

**STATE OF MAINE  
121ST LEGISLATURE  
FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

**Final Report  
of the  
Commission to Study the Scope and  
Quality of Citizenship Education**

**February 2004**

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## Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	i
<b>I. Introduction.....</b>	1
<b>II. Background .....</b>	4
<b>III. Summary of Key Findings .....</b>	8
<b>IV. Conclusions and Recommendations .....</b>	15

## **Appendices**

- A. Authorizing Legislation, Resolve 2003, Chapter 85
- B. Membership List, Commission to Study the Scope and Quality of Citizenship Education
- C. Resource People and Presenters Providing Information to the Commission
- D. Definitions
- E. Bibliography of Citizenship Education Materials
- F. Citizenship Education in Maine: Problems, Assets and Potential Solutions
- G. Citizenship Education in Maine: Hallmarks, Problem Situations and Potential Solutions
- H. Maine Department of Education K-12 Civic Education Survey
- I. Draft of Recommended Legislation to the 121st Legislature

## **Executive Summary**

Resolve 2003, chapter 85 enacted by the 121<sup>st</sup> Maine Legislature authorized the formation of the Commission to Study the Scope and Quality of Citizenship Education (“Commission”). The Commission was comprised of 15 members and included representatives of the Legislature, State and local education agencies, public school educators and students, college administrators and students, the nonprofit education sector, and the business community. The Commission was convened in November 2003, and after establishing a work plan and designing a survey of citizenship education initiatives in Maine schools and colleges, an “ad hoc” working group was formed to review initial Commission discussions and to clarify problem statements, assets, and potential solutions to address the scope and quality of citizenship education.

The Commission focused its deliberations on the issues of the shared responsibility for citizenship education, integrating citizenship education and civic engagement throughout the curricular programs of our schools and colleges, supporting pre-service educator preparation and post-certification training and guidance for educators, engaging students in authentic citizenship experiences, and the need to convene a new task force to continue the work of developing strategies, resources, and implementation plans to monitor the further development of citizenship education in Maine.

Maine’s effort to identify current programs supportive of citizenship education in the public schools takes place against the backdrop of significant recent work at the national level. *“Every Student A Citizen: Creating the Democratic Self”*, published in 2000 by the Education Commission of the States, identified a deepening sense of civic disconnection among both youth and adults and recommended a revitalization of civics education through strengthening curricular programs, providing a venue for discussion of local political issues, increasing opportunities for students to participate in democratic institutions, and expanding service learning opportunities in the community. *“The Civic Mission of the Schools”*, published in 2003 by the Carnegie Corporation and the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, makes the case that a vital founding purpose of the public schools appears to have been marginalized in recent years as schools have attempted to focus on core competencies in English, mathematics, and science; and concludes that without effective civics education, our system of public schools is failing to fully prepare much of the next generation to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives.

Among the conclusions and recommendations of these and other recent reports, a few common aspects come to the fore: (1) that it is necessary, but not sufficient, to acquire knowledge through the study of history and government; and (2) that building effective *skills* to act on civic knowledge, developing *attitudes and beliefs* that provide a personal context supportive of civic engagement, and having opportunities to participate in the civic and political life of their communities, are as important as gaining *knowledge*. These three core aspects of citizenship education -- **knowledge and skills, attitudes and beliefs, and political and community participation** -- run throughout this report and through to the recommendations of the Commission. The Commission’s recommendations include the following.

## **Recommendations for Enhancing the Scope and Quality of Citizenship Education in Maine**

**1. Integration with Maine’s System of Learning Results.** As part of the forthcoming review of Maine’s System of Learning Results (“Learning Results”) and the ongoing efforts to implement the comprehensive state and local assessment system required under the Learning Results, the Commission recommends that Maine policymakers and educators should integrate opportunities for real-life experiences and the development of civic participation skills throughout all content areas of the curriculum.

**A.** “Real life” experiences in civic engagement should be incorporated within the Learning Results, including genuine opportunities to develop the “habits” of an effective and engaged citizen; and citizenship education must extend beyond the content area of social studies and must begin earlier -- commencing in pre-kindergarten programs, continuing through elementary and secondary grades, and extending into postsecondary education programs.

**B.** As “Local Assessment Systems” are developed by school administrative units, assessment methods designed to measure student performance should consider a student’s community involvement and should include “real life” applications of a student’s knowledge and skills.

### **2. Resources and Best Practices for Citizenship Education in Maine’s K-16**

**Education Systems.** The Commission recommends that State policymakers and education officials should use the resources, findings and recommendations contained in this report to engage other State policymakers, local education officials, educators, college faculty and administrators, researchers, and other key stakeholders in an effort to develop a resource guide to effective citizenship education in Maine. Furthermore, the Commission recommends that the membership of the task force convened by the Maine Department of Education and the State Board of Education to follow-through on the recommendations of this study should include policymakers, researchers and practitioners who can pull together effective and practical models of school- and college-based civic education and community-based citizenship engagement for consideration by Maine schools, colleges and communities. The new task force should also develop an action plan for engaging school administrative unit officials, students, parents, and community organizations in discussions about opportunities for integrating citizenship education into school units plans for aligning curriculum and assessment with the Learning Results. The new task force should also develop an action plan for engaging college and university faculty, staff and students in discussions about opportunities for integrating citizenship education into plans for general education reform and reform of the majors.

**3. Pre-Service Educator Preparation Programs and Post-Certification Training and Guidance for Educators.** The Commission recommends that Maine policymakers, including State and local education agency officials, should provide greater support for educators and administrators in our schools and colleges by integrating effective models and content-based

strategies of citizenship education into pre-service educator preparation programs, post-certification training initiatives, and guidance for all teachers and administrators.

**A.** Preparation programs, training initiatives, and guidance for educators should focus on providing educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to infuse civic skills, attitudes, and behaviors into curricular and co-curricular programs for our students. Educator preparation and post-certification programs at our colleges should be augmented with developmental opportunities for educators to earn credits or continuing education units for initial certification or recertification experiences offered through professional associations connected to the range of content areas.

**B.** Faculty and administrators of Maine's educator preparation programs should meet with the task force convened by the Maine Department of Education and the State Board of Education to review the recently established "standards-based" certification system with an eye towards developing standards that more directly address the competencies necessary to effectively infuse civics education and citizenship engagement across the school curriculum.

#### **4. Civic Mission of Maine's Colleges and Universities and Citizenship Engagement**

**Opportunities for Maine Students.** The Commission recommends that the trustees and leadership of Maine's colleges and universities should elevate citizenship education and student engagement in the civic life of their campus and surrounding communities as core aspects of their institutional missions. The Commission also encourages faculty and administrators at our higher education institutions to carefully consider the future social, political, and economic challenges facing our society, particularly the issues that confront our schools and educators in preparing our youth to become active and engaged citizens.

**5. Shared Responsibility and Shared Ownership of Citizenship Education.** State and local government officials should establish joint ventures with leaders in the public, non-profit, and private sectors of Maine to promote citizenship education, including cooperative efforts to organize conferences and activities for youth and collaborative efforts with schools and other youth-serving organizations, to engage youth through existing programs. State government leaders should also sponsor a "Blaine House Summit on Citizenship Education" that would identify opportunities for youth participation on State boards and commissions and that would focus on recruiting and training our youth to serve on these State boards and commissions.

**6. Engage Students in Authentic Experiences Across the Civic Spectrum of Their Communities.** The Commission recommends that Maine's schools, colleges, and communities should promote citizenship education initiatives that engage students in genuine problem solving and decision-making opportunities. As part of the effort to foster a statewide dialogue regarding civic education and citizenship engagement, the Legislative Youth Advisory Council and Maine Legislators should conduct a series of public forums across the State to solicit ideas to address this important work. The Commission proposes that the youth and legislative members of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council should review the Michigan model of citizenship forums as a useful model in planning to undertake this initiative. The Legislative Youth Advisory Council and

Maine Legislators should report their findings and conclusions regarding issues that are important to Maine's youth to the Governor, the Legislature and the Judiciary, as well as to the task force convened by the Maine Department of Education and the State Board of Education to act on the recommendations of this Commission.

**7. Voter Education and Voter Registration.** The Commission recommends that Maine's schools, colleges, and public officials should collaborate on ways to integrate voter education and voter registration efforts targeting secondary school students across the State. The task force convened to follow up the work of this Commission should include the League of Women Voters and other key stakeholders in a review of these issues and should reflect upon the voter education and voter registration models in Connecticut and California to learn from these and other "best practices." The Commission also endorses the continuation and expansion of the "mock elections" program in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The Commission further proposes that the Legislature give serious consideration to implementing some version of LD 640 that proposes to allow youth who are not yet 18 years of age -- but will be at the time of a general election -- to vote in the primary election or state caucus (immediately preceding their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday) for the selection of candidates.

**8. Monitoring Civic Engagement.** The Commission recommends that Maine should develop a civic engagement index to track data on civic skills, attitudes, and behaviors of Maine youth. The task force convened to follow up the work of this Commission should review the North Carolina Civic Index and other measures of civic engagement and should develop a set of indices for Maine that builds upon the work begun by the "Maine Marks" index developed through the Muskie School of Public Service and the surveys conducted by the Maine Economic Growth Council that include questions about voter participation and charitable giving.

**9. Convene a New Task Force to Continue the Work.** The Commission recommends that the Department of Education and the State Board of Education should convene a task force to develop a more complete set of plans and strategies for implementation of effective citizenship education models and civic engagement practices in our schools, colleges and communities. This new study group should have a broader membership -- including legislators, educators, youth representatives and other key stakeholders -- and should address the recommendations proposed by the Commission, including the integration of service-learning into citizenship education and the infusion of citizenship engagement beyond our schools and colleges.

The Commission report includes draft legislation that will be submitted to 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature for consideration by the Legislature during the Second Regular Session.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Commission to Study the Scope and Quality of Citizenship Education (“Commission”) was established during the First Regular Session of the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature by Resolve 2003, Chapter 85. A copy of the authorizing legislation is attached as **Appendix A**. The 15-member Commission included four Legislators, a representative of the Department of Education, five individuals from the public schools with experience in civic education, service learning and related areas including a student, a teacher, a principal, a superintendent, and a school board member, a college dean of students and a college student, two individuals from the nonprofit education sector including one of whom represented kindergarten to grade 12 education and one of whom represented higher education, and a representative of the business community. The roster of Commission members is attached as **Appendix B**.

The Commission was established to examine the scope and quality of citizenship education programs in Maine schools and colleges. The Commission was charged with examining the following:

1. The extent to which citizenship education, including service learning, is currently included in the visions, missions, values and practices of Maine school administrative districts and institutions of higher education;
2. The extent to which existing pre-service and in-service professional development programs for educators address citizenship education;
3. National models for educational continua that cover preschool through college with the potential for preparing Maine students to be active and engaged citizens; and
4. Models for involving students and giving them a voice in the governance of our institutions and providing opportunities for student engagement and leadership.

## **Commission Process**

The Commission was convened on November 5, 2003 once all appointments had been made and after the Legislative Council certified and approved that sufficient “outside” funding was received to fully fund all costs of the Commission. Two other Commission meetings were held on December 3, 2003 and January 5, 2004. Following its second meeting, the Commission established an “ad hoc” working group to revise the problem statements and preliminary findings discussed by the full Commission and to draft proposed recommendations for review at the third and final Commission meeting.

Commission members received program information and preliminary data regarding the scope and quality of civics education and citizenship engagement initiatives in Maine schools and colleges from state and local education agency officials. A list of presenters is attached as **Appendix C**. In addition, recognizing the extensive knowledge and experience of its collective

membership, the Commission also relied heavily on the expertise of its members in identifying and framing the policy issues and developing its recommendations.

During its first meeting, the Commission devised a work plan, charted their own understandings of what it means to be an effective and engaged citizen, and heard presentations regarding national and state-level perspectives on citizenship education, including an overview of civic education initiatives in Maine kindergarten through grade 12 education and higher education systems. The Commission received information on a range of citizenship education programs and models in Maine, including presentations on the Secretary of State's "Fostering Youth Involvement" (FYI) Initiatives, the Maine Commission for Community Service and the Community Service Team in the State Planning Office, the Attorney General's Civil Rights Team Project, the Youth Development Unit at the Muskie School of Public Service, and the Maine Mentoring Partnership.

The Commission used its second meeting to further explore how Maine's System of Learning Results ("Learning Results") currently support and encourage citizenship education, as well as narrowing its focus on the scope of policy issues to be addressed by this Commission. Representatives from the Department of Education provided an historical overview of educational reform in Maine and across the nation; and Commission members discussed the current circumstances related to civics courses, character education initiatives, service-learning models, and citizenship education programs in Maine's schools and colleges. A six-member "ad hoc" working group was established by the Commission at the second meeting to facilitate the design of the civic education survey and to further articulate the "problem definition" and "potential solution" statements discussed during the first two Commission meetings.

Commission members, in conjunction with the Department of Education, developed two surveys to assess how Maine's schools and colleges are preparing students for their roles as "Responsible and Involved Citizens" as outlined in the "Guiding Principles" of Learning Results. The aim of the school administrative unit survey was to determine the type and extent of curricular and co-curricular programs that currently address the civic mission of the public schools. A second survey was geared to those Maine colleges with educator preparation programs in order to understand the role that these pre-service education programs play in preparing and supporting teachers to promote the attainment of this "Guiding Principle" and the civic mission of our schools.

During its third and final meeting, Commission members reviewed the "problem definition" statements and proposed recommendation developed by the "ad hoc" working group. The Commission discussed these findings and reached consensus on a several recommendations, including recommended legislation, for the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature.

The authorizing legislation for the Commission established December 5, 2003, as the reporting date of the Commission to the Second Regular Session of the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature. Due to the condensed time period in which the Commission had to complete its work after the November 5<sup>th</sup> convening date, the Commission chairs petitioned the Legislative Council for an extension of the reporting deadline until the end of January. The Commission was granted a reporting deadline

extension to January 16, 2004. Unfortunately, the Commission did not have adequate time to complete its work and address each of the duties charged to it under the authorizing legislation. Given these circumstances and recognizing the breadth and scope of the Legislature's charge to the Commission, Commission members recommend that the Department of Education and the State Board of Education be directed to establish a new task force to build upon the foundation and framework established by this Commission.

The Commission to Study the Scope and Quality of Citizenship Education, pursuant to Resolve 2003, Chapter 85, submits this report and recommends the draft legislation attached to the 121st Legislature.

## II. BACKGROUND

### **“The Encouragement of Literature, Etc.”**

Prior to serving as our nation’s first Vice President and later as our second President, John Adams served as a delegate to the Massachusetts’ constitutional convention and was the primary drafter of the Massachusetts Constitution. Perhaps foremost among his contributions to this constitution was Chapter V, Section II, “The Encouragement of Literature, Etc.” which was adopted (unanimously and without amendment) by the constitutional convention in 1780.

*Wisdom and knowledge, as well as virtue, diffused generally among the body of the people, being necessary for the preservation of their rights and liberties; and as these depend on spreading the opportunities and advantages of education . . . among the . . . people, it shall be the duty of legislators and magistrates, in all future periods . . . to cherish the interests of literature and the sciences, and all seminaries of them; especially the university at Cambridge, public schools, and grammar schools in the towns; to encourage private societies and public institutions . . . for the promotion of agriculture, arts, sciences, commerce, trades, manufactures, and a natural history . . . ; to countenance and inculcate the principles of humanity and general benevolence, public and private charity, industry and frugality, honesty and punctuality in their dealings; sincerity, good humor, and all social affections, and generous sentiments among the people.<sup>1</sup>*

Historian David McCullough, in his biography on Adams, remarked that this paragraph “was like no other declaration to be found in any constitution until then or since.”<sup>2</sup> While McCullough’s observation refers to Adams’ statement supporting the principal role of education in developing **wisdom and knowledge** through *“literature and the sciences”*, his comment more importantly acknowledges the significance of the “*et cetera*” sections of the paragraph where Adams declares that it is the duty of government to inculcate principles of **“virtue”** among the people and similarly encourages both public *and* private institutions to promote the “common good.” When considered together with the preamble to the constitution -- where Adams presents the principles of the “body politic” established through a **“social compact”**, or covenant, between the “whole people”, each citizen and their government -- Adams’ paragraph declares that education serves “as the bulwark of the good society”<sup>3</sup> and that public officials in the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government have an enduring duty to provide educational opportunity so that individuals might become informed and “useful citizens” capable of safeguarding their freedoms and liberties and competent in fulfilling their responsibilities as part of the “body politic.”

Given that Maine was part of Massachusetts from the colonial period through statehood, it should not be surprising that the Constitution of Maine, which was ratified in 1820, contains a provision similar to Adams’ assertion concerning the role of education and the duty of the

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<sup>1</sup> The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Chapter V, Section II

<sup>2</sup> McCullough, David G. John Adams, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001, p. 222.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 223.

Legislature to promote its advantages. The heading of Section 1 of Article VIII, Part First, “Education” of the Constitution of Maine states that the duty of the Legislature shall be to “require towns to support public schools”<sup>4</sup> since . . .

*A general diffusion of the advantages of education being essential to the preservation of the rights and liberties of the people; to promote this important object, the Legislature are authorized, and it shall be their duty to require, the several towns to make suitable provision . . . for the support and maintenance of public schools; and it shall further be their duty to encourage and suitably endow, from time to time . . . all academies, colleges and seminaries of learning within the State . . .*

From a 21<sup>st</sup> century perspective, it is interesting to note that the “education” provision of the Constitution of Maine did not contain assertions similar to those in the Massachusetts Constitution that encouraged the inculcation of virtuous principles through schools, colleges and other public and private institutions.

On the other hand, a provision in Maine Law enacted in 1821 and subsequently amended, did embrace some semblance of Adams’ point of view regarding the mission of our schools in transmitting virtue and inculcating civic responsibility.

*Instructors of youth in public or private institutions shall use their best endeavors to impress on the minds of the children and youth committed to their care and instruction the principles of morality and justice and a sacred regard for truth; love of country, humanity and a universal benevolence; the great principles of humanity as illustrated by . . . regard for all factors which contribute to the well-being of man; . . . and all other virtues which ornament human society; and to lead those under their care, as their ages and capacities admit, into a particular understanding of the tendency of such virtues to preserve and perfect a republican constitution, secure the blessings of liberty and to promote their future happiness.*

This provision still remains in Maine statutes and can be found under the heading “Teaching of virtue and morality” in Title 20, section 1221.<sup>5</sup> Remarkably, this section was neither included in the recodification of Maine education laws in 1983, nor was it repealed. Apparently, the Legislature’s Education Committee was unable to agree on whether to enact, amend or repeal this provision. While it remains more a footnote to history, it should be noted that this section did resurface in 2001 in the final report of the Commission for Ethical and Responsible Student Behavior, titled: “*Taking Responsibility: Standards for Ethical Responsibilities in Maine Schools and Communities.*” Conducted under the authority of the Department of Education, the Commission’s report articulates the core values of an ethical and responsible person and links these standards with the academic standards found in Maine’s System of Learning Results (“Learning Results”).

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<sup>4</sup> Constitution of Maine, Article VIII, Part First, Section 1.

<sup>5</sup> Maine Revised Statutes, title 20, § 1221.

During the spring of 2003, the Maine Legislature authorized the establishment of the Commission to Study the Scope and Quality of Citizenship Education (“Commission”). The Commission was charged with assessing how Maine’s schools and colleges are preparing students for their roles as “Responsible and Involved Citizens” as outlined in the “Guiding Principles” of the Learning Results. The Commission was also authorized to make policy recommendations to the Legislature regarding the extent to which Maine schools and colleges should be utilizing curricular and co-curricular models of citizenship education, including service learning, in preparing our youth to become active and engaged citizens. Definitions of “citizenship education”, “service learning”, “K-16 education systems” and related terms are attached as

#### **Appendix D.**

### **The National Context for Civics Education Reform**

The civic purpose of the public schools has been under much discussion at the national level this past year. The publication of *“The Civic Mission of Schools”* by the Carnegie Corporation and the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) has outlined both the critical importance of revitalizing civics education, as well as offering a set of recommended actions and strategies directed to schools and policymakers. These recommendations specify actions that can be taken by federal, state and local elected officials, educators in schools and colleges, scholars and researchers, and funders in both the private and public sectors. In addition, the First Annual Congressional Conference on Civic Education in September 2003 resulted in the development of action plans by all 50 states to evaluate the current status of civics education across the country and develop frameworks for improvement as needed. The Maine Study Commission is positioned well to apply these national recommendations to the Maine context.

Maine’s effort to identify current programs supportive of citizenship education in the public schools takes place against the backdrop of significant recent work at the national level. The Education Commission of the States (ECS) published *“Every Student A Citizen: Creating the Democratic Self”* in 2000, which identified a deepening sense of civic disconnection among both youth and adults. The report’s recommendations include a revitalization of civics education through strengthening curriculum, building effective partnerships with elected and appointed officials to provide a venue for discussing local political issues, creating increased opportunities for students to participate in democratic institutions, and expanding service learning opportunities in the community.

Building on the ECS report, the Carnegie Corporation and the CIRCLE published *“The Civic Mission of the Schools”* in 2003. This report makes the case that a vital founding purpose of the public schools appears to have been marginalized in recent years as schools have attempted to focus on core competencies in English, mathematics, and science. The report eloquently makes the case that without effective civics education, the American system of public schools is failing to fully prepare the next generation to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives. Though not alone in thrusting these issues to the forefront of our national attention, these two reports crystallize the case for engaging in a thoughtful restoration of civics learning to a position

of primacy among our other competing educational goals. A bibliography containing references to these and other reports and resources on citizenship education is attached as **Appendix E**.

### **Defining the Civic Mission of the Schools**

“*The Civic Mission of the Schools*” articulates four broad goals of civics education. Young people must learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes embedded in civics education to be competent and responsible citizens who:

- ❖ Are informed and thoughtful; have a grasp and an appreciation of history and the fundamental processes of American democracy; have an understanding and awareness of public and community issues; and have the ability to obtain information, think critically, and enter into dialogue among others with different perspectives.
- ❖ Participate in their communities through membership in or contributions to organizations working to address an array of cultural, social, political, and religious interests and beliefs.
- ❖ Act politically by having the skills, knowledge, and commitment needed to accomplish public purposes, such as group problem solving, public speaking, petitioning and protesting, and voting.
- ❖ Have moral and civic virtues such as concern for the rights and welfare of others, social responsibility, tolerance and respect, and belief in the capacity to make a difference.

In September of 2003, delegations from all 50 states gathered in Washington D.C. for the First Annual Congressional Conference on Civic Education. The conference demonstrated the extent to which the call for revitalizing the civic purpose of the public schools has developed both urgency and nationwide import. Significant in the announced goals of the conference was the development of plans in each of the states to take the recommendations from recent reports and translate them into action. Maine’s delegation to the conference was pleased to report to this national gathering that the Maine Legislature had taken a demonstrable step toward identifying the status of civic education in our schools and creating a process for improvement: the Commission on whose work we now report.

Across numerous reports and sets of recommendations, a few common aspects come to the fore: (1) that it is necessary, but not sufficient, to acquire *knowledge* through the study of history and government; and (2) that building effective *skills* to act on civic knowledge, developing *attitudes and beliefs* that provide a personal context supportive of civic engagement, and having opportunities to *participate in the civic and political life* of their communities, are as important as gaining knowledge. These three core aspects of citizenship education -- **knowledge and skills, attitudes and beliefs, and political and community participation** -- run throughout this report and through to the recommendations of the Commission.

### **III. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS**

The Commission to Study the Scope and Quality of Citizenship Education (“Commission”) was established to examine the scope and quality of citizenship education, including service learning, in the curricular and co-curricular programs offered by our schools and colleges; the extent to which existing pre-service preparation and in-service professional development programs for educators address citizenship education; and the potential of other citizenship education models, including models for involving students and giving them voice in the governance of our institutions, to prepare Maine students to be active and engaged citizens. In addressing these duties, Commission members reviewed existing educational programs, including civics education, character education and service learning programs. The Commission also considered the role of State and local agencies, other public and sector institutions, including both statewide and local community-based programs throughout the State.

#### **Key Findings Regarding Problem Statements, Assets and Potential Solutions for Improving the Scope and Quality of Citizenship Education in Maine**

These findings are intended to inform the Legislature about existing state and local efforts to implement programs and initiatives that seek to respond to the demand for citizenship education, and to address the capacity building and strategic planning necessary to integrate these programs into our schools and colleges, as well as other public and private sector institutions in communities across the State. The following sections summarize the data collected and the information received by Commission members related to the duties charged to the Commission to study the scope and quality of citizenship education programs and the related policy issues that are critical in implementing effective civics education and citizenship engagements in the State.

The Commission findings are presented in the following topics: problem statements, assets, potential solutions, “hallmarks” of an engaged citizen, and the Department of Education surveys. As referenced in the preceding section of this report, the Commission members adopted an analytical framework in examining these policy issues. Commission members found it practical to use the following core aspects of citizenship education in our presentation of these findings: (1) Civic and Political Knowledge and Cognitive Skills; (2) Civic Attitudes and Beliefs; (3) Political and Community Participation; and (4) Social, Cultural and Political Contexts.

#### **Problem Statements**

The Commission reviewed recent reports and commentaries on the need to reinvigorate civic responsibility as a basic tenet of our democratic society. In identifying the following problem statements, the Commission concluded that civic responsibility, citizenship education and a commitment to a democratic society needs to be returned at the center of our society. An analysis of the problem situation, assets and potential solutions is included in **Appendix F**.

#### **Civic Attitudes and Beliefs.**

1. Competing educational priorities and changing social attitudes have de-emphasized the sense of civic responsibility in our society and have eroded the civic mission of our schools.
2. The structure and culture of the vast majority of our schools do not permit students to participate in, at least some aspect of, authentic governance and decision-making; and, as a consequence, students are denied meaningful opportunities to “practice” democracy.
3. A majority of Maine youth does not feel a sense of duty or obligation to participate in their communities; and, as a society, we are squandering opportunities to instill and reinforce the attitudes and beliefs associated with the roles and responsibilities of the “engaged citizen” in our democratic society.

#### **Civic and Political Knowledge and Cognitive Skills.**

4. National and Maine assessment data reveal that there are gaps in the knowledge and skills of too many students regarding the principles of our government, democracy and citizenship. Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reveal that only one-fifth of all American students score at the “At or Above Proficient” levels in Civics (1998 NAEP data). In Maine, less than 30% of students score at the “Meets Standards” level in Social Studies, and overall, students only respond correctly -- on average -- to 50% of the test items on the Civics subsection of the test. Equally concerning is the significant percentage of students, (67%), who believe that Social Studies will not be useful to them in their future work (2002-2003 Maine Education Assessment data).
5. A seeming lack of ability of some individuals in our society to engage in civil discourse with other people with different perspectives, opinions, backgrounds or abilities.

#### **Political and Community Participation.**

6. There are too few opportunities for students to have meaningful, authentic opportunities to participate in their communities.

#### **Social, Cultural and Political Contexts.**

7. “External” accountability structures established through state and federal mandates concerning school curriculum and assessment may be overwhelming the civic mission of our schools while disempowering the “internal” accountability structures of our schools and disaffecting our educators and students.
8. There appears to be a misperception that schools -- and within them, that social studies teachers alone -- are solely responsible for “teaching” citizenship education. Maine is not utilizing the untapped potential of linking both school and community resources

through the “connecting glue” of shared responsibilities to engage and instill the habits of citizenship in the next generation of Maine citizens in each of our communities.

### **Assets: Building Blocks to Improving Citizenship Education in Maine**

During the conversations and deliberations related to defining the problem situation, members of the “ad hoc” working group noted that there were beacons of hope to be found within the data and information presented to the Commission. National and state reports noted positive trends regarding the engagement of our youth in community service and also highlighted some promising approaches to citizenship education that have emerged in our schools, colleges, and other public and private institutions. Commission members agreed that the Commission findings should include a balanced perspective of the current state of citizenship education and civic engagement. This section presents more than a few “assets” that represent a promising foundation from which we can build a more complete framework for developing competent and responsible citizens.

#### **Civic Attitudes and Beliefs.**

- ❖ 46% of youth say they can make a difference in solving community problems (CIRCLE, 2002).
- ❖ Half our youth (51%) say voting is important (CIRCLE, 2002).

#### **Civic and Political Knowledge and Cognitive Skills.**

- ❖ 88% of high school seniors say they discuss current issues in class and 80% of high school students take a government class (CIRCLE, 2002).
- ❖ The guiding principles, content standards and performance indicators of the *Maine System of Learning Results* can provide local school units with frameworks for reclaiming the civic mission of our schools; and, beginning with the 2003-04 school year, the Maine Department of Education has been facilitating a review of the Learning Results (Patrick Phillips, Maine Department of Education).
- ❖ Recommendations from “*Promising Futures: A Call to Improve Learning for Maine’s Secondary Students*” illustrate core principles for our secondary schools and core practices that are connected to civic knowledge, skills, and behavior; and “*Taking Responsibility: Standards for Ethical Responsibilities in Maine Schools and Communities*” articulates the standards and core values of an ethical and responsible person with the Learning Results expectations of what Maine students should know and be able to do. (Connie Manter, Maine Department of Education).

#### **Political and Community Participation.**

- ❖ 46% of U. S. high schools offer service-learning opportunities (U. S. Department of Education, 1999).
- ❖ The proportion of first year college students who volunteer has risen steadily from two-thirds in 1989 to 81% in 2000 (Hart, 2001).
- ❖ 44% of Maine youth said they were engaged in community service; and 47% of this service was organized through school as a service-learning opportunity (Maine Marks, 2003).
- ❖ 51% of Maine youth feel they are given chances to make their city/town better (Maine Marks, 2003).
- ❖ In Maine, 58% of colleges have community service offices, yet only 18% of these offices have full time staff (Campus Compact, 2002).

### **Social, Cultural and Political Contexts.**

- ❖ Legislative Youth Advisory Council -- established in 2001, the council is comprised of 18 high school and college students from across the state and is authorized to address policy issues affecting youth.
- ❖ Attorney General's Civil Rights Team Project -- has grown from 18 middle and high schools in 1996 to more than 194 schools, including 11 elementary schools, in 2003.
- ❖ Secretary of State's Fostering Youth Involvement ("FYI") Initiatives -- including mock elections, voter registration, recognition for outstanding citizenship and essay contests related to Maine history and our Constitution have engaged 33,346 students in Maine K-12 schools (from 1992 to 2002).
- ❖ Maine Commission for Community Service -- established in 1994, serves as the lead partner with the Federal Corporation for National and Community Service; and is comprised of 26 citizens who develop and implement Maine's vision for service.
- ❖ Maine Mentoring Partnership -- there are over 120 mentor programs statewide, with 6,000 youth involved in "one-to-one" mentoring matches, another 10,000 youth involved in "group" mentoring matches, and over 2,000 youth are on waiting lists for mentors.
- ❖ Maine delegation to the First Annual Congressional Conference on Civic Education -- Maine's Congressional Conference team, (Julia Underwood, Rick Lyons and Patrick Phillips), is capable of supporting the Commission recommendations and can play a key role in the next stage of this work, creating a state action plan for citizenship education.

- ❖ KIDS Consortium and Maine Campus Compact, among other organizations, provide extensive technical assistance, resources and support to K-12 school administrative units and colleges on service-learning and civic engagement.

### **“Hallmarks” Of An Engaged Citizen**

Commission members agreed that our schools and communities need to “strike a balance” between the transmittal of knowledge through civic education and the development of skills and attitudes that are associated with citizenship; and that we must accomplish this by means of engagement and accountability. Towards these ends, the Commission offers the following “hallmarks” of an engaged citizen for consideration by policymakers, educators and community leaders. Commission members propose that these characteristics, habits and skills should be promoted for our youth; and that Maine should establish meaningful benchmarks and rubrics to measure civic engagement. An analysis of the “hallmarks” of an engaged citizen, data on the problem situation, and potential solutions is included in **Appendix G**.

#### **Civic Attitudes and Beliefs.** An engaged citizen . . .

- ❖ Appreciates constitutional principles and democratic traditions and believes in the ability of government to bring about positive change;
- ❖ Believes that one person – through a passionate commitment to their ideals -- can make a difference;
- ❖ Is able to tolerate conflict, appreciates the necessity of conflict resolution in a democratic society, and is able to engage in dialogue to exchange ideas and understand diverse perspectives;
- ❖ Understands the importance of civic responsibility, including respecting government and laws as well as passion and issues;
- ❖ Believes in the value and effectiveness of working with others to solve problems;
- ❖ Demonstrates curiosity about our community, nation and the world and welcomes diversity in their own community; and
- ❖ Demonstrates concern for the rights and welfare of others.

**Civic and Political Knowledge and Cognitive Skills.** An engaged citizen . . .

- ❖ Understands the history, structure and process of government, democracy and civic participation;
- ❖ Understands the relationship between government and community;
- ❖ Understands the roles of interest groups and the media in our democracy;
- ❖ Is able to think critically, to formulate opinions and defend judgments, to listen to and persuade others, and to evaluate positions;
- ❖ Is able to research political issues, obtain information and understand diverse perspectives about these issues; and
- ❖ Understands how to engage in civic and political processes within and outside their community.

**Political and Community Participation.** An engaged citizen . . .

- ❖ Participates in their community by voting, attending community meetings, serving the community as a volunteer or serving the public as an elected or appointed official;
- ❖ Participates in and contributes to community-based or political organizations;
- ❖ Encourages others to participate in public service and the political life of their community;
- ❖ Is able and willing to work in groups and to speak in public, including voicing their concerns and opinions when they perceive an injustice; and
- ❖ Is able to obtain information and to engage in dialogue and act collaboratively with their fellow citizens and public officials in resolving social problems and political concerns.

**Maine Department of Education K-12 Civic Education Survey**

The Commission designed two surveys to assess how Maine's schools and colleges are preparing students for their roles as "Responsible and Involved Citizens" as outlined in the Guiding Principles of Maine's Learning Results. The Maine Department of Education administered these web-based surveys on behalf of the Commission. The first survey was tailored to the state's school administrative units to determine the type and extent of curricular and co-curricular programs that currently address the civic mission of the public schools. The companion survey was geared to Maine's colleges with educator preparation programs in order to understand the role that the state's teacher education programs play in preparing and supporting teachers to

support the attainment of this Guiding Principle, as well as the role that pre-service education programs play in preparing and supporting teachers and administrators to support the attainment of the civic mission of the schools.

Given the limited time period in which the Commission had to design and administer this survey to officials at Maine's schools and colleges, Commission members were only able to see very preliminary responses to the survey. At the time of the publication of this report, 45 schools and 8 colleges had responded to this survey. The Department of Education informational letter, the survey directions, and examples of the responses from a school administrative unit and a college are included as **Appendix H**. Since the analysis of these data was deemed to be critical by Commission members in making informed recommendations to the Legislature about the *scope and quality* of citizenship education, the Commission recommends that the Department of Education continue its efforts to urge schools and colleges to respond to these surveys. The findings from these survey responses should also be used by the Department of Education and the State Board of Education as the basis for further data collection and analysis that is conducted by a subsequent task force convened to carry on the work begun by this Commission.

## **IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Commission to Study the Scope and Quality of Citizenship Education (“Commission”) presents the following conclusions and recommendations, including the draft legislation included as **Appendix I**, for the immediate consideration of the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature. These recommendations advance the conclusion of the Commission members that citizenship education, including service learning, should be promoted by Maine schools and colleges – as well as other sectors of our diverse communities – to prepare Maine students to become active and engaged citizens. These recommendations were formulated and adopted through a consensus process by the Commission members present at the final Commission meeting.<sup>6</sup>

Commission members urge the Legislature, State and local education policymakers, educators in Maine’s schools and colleges, and business and community leaders to reflect upon the vital need to reinvigorate citizenship education programs in our schools and colleges. The commission also concludes that an expansion of service learning and other citizenship education initiatives can more effectively engage our youth in the extraordinary opportunities that our schools, colleges, and communities can provide as “laboratories of democracy.”

Preceding sections of the Commission report detail the various aspects of the “problem situation that Maine policymakers, educators, and leaders must contend with in formulating and implementing an effective repertoire of citizenship education and civic engagement initiatives. We suggest that the recommendations presented here represent a foundation upon which a new task force convened by the Department of Education and the State Board of Education can construct a more complete set of plans and strategies for implementation. The Commission concludes that policymakers, educators, and other leaders should embrace and implement these recommendations in order to broaden and sustain the ethic of civic responsibility in our youth.

Specifically, these Commission recommendations are intended to address the scope and quality of citizenship education and civic engagement models, including service learning, that should be promoted by Maine schools and colleges -- as well as other public and private sector institutions and communities -- to (1) prepare Maine students to become active and engaged citizens; (2) provide pre-service and post-certification training and guidance for Maine educators; and (3) endow Maine youth with genuine opportunities for student engagement and leadership, including involvement in the governance of our education and civic institutions.

### **Recommendations for Enhancing the Scope and Quality of Citizenship Education in Maine**

**1. Integration with Maine’s System of Learning Results.** As part of the forthcoming review of Maine’s System of Learning Results (“Learning Results”) and the ongoing efforts to implement the comprehensive state and local assessment system required under the Learning Results, the Commission recommends that Maine policymakers and educators should integrate

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<sup>6</sup> Gail Cadoo, Amanda Coffin and Christopher Hall were not present for the final Commission meeting. Following a review of the final report, these three members endorsed the recommendations presented here.

opportunities for real-life experiences and the development of civic participation skills throughout all content areas of the curriculum.

**A.** “Real life” experiences in civic engagement should be incorporated within the Learning Results, including genuine opportunities to develop the “habits” of an effective and engaged citizen; and citizenship education must extend beyond the content area of social studies and must begin earlier -- commencing in pre-kindergarten programs, continuing through elementary and secondary grades, and extending into postsecondary education programs.

**B.** As “Local Assessment Systems” are developed by school administrative units, assessment methods designed to measure student performance should consider a student’s community involvement and should include “real life” applications of a student’s knowledge and skills.

## **2. Resources and Best Practices for Citizenship Education in Maine’s K-16**

**Education Systems.** The Commission recommends that State policymakers and education officials should use the resources, findings and recommendations contained in this report to engage other State policymakers, local education officials, educators, college faculty and administrators, researchers, and other key stakeholders in an effort to develop a resource guide to effective citizenship education in Maine. Furthermore, the Commission recommends that the membership of the task force convened by the Maine Department of Education and the State Board of Education to follow-through on the recommendations of this study should include policymakers, researchers and practitioners who can pull together effective and practical models of school- and college-based civic education and community-based citizenship engagement for consideration by Maine schools, colleges and communities. The new task force should also develop an action plan for engaging school administrative unit officials, students, parents, and community organizations in discussions about opportunities for integrating citizenship education into school units plans for aligning curriculum and assessment with the Learning Results. The new task force should also develop an action plan for engaging college and university faculty, staff and students in discussions about opportunities for integrating citizenship education into plans for general education reform and reform of the majors.

## **3. Pre-Service Educator Preparation Programs and Post-Certification Training and**

**Guidance for Educators.** The Commission recommends that Maine policymakers, including State and local education agency officials, should provide greater support for educators and administrators in our schools and colleges by integrating effective models and content-based strategies of citizenship education into pre-service educator preparation programs, post-certification training initiatives, and guidance for all teachers and administrators.

**A.** Preparation programs, training initiatives, and guidance for educators should focus on providing educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to infuse civic skills, attitudes, and behaviors into curricular and co-curricular programs for our students. Educator preparation and post-certification programs at our colleges should be augmented with developmental opportunities for educators to earn credits or continuing education

units for initial certification or recertification experiences offered through professional associations connected to the range of content areas.

**B.** Faculty and administrators of Maine's educator preparation programs should meet with the task force convened by the Maine Department of Education and the State Board of Education to review the recently established "standards-based" certification system with an eye towards developing standards that more directly address the competencies necessary to effectively infuse civics education and citizenship engagement across the school curriculum.

#### **4. Civic Mission of Maine's Colleges and Universities and Citizenship Engagement**

**Opportunities for Maine Students.** The Commission recommends that the trustees and leadership of Maine's colleges and universities should elevate citizenship education and student engagement in the civic life of their campus and surrounding communities as core aspects of their institutional missions. The Commission also encourages faculty and administrators at our higher education institutions to carefully consider the future social, political, and economic challenges facing our society, particularly the issues that confront our schools and educators in preparing our youth to become active and engaged citizens.

#### **5. Shared Responsibility and Shared Ownership of Citizenship Education.** State

and local government officials should establish joint ventures with leaders in the public, non-profit, and private sectors of Maine to promote citizenship education, including cooperative efforts to organize conferences and activities for youth and collaborative efforts with schools and other youth-serving organizations, to engage youth through existing programs. State government leaders should also sponsor a "Blaine House Summit on Citizenship Education" to identify opportunities for youth participation on State boards and commissions and that would focus on recruiting and training our youth to serve on these State boards and commissions.

#### **6. Engage Students in Authentic Experiences Across the Civic Spectrum of Their**

**Communities.** The Commission recommends that Maine's schools, colleges, and communities should promote citizenship education initiatives that engage students in genuine problem solving and decision-making opportunities. As part of the effort to foster a statewide dialogue regarding civic education and citizenship engagement, the Legislative Youth Advisory Council and Maine Legislators should conduct a series of public forums across the State to solicit ideas to address this important work. The Commission proposes that the youth and legislative members of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council should review the Michigan model of citizenship forums as a useful model in planning to undertake this initiative. The Legislative Youth Advisory Council and Maine Legislators should report their findings and conclusions regarding issues that are important to Maine's youth to the Governor, the Legislature and the Judiciary, as well as to the task force convened by the Maine Department of Education and the State Board of Education to act on the recommendations of this Commission.

#### **7. Voter Education and Voter Registration.** The Commission recommends that

Maine's schools, colleges, and public officials should collaborate on ways to integrate voter education and voter registration efforts targeting secondary school students across the State. The

task force convened to follow up the work of this Commission should include the League of Women Voters and other key stakeholders in a review of these issues and should reflect upon the voter education and voter registration models in Connecticut and California to learn from these and other “best practices.” The Commission also endorses the continuation and expansion of the “mock elections” program in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The Commission further proposes that the Legislature give serious consideration to implementing some version of LD 640 that proposes to allow youth who are not yet 18 years of age -- but will be at the time of a general election -- to vote in the primary election or state caucus (immediately preceding their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday) for the selection of candidates.

**8. Monitoring Civic Engagement.** The Commission recommends that Maine should develop a civic engagement index to track data on civic skills, attitudes, and behaviors of Maine youth. The task force convened to follow up the work of this Commission should review the North Carolina Civic Index and other measures of civic engagement and should develop a set of indices for Maine that builds upon the work begun by the “Maine Marks” index developed through the Muskie School of Public Service and the surveys conducted by the Maine Economic Growth Council that include questions about voter participation and charitable giving.

**9. Convene a New Task Force to Continue the Work.** The Commission recommends that the Department of Education and the State Board of Education should convene a task force to develop a more complete set of plans and strategies for implementation of effective citizenship education models and civic engagement practices in our schools, colleges and communities. This new study group should have a broader membership -- including legislators, educators, youth representatives and other key stakeholders -- and should address the recommendations proposed by the Commission, including the integration of service-learning into citizenship education and the infusion of citizenship engagement beyond our schools and colleges.

The Commission has directed Commission staff to draft legislation for consideration by the 121<sup>st</sup> Legislature during the Second Regular Session. A draft version of this legislation is included in **Appendix I**.

**APPENDIX A**

**Authorizing Joint Order**

## **APPENDIX B**

**Membership List, Commission to Study the Scope and Quality of Citizenship Education**

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Resource People and Presenters Providing Information to the Commission**

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Definitions**

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Bibliography of Citizenship Education Materials**

## **APPENDIX F**

### **Citizenship Education in Maine: Problems, Assets and Potential Solutions**

## **APPENDIX G**

**Citizenship Education in Maine: Hallmarks, Problem Situations and Potential Solutions**

## **APPENDIX H**

**Maine Department of Education K-12 Civic Education Survey**

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Draft of Recommended Legislation to the 121st Legislature**