

# Task Force to Explore the Incorporation of the Principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) into the Education Systems in Maryland

## House Bill 59 and Senate Bill 467

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*Meetings Notes from the October 20, 2010 meeting at the Maryland State Department of Education Building*

9:00 **Meeting Begins**--Sharon West welcomed the group and thanked them for their participation.

9:10 Fran Sorin opened the meeting and introduced the Maryland State Department of Education team that will be working with the task force and reviewed basic "housekeeping issues."

9:13 Fran provided a **brief overview** of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

9:14 **Warm Up**

Paul Dunford began a warm up activity: imagine learning as a light bulb. Paul provided component parts of a lamp that task force members needed to assemble to make the light bulb work. The screwdriver is the "universal design tool" that helps us assemble the light. Our task as a group is how to put this "network" together. We are trying to get our kids connected to the learning. The best way to connect kids to learning is the networks of the brain: recognition network, strategic network, and affective network.

UDL moves us from teaching to making sure learning is done by the learner. It's important to remember that we are not putting a network together for the middle of the road child, but for every child.

9:30 **Chair introduction and review of survey**—Denise DeCoste, Chair, introduced herself. She shared results of the pre-meeting survey. Of 14 respondents, there was a mix of experience and knowledge of UDL.

9:32 Fran Sorin **reviewed the charge of the task force**. The first charge is the study of the effectiveness of UDL as a framework. The next piece of the bill is studying the feasibility of incorporating and applying UDL. The third piece is to evaluate the implementation of the

incorporation and application of UDL. [Note: See the official task force charge for a complete text in House Bill 59 and Senate Bill 467.]

#### 9:34 **Overview of Universal Design for Learning**

Denise DeCoste provided an overview of UDL. Remember that universal does not mean one approach for all, but front-loading strategies for learning for all students, not retro-fitting.

Reviewed UDL references in federal policy and legislation. Ricki Sabia added that Race to the Top applications included UDL in their winning applications. Denise reviewed UDL wording in the federal Higher Education Act.

Reviewed chart: Connecting Brain Research and UDL: The what, how, and why of learning (recognition, strategic, and affective networks). This is the essence of where Dr. Rose and the team at Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) began their research in UDL.

Gave examples of Multiple and Flexible Means of Presenting Information (offer multi-media, highlighting, providing vocabulary and background, assistive technologies). Multiple and Flexible Means of Expression (graphic organizers and outlines, vocabulary word banks, show what they know in different ways). Multiple and Flexible Means of Engagement (vary challenge/support to prevent frustration, boredom, tie to real-world, choices, self-assessment/reflection)

UDL Guidelines are available at: [www.udlcenter.org/guidelines](http://www.udlcenter.org/guidelines)

UDL applications in today's schools and classrooms: goals, materials, methods of instruction, assessment assessments.

Systems Change strategies were reviewed.

Denise reviewed her role at MCPS and how the district supports UDL.

Systemic considerations included: professional development, curriculum, special education, technology, assessment and accountability, evaluation and selection of materials

Ensuring a conceptual understanding among everyone. Administrators, principals, curriculum design, instructional staff, instructional technology staff

Address learning barriers up front.

NIMAS-National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards—for students who *qualify*. By law, the requested materials are sent to the NIMAC where schools can apply for access to the materials. But this does not address the needs of all students. The group discussed the challenge of how to make such alternate formats available to all students, not a select few. There is no "market model" for a publisher providing such formats while still making a profit.

Assessment needs to be universally designed from the outset, for example, allowing math test questions to be read if the student has that preference or need.

Explore Research Evidence for UDL Guidelines—click on checkpoints within main principles of UDL and you can see all of the research available. Available on the Web at [www.udlcenter.org/research/researchevidence](http://www.udlcenter.org/research/researchevidence)

The task force members introduced themselves and then the charge of the task force was reviewed again.

10:15 Break

10:30 What we Know, What we Want to Know and What we Learned (KWL)

KWL Reflection Activity

The task force broke into four groups to complete the first two columns of the KWL worksheet: What We Know, and What We Want to Know.

The groups reported out their findings. Lauren Blundin recorded these findings on the PowerPoint presentation.

12:00 Lunch—during lunch task force members self-selected subgroups.

12:45 Subgroups Meet & Report Out

The task force gathered into subgroups. Denise went through tasks for subcommittees. Subcommittee will review and summarize the existing UDL literature as well as do a structured phone interview (1 or 2). Today, subcommittees will draft the questions for interviews and divide the literature for review. They will be sending the questions back to MSDE who will review and return them. (The purpose of the interview is to fill in gaps in the literature, which is still very young.) Groups used the KWL charts created earlier in the day to jumpstart the discussion.

Report Out by Group

1:45 Timeline Review

Draft Recommendations: Is there a way to build in a method for various constituencies to have an opportunity to read the draft recommendations? (Does not have to be full report, just draft of recommendations). Perhaps sending a link via google docs? Task force members can send to their constituencies and solicit feedback.

Perhaps if there are certain groups we should include, they can be included in the structured interviews.

State Board meeting—Do we want to get on the agenda for a presentation?

Governor's P-20 leadership council—first meeting is Nov.19 . Is this is another place to promote the work/recommendations?

In general, how do we build upon momentum of the report?

#### 2:00 Subgroup Literature Review

In general, read the literature and summarize key points for task force. Analyze key points and identify, what is important to UDL implementation in Maryland.

Any articles you would like to add, please contact Lauren Blundin at "Lauren Proutt Blundin" [laurenproutt@verizon.net](mailto:laurenproutt@verizon.net). Also, if you have any contacts for interviews, send to Lauren.

The group reviewed the article matrix and divided up reading assignments, discussed a schedule for their work, and getting their work products to the group leader, who will pull all responses together into one submission. Groups decided if they needed a webinar meeting and identified tentative dates.

#### 2:45 Technology—A review of how to access Google Docs and Diigo and Webinars

Google docs for managing articles and other handouts, documents. (please do not share google docs for this group)

Diigo, a bookmarking web site for URLs. (Ok to share Diigo link, it's not searchable)

#### 3:00 Meeting Adjourns—Groups complete and turn in the "exit ticket" of alpha/delta