



**2022 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 2022

# 2022 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE INTERIM ACTIVITY AND WORK OF THE VIRGINIA COUNCIL ON THE INTERSTATE COMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Statutory Requirements for the Executive Summary .....	1
Executive Summary .....	1
Introduction .....	1
Military Family Education Liaison .....	2
Dissemination of Information .....	2
Trainings .....	4
Highlights .....	5
Military Student Identifier .....	5
Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Conclusion .....	6

# 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.

The Commonwealth is home to some of the Nation's largest and most important military installations and educates more military children than most states in the nation. As of July 3, 2022, the United States Defense Manpower Data Center estimated that there are 71,293 school age military-associated children of active duty military, United States Public Health Service (USPHS), and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) members ranging in age from five to 18 residing in Virginia. According to this data, Virginia is home to nearly 11,000 more school age children than Texas, the next highest State. According to the Virginia Department of Education’s (VDOE) 2021-2022 military identifier End of Year Count, public schools in Virginia serve 81,224 military-connected students. These are students whose parents serve on active duty in the United States Armed Forces, United States Reserve Forces, or in the Virginia National Guard.

The average military student experiences twice the transition challenges as compared to non-military connected students 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 2022 was identifying the needs of key stakeholders and working to ease the needs of military-connected children in our schools. The Council was unable to meet during 2022, but the VDOE continued to support the educational transition needs of the military-connected children and their families in a variety of ways.

This executive summary provides an overview of the work conducted by the VDOE to support military-connected children and their families.

## **Military Family Education Liaison**

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

The military family education liaison, otherwise referred to as the VDOE Military Student and Families Specialist, 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 VDOE military resources' webpages. The VDOE Military Student and Families Specialist is:

Daniel L. Dunham  
Military Student and Families Specialist  
101 N.14 Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219  
(804) 225-2157 (office)  
[Dan.Dunham@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Dan.Dunham@doe.virginia.gov)

## **Dissemination of Information**

Through a variety of mediums, VDOE, on behalf of the Virginia Council, has provided training and disseminated timely and relevant information related to the education of military children to school divisions, school liaison officers, exceptional family member program case managers, military organizations, and other important stakeholders.

The 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, administrators, and commanders in troubleshooting and finding solutions to education-related challenges.

Military Exceptional Family Member Program case managers (EFMP's) serve to support military families who care for individuals who have unique and specific needs (special health care needs, disability related needs, etc.). These individuals play a critical role in linking these families to military and community resources that can support the unique needs of these families.

The VDOE Military Student and Families Specialist is in regular communication with the SLOs and EFMPs via email, phone, and at trainings. These regular communications serve as opportunities to discuss issues that align with the Interstate Compact, share updated resources, and link families to local and state supports that often times fall outside the scope of the Compact.

The VDOE, on behalf of the Virginia Council, has developed and maintains a [Military Families webpage](#) dedicated to the Military Compact with resources for military families and educators. The site features guidance documents to help school divisions interpret key provisions of the Compact, 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 military school liaisons officers. The website highlights best practices of school divisions to assist military-connected children, provides training materials, and contains links to numerous military-affiliated support organizations. The VDOE has also maintained a [Virginia Council webpage](#) that includes the Councils' meeting schedule, agendas, and minutes from previous meetings and presentations given at Council meetings.

### **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 VDOE, on behalf of the Virginia Council, is in regular communication with MIC3 to disseminate policy information related to the Military Compact. The VDOE Military Student and Families Specialist also works with Commission staff in some cases where a military family's transfer in or out of Virginia schools needs further assistance.

The VDOE Military Student and Families Specialist, as Commissioner Designee, attended the 2022 Annual Business Meeting (ABM) of the Interstate Commission on Educational Opportunities for Military Children as Virginia's Commissioner's designee. The ABM provided valuable opportunities for the VDOE Military Student and Families Specialist to dialogue with other state commissioners/designees about the implementation of the Interstate Compact and on best practices for navigating challenging issues. During the meeting, Commissioners learned of the need to revise Virginia's existing Compact language. Currently, there is an incorrect citation in the model language of the Compact in Article II (A) and in Article III (A) (1), both of which refer to members of the National Guard and Reserve on active duty orders pursuant to 10 U.S.C. "Section" 1209 and 1211. These provisions should instead both cite to 10 U.S.C. "Chapter" 1209

and 1211. This is a scrivener's (i.e., technical) error in a section of the Compact, which controls its coverage area, and as such, it is best practice that the citation error should be corrected in each impacted state. The VDOE included the need to correct this technical error in *Virginia Code* in their annual communication the Office of the Governor concerning possible educational matters that may require legislative action.

With resources provided by the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3), the VDOE, 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:

- *Guidance for Military Families with Students in Special Education*, a 16-page document that 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.;
- *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;
- *Guide for Parents, School Officials and Public Administrators*, which provides information to families, military leaders, and educators about the Interstate Compact; and
- *VDOE Modules*:
  - *Supporting Our Military-Connected Children in School Settings: Moving them from Risk to Resilience, Module 1 and Module 2*, provides school staff online professional development on the unique needs of military-connected students and their families; and
  - *Building Awareness of the Social Emotional Impacts of Military Family Transitions*, provides school staff online professional development on the stressors that military families face routinely and provides clarity on how best to support these families during periods of heightened stress.

## **Trainings**

The VDOE, 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. In 2022, staff from the Department of Special Education and Students Services provided numerous trainings to school personnel and military families.

In May, the VDOE Office of Family Engagement and the VDOE Military Student and Families Specialist partnered to provide a Military Families Symposium for military families with students in special education. This in-person symposium provided attendees with an opportunity

to learn more about state level support, self-advocacy, Due Process, the I'm Determined program, Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC), and Virginia Commonwealth University's Center for Parent Involvement.

A number of SLO's and EFMP's attended the Connect for Success Conference in September. The VDOE Office of Family Engagement provides this professional development opportunity to those who work in Parent Resource Centers. This opportunity helped to foster collaboration between the school divisions and military partners.

The Family Engagement Network formed a military student and family sub-committee in 2022. This body will investigate the building of resources and programs aimed at strengthening support for military families in the care of students with special needs.

The Military Student and Families Specialist was a panelist at the Military Child Education Coalition Conference held in Washington D.C. in July. He and others leading the way for Purple Star programming in Ohio, Texas, and South Carolina spoke to the value that Purple Star has had on student wellbeing and school climate.

## **Highlights**

In November, the VDOE announced that 189 schools across Virginia were honored with the Purple Star Designation. To qualify for a Purple Star in Virginia, schools must have a staff point of contact (POC) for military students and families. The POC serves as the primary link between the military family and the school. In addition, schools must meet four measures that help to build awareness within the school community and foster peer transition support. One hundred and one of the 189 schools honored this year were second time recipients of the distinction. This is the fifth year the VDOE has designated Purple Star schools. Since 2018, the VDOE and The Council on the Interstate Compact on the Educational Opportunity of Military Children have selected 328 schools across Virginia for the award, of which 192 have been twice honored.

## **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 (House Bill 2373 and Senate Bill 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 the 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.

According to the Military Identifier End of Year Count for School Year 2021-2022, there were 81,224 military-connected students in 130 of the 132 school divisions. 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 both academic non-academic 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.

## **Conclusion**

The VDOE will continue to provide support and technical assistance to both individual families and schools during SY 2022-2023.

The network that encompasses the Military Student Support Process Action Team (MSSPAT), SLO’s, and EFMP’s continues to be impactful. These partners routinely help to review Purple Star applications, conducting trainings, and providing expertise to support improvements to students, parents, and schools.

In nearly every community in Virginia, there are children with parents or guardians on active duty, Reserves, National Guard, NOAA, or USPHS. While their parents honorably serve our nation and our Commonwealth, we should recognize the contributions of military-connected students and celebrate their spirit. To this end, the VDOE is honored to support the transitional needs of military-connected students and their families.