

# Fourth Annual Report of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council



*Submitted to the Second Regular Session of the 122<sup>nd</sup> Legislature*

*February 15, 2006*

**Fourth Annual Report**  
**of the**  
**Legislative Youth Advisory Council**



***Youth Members***

Jennifer Thompson, Youth Chair  
Henry Beck  
Daniel Black  
Carolyn Boyle  
Meghan Brewer  
\*Elizabeth Comeau  
Kala Clark  
Ian Engdahl  
Sadie Fenton  
\*David Heidrich  
Claire Howard  
\*Lindsey Kaley  
Hannah Lennett  
\*Kate Mooney  
Heather Pratt  
James Redstone  
\*Keith Rollins, Jr.  
\*Brenwin Soucie  
\*Zachary Spahn  
Hannah Stein  
\*Emily Tornquist  
\*Cory True  
\*Megan Vashon  
Grace Wright  
Autumn Woodward  
\*Nathanael Yellis

***Legislative Members***

Senator Elizabeth H. Mitchell, Legislative Chair  
Senator Carol Weston  
\*Senator Lynn Bromley  
Representative Rosaire Paradis, Jr.  
Representative David A. Trahan

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\*Denotes persons who were part of the Council for this report period, but who are no longer members of the Council as of the date of this report, (due to resignation or the expiration of their term).

# Legislative Youth Advisory Council

Established in 2002 ♦ Codified at 3 MRSA, §168-A



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February 15, 2006

To the 122nd Legislature and the Youth of Maine:

One of the wonderful things about Maine is its unique approach to encouraging civic involvement. Recognizing the importance of promoting youth involvement in the legislative process, Maine was the first state in the nation to create and implement a Legislative Youth Advisory Council. As is often the case, Maine has set a precedent for the rest of the nation; and several states have now created their own youth councils.

The Council has served the interest of the youth of this State before the Legislature for the past four years. We are proud that we have been instrumental in passing several pieces of important legislation, including a bill to provide better educational opportunities for foster children. Unfortunately, this past year we faced staffing and funding changes which resulted in a period of several months when we were not able to meet. Due to these factors, this annual report is unlike the previous three reports which primarily reported on the activities of the Council. Instead, our report this year focuses on steps that need to be taken to revitalize the Council and establish a plan for a stable future – a future which will enable the Council to continue to serve the Legislature and to engage the youth of our State.

Continuing support of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council will send an important message to youth in Maine – a message that their input is important, and that they will continue to have a voice in the legislative process. This positive message will encourage youth to take an early interest in government at all levels and will lead to active, civic involvement in the future.

Thank you for your support,

Jennifer Thompson, Youth Chair  
Legislative Youth Advisory Council

Sen. Elizabeth H. Mitchell, Legislative Chair  
Legislative Youth Advisory Council

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	i
Background .....	1
Summary of Achievements .....	2
Summary of Meetings .....	4
Legislative Youth Advisory Council Policy Priorities and Operational Issues .....	8
Legislative Youth Advisory Council: A National Context .....	12

## Appendices

- A. Current Statutes Governing the Legislative Youth Advisory Council
- B. Legislative Youth Advisory Council 2005-2006 Appointed Members
- C. Summary of Legislation Recommended to the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature and the 122<sup>nd</sup> Legislature
- D. National Conference of State Legislature’s *LegisBrief*, January 2006
- E. Brief Biographies of Current “Youth Members” of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council

# Acknowledgements

The Legislative Youth Advisory Council would like to recognize and thank the following individuals who have contributed to the success of the Council during 2005-06:

- ⊕ Mr. David Heidrich, Jr., Hillsdale College student and former LYAC Youth Chair;
- ⊕ Mr. Cory True, St. Anselm College student and former LYAC member;
- ⊕ Ms. Francine Rudoff, Executive Director, KIDS Consortium;
- ⊕ Ms. Susan Savelle, Children’s Cabinet Staff and Executive Director, Communities for Children and Youth;
- ⊕ Mr. David Stockford, Children’s Cabinet Staff and Director of Special Services, Department of Education;
- ⊕ Ms. Lauren Sterling, Children’s Cabinet Staff;
- ⊕ Mr. Patrick Phillips, Deputy Director, Department of Education and Co-chair, Task Force on Citizenship Education; and
- ⊕ Mr. James Carignan, Chair, State Board of Education and Co-chair, Task Force on Citizenship Education.



## **Executive Summary**

This is the fourth annual report of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council (“LYAC” or “Council”). The Council was established in 2002 and its statutory role as an ongoing “advisory council” is codified in Maine Revised Statutes, Title 3, section 168-A. The LYAC was the first youth council in the nation to have both an advisory relationship with legislators and the statutory authority to submit legislation. The purpose of the Council is to advise the Legislature, legislative leadership and legislative committees on issues related to youth. The LYAC is comprised of 18 youth members and four legislative members. The Council is authorized to meet up to six times each year, including at least two public hearings, and it may conduct periodic seminars on leadership, government and the Legislature. The Council is required to report annually to the Legislature and may submit legislation to implement its recommendations.

The Council has served the interest of Maine youth before the Legislature for the past four years and has focused on education and employment issues for Maine youth, concerns related to Maine youth in foster care, issues related to alcohol and substance abuse, and factors that impact minority youth who reside across the state. The LYAC has been instrumental in the enactment of important legislation to address these issues and other concerns.

Unfortunately, the Council faced staffing and funding changes during this past year which resulted in a period of several months when the LYAC was not able to meet. Due to these factors, this annual report is unlike the previous three reports which primarily reported on the accomplishments of the Council. Instead, our report this year largely focuses on steps that need to be taken to revitalize the LYAC and establish a plan which will enable the Council to continue to serve the Legislature and to engage the youth of our State.

To achieve these goals, the LYAC members agreed that the Council would focus on addressing the following priorities as part of the LYAC 2006 “Work Plan”:

### **LYAC Operational and Internal Issues.**

- ◆ Greater exposure of the LYAC to the Legislature, legislative leadership and the youth of Maine;
- ◆ The LYAC youth member appointment criteria and process;
- ◆ The LYAC budget development and staffing support issues;
- ◆ The LYAC relationship with the Task Force on Citizenship Education; and
- ◆ Status report from the Secretary of State on voting initiatives.

The Council also agreed to establish two subcommittees to review other issues affecting youth in the State with one subcommittee focusing on the following “Health and Human Services Policy Issues” and a second subcommittee focusing on the following “Education Policy Issues”:

## **Health and Human Services Policy Issues.**

- ◆ Children’s Cabinet initiatives, including their suicide prevention plan and their “caring communities” (anti-bullying and harassment) initiative;
- ◆ Alcohol and substance abuse issues, including high school or college policies on underage drinking (in general) and for athletes (in particular); and
- ◆ Respect and diversity in our schools and communities.

## **Education Policy Issues.**

- ◆ Keeping youth in Maine;
- ◆ Standardized testing, including replacing the 11<sup>th</sup> grade MEA with the SAT and the implication of the federal No Child Left Behind Act;
- ◆ Civic education standards and the minimum voting age;
- ◆ “Child protection” background check of public school employees;
- ◆ Isolation and differential treatment of some special education students; and
- ◆ The growing “gender gap” between male students, who are falling behind female students, in both high school graduation and college participation rates.

## **Accomplishments of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council: 2005-2006**

Advocacy provided by LYAC members was effective in achieving some measure of legislative success. The following summarizes the final disposition of bills that were recommended for passage by the LYAC during the 1<sup>st</sup> Regular Session of the 122<sup>nd</sup> Legislature.

### **LD 1136, An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council (Enacted as Public Law 2005, chapter 309)**

- Directed the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a standard form to be used to indicate approval by the department for children in the custody of the department to participate in school sports, field trips and other extracurricular activities.

### **LD 1511, An Act Regarding the Budget Process for the Legislative Youth Advisory Council (Enacted as Public Law 2005, chapter 414)**

- Amended implementing legislation to transfer staff assistance to the responsibility of the Legislative Council rather than the Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service and that

the staff assistance could be curtailed during periods when the Legislature was in regular or special session.

### **LD 1682, An Act to Support Sibling Rights in Child Welfare Custody Matters**

(Bill was submitted by the DHHS, was carried over by the Judiciary Committee to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regular Session, was voted out of committee “Ought to Pass as Amended,” and awaited further action by the Legislature, (as this report was transmitted))

- Proposes to require the court to order sibling visitation for children who are the subjects of child protection proceedings, when it is reasonable, practicable and in the best interests of the children involved to do so.

### **Collaboration with the Task Force on Citizenship Education**

The Maine LYAC model is highlighted in a recent publication of the National Conference of State Legislatures (“NCSL”) describing “youth civic engagement” initiatives established across the states (see NCSL *LegisBrief* for January 2006). As other states begin to implement their own councils, Maine continues to expand the role of youth in policymaking at the state and local levels.

The LYAC collaboration with the Task Force on Citizenship Education has continued the expansion of meaningful “youth civic engagement” initiatives in Maine’s school, communities and colleges. The task force, authorized by Resolve 2003, chapter 143 during the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature, was convened by the Department of Education and the State Board of Education. The Legislature authorized the LYAC, subject to the availability of outside funding, to conduct a series of statewide public forums on issues important to youth. The resolve further directed the Council to invite Legislators from the various regions of the State to participate in these public forums.

Two public forums were held this past year, one at Oxford Hills High School and another at Caribou High School. LYAC members view these meetings as excellent opportunities to improve the LYAC’s outreach to Maine youth. The forums hold great promise in providing youth with a direct connection to Council members, legislators and government officials. Two more public forums are planned for 2006.





# **Background**

## **History and Description of the Legislative Youth Council**

The Legislative Youth Advisory Council (“LYAC” or the “Council”) was created by the 120<sup>th</sup> Legislature through the enactment of Public Law 2001, Chapter 439, Part PPPP. The law creating the Council was derived from LD 1779, *An Act to Create the Legislative Youth Advisory Council*, and was unanimously endorsed by the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, approved by the Legislature and the Governor. Following the appointment of members during the summer, the Council convened its first meeting on August 15, 2002.

The 22-member Council consists of four legislators and 18 youth members. Half of the members, including two Senators, are appointed by the President of the Senate; and the other half, including two House members, are appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Legislation submitted by the Council, and enacted during the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature, added the second Senate member and required that the legislative chair position alternate every two years between the House and the Senate.

The Council is chaired by a member of the Legislature and a youth member who serve as co-chairs. Appointments to the Council are for a term of two years and were originally staggered so half of the Council’s membership expires each year. Youth members whose terms expire may be reappointed, provided they are still eligible under the age and educational criteria set forth in the law. Legislative member terms are concurrent with their two year legislative term in office.

## **Purpose and Duties of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council**

The purpose and duties of the Council, as set forth in statute, are to:

- ◆ Advise the Legislature on proposed and pending legislation, state budget expenditures and policy matters related to youth;
- ◆ Advise the Legislature’s joint standing committees, study commissions and task forces on issues related to youth;
- ◆ Conduct periodic seminars on leadership, government and the Legislature;
- ◆ Meet up to 6 times per year, including two public hearings; and
- ◆ Present an annual report to the Legislature; and introduce legislation to implement its recommendations.

The enabling legislation also directs the Council to examine issues of importance to youth, including, but not limited to, education, employment, strategies to increase youth participation in municipal and state government, safe environments for youth, substance abuse, emotional and physical health, foster care, poverty, homelessness and youth access to services on a municipal and statewide basis.

## **Leadership of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council**

The Council is co-chaired by a Legislative Chair and a Youth Chair. The Legislative Chair alternates every 2 years between the first-appointed member of the House of Representatives and the first-appointed member of the Senate, (beginning in 2003 with the first-appointed member of the House of Representatives serving as the Legislative Chair for the 121st Legislature). LYAC members annually elect one of the youth members to serve as the Youth Chair for a one-year term.

Senator Elizabeth Mitchell is the current Legislative Chair of the Council. Among her other legislative duties, Senator Mitchell also serves as the Senate Chair of the Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. Senator Mitchell has served in the House during the 107<sup>th</sup> through the 111<sup>th</sup> Legislatures and 115<sup>th</sup> thru the 118<sup>th</sup> Legislatures; and was elected as the Speaker of the House during the 118<sup>th</sup> Legislature. This is Senator Mitchell's first term with the Council. She replaced Representative Rosaire Paradis, who served as the Legislative Chair of the Council for three years. Representative Paradis continues to serve as a member of the LYAC.

Jennifer Thompson was elected as the Youth Chair of the Council on January 6, 2006. Jennifer is currently a senior at Maranacook Community School and has served on the LYAC for four years. Jennifer replaced David Heidrich, who served as Youth Chair during 2004-2005. David currently attends Hillsdale College in Michigan.

## **Summary of Achievements**

A national survey conducted in 2005 by the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine found that "youth civic engagement" initiatives exist in a number of states. While the survey found that there are a wide variety of approaches used by states to formalizing youth input into the policy-making process, researchers concluded that the Legislative Youth Advisory Council in Maine is distinctive in that it advises the Legislature and state agencies, and also has the authority to submit legislation. Clearly, Maine is leading the nation in youth involvement in state government.

### **Accomplishments of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council: 2002 through 2005**

- Maine was the first state in the nation to create a Legislative Youth Advisory Council in 2002;
- Council has served the interests of Maine youth before the Legislature for the past four years and LYAC members frequently testify before legislative committees, task forces and commissions;
- The LYAC has submitted legislation each year to implement its annual report recommendations; and Council members have been instrumental in the passage of

important bills, including legislation to:

- Amend the voting age qualification for primary elections/state caucuses to allow persons who are not 18 years of age, but will be by the general election, to vote in selecting candidates;
- Eliminate barriers for foster children to participate in extracurricular school activities; and
- Expand postsecondary educational opportunities for Maine youth, including foster children; and
- Council has worked with State education and health officials to review policies related to:
  - Data collecting procedures used to determine alcohol and drug use among youth; and
  - Alternative drug prevention programs for youth, including a review of alcohol and drug policies for student athletes; and
- The LYAC has participated in two public forums with the Task Force on Citizenship Education, (Oxford Hills and Caribou); and LYAC members are involved in other youth civic engagement initiatives.

### **Summary of Legislation Submitted or Recommended for Passage by the Council to the First Regular Session of the 122nd Legislature**

#### **LD 1136, An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council** (Enacted as Public Law 2005, chapter 309)

- Directed the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a standard form to be used to indicate approval by the department for children in the custody of the department to participate in school sports, field trips and other extracurricular activities.

#### **LD 1511, An Act Regarding the Budget Process for the Legislative Youth Advisory Council** (Enacted as Public Law 2005, chapter 414)

- Amended implementing legislation to transfer staff assistance to the responsibility of the Legislative Council rather than the Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service and that the staff assistance could be curtailed during periods when the Legislature was in regular or special session.

**LD 1682, An Act to Support Sibling Rights in Child Welfare Custody Matters** (Bill was submitted by the DHHS, was carried over by the Judiciary Committee to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regular Session, was voted “Ought to Pass as Amended,” and (at the time this report went to print) awaited further action by the Legislature)

- Proposes to require the court to order sibling visitation for children who are the subjects of child protection proceedings, when it is reasonable, practicable and in the best interests of the children involved to do so.
- It also proposes to require the department to make reasonable efforts to obtain from prospective adoptive parents an agreement to maintain visitation with a child's siblings after the adoption of the child.
- It further proposes to authorize a child, in a child protection action, to request visitation rights with a sibling from whom the child has been separated as a result of the child protection action.

Continuing the LYAC interest in foster care issues, the Council discussed the need for legislation requiring visitation among siblings who were removed from their homes by DHHS. The LYAC members voted to unanimously support the sibling visitation bill (LD 1682) submitted by the DHHS during the 1st Session of the 122nd Legislature. LYAC member Kala Clark testified in favor of the bill at the public hearing before the Judiciary Committee.

## **Summary of Meetings: 2005-2006**

The Council's third annual report covered the 16<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup> meetings of the Council, as well as two public hearings and a leadership seminar held during the 2004-2005 term. This report relates the activities of the Council since the February 2005 annual report was presented to the 1<sup>st</sup> Regular Session of the 122<sup>nd</sup> Legislature and includes summaries of the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> Council meetings, a public forum co-sponsored with the Task Force on Citizenship Education, and a meeting with the Legislative Council.

### **Joint Public Forum -- March 25, 2005:** **Legislative Youth Advisory Council & Task Force on Citizenship Education**

The Legislative Youth Advisory Council co-sponsored a public forum with the Task Force on Citizenship Education at Caribou High School on March 25, 2005. As well as helping the students become aware of the existence and purpose of the Council, the LYAC used the forum as an opportunity to hear from students about issues that they wanted addressed by the Legislature. Individual students and entire classes from Caribou High School attended the public hearing and voiced concerns about issues including the school nutrition programs, Maine's computer laptop program, gay rights and its effect on schools and society, and the impact of the System of Learning Results.

### **Third Annual Congressional Conference on Civic Education** **-- September 24-26, 2005**

Kala Clark, LYAC youth member, attended this national conference as a participant in the Maine delegation. Kala was the only youth member of a state delegation to attend and participate in this conference. The annual Congressional Conference on Civic Education is sponsored by the Alliance for Representative Democracy and is hosted by the Joint Leadership of the U.S. Congress. The conference focuses state efforts to restore the civic mission of

schools. As part of the Maine delegation, Kala participated in the review of the state action plan and contributed to the strategic plans for strengthening civic education at the state and local levels in Maine. Kala distinguished herself by effectively presenting the report of the Maine delegation to the final plenary session of the conference. She also challenged other states to bring youth members as part of their delegations to the 2006 conference. Conference participants also advocated that conference organizers encourage youth participation in subsequent events.

### **Twenty-First Meeting -- January 6, 2006**

The Legislative Youth Advisory Council convened its 21st meeting, after an interval of nearly 9 months, with just 16 of the 22 members appointed to the Council. Cory True, a former LYAC member, presented the legislative history of the Council and described the statutory provisions regarding Council membership, functions and duties. Together with former LYAC youth chair David Heidrich, Cory also emphasized the need for LYAC members to meet with Legislative leadership to restore the Council as an effective “advisory council” within the legislative policymaking environment. Council members were also encouraged to establish an agenda of “key issues” for Council consideration, research and debate.

LYAC members held a series of work sessions to identify their goals, including their perspectives on issues of importance to Maine youth, that should be considered as the Council establishes a 2006 “work plan.” Council members also reviewed the procedural rules that were adopted by the previous Council, and discussed the election process for the LYAC Youth Chair. As part of the work session devoted to prioritizing the list of concerns voiced by the Council, LYAC members assigned the issues that were identified to one of the following three categories: LYAC Operational & Internal Issues, Health and Human Services Policy Issues, and Education Policy Issues.

In deciding on the “work plan” priorities for 2006, the LYAC members agreed that the full Council would focus on addressing the following “LYAC operational and internal issues”:

#### **Legislative Youth Advisory Council “Operational & Internal Issues”.**

- ◆ Greater exposure of the LYAC to the Legislature, legislative leadership and the youth of Maine;
- ◆ The LYAC youth member appointment criteria and process;
- ◆ The LYAC budget development and staffing support issues;
- ◆ The LYAC relationship with the Task Force on Citizenship Education; and
- ◆ Status report from the Secretary of State on voting initiatives.

The Council also agreed to establish two subcommittees to review other issues affecting youth in the State with one subcommittee focusing on the following “Health and Human Services Policy Issues” and a second subcommittee focusing on the following “Education Policy Issues”:

## **Health and Human Services Policy Issues.**

- ◆ Children’s Cabinet initiatives, including their suicide prevention plan and their “caring communities” (anti-bullying and harassment) initiative;
- ◆ Alcohol and substance abuse issues, including high school or college policies on underage drinking (in general) and for athletes (in particular); and
- ◆ Respect and diversity in our schools and communities.

## **Education Policy Issues.**

- ◆ Keeping youth in Maine;
- ◆ Standardized testing, including replacing the 11<sup>th</sup> grade MEA with the SAT and the implication of the federal No Child Left Behind Act;
- ◆ Civic education standards and the minimum voting age;
- ◆ “Child protection” background check of public school employees;
- ◆ Isolation and differential treatment of some special education students; and
- ◆ The growing “gender gap” between male students, who are falling behind female students, in both high school graduation and college participation rates.

The priority issues (identified above) were recorded on flipcharts during these work sessions and further discussion can be found later in the body of this report in the section titled “Formulation of Goals, Objectives and Priority Policy Issues” (please see page # of this report for a summary of flip chart notes). The full-text version of the meeting summary for this meeting can be found online (please follow link to: <http://www.maine.gov/legis/opla/legyouth.htm>).

## **Priorities Established by the Children’s Cabinet.**

David Stockford, Senior Staff to the Children’s Cabinet reported that the Children’s Cabinet would like to brief the LYAC on the 3 priorities that the Children’s Cabinet has established for this year:

1. Postsecondary access and completion;
2. Early intervention; and
3. Adverse childhood conditions and implications for children’s health.

Mr. Stockford also submitted a Children's Cabinet proposal to the LYAC that senior staff of Children's Cabinet represent the respective Commissioners of the Children's Cabinet agencies (who are "ex officio members" of the LYAC). These agencies include: Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Public Safety, Department of Corrections, and Department of Labor.

LYAC members concluded their planning session by agreeing to sort these policy issues and the Council's internal and operational internal concerns into three groups. The Council members also discussed organizing subcommittees to further address these issues once a "work plan" was established.

### **Legislative Youth Advisory Council Breakfast Forum** **with Legislative Council -- February 3, 2006**

The Legislative Youth Advisory Council invited Legislative Council members to a breakfast meeting on Friday, February 3, 2006 in order to review the purpose and duties of the LYAC in advising the Legislature and its committees regarding policy matters affecting the youth of the State. LYAC members asserted their desire to collaborate with Legislative leadership and committees in an effort to fully restore the LYAC as an effective "advisory council" within the policymaking environment of the Maine Legislature. The message communicated by LYAC members included the following themes:

- The establishment of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council, and support of the Legislature for its continued existence, represents an important statement to youth;
- The Legislative Youth Advisory Council has accomplished much in its first three years;
- The promise of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council as an instrument for youth engagement in the legislative process is at a "tipping point"; and without significant efforts to reinvest in and restore its capacity, the Council will be unable to fulfill its advisory role;
- Legislative Youth Advisory Council members and Legislative leadership should identify the appropriate venues and opportunities through which the Council can provide meaningful advice to the Legislature on policies that affect youth;
- Legislative Youth Advisory Council members and Legislative leadership should forge partnerships with other public and private agencies that are promoting youth civic engagement initiatives in schools, colleges and communities across the State.

The discussion was an open and frank exchange of perspectives on the opportunities and challenges facing the youth council. There was a consensus, (among those present), that reforming the process of appointing youth members to the Council and paying careful attention to the autonomy of LYAC youth members in determining their legislative and policy agendas were essential factors in establishing credibility with youth across the State and with the Legislature.



## **Twenty-Second Meeting -- February 3, 2006**

Council members opened the meeting with a brief review of the LYAC breakfast meeting with the Legislative Council that had taken place earlier that morning. During the January 2006 meeting, Council members identified communication with the Legislative Council as a critical component in the LYAC revitalization efforts for 2006. Council members agreed that the breakfast meeting was positive and productive; and concluded that the need to clarify the process of appointing youth members to the Council was of vital importance to the integrity and effectiveness of the LYAC.

The Council discussed a number of possible criteria for appointing youth members, including community involvement, civic interest or aptitude, leadership, and communication skills; and Council members agreed that geographic and cultural diversity were also important components to keep in mind. The Council also considered the option of identifying school or community agencies across the State that would nominate candidates for appointment to the Speaker and Senate President. The Council recognized that the appointment process was a matter that warranted further discussion before a final decision was reached.

The Council also received briefings on the following policy initiatives:

- Briefing from Fran Rudoff, representing the Task Force on Citizenship Education, who discussed the task force's "youth civic engagement" initiatives and the need to plan for the remaining two public forums to be co-sponsored by the task force and the LYAC; and
- Briefing from Lauren Sterling, representing the Children's Cabinet, who shared information on current initiatives related to the LYAC's concerns, including the Maine youth suicide prevention plan and the "caring communities" (anti-bullying and harassment) initiatives.

Council members also discussed the plans for the annual report to the Legislature required by statute. The Council's first three annual reports each highlighted the previous year's accomplishments. However, due to the relative inactivity of the Council in 2005, (due to staffing and funding issues beyond their control), Council members determined that this year's annual report would:

1. Include background information about the Council;
2. Highlight the cumulative accomplishments of the Council;
3. Focus on the Council's work plan to revitalize the LYAC; and
4. Update the status of the LYAC's recommended legislation and related initiatives.

## **Priority Policy & Operational Issues**

Beginning in fiscal year 2002-03, the Legislative Council provided financial support for the operational and staffing expenses of Legislative Youth Advisory Council through the State's general fund. Staffing support was provided by the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis ("OPLA") with additional assistance provided through a contract with the Muskie School of

Public Service. Due to budgetary constraints for fiscal years 2003-04 and 2004-05, the Legislature eliminated the Council's funding from the Legislative Council's budget and curtailed the staffing support provided by OPLA. A cooperative project agreement was entered into with the Muskie School of Public Service for providing staff support, (except legislative drafting to be provided by OPLA). However, due to the reduction in funding, other (non-State) sources of funding were required to supplement the limited funds available for Council operations.

In 2004, Council members requested that the Legislature restore staffing support for the Council through the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis in order to realign the Council with the lawmaking functions of the Legislature. That request would have eliminated the major funding component facing the LYAC at the time and would have provided the Council with staff experienced in serving Legislative Committees. The remaining budgetary needs would be minimal: mileage expenses for Council members and some related printing costs. The legislation introduced to the 2<sup>nd</sup> session of the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature, LD 917, was amended in the last hours of the session to keep the funding and staffing responsibilities with the Muskie School of Public Service.

These factors resulted in no funding for the Council staff after July 1, 2004. Council staff and members prepared numerous grant applications to local and national foundations which were not funded. However, through collaboration with the Task Force on Citizenship Education, the Council became a significant component of the task force to achieve its goal that . . .

*“Maine youth are knowledgeable as citizens and are motivated to -- and do -- participate in the democratic process, thereby invigorating the public life of our communities, state and nation in a responsible way.”*

The Task Force on Citizenship Education received a two-year grant from the Carnegie Foundation. As part of the Campaign for the Civic Missions of Schools, \$15,000 per year was allocated from these funds for the staffing, meeting and public hearing expenses of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council. This funding became available on December 1, 2004. The Council has agreed to conduct 4 public hearings in various geographic locations during this period.

This opportunity from the Carnegie Foundation provided the Council with some funds to maintain their schedule of meetings and hearings. Legislative members of the Council also worked to attempt to procure ongoing state funding and staffing support for the Council.

### **Formulation of 2006 Goals, Objectives and Priority Policy Issues**

The process used by the Council members during the first two meetings of 2006 to identify and prioritize issues to be included in the 2006 “work plan” has been discussed earlier in this report, (please see January 6<sup>th</sup> meeting summary on pages 5-6). This section of the annual report describes provides (in greater detail) those issues that the Council members have identified and established as priority concerns (please note that the full-text version of the meeting summaries for this work session can be found online at the LYAC website on the Legislature's website: URL: <http://www.maine.gov/legis/opla/legyouth.htm>). The “work plan” priorities for 2006 have been assigned to one of the following three categories: (1) LYAC

“Operational & Internal Issues”; (2) Health and Human Services Policy Issues; and (3) Education Policy Issues.

### **Legislative Youth Advisory Council “Operational & Internal Issues”.**

- Need to reestablish and sustain the role of the LYAC;
- Relationship with the Task Force on Citizenship Education, including:
  - Funding;
  - Promoting public hearings; and
  - Utilizing the task force website to promote the LYAC;
- Greater exposure of the LYAC to Legislature, legislative leadership and the youth of Maine;
- Using funding from the task force for breakfast meeting or public forum with Legislative leadership or legislators;
- Efforts to draw greater attention to the work of the LYAC and engage the citizens and youth of State, including utilization of the Legislature’s “live” Internet feed, (to be activated by the end of January), and requesting the approval of legislative leadership to address a joint convention of Legislature;
- LYAC appointment process and guidelines need to be revisited, including ways to ensure greater geographical representation of LYAC members and consideration of adding one youth member from each county, at-large members, and a secondary school social study teacher (or greater connection through the Department of Education to teachers);
- Utilizing technology resources to minimize the travel barrier to youth participation and to deploy the technology resources available to the LYAC for creating greater access; and
- Dialogue with international youth (initiative of former Michigan Rep. Doug Hart, who is working at a Quaker School in Ramallah with Palestinian high school students, to connect youth across the globe via Internet web logs, or “blogs”).

### **Health and Human Services Policy Issues.**

- The incidence of youth suicide, (Children’s Cabinet staff offered to provide a briefing on the new Maine youth suicide prevention plan);
- Maine youth suicide prevention plan – mental health and mental illness and reduce rate;
- Low Income Heating Assistance Program also affects children and families;
- Invite the Youth Leadership Advisory Team (YLAT) to a meeting to hear their concerns regarding the needs of children and young adults in the child welfare system;

- Bullying in communities and schools;
- Children’s Cabinet commission on gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, or questioning youth (“GLBTQ”) and seeking engagement of, and guidance from, the LYAC in nominating 3-5 youth to participate in this initiative; and
- Alcohol and substance abuse issues, including high school or college policies on underage drinking (in general) and for athletes (in particular), the effectiveness of “Project Graduation” programs, and an initiative on alcohol and substance abuse in Archangel, Russia.

**Education Policy Issues.**

- Standardized testing, including replacing the 11th grade MEA with the SAT;
- “Over-testing” and the stress and related impact on teachers and students;
- Impact of No Child Left Behind Act (“NCLB”) requirements, (invite Congressional delegation to discuss NCLB);
- Civic education standards, including the elimination of social studies and civic education from the state and local assessment systems;
- “Child protection” background check of public school employees;
- Isolation and differential treatment of some special education students;
- State Board of Education’s Select Panel recommendation to reapportion and reduce the number of school districts in the State;
- Access to postsecondary education, including extending tuition waivers for certain youth who have resided in adoptive care or have had subsidized guardians;
- The delay in implementing the tax credit enacted as part of legislation to support access to college and encouraging Maine youth to stay in the State, (tax credit was not funded); and
- The growing “gender gap” between young men, who are falling behind young women, in the rates of high school graduation and participation in postsecondary education.

LYAC members will continue to formulate their “work plan” to address these policy issues and to respond to the internal and operational concerns identified with respect to restoring the effectiveness of the Council.

The Council members also began the process of organizing into two subcommittees to further address the “education” and “health and human services” policy issues. Once a “work plan” has been formally adopted, Council members will continue to work with the Senior Staff of the Children’s Cabinet agencies, as well as other public sector and non-profit sector agencies to seek legislative or policy proposals to respond to these policy issues.

# **The Legislative Youth Advisory Council: A National Perspective**

The Legislative Youth Advisory Council is a first-of-its-kind council in the nation. Since the formation of the LYAC in 2002, several other states have expressed interest in the concept -- including Washington and New Mexico, (which have passed legislation), as well as New Hampshire, (which is currently considering legislation).

In 2002, the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine undertook an effort to better understand the LYAC in a national context and to find out what other states had done with respect to establishing similar youth advisory councils or commissions. In conducting that review, the Muskie School found that many national “youth civic engagement” experts and policy makers are very interested in Maine’s commitment to its young people and in the model of the LYAC. Many other states felt that the LYAC represented an authentic youth leadership initiative that has the potential to not only provide a “hands on” learning opportunity for Maine youth, but also, to provide thoughtful feedback and insightful direction to Maine policy makers.

Maine’s youth council has worked with affiliated “youth civic engagement” groups, such as KIDS Consortium, to bring the Legislature into high schools and colleges, reaching out to help students and teachers prepare to meet with the Council and present testimony to an active, legislative advisory council.

Maine was the only state to have a youth delegate, LYAC member Kala Clark, at the Third Congressional Conference on Civic Education. Throughout the 2005 conference, Maine's delegation challenged other states to bring youth representatives to the 2006 conference and involve their state’s youth in their civic education initiatives. Former LYAC member Cory True, who is currently enrolled at Saint Anselm College, is participating in the effort to enact legislation to establish a youth advisory council in New Hampshire.

A recent publication of the National Conference of State Legislatures (“NCSL”) describing youth civic engagement initiatives established across the states (see Appendix D, for NCSL *LegisBrief*, January, 2006) also features the Maine’s LYAC model. As other states begin to implement their own councils, Maine continues to expand the role of youth in policymaking at the state and local levels. The LYAC collaboration with the Task Force on Citizenship Education, (established by the Department of Education and the State Board of Education), holds great promise in continuing the expansion of meaningful “youth civic engagement” initiatives in Maine’s school, communities and colleges; and for providing authentic opportunities for “youth voice” to be connected to legislators and government officials in the state capitol.

For further information, please consult the following resources on the web:

<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/cyf/engagement.htm>  
<http://www.maine.gov/education/mecitizenshiped/about>  
<http://www.kidsconsortium.org/index.html>.



# **Appendix A**

## **Statutes Governing the Legislative Youth Advisory Council**

**Current through 122<sup>nd</sup> Maine Legislature, 2<sup>nd</sup> Special Session  
(June 30, 2005)**

# Statutes Governing the LYAC (through June 30, 2005)

## 3 § 168-A. Legislative Youth Advisory Council

There is established the Legislative Youth Advisory Council, referred to in this section as the "council."

**1. Duties.** The council shall perform the following duties:

A. Advise the Legislature, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on proposed and pending legislation, state budget expenditures and policy matters related to youth;

B. Advise the joint standing committees of the Legislature and study commissions, committees and task forces regarding issues related to youth;

C. Conduct periodic seminars for its members regarding leadership, government and the Legislature;

D. Meet at least 3 times but not more than 6 times per year, including not more than 2 public hearings on issues of importance to youth; and

E. Report annually to the Legislature on its activities by February 15th of each year. The council may submit legislation to the Legislature to implement its recommendations.

**2. Jurisdiction.** The council shall examine issues of importance to youth, including, but not limited to, education, employment, strategies to increase youth participation in municipal government and State Government, safe environments for youth, substance abuse, emotional and physical health, foster care, poverty, homelessness and youth access to services on municipal and statewide bases.

**3. Membership.** The council consists of 22 voting members and 5 nonvoting members who are Maine residents in accordance with this subsection. In appointing members, the appointing authorities shall consider geographic distribution and shall appoint at least one member from each of the 3 service regions of the Department of Health and Human Services<sup>1</sup>. Members shall serve for terms of 2 years and, if eligible, may be reappointed for subsequent 2-year terms, except that the appointing authorities shall appoint 1/2 of the members first appointed to the council to terms of one year.

A. The President of the Senate shall appoint 11 members as follows:

(1) Six youths who are students in secondary schools or who are enrolled in programs that lead to a secondary school diploma or certificate of attendance or a general equivalency diploma;

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<sup>1</sup> Region I is all of York County and Cumberland County; Region II is all of Franklin County, Oxford County, Androscoggin County, Somerset County, Kennebec County, Waldo County, Knox County, Lincoln County and Sagadahoc County; and Region III is all of Piscataquis County, Penobscot County, Hancock County, Washington County and Aroostook County (Title 22, § 6-A).



## **Statutes Governing the Legislative Youth Advisory Council (through June 30, 2005)**

(2) One youth who is enrolled in an equivalent instruction program under Title 20-A, chapter 211, subchapter 1-A;

(3) Two students at postsecondary educational institutions located in the State;  
and

(4) Two members of the Senate whose terms coincide with the term of office in the Senate.

B. The Speaker of the House shall appoint 11 members as follows:

(1) Six youths who are students in secondary schools or who are enrolled in programs that lead to a secondary school diploma or certificate of attendance or a general equivalency diploma;

(2) One youth who is enrolled in an equivalent instruction program under Title 20-A, chapter 211, subchapter 1-A;

(3) Two students at postsecondary educational institutions located within the State; and

(4) Two members of the House of Representatives whose terms coincide with their terms of office in the House of Representatives.

C. The members of the Children's Cabinet, established pursuant to Title 5, section 19131, serve ex officio and may not vote.

**4. Chairs.** There is a legislative chair and a youth chair of the council. The legislative chair alternates every 2 years between the first-appointed member of the House of Representatives and the first-appointed member of the Senate, beginning in 2003 with the first-appointed member of the House of Representatives serving as the legislative chair for the 121st Legislature. The members shall elect one of their youth members to serve as the youth chair for a term of one year.

**5. Cooperation with Department of Education.** The council shall work cooperatively with the Department of Education on the integration of council experience into the learning results standards in student service and career preparation.

**6. Priorities.** The council shall set priorities and shall determine the function of subcommittees, standards of conduct, process, procedures and the use of technology to convene meetings. Council members shall review and consider the procedures and rules used by the Legislature as they may be appropriate for use as models for the council.

## Statutes Governing the LYAC (through June 30, 2005)

**7. Communication.** The council may provide testimony on legislation pending before the Legislature.

**8. Compensation.** Members of the council who are Legislators are entitled to the legislative per diem and to reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred in order to serve on the council as provided in Title 5, section 12004-I, subsection 54-C. All other members who are not otherwise reimbursed for their service on the council are entitled to compensation for reasonable expenses incurred in order to serve on the council as provided in Title 5, section 12004-I, subsection 54-C.

**9. Freedom of access.** Meetings of the council are public meetings and all records of the council are public records as defined by Title 1, section 402, subsection 3.

**10. Staff.** The Legislative Council shall provide staff assistance to the council from within its existing budgeted resources or from any grants received by the Legislative Council for that purpose. The staff assigned by the Legislative Council shall draft all legislation submitted to the Legislature by the council. Legislative Council staffing may be curtailed during periods when the Legislature is in regular or special session.

**11. Funding.** The Legislative Council may seek outside funds to fund costs of the council. Contributions to support the work of the youth council may not be accepted from any party having a pecuniary or other vested interest in the outcome of the matters being studied or who would in any way compromise the work of the council. Any person, other than a state agency, desiring to make a financial or in-kind contribution must certify to the Legislative Council or its designee in the manner prescribed by the Legislative Council that the person has no pecuniary or other vested interest in the outcome of the work of the council. All contributions are subject to approval by the Legislative Council or its designee. The Executive Director of the Legislative Council administers any funds received by the youth council. The executive director shall notify the chairs of the youth council of the status of the funding on or before December 1st annually and what funding is available for the immediately following calendar year.

Section history: 2001, c. 439, § PPPP1 (NEW). 2001, c. 439, § PPPP4 (AFF). 2003, c. 20, § F2, 3 (AMD). 2003, c. 481, § 1, 2 (AMD). 2003, c. 689, § B6 (REV). 2005, c. 414 (AMD).

# **Appendix B**

**2005-2006 Appointed Members**

**Legislative Youth Advisory Council**

# LEGISLATIVE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

Established in 2002 ♦ Codified at 3 MRSA, §168-A



## 2005-2006 APPOINTED MEMBERS<sup>2</sup>

<b>APPOINTMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Jennifer Thompson, Co-chair	Kennebec	Secondary Schools
Daniel Black	Cumberland	Secondary Schools
Kala Clark	Hancock	Secondary Schools
Claire Howard	Cumberland	Secondary Schools
Hannah Lennett	Kennebec	Secondary Schools
Heather Pratt	Kennebec	Secondary Schools
Vacant		Equivalent Instruction Programs
Henry Beck	Kennebec	Postsecondary Institutions
James Redstone	Penobscot	Postsecondary Institutions
Sen. Elizabeth Mitchell	Kennebec	Senate Members
Sen. Carol Weston, Co-chair	Waldo	Senate Members
<b>APPOINTMENTS BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Meghan Brewer	Lincoln	Secondary Schools
Ian Engdahl	Kennebec	Secondary Schools
Sadie Fenton	Washington	Secondary Schools
Hannah Stein	Cumberland	Secondary Schools
Autumn Woodward	Washington	Secondary Schools
Grace Wright	Cumberland	Secondary Schools
Vacant		Equivalent Instruction Programs
Carolyn Boyle	Kennebec	Postsecondary Institutions
Vacant		Postsecondary Institutions
Rep. Rosaire Paradis, Jr.	Aroostook	House Members
Rep. David Trahan	Lincoln	House Members

<sup>2</sup> The members of the Children's Cabinet, established pursuant to Title 5, section 19131, serve as non-voting, ex officio members (see 3 MRSA, §168-A, sub-§3, ¶C).

# **Appendix C**

**Summary of Legislation Recommended**

**By the Legislative Youth Advisory Council**

**to the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature and the 122<sup>nd</sup> Legislature**

# **Summary of Legislation Recommended By the Legislative Youth Advisory Council to the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature and the 122<sup>nd</sup> Legislature**

## **2003, 1<sup>st</sup> Reg. Session of the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature -- Legislation**

### **LD 751, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council -- Enacted as Public Law 2003, chapter 481**

- Amended implementing legislation to add an additional Senator to the Council, to alternate the Legislative Chair position annually, between a House and Senate member, and to adjust the youth membership terms.
- Established an executive branch youth advisory committee.
- Required Office of Substance Abuse to review their process for collecting information on drug and alcohol use among youths, to review their process for awarding grants, and to review their process for training teachers to administer the information gathering surveys.
- Required the Department of Education to review alternative drug prevention programs for youth, and to review alcohol and drug policies for student athletes.

## **2004, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reg. Session of the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature -- General Recommendations**

### **Futures Subcommittee Recommendations:**

- Include 30% youth membership in State task forces studying youth issues.
- High Schools develop course to assist students with college preparation, including universal time line of necessary steps.
- Increase access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses.
- Separate guidance counselor roles between career counseling and social counseling.
- Explore educational options.
- Study the ratio between need-based and merit-based financial aid at the University of Maine.

### **Foster Care Subcommittee Recommendations:**

- Extend State ward (V-9) support from 21 to 23 years of age.
- Explore change in approval process for school activity permission slips—aimed at DHHS
- Explore changes in obtaining driving experience prior to receiving driving licenses for youth in group homes—aimed at DHHS.

### **Diversity Subcommittee recommendations:**

- Review civil rights police training for minority and cultural sensitivity.
- Include input from minorities in government and school decisions.
- Teach languages other than English at a young age.
- Offer more nonwestern cultural education in schools.

## **2005, 1st Reg. Session of the 122nd Legislature -- Legislation**

### **LD 1136, An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council** -- Enacted as Public Law 2005, chapter 309

- Directed the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a standard form to be used to indicate approval by the department for children in the custody of the department to participate in school sports, field trips and other extracurricular activities.

### **LD 1511, An Act Regarding the Budget Process for the Legislative Youth Advisory Council** -- Enacted as Public Law 2005, chapter 414

- Amended implementing legislation to transfer staff assistance to the responsibility of the Legislative Council rather than the Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service and that the staff assistance could be curtailed during periods when the Legislature was in regular or special session.

### **LD 1682, An Act to Support Sibling Rights in Child Welfare Custody Matters**

-- Submitted by DHHS, carried over by the Judiciary Committee to the 2nd Regular Session, and (at the time this report went to print) voted "Ought to Pass as Amended"

- Proposes to require the court to order sibling visitation for children who are the subjects of child protection proceedings, when it is reasonable, practicable and in the best interests of the children involved to do so.
- It also proposes to require the department to make reasonable efforts to obtain from prospective adoptive parents an agreement to maintain visitation with a child's siblings after the adoption of the child.
- It further proposes to authorize a child, in a child protection action, to request visitation rights with a sibling from whom the child has been separated as a result of the child protection action.





# **Appendix D**

**National Conference of State Legislature's**

***LegisBrief, January 2006***















# **Appendix E**

## **Brief Biographies of Current Youth Members of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council**

## Brief Biographies of Current LYAC Youth Members

<p>Beck, Henry</p>	<p>Henry Beck, age 19 is a Waterville native and a freshman at Colby College. At Waterville High School, Beck served as President of his class. This past November, before his appointment to the Legislative Youth Advisory Council representing Mainers enrolled in higher education, Beck was elected to the Waterville City Council representing Ward 2. As one of Maine's youngest city councilors, Beck has worked for community development in Waterville's North End, job growth, and with youth and social programs. He enjoys Colby hockey games, friends, and spending time with his two Labrador retrievers. His mother is a Waterville attorney, and his father is a carpenter and former Teamster.</p>	<p>Black, Daniel</p>	<p>Daniel Black is a resident of Portland. As a high school senior, Daniel has attended Waynflete School for seven years. Besides being a captain for the Waynflete soccer team, he also enjoys playing tennis and skiing. As a member of Project Respect, Daniel mentors students at Reiche School. In the summer and part time during the school year, Daniel works for local catering businesses. As a continuing member on the Council, Daniel is thankful for his appointment and feels that kids' thoughts are important to our political process.</p>
			
<p>Boyle, Carolyn</p>	<p>Carolyn Boyle is a resident of China Village and a college sophomore at Bowdoin. Her favorite classes are English, Economics and Spanish. She enjoys running, acting, and playing flute in the Colby Flute Choir. Carolyn is concerned with opportunities for youth in Maine.</p>	<p>Brewer, Meghan</p>	<p>Meghan Brewer is a junior at Boothbay Region High School. She is very excited to be working with the Youth Legislative Council of Maine to benefit the youth. She has always had the ambition to make a difference and now she has the opportunity. Meghan wants to become a child psychologist after college. She is thrilled to have another year with the council.</p>
			

# Brief Biographies of Current LYAC Youth Members

<p>Clark, Kala</p> 	<p>Kala Clark is a 17-year-old senior at MDI High School. Kala is a member of the Youth Leadership Advisory Team and the Maine Youth Opportunities Board. In September 2005 Kala represented Maine in D.C. at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional conference on Civic Education. She is also involved in various other volunteer and advocacy activities. Her plans are to study political science in college and continue to explore her passion for serving others. Kala is thankful for her time serving Maine youth= and is most concerned with the lives of kids in foster care and the civic education of youth</p>	<p>Engdahl, Ian</p> 	<p>Ian Engdahl is a 17-year-old Junior at Winthrop High School. He has served as a student member of The Winthrop Board of Education, The Civic Education Task Force-Youth Voices subcommittee, and several other state and local councils and committees. Ian is very excited to be given to opportunity to work with LYAC to help Maine youth.</p>
<p>Howard, Claire</p> 	<p>Claire Howard is a 17 year old junior at South Portland High School. In addition to taking honors courses, Claire is an active member in the Key Club, Latin Club, and South Portland School District's mentoring program – Big Reds, Little Reds. She hopes to attend college in the Boston area, majoring in business or economics. Outside of school, Claire works as a pharmacy technician, plays the piano and enjoys participating in community service actives. On the LYAC, she is strongly focused on discrimination and respect problems within our schools.</p>	<p>Lennett, Hannah</p> 	<p>Hannah Lennett is a 16 year old junior at Oak Hill High School. She enjoys music, dance, and drama. She would love to see Maine schools become "hate-free" places for all students.</p>

## Brief Biographies of Current LYAC Youth Members

<p>Pratt, Heather</p> 	<p>Heather Pratt is a Junior at Cony High School, where she is on the Varsity soccer, basketball, and track teams. She is also Vice President of Key Club, a Peer Helper, and a member of Student Council and the National Honor Society. Heather lives in Chelsea with her family. She is a fraternal triplet. This is her first year on the Council and she is excited to express her ideas concerning the quality of special education and the issue of underage drinking.</p>	<p>Redstone, James</p> 	<p>James Redstone graduated from South Portland High School in 2002. Currently he is attending the University of Maine, where he is pursuing degrees in history and accounting. On campus he is active in a number of organizations, varying from the Lacrosse Club to the Honors College.</p>
<p>Thompson, Jennifer</p> 	<p>Jennifer Thompson is an 18-year-old, senior at Maranacook Community High School, Readfield. Along with co-chairing the Council, she is involved in her student government, interactive theater, and coaching the middle school debate team. She is interested in history, political science, and plans on studying international relations while in college.</p>	<p>Wright, Grace</p> 	<p>Grace Wright is a sophomore at Brunswick High School. She enjoys running cross-country and playing ice hockey with her school teams, and participating in community theatrical productions. She is an active member of the BHS Civil Rights Team. This is Grace's first year on the Council, and she is very excited to be a member.</p>