

Metropolitan Area Foreign Student Advisors  
October 8, 2010  
Meeting hosted by Prince William County Schools  
Minutes submitted by Silvia Hoke

10:00 – 11:00 Transcript samples and sharing

- Nepal – for School Leaving Certificate Exam – do districts grant two years of credit or just one? Some districts grant 2 years, others one and request a 9<sup>th</sup> grade report card.
- Lebanon
- Jordan

11:00 – 2:00 General Meeting

- Minutes from previous meeting were distributed
- Sign-in sheet for update of membership list was circulated
- Patricia Sanguineti described services by Prince William County
- Bylaws – Tracy Jackson (VA Beach) distributed a draft of the proposed bylaws for MAFSA. Bylaws should tell a story about what an organization does, and it was decided that a discussion would be held at the beginning of the next MAFSA meeting about a final draft and adoption of bylaws for our organization. Anyone interested in participating in the discussion is welcome to arrive at 10:00 a.m. at the February meeting.
- Best Practices for MAFSA – Tema Encarnación (Anne Arundel County) is no longer a member and has passed this topic of discussion on to Yvette Poole.
- Bolivia – there were no news to report
- Mongolia – Donna Kelly (Loudoun County, VA) investigated the school system, and an 11<sup>th</sup> year of school will be added to the system, making it a 5+4+2 system. Charts to be adjusted.
- Ghana – Silvia Hoke (PG County, MD) shared the change that has appeared on some transcripts adding a 4<sup>th</sup> year to secondary schools. Students have been reporting that this happened for one year only, and some schools have gone back to the old system. Prince William County will research further.
- Iran – see samples
- Marcella Herran (DCPS) is working on policy for ELL's in the District who are not admitted to school after age 18. She requested any information on the topic to be emailed to her at [Marcella.Herran@dc.gov](mailto:Marcella.Herran@dc.gov).
- Juana Rivas (Alexandria City, VA) shared a decision made by the VA Dept of Ed regarding credit hours. She indicated that they believe that the 140 hours for credit does not apply to courses taken outside VA when students are transferring. Therefore, Alexandria City is no longer asking for hours/time studied in each subject when evaluating transcripts. They are trying to be consistent with credits awarded (maximum of 7 credits) but are not asking students to fill out the schedule questionnaire.
  - MD does not use the 132 hour guideline strictly for granting credits, as was previously dictated by Carnegie Units. But the hours per week information is a good guideline for the evaluation process. Individual cases are always taken into account.

- Rick Castaneda (Harrisonburg City, VA) – When a student is given a P grade, should it factor into the GPA? In most cases, no. We need to be careful about calculating GPA's especially for eligibility for sports.
- Ellen Olson presented for MELFFIN (Maryland English Language Learner Family Involvement Network). She's the ESOL Family and Community Outreach Specialist and shared how parent involvement for ELL families is really becoming family engagement and not restricted to just having parents join the PTA and come to parent-teacher conferences. MELFFIN membership forms were distributed, and everyone was invited to the next general meeting on Friday, October 15, 2010. More information at [www.mellfin.org](http://www.mellfin.org).
- Rick Castaneda (Harrisonburg High School, VA) presented on gang violence prevention in a school setting. Summary of presentation:
  - What's my race?
    - Census Bureau definition
    - Latino Cultural Values = collectivism, simpatia (preference for positive interpersonal relations, politeness and avoidance of conflict), familismo, marianismo (long-suffering mother, protect daughters at all costs), machismo, respeto.
  - Stages of cultures shock – it's important to help students learn this vocabulary and normalize their experiences
  - Collage – separation/reunification
  - Why are young people in trouble? To show that they matter. They are being self-initiated into adulthood because they are losing this important role that the family should play. At times, resiliency helps self-initiation be positive, and youth become over-achievers.
  - Machismo-aggressive communication style. The new cultural message boys are getting is to walk away and tell an adult. What they hear is 'don't be a man'. There is no motivation to change aggressive behavior because the only other option is passivity, which means not being a man. We as helpers don't take away their goal, we give them a new goal (assertiveness instead of aggressiveness).
  - Men of Character program run at the school teaches assertiveness: role plays, style identification, examples
  - Documentation status is very stressful for students – support for the Dream Act is one way we can help.
- Next Meeting: February 18, 2011, Fairfax County, VA
- Agenda items: Australia, Best practices, Ghana, Counseling undocumented students for higher education, Reunification, bylaws.