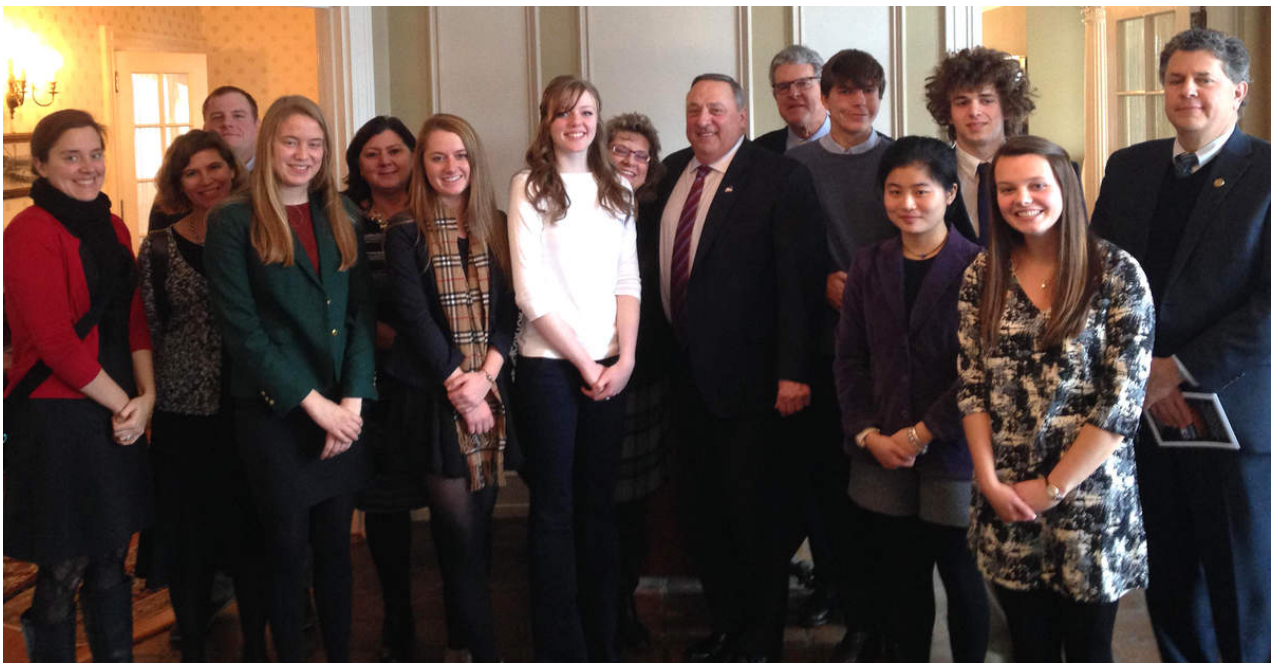




Students make presentation on education to LePage

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Courtesy of: Informed Young Leaders

From left, Megan Bendson (Teacher, Camden Hills Regional High School); Kelley Duffy (Teacher, Lincoln Academy); Jacob Newcomb (Teacher, Medomak Valley High School); Emily Davis (Student, Oceanside High School); Kelly Taylor (Teacher, Oceanside High School); Jacqueline Russell (Student, Camden Hills Regional High School); McKenzie Wing (Student, Medomak Valley High School); Linda Pease (Ass't Principal, Medomak Valley High School), Gov. Paul LePage; Nick Lapham (Founder, Informed Young Leaders); Anton Kalmysh (Student, Lincoln Academy); Hindley Wang (Student, Lincoln Academy); Noah Jordan (Student, Lincoln Academy); Stephanie Hill (Student, Medomak Valley High School); David Sturdevant (Headmaster, Lincoln Academy)

AUGUSTA — A group of students from Camden Hills Regional High School, Oceanside High School in Rockland, Medomak Valley High School in Waldoboro, and Lincoln Academy in Newcastle were treated to lunch with Gov. Paul LePage to discuss "Reimagining Education in the 21st Century" Friday, Jan. 8.

The students gave six different PechaKucha-style presentations (20 images, 20 seconds per image) on various aspects of the educational system they would like to see reimagined.

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Noah Jordan, from Lincoln Academy, spoke about student-centered teaching, and how teaching directed to meeting students' different learning styles produces better academic results.

Emily Davis, from Oceanside High School, talked about the high costs of college education, the over-saturated market of college graduates and whether more students should pursue vocational training to get good-paying jobs instead of going to college.

Anton Kalmysh and Hindley Wang, of Lincoln Academy, revealed that students who took arts classes, especially music, often performed significantly better than students who had no arts education.

Stephanie Hill, of Medomak Valley High School, pointed to evidence that Finland's education system of starting school at age 7 produces significantly better results than traditional systems that start elementary school at 5 years old. She also advocated for higher teacher salaries in order to make teaching a more attractive profession, and she asked why spending per school system varied so widely in Maine, and why all school districts didn't receive equal per-student funding.

Jacqueline Russell, of Camden Hills Regional High School, spoke about the vulnerability to radicalization of young Muslim immigrants if they are not integrated into our school systems. She pointed to the success of the boys' soccer program in Lewiston as an example of how welcoming new immigrants into our schools systems creates a win-win for the students and their newly adopted communities.

McKenzie Wang, of Medomak High School, gave an overview of what skills and learning will be needed 10 years from now.

Following the presentations, the governor engaged the students in a question-and-answer conversation. "You are spot-on with your analyses and recommendations," LePage said. "We need to get you to come up and present to both houses of the Legislature so they can hear from the students, not the lobbyists or bureaucrats, what are our most pressing needs."

The governor said the Informed Young Leaders Series, which organizes public events for local students to give PechaKucha-style presentations on key political issues to the public, is an excellent program. "If these students' presentations are representative of the program, we would like to see it expanded to other communities throughout the state," he said.

After the lunch presentations, the governor gave the students and their accompanying teachers and school administrators a personal tour of the Blaine House, telling them stories about James G. Blaine, who represented Maine in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1863 to 1879.

The next Informed Young Leaders event is scheduled for Friday, April 8, at a venue to be determined.

For more information contact Nick Lapham at nick@informedyoungleaders.com and visit their website at informedyoungleaders.com.