

# MAFSA Meeting Minutes – May 8 2026 (AI generated)

## Quick recap

The MAFSA meeting, the last one for the 2025-2026 school year, focused on transcript evaluations and credit transfer policies for international students. Silvia Hoke, the secretary, welcomed attendees and discussed website updates, including a renewed contract that will cover two years instead of one. Candice Lenet, the membership chair, outlined membership requirements and benefits, including access to password-protected charts and training sessions. Marisa Izita from Loudoun County presented updates to the transcript evaluation charts, adding new website links for accessing records from various countries. Norka Padilla from Montgomery County presented research on transferring English literature credits from international students' native language studies, showing strong alignment with U.S. Common Core State Standards in most countries studied. The conversation ended with breakout sessions by state to discuss the literature credit transfer framework, with participants exploring how to better recognize and transfer international students' academic achievements.

## Next steps

- Maribel: Write up detailed information about the recent changes to Kenya's education system (6th and 9th grade exams) and send to Silvia and Marisa for review and potential update to MAFSA charts.
- Marisa: Add the Ukraine graduation information and relevant link (regarding 11th/12th grade graduation) to the MAFSA charts at the bottom details section.
- Candice: Review the current MAFSA charts for Ukraine and determine if updates are needed regarding grade 11 vs grade 12 graduation.
- Silvia: Set up continued state/district group connections for those interested in further discussion about Welcome Center development and literature credit transfer, and facilitate ongoing communication between interested parties.
- Silvia: Collect names/emails of members interested in becoming chart trainers, and schedule a planning meeting with current and prospective trainers.
- Silvia/Candice: Schedule and announce a summer chart training session for members who need it, based on expressed interest.
- Silvia: Post the meeting recording on the MAFSA website and send out an email with the link by Monday or Tuesday.
- All members: If not already done, sign in on the attendance sheet before the meeting link closes.
- Members interested in chart training (as trainers or trainees): Put name, email, and district in the chat (or follow up with Silvia/Candice) to be included in future training planning.
- Marisa: Continue to update MAFSA charts as new information is received and verified, especially regarding new country data or changes in grading/graduation systems.
- Members with new country information or updates: Send relevant details to Marisa and Silvia for review and possible inclusion in MAFSA charts.
- Lee Griffin: Send Nigeria transcript to Candice for review and guidance on appropriate grade placement/credit transfer.
- Candice: Review Nigeria transcript sent by Lee Griffin and provide feedback.

## Summary

## **Technical Issues and Troubleshooting Meeting**

The meeting began with technical difficulties as Silvia experienced Zoom audio issues and could only participate via phone. Margarita and Candice helped troubleshoot the problem, suggesting Silvia delete and reinstall the Zoom application. The team made Candice a co-host to ensure smooth meeting continuation when Margarita had to leave at 11am for another commitment. The meeting was recorded to the cloud, and participants were reminded to check in by initialing the sign-in sheet linked in the agenda chat.

## **MAFSA Leadership and Website Update**

Silvia welcomed attendees to the final MAFSA meeting of the 2025-2026 school year and introduced the MAFSA leadership team, including Margarita Bohorquez, Candice Lenet, and Marisa Izita. She explained that MAFSA is a free network for professionals working with international students and transcript evaluations, with website maintenance funded through optional \$5 donations. Silvia announced that the website had been renewed for two years at a 50% discount, meaning no additional donations would be needed next year.

## **MAFSA Membership Rules and Procedures**

The meeting focused on MAFSA membership rules and procedures. Candice explained that members must attend at least one of three meetings per school year and there is a cap of three members per school district, with guests welcome to attend. She outlined that members gain access to password-protected charts and grading scales, requiring completion of a chart training session. Silvia provided an update on her role as secretary, managing the website and communications, and announced that members can now access the Cambridge exam results portal following a presentation from Chantel Reynolds at the previous meeting.

## **MAFSA Membership and Services Updates**

The meeting discussed several topics related to MAFSA membership and services. Silvia mentioned that there had been no requests for Cambridge exam result verification services since February, and encouraged members interested in this service to contact Chantelle. The group reviewed a survey on best practices for transcript evaluations and credit transfers, which is available on the MAFSA website's password-protected page. Carrie Hatfield, a new member from Virginia, asked about establishing a joint Welcome Center for Title I, Title III, and special education services, particularly for English learners. The discussion touched on the services a Welcome Center might provide, including transcript evaluation support, registration assistance, and connecting families to resources. Margarita shared her experience with a robust Welcome Center in Montgomery County.

## **Welcome Centers and Transcript Updates**

The meeting focused on two main topics: Welcome Centers and transcript evaluations. For Welcome Centers, participants discussed resources and potential visits to existing centers, with several members offering to share information and support Carie's project. Marisa Ezita from Loudoun County presented updates to the MAFSA charts, including new links for accessing report cards and certificates from various countries, though she noted issues accessing some Bangladesh websites due to security concerns. The group also discussed needed updates to the Kenya education system information, with Maribel sharing changes to the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education exam structure and being asked to provide source information for verification.

## **Student Transfer Evaluation Challenges**

The group discussed challenges with evaluating and placing a student transferring from Taiwan. Marisa raised concerns about discrepancies between the student's transcript and family claims

regarding attendance and grades. The team provided suggestions, including contacting the school in Taiwan for clarification, using policies to transfer credits without grades affecting GPA, and offering semester courses as an interim solution. Vanessa also brought up a question about Ukrainian graduation practices, noting conflicting information about whether students graduate after 11th or 12th grade, and requested verification from others who have recently received records from Ukraine.

### **International Student Transcript Evaluations**

The meeting focused on discussing educational systems and transcript evaluations for international students. The group reviewed Ukraine's graduation requirements, where Candice explained that while students can graduate after 11th grade, they typically complete 12th grade, and Silvia recommended consulting experts familiar with Ukrainian systems. Courtney presented a question about an incomplete and potentially altered transcript from Argentina, leading to a discussion about evaluation procedures and the availability of test-for-credit options. The conversation ended with Monica Ranta from Howard County Public School System seeking guidance on evaluating a WASSCE certificate from Nigeria, with Candice confirming that completion of SS3 is required for graduation.

### **International Literature Credit Transfer Research**

Norka presented research on transferring international literature credits, explaining that students who have mastered literary analysis skills in any language should receive credit equivalent to U.S. Common Core State Standards. The research found strong alignment across many countries, with only Afghanistan and Iran requiring individual review due to specific circumstances. The presentation emphasized that credit transfer should focus on content standards rather than language, as the same cognitive rigor is demonstrated regardless of the language used. The conversation ended with participants moving to breakout rooms to discuss three guiding questions about implementing this approach, including how to handle countries not covered in the research and how to value multilingualism in credit evaluation.

### **State-Based Literature Credit Discussions**

The meeting involved organizing participants into breakout rooms by state to discuss literature credits presented by Norka. Silvia set a 15-minute check-in time and specified that rooms would close at 11:50 AM. Margarita helped participants join their respective breakout rooms and provided technical assistance. After the breakout sessions, Candice welcomed everyone back and noted the success of the discussions, mentioning potential interest in another charge training over the summer.

### **International Credit Transfer Process Discussion**

The meeting focused on discussing credit transfer processes for international students, with Margarita and Norka presenting Montgomery County's 4-year journey in removing barriers and providing equal access to education. Silvia announced plans to set up follow-up discussions outside of MAFSA for those interested in continuing conversations with their state groups. The group discussed organizing charge training, with Silvia requesting interested trainers to submit their information and noting that training would be scheduled for early June for those who RSVP'd. The conversation ended with information about accessing the recording and meeting minutes, which would be posted on the website within 24 hours.