

2018
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

December 2018

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

As of November 26, 2018

Dr. James F. Lane, Compact Commissioner, Council Chairman, Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction

Senator Mamie E. Locke, Hampton, Virginia Senator 2nd District, Senate Representative

Secretary Carlos Hopkins, Virginia Secretary of Defense and Veterans Affairs (Governor's designee)

House of Delegates Representative (VACANT)

Dorothy McAuliffe, Former First Lady of Virginia

Captain Joey Frantzen, USN, Installation Commander, Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story

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

Dr. Dede Bailer, Coordinator of School Psychology Services, Fairfax County Public Schools

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 September 2018, the United States Defense Manpower Data Center estimated that there are 70,213 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.

The continued focus for the Virginia Council in 2018 was identifying the needs of key stakeholders and 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 Virginia Department of Education (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 2018.

Virginia Council Meetings

The Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children held one public meeting in 2018. The meeting was attended by military school liaison officers, school representatives, students, parents, military officials, members of educational organizations, VDOE staff, and other members of the public. The meeting was streamed live on the Department's webpage and recorded for archival purposes. The meeting's agenda covered a number of issues related to the education of children of military families in the Commonwealth. Additional details about the meeting are included below.

- *October 24, 2018 Virginia Council Meeting
Richmond, Virginia*

The October meeting marked changes in the Council's make up and leadership. The newly appointed Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. James F. Lane, assumed the roles as Council commissioner and was also appointed chair of the Council. Additionally, the Council welcomed three new members. They are: Mr. Carlos Hopkins, Delegate Robert Thomas and Dr. Dede Bailer.

Dr. Chelsea Ireland Kulp, Instructional Trainer and Program Director for Poquoson City Public Schools presented how the school division used Department of Defense Education Activity Grant funding to support Project Based Learning and STEM instruction across the division.

Mr. Dunham proceeded to present the list of nominated schools for Purple Star Designation for Council's approval. The Council approved 59 Virginia schools to receive this distinguished honor. These schools set themselves apart from other schools in that each school demonstrated strong support for military connected students especially during the student's transition.

Mr. Dunham then provided the Council with an update from the National Business meeting of the Military Children's Interstate Compact Commission. He highlighted the positive impact that Virginia has on other states. In particular Mr. Dunham received many comments from other state Commissioners and Designees on how the Commonwealth is addressing the transitional challenges to military families living in temporary housing and in military housing. Mr. Dunham went on to share that the Commission voted to increase dues from one dollar per child to one dollar and fifteen cents per child beginning with FY 2020. No state dues assessed shall exceed \$69,000. When it approved the increase, the Commission noted that its requests for support have increased, and its purchasing power had been reduced due to increasing costs.

The Commission also voted to amend the rules adding a definition to "State Council" and added specificity to the frequency of state Council meetings and the reporting of the meeting or meeting(s) to the Interstate Commission executive office.

Lastly Mr. Dunham brought to the attention of the Council the transitional challenges being experienced by students whose parents serve the National Security interest under U.S.C. Title 22 and Title 50 orders. Currently the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children only assists those students whose parents serve the National Security interest under U.S.C. Title 10. Mr. Dunham expressed that students whose parent's serve under Title 22 and Title 50 are experiencing the same challenges as their military connected peers to include, staying on track programmatically, on time graduation, Kindergarten enrollment, deployment stressors and accessibility to specialty centers. Council expressed interest on this issue and requested that this information be presented at future meetings.

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' webpages. Virginia's liaison is:

Daniel L. Dunham
Military Student and Family Specialist
101 N.14th St., Richmond, Virginia 23219
804-225-2157 (office)
Dan.Dunham@doe.virginia.gov

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 (SLOs) connect military families with educational opportunities and critical information about state and local school laws, policies, and standards. The 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. The SLOs 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 email, 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 webpages 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 website 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 webpage 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. The SLOs 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 and SB 1354) 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. The VDOE communicated with school divisions about implementing the military student identifier through Superintendent’s Memorandums 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, 126 school divisions reported data regarding military-connected students in the division. 7 school divisions did not report any military-connected students during the End of Year Count for SY 2017-2018 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 2018, many schools demonstrated an interest in the Purple Star Designation and worked to improve supports to military connected students and their families. These increase interests lead to a surge in professional development requests on the unique needs of military connected students. It also strengthened the partnership between schools and military installation school liaison officers.

The Military Student Support Process Action Team continued to be a valuable resource in 2018. The body helped to add clarity on issues of importance to military families and assisted in the review of Purple Star School applications and selection of schools to nominate. This group is currently assisting the VDOE Military Student and Families Specialist with effort to improve transitional support of military families with students in Special Education.

Military connected students continue to be challenged during transition with a number of students being unable to enroll into courses prior to their physical arrival. The VDOE Military Student and Families Specialist will be bringing attention to these challenges to school divisions across the state in the hope of developing a solution.

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 2018 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. As stated earlier in this report the Commission voted to approve a dues increase to one dollar and fifteen cents per child beginning with FY 2020. No state dues assessed shall exceed \$69,000. Additionally, the Commission also voted to amend the rules adding a definition to "State Council" and added specificity to the frequency of state Council meetings and the reporting of the meeting or meetings to the Interstate Commission executive office.

Conclusion

Throughout 2018, the Virginia Council took 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 the contributions of military connect students 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.