

P20 Task Force on Arts Education in Maryland Schools Meeting Notes

Baltimore County Public Schools, Greenwood Campus

Building E, Room 123
6901 Charles Street
Towson, MD 21204

Friday, February 21, 2014 - 9:30 – Noon

Opening Remarks and Updates

Mary Ann Mears and Dr. Jack Smith offered opening remarks. Jack asked members of the Task Force to introduce themselves. Mary Ann stated that a lot has been going on since the last meeting. We have been conducting the forums, and we have had good attendance. We have also learned a lot. The notes of those forums can be found in the drop box. A number of arts teachers said that they moved to Maryland from other states because of our strong arts programs. We also had 461 responses from the questionnaire that was distributed across the state. The responses are also in the drop box, and there are more to review.

Alexa reviewed the contents of the drop box by showing members on the overhead screen each of the items that are posted. Theresa Colvin discussed the survey from the Maryland State Arts Council. The Council commissioned a public research firm to do a public opinion poll. She discussed the key findings of the poll. The major findings are also found in the Review of the Literature section.

Mary Ann shared that the New Jersey report is also in the drop box. There are some distinct similarities to our own effort.

Jack discussed the revised timeline and the crafting of recommendations. He wants to do a multi-step process. He would like to have a small committee of the Task Force synthesize initial recommendations from the three subcommittees and then share them with the whole task force for further discussion in order to help provide coherence and reduce overlap.

Presentations and Discussion

HEAT Task Force

Mary Ann introduced Dr. Kathy O'Dell, Associate Dean of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at University of Maryland Baltimore County and Chair of the Higher Education Arts Task Force (HEAT Task Force). Kathy provided the Task Force with five recommendations. They include:

1. Incentives – provide concrete resource supports for students who pursue certification beyond the baccalaureate degree to allow for in-depth discipline-specific training.
2. Professional Development Schools – a review of the viability of PDS as a system for placing interns in the arts. This is logistically challenging in the arts discipline.
3. Professional Development – in-depth professional development for arts teachers, principals, and other administrators.
4. Sharing of Exiting Practices -- establish a statewide group charged with sharing, analyzing, and reporting on current practices.
5. Value – full scale commitment to deep understanding, support, and advocacy for the value of the

Kathy received several suggestions from the Task Force. She will revise the HEAT Task Force recommendations and get a new version back to this Task Force. (This revised information will be added to the drop box.)

Arts Survey

Jack Smith shared that about half of the school systems have responded to the arts survey. He asked members of the committee to check in their own systems to determine the status of the questionnaire. He will be contacting the systems that have not yet responded within the next couple of weeks.

Review of the Literature

Jack asked Jim Foran to share the current status of the Review of the Literature section of the final report. Jim shared the initial review has been completed and is in the drop box. It follows the previously submitted outline. The 25 pages of content are supported by 10 pages of bibliography. Many of the findings in the

review have implications for the work of the three committees, and all Task Force members are requested to read the review. An abstract has also been prepared, but since it will be part of the front matter of the report, it will not be completed until we have a better handle on the Task Force recommendations so that we can help ensure coherence throughout the report. Jim asked Task Force members to keep their eyes and ears open to any new, groundbreaking research that may surface prior to publishing the Task Force Report so that we can update the Review section to make it as current as possible.

Longitudinal Data System

Nancy Shapiro provided background on PreK-16 efforts over the years having to do with data. She also discussed briefly the new Longitudinal Data System and introduced Mr. Ross Goldstein, Executive Director of the Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center. Ross provided the Task Force with an update on the current status of the Center and its work. It is a collaborative effort among several agencies. The Center oversees the day-to-day operation of the system. There is also a 12 member board. He went into some depth about security of the data. Data collection has begun on a small scale. The system should be operational in June of this year. There are fifteen policy questions to guide the work of the Center. Their website can be accessed at www.mlds.org, and future data needs for the arts community should be much easier to get in the future.

Committee Reports and Discussion

Each of the committees of the Task Force provided a summary of their preliminary work so far on potential recommendations.

Curriculum and Instruction

Mark Coates, chair of the Curriculum and Instruction Committee, stated that this committee was focusing on the following:

1. Arts teachers as well as regular classroom teachers need to have access to artists.

2. What does exemplary professional development look like for fine arts teachers? We need to have some kind of resources or model for a minimum amount of time to discuss content-related issues.
3. The committee talked about the media arts – a fifth discipline. The committee feels that the media arts should be embedded in the other arts. All arts teachers are media teachers.
4. The committee believes that we need to look at a model for evaluating fine arts programs and fine arts teachers. The Charlotte Danielson model does not address the needs of arts teachers in general and performing arts teachers specifically.
5. We need to look at arts program to say what a good arts program looks like.
6. The committee has a number of smaller recommendations as well.

Policy and Regulations

Judy Jenkins, chair of the Policies and Regulations Committee, reviewed the current regulation on Programs in the Fine Arts. She passed out a copy of the regulation with “track changes” to show the recommendations of the committee (see attached). The Task Force discussed at some length the language in the “track changes” version and gave the committee feedback to consider as they continue their work.

Resource Allocation Committee

Sonia Synkowski, chair of the Resource Allocation Committee, stated that this committee was focusing on the following:

1. What are the resources and how are they being allocated? What are the allocations by pupil? What is the minimum funding required to start and also to sustain a rich arts program.
2. The committee is looking at current instructional time devoted to the arts and recommendation that might be made about the amount of instructional time that should be provided.
3. How schedules are currently built in the high schools. A requirement that all high schools should offer all four of the arts.
4. How are schools staffed? How should they be staffed?
5. Curriculum and instruction at the central office level should be supported by one staff member per discipline.

6. They are also looking at teacher preparation programs – will have some recommendations at a later date.
7. The need to ensure instructional time for the arts is not replaced or removed for other subject areas.

The committee is reviewing and revising the language for recommendations for the above topic areas.

Recommendation Due Date

Jack informed the Task Force that we need recommendations by March 21. The recommendations will flow to the whole Task Force. We will have a vigorous conversation about major recommendations. Local policies should be part of the regulations conversations.

Jack said that we want a report that will guide the state for at least 3-5 years.

STEM or STEAM

Maravene Loeschke asked if we wanted to have an in-depth conversation about STEM vs. STEAM; Jack suggested that we should add it to the next agenda.

Thornton Revisited

Mary Ann -- Thornton negotiations will come up next year (adequacy study). We want to make sure we position the arts properly.

Miscellaneous Comments

John Baugher wanted to know if there was going to be any conversation about funding. Jack said it would be part of the resource allocation discussion.

Rick Penix said that equitable access to the arts should be a top priority.

Committee Meetings

Before adjourning, the committees met briefly to discuss upcoming calls and/or meetings.