

Metropolitan Area Foreign Student Advisors
May 29, 2009
Meeting hosted by Howard County Public Schools
Minutes submitted by Silvia Hoke

10:00 – 11:00 Transcript Evaluations and general questions

- Kosovo – Le Hang Phan shared information about Kosovo, which was designated as a new country in February 08. Our charts lists it as Yugoslavia. Elena Morozova (Harford County) has had several families from Kosovo and will get additional information about the school system changes for the next meeting. The grading scale is the same as Yugoslavia in our charts.
- There was a question about students coming from school systems with less than 12 years. We can only give high school credit for material studied in grades 9 and above. Exception is Foreign Language or Math at the Algebra 1 or higher levels taken in Middle School. In Maryland, F.L. credits are given for middle school only if the language was not the native language of the student (i.e. a student from Guatemala studying Spanish would not receive middle school F.L. credit, but if he studied French, he could receive credit). In VA, students can receive F.L. credits for their native language in middle school.
- Harford County asked about ESOL curriculum. They don't have a curriculum, so ESOL counts as an Elective. They need help with curriculum writing and alignment with state guidelines for credit. They will request help from surrounding counties.
- There was a discussion on English credits vs Foreign Language credits. VA and MD have different guidelines.
- Math and Science determination – should be based on the interview with the student as well as the course titles listed on the report cards. When possible, a curriculum description from the country can help determine which Science credits to grant. A sample interview form is posted on the MAFSA website and can be downloaded for use. To determine Math level, several counties have placement exams that they use (i.e. –Fairfax County has a math test in 10 languages, Prince George's County has an International Student Math Placement Test)

11:00-2:00 General Meeting

- Howard County International Student Registration Center presented on their services. There was much interest on their Newcomer Center, and it was suggested that they present more about it at the next MAFSA meeting.
- Minutes from the last meeting were not available for distribution, but will be posted on the website for review. Please send any information that you think has been helpful to Silvia Hoke for posting on the website as well.
- Charts Review:
 - Le Hang Phan (Fairfax County) brought information on the Danish grading scale. Charts will be updated to reflect changes.
 - Belize (Juana Rivas – Alexandria City) no changes made, discussed at previous meeting.

- Reunification video was to be shown, but only Spanish version was brought. We will postpone until next meeting.
- Questions from Members:
 - Tracy Jackson (VA Beach) said that some schools in her district have called her about visa status of students and whether they should be enrolled in school. We were all reminded that according to Supreme Court ruling 457US202 (Plyler vs Doe), schools cannot ask children or families about their immigration status. The website will include a link to this important ruling.
 - F-1 and J-1 status are the only ones that require ‘documentation’, but schools cannot ask for the alien status. Nivea Cordova-Berrios (Montgomery County) shared that they have a number of F-1 students, and that these students are required to enroll in the school that issued the I-20, or receive a transfer approval before being enrolled by the county.
 - Joanne Chen (Fairfax County) attended the TESOL conference and attended a workshop on immigration. She will try to get more information about the DREAM Act for sharing.
- Latino Mental Health Network Conference held on April 18, 2009 at University of Maryland, College Park. Candice Hindmarch (Baltimore County) and Silvia Hoke (Prince George’s County) attended the conference. They felt it was very good and had some interesting information about family relationships of immigrants, acculturation, school readiness, etc. It was a little heavy on the research side, but provided a lot of food for thought and possibilities for practical applications in our jobs.
- Next meeting to be hosted by Anne Arundel County on October 23, 2009.
 - Everyone to bring own lunches
 - Agenda items:
 - Kosovo
 - Video on separation/reunification
 - World Education Services speaker – will try
 - Newcomer Center in Howard County
 - GED and undocumented students
 - 10:00 – 11:00 Difficult transcripts, and AA County will provide a few samples so we can all practice
 - Question and Answer session