February 2022 President’s Message

Dear MaFLA members,

How time flies from the month of resolutions to the month of February: famous for love, winter vacation, and the celebration of Black history. We’ve enjoyed seeing some of your posts on social media celebrating the Chinese New Year with your students and hope to see more in your classrooms: tag us on Twitter @MaFLAonline!

The MaFLA board met in January and explored the Learning for Justice Standards, which include the identity standard, “Students will express pride, confidence and healthy self-esteem without denying the value and dignity of other people” and the Diversity standard, “Students will respectfully express curiosity about the history and lived experiences of others and will exchange ideas and beliefs in an open-minded way.” These two, among others, outline our responsibility as teachers to embed both windows and mirrors into our teaching so that students can reflect on their own identities, cultures, ways of being and doing – as well as others around the world. We hope that you endeavor to bring these and other elements of the SJ Standards into your practice, particularly in this upcoming month as we specifically bring to the forefront Black history. Stay tuned for exciting opportunities from a MaFLA Board Challenge and the SJ Standards!

In my January message, I explained that my theme is sustaining the pipeline. One way we’ve worked on that as a board is by engaging in community-building activities, the most recent of which was a beautiful reflective task brought to us by Bárbara Barnett (Wellesley Elementary Schools WL Department Head) in which we contrasted our identities (I am...) with ways we have been stereotypes (but I am not...). In hearing ways that my colleagues have been both seen and marginalized, I was reminded of how important it is to see our students’ identities and hear their stories as we craft our plans around what they bring to the table. In what ways are our current teaching practices building the pipeline for WL Educators and leaders of tomorrow?

In these final weeks before vacation, I hope you can take a chance to connect with and support your students and colleagues. Likewise, let me know how MaFLA can help you feel seen, heard, connected, and supported.

Beckie Bray Rankin

MaFLA Leader in the Spotlight

Mike Farkas, currently our Needs & Policies Chair and our LILL representative for Cohort 4, embodies the standards quoted earlier every day. His LILL Action Plan is to create a network of educator-led PLNs open to ALL MaFLA WL educators to forge relationships, partnerships, collaboration, and support. He is certified in both Spanish and TESOL, spends time dabling with French, models curiosity and support through his policy work on the MaFLA board, and is skilled at bringing folks together for critical conversations. Soon, you’ll be seeing his name in your inbox as he brings his Action Plan to fruition through our MaFLA Board Challenge.

Upcoming Events

Did you know that the Social Justice Standards are embedded in the new Massachusetts WL Frameworks? Join 2020 ACTFL Teacher of the Year (Rebecca Blouwolff) and one of the MA pioneers for the Seal of Biliteracy (Nicole Sherf) as they help us integrate the MA Frameworks into our lessons and units through MaFLA’s own Core Practices at BU, March 11-12. If standards aren't your cup of tea, we have LJ Randoff joining us both Friday and Saturday specifically to work on Social Justice in the WL Classroom. It will be exciting to participate in in-person PD again! Check MaFLA’s website for additional upcoming professional development opportunities including OPI Virtual Familiarization in late May, Proficiency Academy June 27-30, and Summer Institute August 12-14.