

Sent to the NSRF Facilitators Listserv on April 29, 2009 on Behalf of Susan Adams and Jay Davis, Co-chairs of the Membership Council Task Force:

Dear NSRF community,

We write to you on the eve of the Chicago Spring meeting, which will feature meetings of the Accountability Council, a Membership Meeting, and then Open Space meetings to allow people to bring their own most important work for feedback and discussion.

And OUR most important NSRF work at the moment is reflected in the document pasted at the bottom of this e-mail. It is a brief document representing the consensus of the Membership Council Task Force as to the range of roles that a Membership Council could play for a newly restructured NSRF. Such a council would serve many important roles for NSRF: initially, and critically, it would help NSRF to analyze its central challenges and opportunities as it goes forward through this time of great change. Ultimately, it would work to provide consistent attention to some areas of NSRF's work that are of most immediate importance to its members.

A potentially useful metaphor comes from Sergiovanni's work on organizational governance, where the MC would be the "heart" of the organization, with the restructuring AC/governing board as the "head" and the Executive Director as the "hand."

It is important to note that the Task force consensus is that the MC would NOT be able to serve in all of the roles listed below; for the time being, such the document is intended as a starting point for the discussions that will be happening in Chicago. Some of these roles will fall under the purview of the new governing board that replaces the Accountability Council, some under National Office and Executive Director, and some will form the foundation for the work of the Membership Council. However it works out, the Membership Council Task Force believes the items listed below to be of significant importance as NSRF moves forward, and the three organizing categories to be useful.

If you have responses to this document that you would like to inform the discussions in Chicago, please reply to all or send them directly to us at Jay.Davis@dartmouth.edu and sradams@butler.edu. There will also be time after the Chicago meetings for more comments from the NSRF membership at large, as no final decisions about a Membership Council will be made. There are many, many details to work out, but we believe that important work is happening on several NSRF fronts right now, and the Chicago meetings will be an important opportunity to overlay this work and move the organization forward in its central mission to foster social and educational equity as we help children learn.

Many, many thanks to the members of the MC Task Force, listed below, and we look forward to continuing the dialogue,

Jay Davis and Susan Adams, Co-Chairs of the Membership Council Task Force

Membership Council Task Force Members:

Shirley Andrews, GA
Debbie Bambino, PA
Wendy Brannen, NY
Angela Campbell, CA
James Cassara, NC
Deb Davis, WI
John De La Cruz, TX
Kevin Fahey, MA
Kim Feicke, OR
Nicole Hill, WA
Sue Horan, IL
Chris Jones, IN

Ericka Lawson, TX
Ileana Liberatore, TX
June Long, GA
Margaret MacLean, VT
Tim Martindell, TX
Jonett Miniell, TX
Tina Muncy, VT
Scott Murphy, CO
Ross Peterson-Veatch, IN
Lindsey Pollock, TX
Josephine Rice, TX
Janice Schomburg, FL

Potential roles of a Membership Council

1. Program Development/Mission Alignment:

- Create and/or update agreements that define roles, rights and responsibilities of members, facilitators, and centers, including standards for achieving/maintaining status as a facilitator.
- Standardize a process for submitting, reviewing and ultimately disseminating to the national membership promising new work from the field (new protocols, articles, etc.)
- Have representation from the MC on planning committees for national and regional NSRF meetings.
- Mentor new Centers of Activity and/or facilitate communication among centers that need support/wisdom
- Help hone standards for the development of facilitator interns, potentially facilitating intern exchanges as well.

2. Communication with Membership

- Serve as a conduit for "voices from the field," initiating and responding to feedback (such as regular online surveys) of NSRF members at all levels of membership, including paid members of NSRF who are not coaches or facilitators and particularly those who are classroom teachers.
- Ensure that members' professional development needs are solicited, and met where possible in agendas for national meetings, new resources added to the website, etc.
- Ensure that there is regular communication with the full membership from the MC, ED and new Governing Board, to further strengthen connections and awareness.
- Conduct/model online blogs, Gallery Walks, etc. that will help facilitate "real time" work being done together across geographical difference.
- When possible, plan and convene (in smaller sub-committees) regional meetings with members and centers to conduct some of the above business face to face.

3. Advisory:

- Serve as an advisory group to the new Governing Board, including two seats on the Board to represent the NSRF membership at large.
- Serve as an advisory group to the Executive Director, in the "Critical Friend" role that the Accountability Council was originally designed for.
- As an advisory group, the Membership Council will have the following as explicit areas of focus:
 1. Advocating that NSRF's diverse membership be represented in its leadership.
 2. Advocating for, and helping develop, as diverse a national membership as possible.
 3. Insisting on transparency in all aspects of NSRF work (financial, procedural, selection of committees, etc.), including the work of the Membership council.
 4. Supporting long-time NSRF traditions while actively advocating new systems and traditions where needed.
 5. Helping NSRF decide what it means to be a democratic institution and/or a membership-based organization.
 6. Speaking public truth to power, wherever that power is located in NSRF.