

Metropolitan Area Foreign Student Advisors
February 19, 2010
Meeting hosted by Alexandria City Public Schools
Minutes submitted by Silvia Hoke

10:00 – 11:00 Transcript evaluation training led by Silvia Hoke. See Power Point posted on website: www.WorkNotes.com/MD/MAFSA/member.

11:00 – 2:00 General meeting

- Introductions
- Minutes from previous meeting were distributed and adopted without change. Silvia Hoke noted that the website had not been operational for several months, but will be updated as soon as possible.
- GED requirements in Maryland – Lori Miller (Howard County) presented information about how non-graduates can receive a high school diploma in the state of Maryland. Students must be a Maryland resident for at least 3 months prior to taking the exam, be at least 16 years old, and have not received a high school diploma and been withdrawn from school for at least three months. The GED is now being managed by the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulations, therefore making undocumented students ineligible to take the GED exam. Their only other option is the External Diploma program. Counseling older students about their options and course choices will depend on which program they are eligible to pursue: GED or External Diploma. Students should know their options and make a plan.
Call 410-767-0069 for more information.

In VA, the requirements are slightly different, and may change in the near future:
Age = 18+

Need a valid government ID (could be from their own country), and does not need to live in VA

Call 1-804-371-2333 for more information.

- Report on immunization records – Beverly Pariser-Foster (Prince George's County) forwarded a letter to the Department of State asking that immunization record copies be given to immigrants at the port of entry. A similar letter was sent to INS several years ago and we started to see families with copies of the shot records, but that trend has changed in the last year. No real answer has been received yet. Beverly will keep us posted.
- Discussion on Haiti – County representatives discussed children entering their schools from Haiti after the earthquake of January 12, 2010. Montgomery County has received the most students so far, followed by Prince George's County. Howard and Baltimore Counties reported having registered a few children so far.
- Changes in the Charts
 - Bangladesh – LeHang Phan (Fairfax County) brought information about a third grading scale, to be added to the Charts.
 - CXC – LeHang also brought information about the CXC's in Jamaica and other Caribbean countries. The CXC is the examining board, and the exam

is called the CSEC or CSC. Some VA districts consider that students entering Lower 6 or Upper 6 have not graduated. Most MD districts consider them graduates. At the October 2009 meeting, a representative from World Education Services (WES) had researched the same topic and emailed MAFSA with their opinion that a student with 5 passes on the CSEC is considered a graduate and Lower 6 and Upper 6 courses are seen as post-graduation/pre-college entrance levels, comparable to the A levels in the British system.

- Mozambique – Howard Stein (independent consultant) brought information about the school system and grading scale. More research is needed on the grading scale before the Charts can be changed.
- Bolivia – Do we need a grading scale update? Candice Hindmarch (Baltimore County) will research.
- Korea – Lori Miller (Howard County) will research the grading scale. According to WES, there is an E, but Howard County’s registrar from Korea says that no E’s are granted in schools in Korea.
- The Video *Journey to America* from Anne Arundel County was viewed. It describes the journey taken by several immigrant students and the impact of family separation and reunification.
- A guest speaker invited by Sylvia Koch (Arlington County) presented on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. Michael Flaherty, Marine Corps Educational Liaison, was the presenter and responsible for the compact in the VA/MD area. Copies of the presentation can be obtained by contacting any of the MAFSA members present at the meeting.
- Next Meeting: To be hosted by Arlington County, **May 14, 2010**
 - Agenda items:
 - Best practices document (for grade placement, retention, graduation) – suggested by Tema Encarnacion (Anne Arundel)
 - Iraqi refugees’ experiences – guest speaker. Rick Castaneda (Fredericksburg H.S.) will invite. In the future, a presentation on Latino young men was suggested.
 - Updates on Mozambique, Bolivia, Korea, Chile
 - Howard County will bring their video *Welcome*
 - Update on website and cover sheet for Charts, and possibly include some websites on bibliography