



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 2120

RICHMOND 23218-2120

January 10, 2018

Mr. Daniel L. Dunham
Virginia Department of Education,
Military Student and Family Specialist
101 N. 14th Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Virginia General Assembly
Members of the Virginia General Assembly
General Assembly Building
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor McAuliffe and Members of the General Assembly:

As coordinator of the Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children and in accordance with § 22.1-361, *Code of Virginia*, I am pleased to submit an executive summary of the work of the Virginia Council for 2017.

The Virginia Council may consider any and all matters related to the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children which seeks to remove barriers to educational success imposed on children of military families because of frequent moves and deployment of their parents. The executive summary provides information regarding the meetings of the Virginia Council, as well as other actions taken during 2017 to disseminate information regarding the Compact to school divisions, military families, and other affected entities.

The Virginia Council is grateful for the support the Governor and General Assembly give to the dependents of military families in the Commonwealth, especially as they transition in and out of our great public schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel L. Dunham".

Mr. Daniel L. Dunham
Coordinator, Virginia Council on the Interstate
Compact on Educational Opportunity for
Military Children

Enclosure

2017

Executive Summary of the
Interim Activity and Work of the

**Virginia Council on the Interstate
Compact on Educational Opportunity
for Military Children**

Presented to
the Governor
and the General Assembly

January 2018

**Members of the
Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact
on Educational Opportunity for Military Children**

as of December 14, 2017

CAPT Joey Frantzen, United States Navy

Dr. Jill Gaitens, Community Affairs Leader, Military Child Education Coalition

Dr. John B. Gordon, III, Director of Administrative Services, Fredericksburg City Public Schools

Dorothy McAuliffe, First Lady of Virginia (Governor's designee)

The Honorable Mamie Locke, Senate of Virginia

Dr. Aaron C. Spence, Superintendent, Virginia Beach City Public Schools

Dr. Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Brad Williams, School Counseling Director, Tabb High School

Statutory Requirements for the Executive Summary

The *Code of Virginia*, § 22.1-361 states:

In accordance with the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, there is hereby created the Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, hereinafter referred to in this section as the "Virginia Council."... The chairman of the Virginia Council shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an annual executive summary of the interim activity and work of the Virginia Council no later than the first day of each regular session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (Virginia Council) was created in 2009 to consider any and all matters related to the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. The Compact seeks to remove barriers to educational success imposed on children of military families because of frequent moves and deployment of their parents. The Compact addresses such issues as timely enrollment and placement, on-time graduation, and sharing of information between states to ensure a smooth educational transition for dependents of military families as they move from and to other states.

Virginia is home to some of the nation's largest and most important military installations, so it is not surprising that the Commonwealth's schools educate more military children than most states. As of August 2017, the United States Defense Manpower Data Center estimated that there are 70,380 school age military-associated children of active duty members in Virginia.

The average military student faces transition challenges more than twice during high school, and most military children will attend six to nine different school systems from kindergarten to twelfth grade. The Compact seeks to make transitions easier for the children of military families so that they are afforded the same opportunities for educational success as other children and are not penalized or delayed in achieving their educational goals.

A continued focus for the Virginia Council in 2017 was identifying the needs of key stakeholders group working to ease the needs of military-connected children in our schools. The Council received feedback during all meetings held. This feedback enabled the Council and the VDOE Military Student and Family Specialist to better prepare initiatives that will ultimately support professionals and agencies dedicated to easing the transitional challenges of military connected children across the Commonwealth.

This executive summary provides an overview of the work of the Council in 2017.

Virginia Council Meetings

The Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children held three public meetings in 2017. The meetings were attended by military school liaison officers, school representatives, students, parents, military officials, members of educational organizations, Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) staff, and other members of the public. When possible, the meetings were also streamed live on the Department's Web page and recorded for archival purposes. The meetings' agendas have covered a number of issues related to the education of children of military families in the Commonwealth. Additional details about each meeting are included below.

- *June 7, 2017, Virginia Council Meeting
Richmond, Virginia*

The June meeting marked the resignation of Delegate Kirk Cox as a member and Chair of the Council.

Mr. Dunham presented an update to the Council related to his work as the Military Student and Family Specialist. He highlighted the outreach he had conducted, shared analytics on top issues, provided a review of recent interactions with Fort Belvoir elementary school, and gave an overview of Month of the Military activities that occurred across the state. Mr. Dunham then provided the Council with clarification of the residency verification challenges experienced by military families in a temporary housing status and experienced by presenter Mrs. Aikman. He went on to inform the Council of legislation passed in the states of California and Florida aimed at addressing these challenges.

Ms. Emily Hess, Counselor, Henderson Elementary School, Prince William County Public Schools and five fifth-grade students presented on the Secret Agents Group and Character Program conducted at Henderson Elementary. Ms. Hess and her students provided detailed evidence for how the program is administered and how impactful character development has been on the students and the school community.

Dr. Dede Bailer, Fairfax Public Schools, Mrs. Jamie Albers, Fort Belvoir School Liaison, and Wendy O’Sullivan, Fort Belvoir School Liaison presented on the Fairfax County Public School Military Student Process Action Team; a best practice that highlights the power of collaboration. Dr. Bailer provided an in-depth overview of the team’s development, operation, and positive outcomes.

The Council also received the outcomes and next steps from Mr. Dunham that he gathered from the March 29th, 2017, Virginia Military Student Convening. He highlighted the three main component areas: Academics, Advocacy and Access to Opportunity. His presentation included a detailed overview of these areas and the action steps that are underway in addressing the outcomes gathered.

Following these presentations and the reading of a parent letter by Ms. Debbie Patch, Navy Regional School Liaison Officer, the Council took action and requested that the Virginia Department of Education form a workgroup to investigate the issues presented by Ms. Aikman and others when residing in temporary housing both in coming and departing from the State. The Council also requested that they receive a follow-up on the outcomes and recommendations of this meeting at the next Council meeting.

- *Oct 31, 2017, Virginia Council Meeting
Richmond, Virginia*

The Council presented a resolution to Del. Kirk Cox for his contributions to the Council and support of Military family throughout his career.

This meeting also included the welcoming of Navy Captain Joey Frantzen to the Council and the welcoming of Virginia Secretary of Defense and Veterans Affairs Carlos Hopkins to the Council to serve in an advisory role.

Dr. Steven Staples assumed the role of acting chair of the Council.

Mr. Dunham presented an update to the Council related to his work as the Military Student and Family Specialist. Dr. Aaron Spence provided details on Virginia Beach Public School's (VBPS) attendance at the STEM fair held at Naval Air Station Oceana and on the Science Initiative (NMSI) grant given to VBPS.

Coast Guard Captain Kevin Carrol and Coast Guard Lt. Joshua Zirbes were called to present their concerns to the Council. CAPT Carrol and Lt. Zirbes shared details of their recent interactions with the Superintendent of Accomack County Public Schools and the Accomack School Board on the topic of allowing Coast Guard families assigned to Chincoteague Coast Guard Station to attend Chincoteague Elementary School. He learned of the denial by the Accomack School Board during a follow up conversation with Superintendent Holland but felt that he did not receive a full explanation for the denial. He seeks support from the Council on this issue so he might further the conversation and receive rationale for the denial.

The Council then approved a motion calling for the draft of a resolution of support on behalf of the Coast Guard Families to be delivered to the Superintendent and members of the Accomack County School Board.

Mr. Dunham provided the Council with an update on the outcomes of the VDOE temporary housing workgroup formed at the request of the Council during the June 7th, 2017, meeting to investigate possible solutions to the temporary housing issue. Mr. Dunham shared that the workgroup developed three recommendations. First, that VDOE supply guidance to school divisions in the handling of military families residing in temporary housing. Second, that regional summits be held to help foster communications between adjacent school divisions in addressing the needs of military families in temporary housing. Third, that legislation be developed addressing the needs and support of military families in temporary housing. Mr. Dunham also shared VDOE had already taken action on the recommendations to include a superintendent's memorandum, meeting with regional superintendents, and assisting in answering question regarding the issue with other state agencies.

Mr. Dunham then provided the Council with information on a proposal that would provide a Purple Star designation for schools who excel at meeting the unique needs of military families. He also outlined what the criteria would be for Virginia schools seeking the designation.

The Council then approved a motion to adopt the Purple Star Designation for implementation in Virginia.

Mr. Dunham then presented an update on the outcomes of the National Military Interstate Compact Commissions' National Business meeting. He highlighted that once again Virginia is home to more military connected school-aged children than any other state in the nation. Mr. Dunham also informed the Council of the new executive order that would now require the Commissioner and her/his designee to provide an annual conflict of interest form to the national office. Mr. Dunham also shared that a change in the bylaws had been approved. This change requires that the Training, Education and Public Relations Committee be separated into two committees; that these committees are now referred to as the Training Committee and Communications and Outreach Committee. The Council was also informed of possible increases to dues in the coming years to offset the rising cost of conducting business. Mr. Dunham concluded the presentation by sharing how he contributed positively to the meeting and during breakouts. He also shared praise of Mrs. Debbie Patch for her representation of the State and fellow School Liaison Officers during her conducting of the School Liaison Officer breakout session and the sharing out of that group's session.

- *December 14, 2017, Virginia Council Meeting
Richmond, Virginia*

The December meeting included a presentations of appreciation to First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe and Dr. Steven Staples by Virginia School Liaison Officers for the work that both have conducted on behalf of military connected students across the Commonwealth.

Ms. Angela de Mik then presented on Operation Break the Code. This program was made possible through a Department of Defense grant and benefits elementary students attending Norfolk Public Schools. The program engages k-5 students in understanding "code" and introduces them to the wonders of computer science coding (K-5).

Mr. Dunham then presented an update to the Council related to his work as the Military Student and Family Specialist. This presentation included his sharing of a proposed temporary housing Bill being considered for possible legislation. The Governor's office wished for the Council to review the language and offer comment in support of the patron of the Bill.

The Council deliberated on the proposed Bill's language. The suggestions offered by the Council specified that the use of the phrase "military orders" be added to the language as these orders are sufficient evidence of the families' relocation and need for the

flexibilities offered in the Bill. The Council also suggested that the language include a statement outlining the responsibility of the school division to place the student into a school based on the anticipated location of the families permanent address.

All presentations and meeting materials are available online at www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student_family/military/va_council/.

Military Family Education Liaison

Pursuant to § 22.1-361, the Department of Education employs a military family education liaison to provide staff support to the Virginia Council and to assist military families and the state in facilitating the implementation of the Compact.

The military family education liaison provides for the coordination among state agencies of government, local education agencies, and military installations concerning the state's participation in, and compliance with, the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. A key function of the position is to assist military families and local education agencies in implementation of the Compact to ensure a smooth academic transition for military children in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The liaison works with families and school divisions to resolve problems related to educational records and enrollment, course placement, graduation requirements, and other important issues. The liaison also serves as a policy consultant on issues related to military transfer students, including drafting guidance documents for distribution to school divisions, maintaining communication with school liaison officers, providing training on the Interstate Compact, and maintaining the military resources' web pages.

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Dissemination of Information

Through a variety of mediums, the Department, on behalf of the Virginia Council, has disseminated timely and relevant information related to the education of military children to school divisions, school liaison officers, military organizations and other important stakeholders.

Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps school liaison officers play an invaluable role in sharing information about the Interstate Compact with military families and Virginia educators. School liaison officers (SLO's) connect military families with educational opportunities and critical information about state and local school laws, policies and standards. SLO's work in partnership with local school divisions and the leaders of military commands and installations to enhance the public school experiences of military children. They equip school division staff with resources and information about the challenges faced by military children while working in partnership with schools and community organizations to raise awareness about the needs of these students. School liaison officers promote parental involvement and assist parents, teachers

and administrators and commanders in troubleshooting and finding solutions to education-related problems.

The military family education liaison is in regular communication with the SLOs via e-mail, phone, and the Virginia Council meetings. These communications serve as opportunities to discuss issues with implementation of the Interstate Compact and share updated resources.

The Department, on behalf of the Virginia Council, has developed and maintained Web pages dedicated to the Military Compact (http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student_family/military/index.shtml), with resources for military families and educators. The site features guidance documents to help school divisions interpret key provisions of the Compact and training materials, including printable brochures and guides. The resource pages contain links to pertinent Virginia laws related to the education of military children, as well as contact information for school liaisons. The Web site highlights best practices of school divisions to assist military-connected children, and provides links to numerous military-affiliated organizations for additional resources. The Department has also maintained a Web page dedicated to the Virginia Council that includes the Council's meeting schedule, agendas and minutes from previous meetings, and presentations given at Council meetings.

With resources provided by the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3), the Department, on behalf of the Virginia Council, has distributed guidance documents to school liaison officers and school divisions that can be used in trainings for school division staff and in meetings with military families. The resources include:

- a 16-page document, *Guidance for Military Families with Students in Special Education*, which provides information and answers to questions that military families with school-aged children might have about special education programs in Virginia public schools. Topics include enrollment, special education services, parental consent in Virginia, Section 504, dispute resolution, and procedural safeguards.
- a *Desk Reference for the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children: Compact Rules*, which is shared with school liaison officers as they work with educators in implementing the provisions of the Interstate Compact; and
- a brightly-colored pamphlet, *Guide for Parents, School Officials and Public Administrators*, which provides information to families, military leaders, and educators about the Interstate Compact



The Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3) also provided states with posters to promote the Interstate Compact. The posters were distributed to schools with large

military populations to welcome military-connected students and make families aware of the Interstate Compact.

The military family education liaison, on behalf of the Virginia Council, has provided training on the Compact and the Virginia Council to thousands of educators, military families, and other interested stakeholders since its creation in 2009. SLO's throughout Virginia frequently provide training on the Interstate Compact to educators in their region as well.

Military Student Identifier

In 2014 the Virginia Council unanimously adopted a statement in support of a military student identifier:

The Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children supports the implementation of a military student identifier in Virginia as a means for local school divisions to collect information on military-connected children enrolled in the school division, beginning with the 2015-2016 school year. Further, the Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children encourages the use of such data by local, state, and federal entities to enhance the funding and quality of services provided to serve the unique needs of military-connected children residing in the Commonwealth.

The 2015 Virginia General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed, legislation (HB 2373 Ramadan and SB 1354 Reeves) to require the “identification of newly enrolled uniformed services-connected students by local school divisions.” School divisions were provided flexibility in how they identify the students and collect the data. The data is collected three times per year, via VDOE’s Student Record Collection. VDOE communicated with school divisions about implementing the military student identifier through Superintendent’s Memorandum’s and webinars hosted by the VDOE Office of Educational Information Management. Students are “coded” as either not military connected, active duty connected, or reserve connected.

In total, 125 school divisions reported data regarding military-connected students in the division. 9 school divisions did not report any military-connected students during the Fall 2017 data collection period, however this should not necessarily be construed as not serving any military-connected students.

The Virginia Council and the Virginia Department of Education will continue encouraging school divisions to identify and reach out to the military-connected students in their schools. The identifier serves as an important tool in connecting military-connected children with the counselors, services, and resources for academic, social, and emotional support. The identifier also provides data for becoming eligible for critical funds for schools to further meet the needs of uniformed services-connected students residing in the Commonwealth.

Top Issues

Throughout 2017, several issues related to the transition of military-connected students surfaced as reoccurring topics to address. The Council will continue to discuss these important issues with its partners and provide leadership in finding solutions to these challenges.

Temporary Housing

For several years, the Virginia Council has heard from military families and school liaisons on issues related to the transition challenges that military families residing in temporary housing face. The Council's request that a workgroup convene to study the issue resulted in positive outcomes.

Professional Development for Educators

2017 marked the development of the Military Student Support Process Action Team. This group is comprised of Military School Liaisons, School Counselors, School Student Service administrators, military parents, and VDOE staff. The purpose of the group is to serve an advisory role to the Military Student and Family Specialist. Perhaps the greatest accomplishment of the Advisory Council in 2017 was the development of modules to be used as the basis for training of school personnel.

Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission

The Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3) is the national organization that oversees the implementation of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. The Department, on behalf of the Virginia Council, is in regular communication with MIC3 to disseminate policy information related to the Military Compact. The military family education liaison also works with Commission staff in some cases where a military family's transfer in or out of Virginia schools needs assistance.

The Virginia Student and Family Specialist attended the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Interstate Commission on Educational Opportunities for Military Children as Virginia's commissioner's designee. The Annual Meeting provided valuable opportunities for the Virginia Student and Family Specialist to dialogue with commissioners in other states about how the Interstate Compact is implemented, and share best practices for navigating challenging issues. Topics for discussion included MIC3's strategic plan goals and action plan, rule changes discussion on the issue of temporary housing and redefining of the term "active duty", State Council set-up and maintenance, and state council selection of military representatives to the state Councils.

Conclusion

Throughout 2016, the Virginia Council has taken on many important issues related to the education of children of military families. The Council provided numerous training opportunities and resources to educators and military families on the provisions of the Compact. Despite progress, more work is needed to ensure that educators and military families alike are aware of the Interstate Compact, and the flexibilities it offers. Ongoing professional development for those

working with military-connected students is needed to ensure military-connected students' transition to and from Virginia is as seamless as possible.

In nearly every community in Virginia, there are children with parents or guardians on active duty with the armed forces. While their parents honorably serve our nation and our Commonwealth, we should recognize military childrens' contributions and celebrate their spirit. The Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children is proud to recognize the service of our military servicemen and women, their families, and their children.

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