the public forum implementation process and outcome. A total of 12 LYAC members responded to this question of the survey. Overall, feedback from respondents indicated satisfaction with the planning and implementation of the public forums. At least 84% of respondents indicated that they were "completely satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with the following aspects of the public forum implementation process and outcome:

- "Policy topics covered," (92%);
- "'Issue briefs' prepared for the forums," (91%); and
- "Content outlined in the report" (84%).

On the other hand, 17% of respondents indicated that they were "somewhat dissatisfied" with the "attendance" at the public forums and with LYAC member participation in the public forums.

APPENDIX A

Authorizing Legislation, Public Law 2005, Chapter 616, Part A-3

PUBLIC LAW 2005, CHAPTER 616
Part A, Sec. A-3
(S.P. 856 - L.D. 2114)

An Act to Implement Organizational Improvements to the Legislative Youth Advisory Council

PART A

Sec. A-3. Commissioner of Education to fund 2 public forums of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council during fiscal year 2006-07. The Commissioner of Education shall use funds received by the Department of Education to support the Task Force on Citizenship Education, established pursuant to Resolve 2003, chapter 143, to pay all costs associated with 2 statewide public forums to be held by the Legislative Youth Advisory Council established in the Maine Revised Statute, Title 3, section 168-A. Furthermore, the department shall reimburse the Legislature for Legislator expenses incurred in participating in the public forums. At the conclusion of the forums and payment of related costs, the department shall provide the Executive Director of the Legislative Council with a detailed financial accounting for all expenses incurred for each public forum, including the sources of the funding.

The 2 public forums must be held between July 1, 2006 and November 30, 2006, in high schools north and south of Augusta and must be for the purpose of soliciting input, suggestions and ideas for enhanced civic education in the State's secondary school system. The commissioner shall provide at least one staff person to attend each public forum and prepare written summaries of the meetings. The Legislative Council shall also provide a staff person to attend each public forum. These 2 public forums of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council constitute 2 of the 6 annual meetings of the council authorized under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 3, section 168-A, subsection 1. The Legislative Youth Advisory Council must include a summary of those public forums, along with any recommendations resulting from those forums, in a report submitted to the Legislative Council by January 15, 2007.

Completion of the 2 public forums required under this section and full payment by the department of all associated costs constitutes fulfillment of the duties of the department and the Legislative Youth Advisory Council pertaining to public forums required under Resolve 2003, chapter 143, Part A, sections 2 and 3.

RESOLVES 2003, CHAPTER 143
Part A, Sec. A-2 and Sec. A-3
(H.P. 1417 - L.D. 1915)

Resolve, To Implement the Recommendations of the Commission To Study the Scope and Quality of Citizenship Education

PART A

Sec. A-2. Statewide public forums for youth. Resolved: That, subject to available resources, the Legislative Youth Advisory Council shall conduct a series of statewide public forums on issues important to youth and invite Legislators from the various regions of the State to participate in these public forums. The Legislative Youth Advisory Council shall submit a report including its findings and recommendations no later than November 3, 2004 to the Governor, the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters, the Judicial Department and the Task Force on Citizenship Education established in Part B, section 1; and be it further

Sec. A-3. Funding. Resolved: That the Legislative Youth Advisory Council shall seek outside funds to fully fund all costs of conducting the public forums described in section 2. If sufficient outside funding has not been received by August 15, 2004 to fully fund all costs of conducting the public forums described in section 2, no public forums are authorized and no expenses of any kind may be incurred or reimbursed for this purpose. All contributions are subject to approval by the Legislative Council. All funds accepted must be forwarded to the Executive Director of the Legislative Council along with an accounting record that includes the amount of funds, the date the funds were received, from whom the funds were received and the purpose of and any limitation on the use of those funds. Upon approval from the Legislative Council, the Executive Director of the Legislative Council shall forward any funds received by the Legislative Youth Advisory Council to the Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service, which shall administer and make available an accounting of the funds. The Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service shall notify the chairs of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council when sufficient funding has been received

APPENDIX B

Membership List, Legislative Youth Advisory Council

Legislative Youth Advisory Council (on-going)

P.L. 2001, Chapter 439 (amended by P.L. 2005, c. 414 and P.L. 2005, c. 616)

Thursday, December 21, 2006

Appointment(s) by the President

Sen. Elizabeth H. Mitchell 277 Cushnoc Road Vassalboro, ME 04989	Senate Members
Sen. Carol Weston 154 Choate Road Montville, ME 04941 207 589-4481	Senate Member
Henry Beck 21 Prospect Street Waterville, ME 04901	Representing Postsecondary Educational Institutions
Daniel Black 66 Stroudwater Road Portland, ME 04102	Representing Secondary Schools
Kala Clark 1012 State Highway #3 Bar Harbor, ME 04609	Representing Secondary Schools
Will Colan 221 South Road Readfield, ME 04355 207 685-3078	Representing Secondary Schools
Alec Hartman 7 Sawmill Road Vassalboro, ME 04989	Enrolled in Equivalent Instruction Program
Claire Howard 102 Mitchell Road South Portland, ME 04116	Representing Secondary Schools
Hannah Lennett PO Box 71 Litchfield, ME 04350	Representing Secondary Schools
Heather Pratt 67 Collins Road Chelsea, ME 04330	Representing Secondary Schools
James Redstone 91 Oak Street Old Town, ME 04468	Representing Postsecondary Educational Institutions

Appointment(s) by the Speaker

Rep. Rosaire Paradis Jr. - Chair 40 U.S. Route 1 Frenchville, ME 04745 207 728-4854	House Member
Rep. A. David Trahan 2084 Washington Road Waldoboro, ME 04572	House Members

Carolyn Boyle PO Box 6293 China Village, ME 04926	Representing Postsecondary Educational Institutions
Meghan Brewer 10 Hackmatack Road Boothbay Harbor, ME 04358	Representing Secondary Schools
Ian Engdahl Annabessacook Road Winthrop, ME 04365	Representing Secondary Schools
Sadie Fenton 306 Main Street Jonesport, ME 04649	Representing Secondary Schools
Benjamin D. Goodman P.O. Box 115 Kennebunk, ME 04043	Representing Secondary Schools
Brandon Mazer Bowdoin College 489 Smith Union Brunswick, ME 04011	Representing Secondary Schools
Dave O'Heir 5 Newland Avenue Waterville, ME 04901 207 649-5092	Representing Postsecondary Educational Institutions
Hannah Stein 165 Vaughan Street Portland, ME 04102	Representing Secondary Schools
Autumn Woodward P.O. Box Harrington, ME 04643	Representing Secondary Schools
Grace Wright 15 Locust Lane Brunswick, ME 04011	Representing Secondary Schools

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Staff:

Phil McCarthy 287-1670
OPLA

APPENDIX C

Public Forum Partners and Key Resource People

LYAC Public Forum Partners and Key Resource People

Public Law 2005, chapter 616 required that the Department of Education fund the public forums with funds received to support the Citizenship Education Task Force. Commissioner Gendron agreed to provide technical assistance to the LYAC and to the host high schools to carry out these forums. The LYAC would like to recognize and thank the public forum partners and key resource people who participated in the planning and implementation of these forums.

- William Connors, Principal, Ellsworth High School
- Jill Cohen, Assistant Principal, Ellsworth High School
- Nelson Beaudoin, Principal, Kennebunk High School
- Susan Gendron, Commissioner, Department of Education
- Angela Faherty, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Education
- David Stockford, Director, Office of Special Services, Department of Education
- Norm Higgins, Consultant to Department of Education, Center for Educational Transformation and Maine Readiness Campaign
- Juanita Deschambault, Administrative Assistant, Department of Education, Center for Educational Transformation
- Charlie Hartman, Service-Learning Consultant, Department of Education
- Glenn Nerbak, Distinguished Educator for Civic Education & Service-Learning, Department of Education
- Lauren Sterling, Senior Staff Coordinator, Children's Cabinet
- Kathryn Hunt, Research Associate, Margaret Chase Smith Center for Public Policy and Facilitator, Citizenship Education Task Force
- Dara McIntire, Research Assistant, Margaret Chase Smith Center for Public Policy and Staff, Citizenship Education Task Force
- Fran Rudoff, Executive Director, KIDS Consortium; and Steering Committee Member, Citizenship Education Task Force
- Deborah Bicknell, Training & Project Coordinator, Maine Youth Action Network and PRO People

APPENDIX D

Policy "Issues Briefs" Prepared for LYAC Public Forums

Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council
ISSUE BRIEF: BULLYING

"Each year, more kids are bullied than the populations of Philadelphia, Columbus and Memphis combined."
-- Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Maine

INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a form of harassment and anti-social behavior that affects most adolescents regardless of age, race, gender, ability, or family economic status. Defined as being "exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students,"[1] bullying prevents students from enjoying a safe, stress-free learning environment. Students who are bullied report fear of going to school and/or riding the bus, physical symptoms of illness, and lower levels of self-esteem.[2] Bullies themselves are more likely to engage in criminal behavior and violence when they are older.[3]

In 1998 the Maine Project Against Bullying (MPAB), a 3-year research-based program funded by the Maine Department of Education began researching the prevalence of bullying in Maine schools. Its primary goal was to assist in implementation of best practices in addressing the problem of bullying among children in Maine schools, grades K-4. Despite such efforts to address bullying, is continues to be prevalent in Maine elementary and high schools. According to the Bully Police, Maine ranked among the top 10 in a state-by-state comparison of the total number of reported cases of bullying that occurred between 2000 and 2003.[4]

FACTS ABOUT BULLYING IN MAINE

The MPAB conducted a survey on bullying of third graders in Maine elementary school in February of 1999. The survey findings reveal the following facts about the extent to which bullying occurs and how children react to bullying:

- On a regular basis, (every day as compared to once or twice a week or month), 22.6% of third graders surveyed said they were threatened, 40.7% were teased in a mean way, 40% were called hurtful names, 34% were left out of things on purpose, and 37.5% were hit, kicked or pushed.
- Of surveyed students confronted with bullying: 91.3% report taking some action in response; 44.3% tell an adult; 34.2% tell the bully to stop; 32% get away from the bully; and 5.9% never told anyone.
- Bullied students reported that when they told someone about the bullying, 48.2% said it got better, while 15.3% said it got worse, and 21.7% said nothing happened.

Though these findings are specific to third graders, research has shown that bullying begins in elementary school, peaks in middle school, diminishes but does not disappear in high school[5] and if allowed or neglected, it can continue to affect both the bully and the victim for the rest of their lives.

FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION

Since 1999, at least 16 states have passed laws to address harassment, intimidation and bullying in school. The primary goals of almost all these legislative efforts are to define bullying, to establish school or district-level policy that firmly prohibits such behavior, and to communicate that policy to

students and their parents.[6] Pending legislation before Congress proposes to amend the federal Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act to include bullying and harassment prevention programs.[7]

In 2005, Governor Baldacci signed into law LD 564, "An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Student Code of Conduct," requiring Maine school boards to establish policies to address bullying, harassment and sexual harassment and put such policies in place by September of 2006.[8] Pursuant to this law, a subcommittee of the Maine Children's Cabinet developed "Maine's Best Practice Guide to Bullying and Harassment Prevention", which offers model policies specific to recognizing and addressing bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment, as well as materials for communicating and implementing such policies.

POLICY QUESTIONS

In thinking about what a state-wide anti-bullying and harassment law or policy should look like, consider the following questions:

- Definitions - What is bullying? Harassment? Violence? How are they similar? How are they different?
- Accountability - Who should be responsible for ensuring that bullying and harassment do not occur in school? Communities? Schools? Teachers? Parents? Students? Law enforcement?
- Enforcement - What kind of punishment is appropriate for bullying? Ignoring an incident? What kind of incentives or rewards could be provided for reporting incidents? How should incidents be tracked or monitored?
- Awareness - Who should be educated about bullying and harassment? What are some ways to raise public awareness about bullying and harassment at school?
- Policy - Should an anti-bullying policy be mandated for all schools in Maine? Should they all be similar or allowed to be different depending on the school? What should be the main components of an anti-bullying policy? Should counseling services, for bullies and victims, be made available at school?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Maine's Best Practices in Bullying and Harassment Prevention: A Guide for Schools and Communities, Maine Governor's Children's Cabinet, 2006.
http://mainegov-images.informe.org/cabinet/Bullying_000.pdf

Maine Project Against Bullying
http://lincoln.midcoast.com/~wps/against/bullying.html

U.S Department of Education, Student Reports of Bullying 2005
http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2005/2005310.pdf

The Bully Police
www.bullypolice.org

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Maine
http://www.fightcrime.org/me/index.php

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[1] Olweus, 1991

[2] Maine Project Against Bullying, http://lincoln.midcoast.com/~wps/against/bullying.html

[3] Colvin et. al, 1998

[4] Bully Police USA Report, Survey data submitted since May 2000

[5] Maine Project Against Bullying, http://lincoln.midcoast.com/~wps/against/bullying.html

[6] 2005 NCSL, School Bullying

[7] H.R. 284

[8] P.L. 2005, chapter 307

Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council
ISSUE BRIEF: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

"More young Americans can name an American Idol winner and the city where the cartoon Simpsons live than know the political party of their state's governor." [1]

INTRODUCTION

Recent evidence suggests that American youth are disengaged and lack the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to participate in and carry out civic duties. Examples of this trend include:

- 49% of youth today say voting is not important, and voter turn-out rates among 18-24 year-olds have dropped by one third since 1972.[2]
- One third of high school seniors lack a basic understanding of the principles of our government and how our democracy works.[3]
- Only 26% of U.S. students have proficient skills, knowledge and dispositions for democratic participation.[4]

In Maine, the evidence is consistent. Less than 30% of students meet State standard score levels in social studies and 67% believe social studies will not be useful to them in their future work.[5] Maine students responded correctly to only 50% of the assessment test questions related to Civics.

Many fear that the civic mission of public schools has been neglected in light of ever-changing educational standards that emphasize other subjects.[6] Some think that the structure and culture of most schools do not permit student participation in school governance and decision making. Others believe there aren't enough opportunities available for students to have meaningful, authentic experiences to participate in their communities.[7] Though the cause of this problem may be multifaceted, the cause for concern is not. How will today's disengaged youth lead America through the next generation of challenges without knowledge of – and interest in – citizenship?

CURRENT APPROACHES

A variety of local and state-wide approaches to address this issue are making headway in Maine, including the following initiatives.

- **Maine Citizenship Education Task Force** – A coalition of individuals and organizations committed to promoting and strengthening citizenship education across Maine schools, communities and colleges.
- **Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council** – A 20-member (16 youth, 4 legislators) council that advises the Legislature on proposed legislation, state budget initiatives and policies that affect youth.
- **Lewiston Youth Advisory Council** - An advisory council to the Lewiston City Council that enables youth to work towards goals that empower all the community's youth and to undertake service projects that enhance the community.
- **Project Citizen** – A curricular program in which students work cooperatively to identify a public policy problem in their community, develop a solution, and implement an action plan.
- **First Amendment Schools** – A national initiative designed to transform how schools teach and practice the rights and responsibilities of citizenship that frame civic life in our democracy.
- **Civil Rights Teams** – A co-curricular program involving students, faculty and community members who work together towards making positive changes in a school's social climate.

Students involved in these and other civic education programs across the state have accomplished noteworthy successes that highlight the potential of a reinvigorated youth citizenry. Youth members serving on the **Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council** advised Legislators on tough issues including education, youth employment, youth in foster care, and substance abuse. Members of the **Lewiston Youth Advisory Council** have conducted a noise pollution awareness campaign, partnered with the city fire department to encourage business and homeowners to follow emergency response guidelines and raised money to create electronic, community message boards. Through **Project Citizen**, Cumberland students created a pay-per-bag waste policy to increase recycling, Portland students testified before the Legislature's Education Committee in support of a proposal to increase funding to pay for laptops, and Holden students developed a policy that requires defibrillators in public buildings. Kennebunk students fulfill **First Amendment School** practices and principles through active participation on the school board and hiring committees, by developing policies to encourage students to take standardized tests more seriously, and by implementing revisions to the student government structure. The Ellsworth's **Civil Rights Team** participated in the 2006 Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week by partnering with community-based and school-based domestic violence and sexual assault educators.

POLICY QUESTIONS

Building on the initiatives described above and their role in enhancing civic engagement of Maine's youth, consider the following policy questions:

- Definitions – What is civic engagement? A behavior? An attitude? An understanding? Knowledge? A set of skills? Where does it occur?
- Accountability – Who should be accountable for enhancing and maintaining civic education in Maine schools and colleges? Students? Teachers? Schools? Colleges? Communities? States? Feds?
- Costs and Benefits – What are the costs and benefits of increasing youth engagement in civic education activities? Do the benefits outweigh the costs or vice versa?
- Standards – What role(s) can Maine's existing learning standards (Maine Learning Results) play in enhancing and maintaining civic education in Maine schools?
- Assessment – Can civic engagement be measured? If so, how?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Maine Citizenship Task Force
www.maine.gov/education/mecitizenshiped/about/index.html
Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council
http://www.maine.gov/legis/opla/legyouth.htm
Final Report (2004) of the Commission to Study the Scope and Quality of Citizenship Education
http://www.maine.gov/legis/opla/citedrpt.PDF
Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools
http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/site/resources/index_html
The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Education
http://www.civicyouth.org/practitioners/practitioners_outside27.htm

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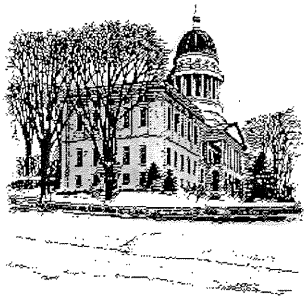
[1] Kurtz, K.T., A. Rosenthal & C. Zukin. Citizenship: A Challenge for All Generations. Denver: National Conference of State Legislatures, 2003.
[2] The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) 2002.
[3] National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Data, 1998.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Maine Educational Assessment Data, 2002-2003.
[6] Smith, Stacy. Are Public Schools Leaving Citizenship Behind? *Journal of Maine Education*, Winter 2005.
[7] Final Report of the Commission to Study the Scope and Quality of Citizenship Education, 2004



Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council
ISSUE BRIEF: ENFORCING SCHOOL ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICIES

"25.9% of underage drinkers are alcoholics and they consume 47.3% of the alcohol drunk by underage drinkers"
– National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse

INTRODUCTION

The illegal use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs is an issue all schools must confront; and Maine schools are no exception. While lawmakers have attempted to find the appropriate balance between policies that support prevention, intervention and treatment programs and policies that impose penalties for the illegal use of prohibited substances, this issue brief focuses on the enforcement of alcohol and drug policies in our schools. Although reported alcohol and drug use rates among high school students have continued to decline[1], incidents of alcohol and drug-related violations in Maine schools remain high. Incident report data from 2004-05 included the following:

- 2,512 drug-related incidents were reported by Maine schools, representing 20% of the total incidents reported in all schools and 27% of the incidents in high schools.[2]
- 34% of all student expulsions were a result of drug-related violations – an increase from 26% in 2000-01.
- 14% of 6th through 12th grade students in Maine schools were reported to have been "drunk" or "high" at school and 7% were reported to have sold illegal drugs.[3]

These statistics indicate that Maine schools are, in fact, enforcing alcohol and drug policies – though, to what extent, remains unknown. Given the serious consequences – including punishment and health and safety risks – one might wonder why the illegal use of alcohol and drugs at school continues to be so prevalent. All of which begs the question: how effective are school substance abuse policies?

FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATION

While legislation addressing illegal alcohol and drug use has focused on requiring schools to implement a "code of conduct" and providing substance abuse prevention as part of health education programs in schools, little guidance is provided to local school officials with respect to the enforcement of alcohol and drug policies.

- The federal Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act requires schools to have a code of conduct in place prohibiting the possession and use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in order to qualify for federal funding they need to implement or strengthen school programs that prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs [4] (20 U.S.C. § 7101).
- Maine law requires all school boards to adopt a student code of conduct, including a definition of unacceptable student behavior, "with input from educators, administrators, parents, students, and community members," (20A §1001, sub-§15).
- Maine law also directs the Department of Education to help schools establish school-based substance abuse programs and health education curricula (20A §6604); however, only elementary schools are required by law to include information on the adverse health effects of substance abuse in their course of study (20A §4711).

A PROMISING APPROACH

The Youth Empowerment and Policy Project (YEPP) was established in 2001 with the primary goal of involving Maine's youth in the effort to decrease underage drinking by working to change factors in the social, legal,

economic and political environment that encourage, enable or support underage drinking. Trained in public speaking, facilitation and policy issues, YEPP members incorporate their perspectives and experiences in the development and implementation of findings and recommendations to improve the effectiveness of drug and alcohol policies. In a review of the Maine Department of Education's Standards for Ethical and Responsible Behavior in Maine Schools (2001), YEPP made some notable findings and recommendations regarding school drug and alcohol policies:

Findings	Recommendations
Youth receive "mixed messages" from TV, radio, advertisements, peers and adults regarding alcohol use	Gather representative community members and come to an agreement on core values regarding underage alcohol use
Drug and alcohol education is not consistently incorporated in our school curricula; and curricular efforts are insufficient to counteract the constant stream of marketing, media and other influences	Implement drug and alcohol curriculum that is more consistent throughout the year and include discussion of policy making from core value identification through enforcement of policies and laws
One or more of four major populations – regular users, nonusers, those considering use, and those affected through family or friends – are often excluded from drug and alcohol policy deliberations	Youth need a legitimate voice in the process of creating drug and alcohol policy; policy enforcement should not only lead to punishment, but also to options for treatment
Discussion between parents and educators is often limited to certain extracurricular activities or to punishment situations	Each year, parents need to be welcomed and included in discussions of drug and alcohol issues and their relationship to school policy
Emphasis is concentrated on athletic and academic achievements and rarely includes recognition of ethical behavior	Students should learn to recognize ethical behavior in the primary grades since it is more difficult for high school students, who may have developed unhealthy behaviors, to change their behavior
Students do not have a voice in assessment of policy outcomes	Create and utilize a system that legitimately involves students in the regular assessment of drug and alcohol policy

POLICY QUESTIONS

Building upon the YEPP findings and recommendations above, consider the following policy questions:

- Advertising – What role can advertising play in preventing underage drinking and substance abuse in schools? What role can the alcohol and tobacco industries play?
- Policy – To what extent should students and parents be involved in the development and enforcement of school drug and alcohol policies? What can students contribute that others can't?
- Punishment – What types of punishment are appropriate for violating school drug and alcohol policies?
- Incentives – How can schools provide incentives for students with substance abuse problems to seek help?
- Access – How can student access to substance abuse services be improved? What types of services should be made available at school?
- Education – Should schools be required to include substance abuse education in the curriculum? At what grade levels?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Youth Empowerment and Policy Project: http://www.neias.org/YEP/
Maine State Office of Substance Abuse: http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/osa/
Maine Department of Education: http://www.maine.gov/education/
Main Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act: http://www.mainesdfsca.org/
Maine School Management Association: http://www.msmaweb.com/

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[1] Maine Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results, 2005
[2] Maine Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Program: Report on Incidence of Prohibited Behavior and Drug and Violence Prevention 2004-2005. "Drug-related incidents" include incidents involving the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco and prohibited drugs. Available at http://www.mainesdfsca.org/pdf/lobster0405.pdf
[3] Summary of Maine Youth Drug and Alcohol Use Survey 2006 Results for State of, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Office of Substance Abuse, Maine Department of Health and Human Services.
[4] Maine Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act. Synopsis available at http://www.mainesdfsca.org/about.html

Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council
ISSUE BRIEF: SUICIDE PREVENTION

"Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for youth aged 15-24 and the 3rd leading cause of death for youth aged 10-14".
-- Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Program

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the percentage of Maine's high school students who seriously considered attempting suicide has significantly declined.[1] However, in 2005, 13 percent of high school students reported having seriously considered attempting suicide and 6 percent actually attempted suicide, indicating that it remains a very real and serious public health issue affecting Maine youth. In response to this concern, the Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC) identified suicide, suicide behavior, and its prevention, to be among its top policy priorities.

Maine has been a leader for other states in its effort to focus on youth in developing a state-wide suicide prevention plan. In 1998, three years after Governor King appointed a Task Force on Adolescent Suicide, the Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Program (MYSPP) was established. As a priority initiative of the Governor's Children's Cabinet, the MYSPP established a 24-hour suicide hotline, trained educators and others who work with youth in prevention strategies, and encouraged the integration of suicide prevention information into comprehensive school health education.

MAINE YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM (MYSPP)

Maintaining its efforts to raise public awareness of suicide and suicide prevention, the MYSPP recognizes evidence that, in many cases, suicide is preventable. Central in its work with state and private sector agencies and individuals are these common goals:

- To increase public awareness about suicide prevention;
- To reduce the incidence of suicide behavior among Maine youth aged 10-24; and
- To improve youth access to appropriate prevention and intervention services.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the MYSPP has made a difference since its beginning in 1998, though its true impact has not been measured and remains unknown. The MYSPP is challenged with meeting the needs of a diverse group of stakeholders, connecting with youth across Maine, and evaluating the overall impact of its work. The LYAC's objective is to learn from Maine's youth about how it can help address these challenges and lend itself towards the accomplishment of the MYSPP goals.

RISK FACTORS

According to the MYSPP, there are several risk factors known to be strongly associated with suicide behavior. Understanding these risk factors is an essential step in suicide prevention. They include:

- Mental illness, depression and /or anxiety
- Conduct disorder / poor impulse control
- Alcohol and/or substance abuse
- One or more prior suicide attempts
- One or more very stressful events, transitions, or losses
- Suicidal ideation and threats of suicide
- Detailed plan for a suicide attempt
- Access to lethal weapons
- Exposure to suicide or suicide of a family member / friend
- Feelings of powerlessness, hopelessness and helplessness

LEGISLATION

Many school officials are seeking guidance in the development of comprehensive suicide prevention and intervention, as well as guidelines to assist their personnel in responding to suicidal behavior. The U.S. Surgeon General and clinical experts nationwide promote the adoption of suicide prevention protocols by local school districts to increase the safety of at-risk youth and to protect school personnel and the entire school community.

To this end, Maine law requires the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education to "develop a teenage suicide prevention strategy and model suicide prevention program to be presented in the secondary schools of the State", (34B, § 3007). Maine law also requires schools to work with local public safety, mental health and law enforcement officials to develop crisis response plans to deal with crisis and potential crisis situations involving violent acts by or against students in every school administrative unit, (20A, §1001, sub-§ 16).

POLICY QUESTIONS

In thinking about how LYAC's role in the legislative process can address the issue of suicide, suicide behavior and prevention, consider the following policy questions:

- Awareness - One of MYSPP's messages to youth is, "Suicide is never a good solution to one's problems and it is not the one most young people choose." What are some ways to get this message across to Maine youth? What are other ways to raise awareness about suicide and suicide prevention in Maine? What role might the media play?
- Subject Sensitivity - It is important to provide information about suicide rates to increase understanding and awareness of the problem without dramatizing, glorifying, showcasing or otherwise portraying the act of suicide as a common response. With these considerations in mind, how should this kind of data or information be presented appropriately?
- Services - How can youth access to appropriate prevention and intervention services be improved? How can the act of seeking help be destigmatized?
- Risk Factors - What can schools do to address some of the risk factors that are identified to be strongly associated with suicide behavior?
- Training - In addition to trained professionals, should others be trained in suicide and crisis intervention? Who? Teachers? Youth? Coaches? Councilors? Parents?
- Impacts - One of MYSPP's biggest challenges is to measure the impact it is having on the number of suicide-related incidents. What are some ways that these impacts could be measured?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Program, Official website for youth.
http://www.state.me.us/suicide/youth/index.htm

Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Program, Official website
http://www.maine.gov/suicide/

Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Intervention and Postvention Guidelines: A Resource for School Personnel, Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Program, May 2002.
http://mainegov-images.informe.org/suicide/docs/guidelines02.pdf

Winthrop Community Study: A Summary of Findings, Maine Youth Suicide Prevention, November 7, 2005.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Maine Chapter
http://www.afsp-maine.org/index.html

[1] Maine High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results, 2005, http://www.mainecshp.com/survey.html

Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council
ISSUE BRIEF: SCHOOL SAFETY

"Of the 400-plus deaths in school violence in the last 12 years, only a handful were at the hands of intruders....Now, just in the last month, at least five people have been killed and several wounded by intruders shooting in schools."
-- Chicago Tribune [Oct. 3, 2006]

INTRODUCTION

In light of recent acts of violence that have taken place at schools around the country, local, state, and federal authorities and lawmakers are revisiting the issue of school safety. From a policy perspective, school safety is a complex issue that encompasses a number of inter-related issues such as emergency response and preparedness, crisis intervention, school climate, and student conduct. School safety also depends upon a countless number of people at the local, state and federal levels working together to ensure the development and implementation of effective policies. While local school boards work with public safety officials and their communities to develop school safety policies and crisis intervention programs, federal and state officials need to ensure that schools have the resources to support the implementation of such policies, and parents and students are expected to become informed about their school safety policies and procedures. Coordination and cooperation among each sector, including local schools and communities, is critical to keep students and school personnel safe.

STATE LEGISLATION

Maine lawmakers study of school safety issues, from a variety of angles, has resulted in a set of laws and guidelines intended to prevent the occurrence of violence in schools and ensure adequate preparedness in the event of a crisis or emergency. The following Maine statutes have been enacted to spell out the duties and requirements of state and local education officials with respect to school safety:

The Commissioner of Education is required to:

- Develop statewide standards for responsible and ethical student behavior in consultation with organizations representing school boards, school administrators, teachers, parents, and other interested local officials and community members (20A, §254, sub-§11).
- Provide technical assistance to school administrative units in the provision of violence prevention and intervention training programs for teachers, school staff and students (20A, §262).
- Develop prototypical guidelines, policies and procedures for school districts concerning the prevention and response to school bomb threats(20A, §263).
- Amend the review process for new school construction to consider whether new schools could serve as public community shelters with backup energy generators; and work with homeland security officials to coordinate community outreach efforts for all-hazards emergency planning (PL 2005, c. 634).

Local school boards are required to:

- Adopt a student code of conduct consistent with the statewide standards for student behavior with input from educators, administrators, parents, students and the community (20A, §1001, sub-§15).
- Annually approve a school district plan, developed with local public safety, mental health and law enforcement, to deal with crises involving violence by or against students (20A, §1001, sub-§16).
- Adopt policies prohibiting possession of a firearm or dangerous weapons on school property and requiring expulsion for a student who is found to violate such policies (20A, §1001, sub-§§9 & 9-A).
- Adopt policies concerning school bomb threats consistent with state guidelines (20A, §1001, sub-§§17 & 18).

REVISITING SCHOOL SAFETY IN MAINE

The recent resurgence of violence in schools in other states has prompted Maine state and local education officials to revisit, evaluate and update current school safety policies. Governor Baldacci has recently requested that all Maine schools review their safety and crisis plans. In addition, the Commissioner of Education Gendron has directed superintendents and private school headmasters to review school safety recommendations from the FBI and Department of Homeland Security, including "short-term, protective measures" such as raising community awareness and conducting awareness training, considering limiting visitors inside schools and single entry points for students, staff and visitors; and "long–term, protective measures," including installation of secure locks for all external and internal doors and windows, and considering establishing a safety area within the school.

In response to the Governor's request, the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and the Department of Education (DOE) reminded schools of the basics of successful emergency response planning:

1. Involve representatives from all the public safety agencies who might respond to a crisis at your school.
2. Take MEMA's "pop quiz"[1] to determine where you are in your preparedness process.
3. Complete MEMA's risk assessment[2] to determine what particular types of emergencies you should plan for.
4. Build your plan to fit your community, your circumstances, and your resources.
5. Practice – Contact your county emergency management agency for guidance on how to conduct a realistic exercise that will help you determine if your plan will work in an actual event, and how to improve it.

POLICY QUESTIONS

Consider the following policy questions in thinking about how Maine policymakers can address school safety:

- Definitions - What does it mean to feel 'safe' at school? Are there any other aspects of school safety that you feel have not been addressed by your school administration, your school board or by state officials?
- Policy - What aspects of school safety should state legislators focus on: promoting prevention via safe school climate and ethical student conduct; or preparing for emergency and crisis response planning? Why?
- Input - Maine law requires that school boards seek input from students, parents and community members in the development of student codes of conduct. What might be done to ensure that this happens?
- Awareness - To what extent are you aware of your school's emergency response plan? What might legislators consider to improve student awareness of emergency response and potential crises?
- Balance - Following the 1999 shootings at Columbine H.S. and subsequent violent acts at other schools, lawmakers have debated the appropriate balance between civil liberties and safety/security. As a student, what rights do you give up for a safer school? Would you be willing to give up more of those rights to feel safer?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Maine Emergency Management Agency, School Safety Planning Resources
http://www.state.me.us/mema/prepare/prep_news.shtml?id=24609

Maine EMS Emergency Guidelines for Maine Schools
http://www.state.me.us/dps/ems/docs/#Guideline

Maine Department of Education, School Security, Safety, and Emergency Preparedness Resources and Links
http://www.maine.gov/education/sos.html

National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, Safe School Facilities
http://www.edfacilities.org/safeschools/index.cfm

National Education Association Crisis Communication Guides and Toolkit
http://www.nea.org/crisis/index.html

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[1] Available at http://www.state.me.us/tools/whatsnew/attach.php?id=23684&an=3

[2] Available at http://www.state.me.us/tools/whatsnew/attach.php?id=23685&an=3

Maine Legislative Youth Advisory Council
ISSUE BRIEF: SCHOOL NUTRITION

The increasing percentage of overweight children is a major public health concern. In 1976–1980, only 6% of children ages 6–17 were overweight. By 1988–1994, this proportion had risen to 11%; and, in 2003–2004, the proportion of overweight children was 18%.

-- America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2006

INTRODUCTION

As public health officials documented the sharp rise in the rates of school-age children who were overweight or obese, federal and state policymakers began to focus on the extent to which policies associated with school nutrition programs are part of the problem or could be part of the solution to this public health challenge. Obesity occurs when a person's energy intake, (calories from food and drink), exceeds their energy expenditure, (through metabolism and physical activity). Overweight children are more likely to develop high blood pressure, heart disease, high cholesterol, diabetes, stroke, orthopedic problems, serious behavioral problems, and certain cancers. Consequently, it should come as little surprise that public health advocates have determined that school nutrition policies and food service programs, as well as health and physical education curriculum, are critical factors in efforts to prevent and reduce the prevalence rates of childhood obesity.

COMMISSION TO STUDY PUBLIC HEALTH

During the 2003-2004 legislative biennium, the 121st Legislature considered a number of bills that sought to contend with the rising obesity rates in Maine. These legislative proposals attempted to address the health risks associated with obesity through curricular reforms in our schools, changes to the state's transportation infrastructure and regulation of menus at chain restaurants. One bill that emerged from the legislative process was Resolve 2003, Chapter 95, which created a 31-member Commission to Study Public Health. The Commission was established to examine a number of areas, including nutrition, physical activity and health assessment in schools. The Commission, which was charged with conducting an analysis of whether schools are meeting modern nutrition standards for school meals and other food and drinks offered on school property, presented the following findings:

- Most children consume too much fat, saturated fat and sodium, and not enough fruits, vegetables or calcium;
- High fat, high sugar foods are available for sale in most schools in vending machines, concessions, and as "a la carte" items; and studies report that approximately 75% of high schools offer an "a la carte" program at lunchtime with few low-fat items, fruit or fruit juice offered;
- Students in schools that don't offer "a la carte" foods consume more fruit and vegetable servings daily and are less likely to exceed fat intake guidelines than students in schools offering "a la carte" items;
- Vending machines displace student consumption of more nutritious foods; and fruit consumption decreases by 11% for every vending machine present in the school;
- Soft drinks are most likely to be chosen from a vending machine, followed by candy and chips;
- In addition to soft drinks, vending machines offer a variety of energy-dense candy and chips that are loaded with fat, particularly the heart-unhealthy saturated and trans fats; and
- Packages of snack foods sold outside of the school lunch programs often provide more than one serving per package; and, like adults, children are likely to overeat when served large portions of food.

The Commission was authorized to submit a report to the Legislature, including proposed legislation to improve public health, decreasing rates of obesity, decreasing the cost of health care, increasing the physical activity of youth and increasing awareness of healthy eating choices. The Commission concluded that greater control of the nutritional quality of food items for sale in school was needed and proposed to develop guidelines for nutritional food and further consideration of the potential costs and benefits of adopting a specific definition of "healthy foods and beverages" that would apply to food and beverages provided to school children in Maine schools.

While several bills were introduced on behalf of the Commission, the only bill that was enacted was an amended proposal that adopted a few of the recommended changes to school health and nutrition policies. Public Law 2005, chapter 435 implemented the following recommendations of the Commission to Study Public Health concerning schools, children and nutrition:

1. Directs the Department of Education to encourage nutrition education in public schools;
2. Directs the Department of Education to establish standards for food and beverages sold outside of the school meal programs, (standards are to be adopted as major substantive rules);
3. Requires schools to post caloric information on prepackaged "a la carte" items offered for sale;
4. Directs the Department of Education to implement a pilot program to install milk vending machines; and
5. Directs the Department of Education to collaborate with the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources to implement the National Farm to School Program.

SCHOOL NUTRITION & OBESITY IN MAINE

The prevalence of obesity in our school-age population remains a significant public health concern. The 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey of Maine 9th through 12th graders reported that:

- 31% described themselves as slightly or very overweight;
- 11% were overweight (i.e., at or above the 95th percentile for body mass index, by age and sex), including 6% of female students and 14% of male students;
- Another 14% were at risk for becoming overweight (i.e., at or above the 85th percentile but below the 95th percentile for body mass index, by age and sex);
- 19% reported eating five or more servings per day of fruits and vegetables during the past 7 days; and
- 66% reported participating in at least 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity on three or more of the past 7 days and/or at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on five or more of the past 7 days.

POLICY QUESTIONS

In thinking about how state or local education officials should address school nutrition policy, consider the following:

- Policy - What aspects of school nutrition policy should state legislators focus on: improving health curriculum, defining healthy foods and beverages that may be sold in schools, regulating food and beverage vendors, measuring student's "body mass index"? Why?
- Accountability - Who should be responsible for educating students about making healthy choices regarding nutrition and physical activity? Schools? Teachers? Parents? Students?
- Awareness - Should state health or education officials work with schools to educate students about the health risks associated with being overweight and obese? What are other ways to raise public awareness?
- Fiscal impact - School food service programs are typically "self-supporting" operations. Who should pay for the mandated requirements for nutrition education, posting caloric information, etc.?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Maine Department of Education & Maine Department of Health & Human Services, Coordinating School Health Program, Nutrition Services Resources and Links
http://www.mainecshp.com/nutrition_services/index.html

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, School Health Policies and Programs Study
http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/nutrition/index.htm

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System
http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm

Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2006
http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/

APPENDIX E

LYAC Public Forum Agendas – Ellsworth High School & Kennebunk High School

Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC) "Public Forum"
Ellsworth High School
November 2, 2006

★ ★ AGENDA ★ ★

4:30 p.m. REGISTRATION & CHECK-IN. (*Main Hallway*)

- ☞ Participants check-in at the registration tables and then proceed to the auditorium

5:00 p.m. CALL TO ORDER: CONVENING THE FORUM. (*Auditorium*)

- ☞ Welcome and introductions of LYAC members and Ellsworth H.S. Team
- ☞ Review purpose of public forum, agenda and expectations

5:30 p.m. "MEET, GREET & EAT" SPAGHETTI SUPPER. (*Café*)

- ☞ **School Safety** (yellow) - Café North
- ☞ **Bullying** (red) - Café South
- ☞ **School Nutrition** (green) Café East
- ☞ **Open Forum** (blue) - Café West

- ☞ Participants "meet, greet & eat" in discussion groups with co-facilitators

6:00 p.m. BREAKOUT SESSIONS: POLICY TOPIC DISCUSSION. (*Breakout Rooms*)

- ☞ **School Safety** - Teacher's Room
- ☞ **Bullying** - Library
- ☞ **School Nutrition** - Café East
- ☞ **Open Forum** - Café West

- ☞ Co-facilitators summarize state policy topic and "issue brief"
- ☞ Participants discuss policy questions and prioritize their top 3 policy issues
- ☞ Participants discuss role of schools, communities and state in addressing the policy
- ☞ Participants identify policy options that LYAC and Legislature should address in 2007

7:00 p.m. DISCUSSION GROUPS "REPORT BACK" TO THE FORUM. (*Auditorium*)

- ☞ Each group presents a report summarizing the top 3 policy issues discussed, the proposed alternatives identified and the roles of different policymakers in addressing these issues
- ☞ Each groups will have 10 minutes to present their report, including time for discussion

7:45 p.m. WRAP-UP: "NEXT STEPS." (*Auditorium*)

- ☞ LYAC members comment on "next steps" for LYAC in 2007
- ☞ Final comments & acknowledgements from Ellsworth H.S. Team
- ☞ Participants complete evaluation forms
- ☞ Raffle drawing for iPod nano

8:00 p.m. ADJOURNMENT. (*Drive Safely*)

Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC) "Public Forum"
Kennebunk High School
November 14, 2006

★ ★ A G E N D A ★ ★

5:00 p.m. REGISTRATION & CHECK-IN. (*Gym A*)

- Participants check-in at the registration tables and then proceed to Gym A

5:30 p.m. CALL TO ORDER: CONVENING THE FORUM. (*Gym A*)

- Welcome and introductions of LYAC members and Kennebunk H.S. Team
- Review purpose of public forum and agenda

5:45 p.m. PIZZA PARTY / DISCUSSION GROUPS. (*Café*)

- **Bullying**
- **Alcohol & Substance Abuse**
- **Suicide Prevention**
- **Civic Engagement**

- Participants will meet and eat in discussion groups with co-facilitators

6:15 p.m. BREAKOUT SESSION "A." (*Breakout Rooms*)

- **Bullying:** Gym A
- **Suicide Prevention:** Library
- **Alcohol & Substance Abuse:** Chorus Room
- **Civic Engagement:** Café

7:05 p.m. BREAK. *(Participants proceed to Breakout Session B rooms)*

7:15 p.m. BREAKOUT SESSION "B." (*Breakout Rooms*)

- **Bullying:** Gym A
- **Suicide Prevention:** Library
- **Alcohol & Substance Abuse:** Chorus Room
- **Civic Engagement:** Café

8:05 p.m. BREAK. *(Participants proceed to Gym A for Closing Session)*

8:15 p.m. CLOSING SESSION: GROUP REPORTS & NEXT STEPS. (*Gym A*)

- Group spokespeople report back on main discussion points (3 minutes each)
- LYAC "next steps" for 2007 Legislature
- Participants complete evaluation forms
- Raffle drawing for iPod nano

8:30 p.m. ADJOURNMENT. (*Drive Safely*)

APPENDIX F

LYAC Member Survey and Results on LYAC Public Forum Potential Solutions

Privacy Contact Us Logout

SurveyMonkey.com
because knowledge is everything

Home | New Survey | My Surveys | List Management | My Account | Help Center

Tuesday, December 19, 2006

Results Summary

Show All Pages and Questions

Export... View Detail >>

Filter Results

To analyze a subset of your data, you can create one or more filters.

Add Filter...

Total: 14
Visible: 14

Share Results

Your results can be shared with others, without giving access to your account.

Configure...

Status: Enabled
Reports: Summary and Detail

2. Public Forum Findings and Potential Solutions

1. Enforcing School Drug and Alcohol Policies

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Average
A. Make harsher the existing punishments associated with violating school drug and alcohol policies.	21% (3)	**50% (7)**	7% (1)	21% (3)	0% (0)	**2.29**
B. Ensure that punishment is consistent across individuals regardless of extracurricular involvement.	**71% (10)**	29% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**1.29**
C. Standardize school drug and alcohol policies statewide to ensure consistency in expectations across schools, districts and regions.	**50% (7)**	36% (5)	7% (1)	7% (1)	0% (0)	**1.71**
D. Direct schools to focus school drug and alcohol policy more on safety and education and less on prevention.	7% (1)	**36% (5)**	14% (2)	**36% (5)**	7% (1)	**3.00**
E. Require schools to ensure that parents are educated about school drug and alcohol policies as well as the prevalence and consequences of drug and alcohol abuse among youth.	21% (3)	21% (3)	21% (3)	**36% (5)**	0% (0)	**2.71**
F. Require schools to enforce drug and alcohol policy in coordination with local law enforcement.	**43% (6)**	**43% (6)**	14% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**1.71**
					Total Respondents	**14**
					(skipped this question)	0

2. Bullying and Harassment

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Average
A. The definition of bullying should include the use of the web (i.e. myspace.com) as a means of bullying;	**50% (7)**	**50% (7)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**1.50**
B. The definition of bullying should make clear that bullying is a negative intention directed AT the victim.	**43% (6)**	**43% (6)**	7% (1)	7% (1)	0% (0)	**1.79**
C. Individual schools should be held accountable for enforcing anti-bullying	29% (4)	**43% (6)**	29% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**2.00**

policy.						
D. Teachers should be held accountable for ignoring and/or contributing to bullying.	**43% (6)**	36% (5)	7% (1)	7% (1)	7% (1)	**2.00**
E. The State should mandate education for students, teachers, and parents to increase awareness about the prevalence and consequences of bullying as part of individual schools' anti-bullying policies.	**36% (5)**	**36% (5)**	21% (3)	7% (1)	0% (0)	**2.00**
F. Schools need to establish norms and expectations for peer interaction and teachers should communicate positively about the behavior expected of all students.	43% (6)	**50% (7)**	7% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**1.64**
G. Education for students should include small-group peer-to-peer training on how to recognize, report, and cope with bullying.	29% (4)	**36% (5)**	29% (4)	7% (1)	0% (0)	**2.14**
H. Education on bullying should NOT come in the form of traditional assemblies and lectures.	**64% (9)**	14% (2)	21% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**1.57**
I. School support services should include the availability of students who are trained to talk to and serve as allies to victims of bullying.	36% (5)	**57% (8)**	7% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**1.71**
J. Anti-bullying and harassment policy should be developed and implemented by individual schools to capture differences in social norms.	21% (3)	**50% (7)**	21% (3)	7% (1)	0% (0)	**2.14**
K. Punishment for bullying and harassment violations should be consistent for all students without exception.	**43% (6)**	21% (3)	7% (1)	29% (4)	0% (0)	**2.21**
L. Teachers should be trained in following a standardized protocol for responding to acts of bullying.	**43% (6)**	**43% (6)**	7% (1)	7% (1)	0% (0)	**1.79**
				Total Respondents		**14**
				(skipped this question)		0

3. Civic Engagement

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Average
A. Exposure to current events and participation in civic activities in history/civics classes should be mandatory and incorporated into existing curriculum requirements.	38% (5)	**46% (6)**	8% (1)	8% (1)	0% (0)	**1.85**
B. Political leaders should visit high schools to discuss and speak about civic awareness.	**54% (7)**	31% (4)	15% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**1.62**
C. Schools should provide and ensure funding for student-led political clubs.	31% (4)	**38% (5)**	15% (2)	15% (2)	0% (0)	**2.15**
D. State and local government should be more involved with increasing youth civic engagement.	**62% (8)**	38% (5)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**1.38**
E. Improve communication between government, schools and students regarding civic education and engagement opportunities.	**62% (8)**	38% (5)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**1.38**
F. Political advertisements should include youth as part of their targeted audience so that youth can be better informed about political issues.	**46% (6)**	31% (4)	15% (2)	8% (1)	0% (0)	**1.85**

G. Increase youth representation in state government.	**38% (5)**	**38% (5)**	23% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**1.85**
					Total Respondents	**13**
					(skipped this question)	1

4. School Nutrition

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Average
A. Provide state-funded, mandatory nutrition and fitness education in the school curriculum as part of health and physical education classes.	**29% (4)**	**29% (4)**	14% (2)	**29% (4)**	0% (0)	**2.43**
B. The purpose of nutrition education should be to inform and raise awareness, not to limit choices or control behavior.	29% (4)	**64% (9)**	0% (0)	7% (1)	0% (0)	**1.86**
C. Schools and communities should raise awareness about healthy food choices, eating disorders and life style choices.	**57% (8)**	43% (6)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**1.43**
D. Make nutrition facts on labels more understandable and address false claims about food's nutritional value.	36% (5)	**50% (7)**	7% (1)	7% (1)	0% (0)	**1.86**
E. Build strong links among resources -- parents, schools, teachers and peers - to educate and raise awareness.	43% (6)	**50% (7)**	7% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**1.64**
F. Raise public awareness about healthy food choices via a campaign using television, public radio and newspapers.	21% (3)	**50% (7)**	21% (3)	7% (1)	0% (0)	**2.14**
G. The State should provide funding for any mandated nutritional or fitness programs in our schools and communities.	23% (3)	**38% (5)**	23% (3)	15% (2)	0% (0)	**2.31**
					Total Respondents	**14**
					(skipped this question)	0

5. School Safety

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Average
A. School safety should focus more on student behavior and their potential to cause harm than on preparedness for unlikely events such as a bomb.	**50% (7)**	21% (3)	7% (1)	14% (2)	7% (1)	**2.07**
B. Require that all school safety policies contain, at minimum, an emergency response plan; regular drills to ensure student knowledge of what to do in an emergency; and visual displays of emergency response plans in high-traffic common areas around school campuses.	43% (6)	**50% (7)**	7% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**1.64**
C. Use law enforcement officers to patrol on and near school campuses for suspicious or dangerous activity.	14% (2)	**43% (6)**	21% (3)	7% (1)	14% (2)	**2.64**
D. The Maine Emergency Management Agency should be held accountable for ensuring that schools have their emergency response plan in place.	21% (3)	**36% (5)**	29% (4)	14% (2)	0% (0)	**2.36**
E. Authorize the use of school and/or community-based surveys or group						

dialogues as a means to gather information about the extent to which school safety policy is being enforced and to gauge stakeholder interest in the potential for implementing new safety measures.	21% (3)	**50% (7)**	21% (3)	7% (1)	0% (0)	**2.14**
F. Require schools to review their current student conduct codes and assess the extent to which they are consistent with school safety policy.	36% (5)	**43% (6)**	21% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**1.86**
				Total Respondents		**14**
				(skipped this question)		0

6. Suicide Prevention

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Average
A. Require schools to incorporate comprehensive suicide prevention education into required curriculum.	14% (2)	**43% (6)**	21% (3)	21% (3)	0% (0)	**2.50**
B. Require schools to provide emotional development tools and resources to all students.	21% (3)	**57% (8)**	21% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**2.00**
C. Better publicize existing support services (i.e. suicide hotline).	21% (3)	**64% (9)**	7% (1)	7% (1)	0% (0)	**2.00**
D. Require schools to host a student-led "awareness day" to raise awareness about suicide, regional support services, and mental/emotional wellness.	7% (1)	29% (4)	**36% (5)**	21% (3)	7% (1)	**2.93**
E. Direct schools to review and commit to eliminating barriers that may prevent a student from accessing available support services.	14% (2)	**71% (10)**	7% (1)	7% (1)	0% (0)	**2.07**
F. Train students as well as adults in suicide support so students have the option when seeking help.	14% (2)	**64% (9)**	21% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**2.07**
G. Trust, confidentiality, and acceptance should be major components of a school's emotional support philosophy.	**50% (7)**	43% (6)	0% (0)	7% (1)	0% (0)	**1.64**
H. Require schools to provide service options including but not limited to peer support, adult support, faith-based support, hotline information, and referrals to community services outside of school.	29% (4)	**64% (9)**	7% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**1.79**
I. Require schools to provide stress management and emotional support as part of its crisis intervention and suicide support services.	**50% (7)**	36% (5)	14% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**1.64**
J. Direct schools to review the laws governing the provision of crisis intervention services and to provide funding for implementation.	7% (1)	**71% (10)**	21% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**2.14**
				Total Respondents		**14**
				(skipped this question)		0

3. LYAC Legislative Priorities

7. Please rank each topic on a scale of 1 to 6 according to which you think should receive the highest or lowest priority in the next legislative session (1 = highest priority, 6 = lowest priority). EACH TOPIC

SHOULD CORRESPOND TO A DIFFERENT NUMBER SO THAT THEY CAN BE ORDERED BY RANK.

	1 (Highest Priority)	2	3	4	5	6 (Lowest Priority)	Response Average
Enforcing School Drug and Alcohol Policies	**29% (4)**	14% (2)	14% (2)	**29% (4)**	7% (1)	7% (1)	**2.93**
Bullying and Harassment	29% (4)	**36% (5)**	14% (2)	7% (1)	14% (2)	0% (0)	**2.43**
Civic Engagement	**43% (6)**	14% (2)	0% (0)	7% (1)	29% (4)	7% (1)	**2.86**
School Nutrition	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	29% (4)	21% (3)	**50% (7)**	**5.21**
School Safety	0% (0)	14% (2)	21% (3)	**29% (4)**	7% (1)	**29% (4)**	**4.14**
Suicide Prevention	0% (0)	21% (3)	**50% (7)**	0% (0)	21% (3)	7% (1)	**3.43**
						Total Respondents	**14**
						(skipped this question)	0

4. LYAC Preliminary Recommendations

8. Based on your review of the Draft Report in addition to your own knowledge, opinions, and expertise, list 3 policy recommendations you would like LYAC to make to the Legislature in the space provided below. PLEASE TAKE CARE IN MAKING SURE YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS ARE CLEAR AND CONSISE, LEAVING NOTHING TO INTERPRET.

View **Total Respondents** **11**

(skipped this question) 3

5. Public Forum Planning - Feedback

9. Please indicate the extent to which you are satisfied with the following aspects of the public forum implementation process and outcome.

	Completely Satisified	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Completely Dissatisfied	Response Average
Attendance	33% (4)	**42% (5)**	8% (1)	17% (2)	0% (0)	**2.08**
Content (as outlined in the draft report)	**42% (5)**	**42% (5)**	17% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**1.75**
Policy topics covered	42% (5)	**50% (6)**	8% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**1.67**
Issue briefs (see Appendix D)	**58% (7)**	33% (4)	8% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	**1.50**
LYAC Member participation	17% (2)	**58% (7)**	8% (1)	17% (2)	0% (0)	**2.25**
					Total Respondents	**12**
					(skipped this question)	2

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Tuesday, December 19, 2006

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Based on your review of the Draft Report in addition to your own knowledge, opinions, and expertise, list 3 policy recommendations you would like LYAC to make to the Legislature in the space provided below. PLEASE TAKE CARE IN MAKING SURE YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS ARE CLEAR AND CONSISE, LEAVING NOTHING TO INTERPRET.

1. As far as bullying/harrassment is concerned, focus on mandating that teachers are trained in bullying situations and understand the consequences of not acting within them.

2. Review for effectiveness drug/alcohol prevention programs. Eliminate those that are ineffective and shift funding to those that work. All schools must review policies and support services that can assist in suicide prevention. Schools should be directed to have an effective, policy in place. Students should be added to more boards and commissions like the State Board of Education.

3. 1. Civic Engagement - The state government, not schools, should make funds available for student-led groups. 2. Civic Engagement - If the Maine Learning Results are reinstated, standards for civic engagement and civic education should be required. 3. Drug/Alcohol Abuse - Consequences for illegal use of Drugs and Alcohol should be consistent state-wide.

4. 1/Statewide, standardized awareness courses on bullying; the State pays the bill 2/Statewide, standardized awareness courses on the causes of suicide among young people and signs of posssible suicide 3/Statewide concerted efforts among state, schools, communities and elected officials to promote civic awareness and involvement of youth in government

5. I think a statewide policy should be made that prohibits drug and alcohol abuse among student ahtletes. Ofentimes, schools have differing policies. I think if we had a statewide one, it would lead to less confusion, and also, would send a message to the state's youth that says our state does not tolerate this illegal behavior. Government classes should be required in all schools. This will help with the civic engagement component. I think suicide prevention needs to be addressed head on. Schools don't talk about it. Suicide is almost like taboo. I think schools should incorporate it into the required curriculum.

6. 1. In regard to Policy Issue #1: Enforcing School Alcohol & Drug Policies, I feel that in my own school and neighboring schools, educators are misinformed about what they can do to stop illegal substance use and abuse, and are focusing on all the wrong methods listed under the category "Approaches that participants generally agreed do not work." On a statewide level, parents and educators need to be educated about the solutions proposed at these forums, and the information they are given should be consistent throughout the state. 2. I strongly, strongly, strongly agree with the proposed solutions for Policy Issue #2: Bullying & Harassment; that "school support services should include the availability of students who are trained to talk to and serve as allies to victims of bullying" and that "Anti-bullying and harassment policy should be developed by individual schools." The approaches previously used at my school and neighboring schools do not match up with this and though schools should develop their own individual harassment policies that are applicable to their own situations, I feel it would be pertinent to create a statewide awareness program to inform schools about the definition of bullying and effective ways to deal with it. 3. More than any other topic, I hear students at my own high school complain about how nutritional issues are mishandled by our school administration attempting to control behaviors and severely limit cafeteria choices. While rising rates obesity, especially in children, are an extremely important health issue, the approach my school has taken to deal with it has proved extraordinarily ineffective. It seems like educators at my school are not properly informed about how to handle the situation, and measures to educate and raise

awareness about health, nutrition, and fitness within schools and communities seem like a good alternative approach to this issue.

7. 1. Making it mandatory for all schools to have a place for students to seek help with any of the six issues, from peers, teachers, parents ect. 2. Making sure student bodies are aware of the issues taking place in their school, and creating a place for students to become more educated about all six topics. 3. Creating clear and concise rules throughout all the schools in Maine, not excluding anybody, and not according to extracurriculars.

8. 1. I agree that policies should be similar across schools in regards to drug and alcohol, but I do not think they should be limited if they want to go beyond the suggested requirements. 2. All snack and soda machines should be turned of during normal school hours and only available after school hours. 3. There should be a better transition between students going from high school to college in regards to drugs and alcohol. (I realize this is a vague policy and needs better etching out, but the basic idea I believe is understandable).

9. 1. I believe for CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, the recomendation of state funded political clubs - having some funding available, even just a small stipend for faculty facilitators of school groups would be phenomenal. 2. Training students in SUICIDE PREVENTION is a wonderful idea -- perhaps through workshops. Being trained rather than talked at. 3. I agree with, directly from the report: "Direct schools to focus school drug and alcohol policy more on safety and education and less on prevention."

10. At this time, none of the recommendations given by the youth of the state are particularly appealing for formulation into policy.

11. 1. Evaluate school's implementation of bullying and harassment policies; and revise state standards as necessary (e.g., cyber-bullying). 2. Advocate more meaningful civic education as part of high school curriculum, including standards for civic engagement in schools and communities. 3. Encourage schools to provide more time and effort to physical activity each school day. Provide guidelines, training and incentives.

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