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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Governor Receives Task Force to Engage Maine's Youth Report

AUGUSTA – Governor John E. Baldacci today received the final report of the Governor's Task Force to Engage All Maine Youth. The Governor created the Task Force to explore barriers to youths' ability to successfully engage in school and/or work.

"Maine's youth and young adults are the key to the State's future," said Governor Baldacci. "Our economy – present and future – depends on a well-educated and well-trained workforce. The recommendations in this report will help us put forward policies and initiatives to more effectively invest in our youth."

The Task Force report highlights specific long- and short-term strategies, policies and legislation to support active youth engagement in their communities, school and/or work. The recommendations promote collaboration and improved communications among the various state agencies and community-based partners in identifying gaps in services and impacts of success.

As a result of the work of the Task Force, legislation was passed last spring that established a process to recognize academic work for youth who experienced a disruption in their education due to homelessness, in-patient psychiatric hospitalization, correctional facility placement or foster care placement.

The final report includes four other recommendations:

- Increase capacity to identify, track and analyze the status of youth to inform decision making, allocate resources, and assure accountability to Maine's youth and families;
- Provide equitable access to a spectrum of high quality learning and service opportunities utilizing a youth-driven, family-centered approach to policy development, services and supports;

- Collaborate to develop a process so agencies can cross-reference outcomes or policies and services for implementation, efficiency, and reduction of cross-purpose programming; and
- Calls for an annual cross-departmental report to the Governor that cites the status of the action steps contained in this report and the impact on policy and program changes.

The Governor said that he will work to implement many of recommendations of the report.

“Later this spring, I will announce the creation of the Shared Youth Vision Council that will incorporate the findings and recommendations of the Task Force report,” said the Governor. “The youth in Maine are our future, and we must support their high aspirations and successful transitions to adulthood.”

For more information on the Task Force, please visit:

<http://www.mainesupportnetwork.org/taskforce/>

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