

Metropolitan Area Foreign Student Advisors
May 6, 2011
Meeting hosted by Prince George's County Public Schools
Minutes submitted by Silvia Hoke

10:00 – 11:00 – Discussion of MAFSA Bylaws. Draft version was distributed and updated. The group will continue with the Bylaws discussion and possible adoption at the next meeting.

11:00 – 2:00 – General Meeting

- Welcome and Introductions. Membership list was passed out for corrections.
- Minutes – Silvia Hoke shared that the minutes for MAFSA meetings are being posted to the website (www.WorkNotes.com/MD/MAFSA/member). All future minutes will be posted to the website as well.
- Discussion of WIDA Test – Twenty-five states, including VA, DC, PA currently use the WIDA to determine English language proficiency (developed by the Wisconsin Center for Education). Maryland is now moving towards using the WIDA next year. Cathy Nelson from MSDE explained the reasons for the change. MD has used the IPT, LAS Links, etc. over the years. The WIDA does not stay the same from year to year, as items are changed every year. The WIDA is updated, and it includes a curriculum, standards, instruction, and assessment pieces. The intake test is called WAPT (WIDA Access Placement Test), or is referred to as the Access for ELL's. VA is using it now. Joanne Chen from Fairfax described her experiences with the ACCESS: This is the first full year of implementation for Fairfax. The district has seen students coming in at lower levels than in the past. The test addresses content (Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies). Testing takes from 5 to 30 minutes depending on students' proficiency. Each student is tested individually. In the summer it can take longer, but teachers get more information about the students when they start school. (Parents can be given tasks while the students are being tested.) For initial screening, a 'Model' is being used for K students. It takes one hour for students to complete, and it gives teachers more information about the students' level. The WAPT is used for grades 1-12. Next year, K students will be tested at their schools. In Fairfax, K does not go to the intake center over the summer. The only start registering at intake center on the first day of school, based on the home language survey. The process requires intense training with registrars. In Fairfax, K-2 register at school and are sent to Central Registration if the home language survey indicates a second language. For grades 3-12, all students begin registration at Central office, with the exception of students who have been in a U.S. school for 2 years or more and have documentation that they have passing grades and no ESL for those past 2 years.
- Deneice Jones – USCIS Community Relations Coordinator – shared information about her fairly new position. She services the State of MD, but there's a Community Relations Coordinator for VA too (Gloria Brevard-Williams). Their audience is anyone who wants to know about immigration. In general she addresses questions about F-1 students, citizenship, visas, etc. Parents or students

can also contact them. Please check their website for more information:

www.uscis.gov (Community Relations)

- Separation and Reunification – presentation by Patricia Chiancone, Prince George’s County Public Schools. Power Point to be posted on MAFSA website.
- Best Practices – Amy Harris had to leave, so Yvette Poole (Anne Arundel County) distributed draft guidelines. Please share comments with Amy by email (ae_harris@aacps.org). Discussion was tabled until the next meeting.
- List of Scholarships for Immigrant students (Documented and Undocumented). Please email Lori Miller (Howard County) with any additions.
- Comparison Charts:
 - Algeria – change made to school system
 - Liberia – change made to school year (Sept to June)
 - Pakistan – Do districts grant two years of credit for the Board Exam, which is given in Pakistan at the end of grade 10? Most districts grant only one year of credits, and request a report card for grade 9. In general it is not difficult to get the 9th grade report.
 - China – Baltimore County saw a school system that was 5-3-4 instead of 6-3-3
 - Iran – Still has 12 years of education. Nivea Cordova-Berrios (MCPS) noted that it was removed from The Charts in February, but we need to bring it up again. Nivea will research.

* Other Business

Some schools are asking parents for their children’s Social Security numbers. When training staff, it must be made clear that providing the number is optional, and the way they ask is very important in order not to ‘chill’ the enrollment of any student who does not have or does not wish to provide the information. Parents must be told why the school is asking for the number.

- Next Meeting:
 - Friday October 14, 2011
 - Hosted by Baltimore County Public Schools
 - Agenda Items:
 - 10:00-11:00 – difficult transcripts
 - 11:00-2:00 – Best Practices
 - Scholarships
 - Iran
 - USCIS
 - Vote on Bylaws