

Legislative Youth Advisory Council
123rd Legislature, 2nd Regular Session
August 13th 2008 Draft Meeting Summary

Wednesday, August 13th, 2008
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Room 220, Cross Office Building
Augusta, Maine

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

Youth Members and Legislative Members Absent: Sen. Joseph Perry, Bangor; Grace Wright, Brunswick; Hannah Stein, Portland; Brandon Mazer, Brunswick; Claire Howard, South Portland; Mary Beth Moyer, Lewiston; Maureen Quinn, Portland.

Staff and Others Present: Deb Bicknell, Training and Projects Coordinator, Maine Youth Action Network (MYAN); Danielle Fox, Legislative Analyst and Brenna Byrne, Legislative Researcher, Office of Policy and Legal Analysis.

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

Call to Order

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

Agenda

Staff briefly reviewed the agenda. The primary purpose of this meeting is to approve the statutory and rule change proposals developed at the previous meeting to address the challenges LYAC faces with respect to member attendance and constituent communication. Additional goals of this meeting include developing a screening process for youth who are interested in serving on LYAC and developing an action plan for improving youth outreach and constituent communication.

Approval of July 30, 2008 Meeting Summary

Motion: Will Colan motioned to approve the July 30th 2008 draft meeting summary. Zoë Baker seconded the motion.

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

Unfinished Business

Language review of draft statute/rule changes

Danielle presented the Council with a side-by-side chart comparing LYAC’s existing statutes and the proposed changes the Council adopted at its previous meeting. To address the Council’s

need for improved constituent communication, the proposed statutory changes add the following requirements to LYAC's duties under Title 3, MRSA §168-A, sub-§1:

- F. Establish and maintain a communication network with other youth groups in the state that focus on state and local policies that impact youth to create awareness of the existence of the council, including but not limited to appointing a council member as communication director or creating a communication and outreach subcommittee;
- G. Facilitate methods to solicit and receive input from youth representing various geographic regions of the state regarding proposals being considered by the council and matters that may become part of the council's legislative considerations; and
- H. Develop criteria for membership to be considered when recommending future youth appointments to the council to appointing authorities.

The proposed changes also amend Title 3, MRSA §168-A, sub-§3 pertaining to membership by replacing the sentence with strikethrough with the underlined language as follows:

3. Membership. The council consists of 20 voting members who are Maine residents and appointed in accordance with this subsection. In appointing members, the appointing authorities shall consider geographic distribution. All youth and legislative appointments must be made within 60 days after the convening of each new Legislature. All appointments are for the duration of the legislative term for which the members are appointed and expire upon the convening of the next Legislature. ~~The appointing authorities shall select youth members from youths recommended by principals, guidance counselors or administrative heads of secondary or postsecondary school systems, representatives of equivalent instruction programs or other organizations having an interest in youth activities. The appointing authorities shall select youth members from youths recommended by the previous membership of the council and may also consider youth recommended by principals, guidance counselors or administrative heads of secondary or postsecondary school systems, representatives of equivalent instruction programs or other organizations having an interest in youth activities. The appointing authorities shall give special consideration to youth who have already served on the council and are still eligible when making appointments. The appointing authorities shall appoint new members to fill a vacancy on the council as soon as practicable after receiving notice of a vacancy.~~ The appointing authorities shall select youth members from youths recommended by the previous membership of the council and may also consider youth recommended by principals, guidance counselors or administrative heads of secondary or postsecondary school systems, representatives of equivalent instruction programs or other organizations having an interest in youth activities. The appointing authorities shall give special consideration to youth who have already served on the council and are still eligible when making appointments. The appointing authorities shall appoint new members to fill a vacancy on the council as soon as practicable after receiving notice of a vacancy. Members may be reappointed to subsequent terms on the council as long as they are eligible at the time of their reappointment.

Based on their conversation with the Presiding Officer's at the previous LYAC meeting, several members felt the language *requiring* the appointing authorities to select youth recommended by LYAC was too strong. The Council unanimously agreed that the language should require appointing authorities to *consider* selecting youth recommended by LYAC.

To address the Council's attendance issues, the adopted statutory changes add a new subsection under Title 3, MRSA §168-A as follows:

4-A. Attendance. The council shall include in its committee rules of procedure an attendance policy that authorizes the chairs in consultation with the council to revoke membership for lack of attendance.

Additionally, the Council reviewed, discussed and approved the draft language for amending the Council's rules of procedure to include the following attendance policy:

- 3. Attendance required; appointment revocation.** Attendance is required at all meetings of the council. If a member is unable to attend a meeting, it is that member's responsibility to notify the Council chairs or Council staff whenever that member is unable to attend a meeting of the Council. If a member fails to attend 2 consecutive meetings, regardless of providing notice, the chairs in consultation with the Council shall consider revocation of that member's appointment to the Council. The chairs shall provide written notice of the consideration of revocation to a member who has failed to attend 2 consecutive meetings and provide that member the opportunity to appear before the Council to justify the lack of attendance and to request that membership not be revoked. If the member subject to the consideration of revocation fails to respond within 10 business days to the notice provided by the chairs, that member's appointment is automatically revoked.

Several members expressed a need to notify members who miss more than two consecutive meetings both electronically and by mail.

In the process of reviewing the above language the Council discussed the advantages and disadvantages of amending their rules of procedure versus their governing statutes. Council members also discussed the need to find a 'Legislative Champion' to sponsor the bill for submission to the 124th Legislature. Senator Benoit volunteered to serve as the bill sponsor if she is re-elected and, if not, she would find a sponsor. Danielle offered to submit a Legislative Request on her behalf if she is re-elected prior to cloture before the 124th Legislative Session.

The Council discussed the need to follow up with the Presiding Officers in a form of a letter expressing gratitude for their support and presenting them with a summary of the proposed changes to LYAC's statutes and rules of procedure. Danielle clarified that with the Presiding Officer's approval, the rule change would be in place for the 124th Legislative Session but the statutory changes, which grant the LYAC Chairs the authority to revoke membership, would not be effective until the end of the 124th, 1st Regular Session, if the bill passes. Danielle emphasized the need to communicate these changes and the timeframe for implantation to the next LYAC.

Brainstorming on implementing the proposed changes to LYAC's appointment process

The Council began an informal discussion about how to implement the proposed changes to LYAC's appointment process. The purpose of this discussion was to develop a process by which LYAC can review information about youth who are interested in serving on LYAC and make

recommendations to the Presiding Officers for their consideration when making appointments to LYAC.

LYAC members reviewed several examples of youth applications to legislative youth advisory councils in other states as well as the application LYAC members helped develop last year for the Maine State Board of Education, which was used to recommend students to the Governor for appointment to the Board. Council members agreed upon using a similar application, calling it an 'Expression of Interest', as a means of providing interested youth with information about LYAC and gaining information about interested youth. Using an example from Washington State, Council members outlined the Expression of Interest form, which staff will draft and bring back to the Council for review and final approval at the next meeting.

Representative Farrington raised several logistical questions about who completed Expressions of Interest would be submitted to and how they would be distributed among Council members for review. Danielle offered to inquire about whether or not staff could act as a warehouse for completed Expressions of Interests but stressed that staff can not be involved with reviewing youth information or any other aspect of the appointment process.

Council members discussed the feasibility of providing the Presiding Officers of the 124th with a prospect file of potential LYAC appointees given the limited timeframe and lack of existing framework for accepting large volumes of Expressions of Interest. Members made suggestions about how to raise awareness about LYAC vacancies among Legislators and youth across Maine. The Council agreed to relay in its letter to the current Presiding Officers LYAC's intent to provide several names of eligible youth in a prospect file for their successors to use when making appointments to LYAC for the 124th Legislative Session.

Presentation: Exploring LYAC and MYAN Partnership Opportunities - Deb Bicknell, Training and Projects Coordinator for the Maine Youth Action Network

Representative Farrington introduced Deb Bicknell, who has worked previously with LYAC on several occasions. Deb presented the Council with several ideas about how MYAN and LYAC can work together as partners including:

- Continued LYAC participation at the MYAN Peer Leadership Conference
- Incorporating LYAC news into MYAN's electronic newsletter publication
- Increase LYAC visibility and use of MYAN's website
- Participate in MYAN youth/adult partnership training courses
- Capitalized on MYAN's existing statewide network of youth for outreach

Council members expressed support for these partnership opportunities.

Discussion: LYAC Action Plan for Youth Outreach and Constituent Communication

Deb began a brainstorming exercise with the Council to help develop an action plan for youth involvement and outreach that LYAC will recommend to the next incoming Council. Together, Council members itemized the following list of action steps they would like to see LYAC take to improve and maintain communication with its youth constituency:

- Build an on-going relationships with Maine high schools and colleges;
- Publish a periodic newsletter about LYAC activities;
- Create an information brochure about LYAC to distribute at meetings and events;
- Establish a relationship with YMCA's Youth in Government and attend Model State meetings to discuss legislative proposals;
- Create and maintain a list of youth groups and organizations LYAC can network and communicate with;
- Implement a survey or suggestion box at the MYAC Peer Leadership Conference and other LYAC-related events;
- Create a LYAC Face book presence; and
- Establish a LYAC Communications Director role;

Through a mock voting process, Council members prioritized this list and collectively determined that publishing a periodic newsletter, establishing an on-going relationship with Maine high schools and colleges and attending Youth in Government's Model State meetings were the Council's top priorities respectively. Focusing initially on the newsletter, Council members discussed what should be included in its content as well as how and to whom it should be distributed. Zoë Baker and Meg Richardson volunteered to draft the first newsletter for the Council's review at the next meeting. Representative Farrington volunteered to obtain a distribution list of Maine schools and draft a cover letter introducing the newsletter for mailing to schools.

Other LYAC Business

Next LYAC Meeting Scheduled

The Council scheduled its next meeting for Monday September 22nd, 2008, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Lewiston Youth Advisory Council Invitation

Ben Goodman and Zoë Baker confirmed their attendance at the Lewiston Youth Advisory Council's orientation meeting on August 15th, from 11:30 to 12:00.

Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,

LYAC Staff
Office of Policy and Legal Analysis
Maine State Legislature