

MSAC Meeting Minutes
April 4, 2008
Bosque del Apache

Began at 10:00 am

In attendance: Bob Eisenstein, Joyce Kaser, Ted Stanford, Cathy Kinzer, Cheryl Coyle, Len Duda, Ellen Levy, Tom Gruszka, Brian Every, Patrick Lopez, Jonathan Wolfe, Lorenzo Gonzalez, Pascal Buser, Rick Scott, Mary Jo Daniel (note-taker)

Guests: Don Cobb and Nicolla Covey from LANL Foundation,

Minutes from last meeting were approved (available on the MSAC website).

Bob encouraged all council members to log into the website for information. He informed the group that Representative Janice Arnold Jones would be coming after lunch to report on her efforts in public relations.

Math and Science Report

Rick Scott reported that he plans to distribute the new Math/Science report a few days before each meeting. (Current report is available on the MSAC website for reference.) It is organized around the 3 goals of the SAP; future issues will be organized around chapters of NM Project 2012. Corrected first issue: there are 21 proposals for funding received. He then pointed out the request for advice on licensure issues (p. 2 of Report) and asked for Council input.

Comments on licensure issues:

Council members believe that an Algebra 1 exit exam is needed and that this is more important than the licensure level of the Algebra 1 teacher.

Rick reported that the Asst. Secretary for Assessment and Accountability, Carlos Martinez, is supportive of an end of course exam, but development is complicated as there is variability in course content and completion dates. Rick encouraged interested Council members to contact the Asst. Secretary with input on this issue.

The question was raised of whether there will be end-of-course exams for other math courses. Reply: the costs for development, application, and scoring are significant. American Diploma Project is now piloting an Algebra II end of course exam.

A suggestion was made that the end of course exam be a bank of questions with recommendations of how to build/implement the test at the school or district level. Reply: This would complicate cross-district comparisons and statistical comparisons and reliability and validity issues.

Council members indicated that districts have varying policies on whether Algebra I teachers (8th grade) need a high school license for their students to get high school credit. Recent legislation requires schools to offer Algebra I in grade 8. Per Rick, the Licensure Bureau sent out a memo saying that if any school is going to give high school credit for Algebra I in 8th grade, the teacher must have secondary license. This policy has been in place for a while. Pascal and others are trying to determine what the current situation is in terms of what licenses current teachers have.

We should have more information next time. Other questions that need to be addressed are: how are districts interpreting the letter from licensure bureau? What are the reactions of district Human Resources directors who have to make hiring decisions?

A motion was made that the Council make a recommendation to Asst. Secretary for Accountability and Assessment, Dr. Carlos X. Martinez, to create an Algebra I end of course exam in collaboration with the Math and Science Bureau.

Discussion of motion: A policy for use and implementation of the test may still have to be developed; that is a separate issue still to be decided. A tool would be created that might be used in different ways. Claudia has created a proposed list of standards for Algebra I which is being circulated for comment among NM math educators.

Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of the second issue from Rick's report: changes could be enacted by a revision of NM Administrative Code, according to past secretary of educator quality. If council feels strongly about the issue, it could call for a revision of the applicable rules.

Licensure rules cause troubles in finding appropriate staffing, especially at the middle school level. Districts end up using long-term subs. Imposing another hurdle or stipulation will make it even more difficult. Reply: the revision should allow greater flexibility for hiring math and science teachers at the middle school level. Changing the rule may be even more helpful in special education and bilingual classes.

After discussion, a motion was made that the Council make a recommendation to the PED Licensure Bureau to allow secondary licensed teachers in one area to take the middle school exam to be highly qualified in a different content area in grades 7 and 8. Motion passed unanimously.

Council members suggested that the Math and Science Report be distributed broadly. Reply: the Math and Science Bureau is seeking permission to distribute it; current Report is being reviewed by Dep. Secretary Catherine Cross-Maple.

Motion: Ask Math and Science Bureau to distribute the Math/Science report more broadly, including to every district and the LESC, to link it to other websites, and to post it on the public portion of MSAC website. Motion passed unanimously.

New issue: has anyone been working with new leadership of NM Partnership for Math and Science Education to determine their role in relationship to Council? Rick has been asked to give a history of the partnership at the next meeting. The main purpose of the meeting is to determine their role. Not everyone was notified; Bob committed to circulating information about upcoming NMPMSE meetings to all Council members.

In their work, the Chapter 2 group suggested that the Partnership become the statewide professional development organization. Perhaps there are other roles for the Partnership related to NM Project 2012.

The guests from the Los Alamos National Laboratory Foundation introduced themselves and expressed their intent to align their funding efforts with MS Bureau and Council work.

NM Project 2012 Group Work

Bob reviewed the intent and structure of NM Project 2012 and progress to date. He mentioned increased use of phone conferencing. Groups for Chapters 1, 2, and 5 were formed and continued to discuss their chapters in this way.

Lesson

After the group work, Jonathan Wolfe led a lesson relating fractals to measuring coastlines, showing how different scales of measurement result in different levels of precision. His presentation also highlighted fractals in nature and was greatly enjoyed by all. Several Council members spoke highly of Jonathan's First Friday Fractals presentations at the Lodestar Planetarium and encouraged everyone to attend.

Public Relations Update

After lunch, Bob asked Rep. Janice Arnold-Jones to report on her activities.

Ahrens and Garrity, a public relations company, has agreed to work pro-bono for one year (in expectation they won't be abandoned when \$ becomes available) to create a media and public relations strategy for the MSAC. They understand that we are engaging in a cultural shift. Their work would include creating press releases, developing an overall media plan, and emergency or crisis management as needed. They won't be producing media. Rep. Arnold-Jones will bring them to our next meeting if council agrees. She also reported that NMSU has agreed to be responsible for the SME in classroom website. This will be a tool to facilitate getting subject matter experts involved and to link teachers into all things that are being developed. NMSU is looking to hire a full-time person to manage website. Validating the volunteers' credentials will be one component. They will automate everything that can be automated, but recognize that development will take time. This effort gets NM Project 2012 moving in the eyes of the public while allowing MSAC time to do the other work that needs to be done. It generates interest to meet with others in the state with possible resources that could be used for the larger effort.

The Council discussed key ideas that might be addressed by a p.r. campaign>

Rick: public thinks students are not doing as well as they used to. Old requirements for high school were at middle school level; requirements have increased. We now want all kids to learn what only a fraction were expected to learn in the past. This is a message the public doesn't understand. We are expecting so much more now, due in part to workplace qualification issues.

Administrators and parents and others have concerns; we might need a way to collect and post responses and resources to help public understand issues.

Everybody is an expert in education. Any pr message needs to take that into account—people have strong ideas that may or not be well informed.

Make sure we don't just create an ad campaign that tells the world we're doing fine. We need an opportunity/invitation for people to participate. "Here's a role for you to play" (as a child, as a

parent, etc.). There's more we need to know today; the world is changing. We need a universal call for action. Here's what YOU can do.

What are the communication channels between council and public relations firm?

A process needs to be formalized. Right now, Rep. Arnold Jones calls them as needed. She asked that the council develop a management plan/process.

Suggested structure: NM Project 2012 Chapter 7 group and Rick have a phone conversation with Ahrens Garrity (A-G) about what would be an appropriate way to interact with them and determine how to make use of input from a larger group. After conversation, invite A-G to next Council meeting as appropriate. Jonathan Wolfe agreed to update Chapter 7 members not present and will work with MS Bureau staff to set up a phone call.

Additional comments addressed concerns that initial focus of NM Project 2012 media campaign is on the Engineers, Scientists and Mathematicians in the Classroom effort. Bob reiterated that this does not represent a statement of priorities, but simply we have 7 things proceeding on parallel tracks and some are going faster than others. The Council will talk about the effort from the broader perspective and ensure that the PR firm understands the bigger picture.

Another concern expressed was that this could be a waste of our time if we develop media plan, etc. without resources to implement them. Rep. Arnold-Jones is looking at possible resources.

Rep. Arnold Jones also reported that half of rural libraries will be connected to fiber by the end of summer. This work supports IDEAL NM and Supercomputing Applications Center. We need to connect our efforts for state's economic development and environmental sustainability. Need the connectivity to meet our educational goals.

Bob asked Rep Arnold Jones for input on Chapter 4; she agreed to follow up with this..

Chapter Reports

Chapter 1 did not feel they needed to take Council time to report at this point.

Chapter 2 (Professional Development) reported on their discussions and work to date. Key points:

PD is integrated into a teacher's job—cultural shift

Seeking council input on 2 big ideas:

1) Should we recommend or ask for a lengthened contract year and/or day for teachers with days in that year for professional development/learning? This is a big recommendation that would cost a lot of money.

2) There needs to be a more systemic and coherent data collection throughout the state. We could use more resources to districts collecting data, sharing with PED and visa versa. This affects the whole plan, not just p.d. We need a way to see if what we are doing is working.

Discussion:

We need to look at how all parallel tracks of NM Project 2012 are developing and how they interact.

Changing the language of the chapter from professional "development" to "learning" is more than a semantics issue because the latter implies it is embedded in the teachers' day. Perhaps we

need to look at a transitional phase of more days and changing of schedules so it is a blend of professional development and professional learning.

Chapter 2 also looked at changing the culture of higher education not just K-12.

Structural change within PED may also be needed; does there have to be some structural change for professional development? There isn't a statewide structure for professional development for those who are on soft money (e.g., math coaches) to allow their work to continue once grant funding ends.

Need to be sure not to recommend that we tack on days at the beginning and end; districts cannot deal with all teachers on the same day.

Data needs haven't changed in 10 years. It's still very hard to get good data and we have a lot of data, but not much good information. We need a good list of what is the information that we want. We ask Pascal first then go to another level if he can't.

For all groups, what information do you want so we can make sure that data is available?

Chapter 5 discussion

Ellen Levy and Brian Every handed out the current draft and asked Council members to read it silently. After reading, they asked for Council members to identify key ideas as a means of determining whether draft was clear.

Discussion focused on a key idea raised in the chapter for which the Chapter 5 group needed Council input: Is the Council setting as a goal that the entire state uses one program of instructional materials? Definitions of key terms (curriculum, instructional materials, etc.) were not acceptable to all Council members and need additional work. Chapter also needs to better identify fundamental features that are needed in instructional programs. One suggestion was to develop a statewide "preferred" curriculum (or instructional materials program) around which the state would provide professional development and other support services. Districts could choose another program (from a short list), but would not receive implementation support from the state. Another question raised was whether this chapter would address "practical" issues such as amount of time spent teaching science, standards revision or reduction, etc. The Chapter 5 group will take all of the notes from the conversation into account as they move forward in further developing the Chapter.

Plus/Delta

Discussion was helpful; more time would have been beneficial.

Liked lesson; good to keep a math/science presentation

If we meet at Bosque del Apache again, we should have a presentation related to this site.

Group self-policed in conversation well.

Thanks to the Santa Fe Alliance for Science for providing lunch.

Next meeting will be on THURSDAY, May 22 in Santa Fe, location to be determined.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.