

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

Minutes: January 5, 2011

Council members in attendance:

- Senator John C. Miller, Chair
- Delegate M. Kirkland Cox
- Dr. William C. Boshier Jr.
- Professor Marlena E. Bremseth
- Ms. Susan McIntosh
- Dr. James G. Merrill
- Dr. Winston O. Odom
- Dr. Patricia I. Wright

Senator Miller opened the meeting by welcoming the Council members and guests.

**Working with the Military to Assist Families:** Dr. Bobby Browder, Superintendent of Prince George County Public Schools, gave a presentation about how Prince George County Public Schools works to assist military families at Fort Lee. Fort Lee is expanding significantly and rapidly, and this has resulting in housing problems in that base housing may not be immediately available, and families moving from other communities in Virginia may have problems selling their house because of the economy. Therefore, some families may live in Chesterfield County, New Kent County, or other nearby counties, and the children are served by other school divisions until the families can locate base housing or housing near Fort Lee. As a result, students must transfer from one school division to another, which is disruptive and hampers a smooth transition. Enrolling the students before the families move would also be problematic because of transportation issues and enrollment policies.

Another issue for Prince George County Public Schools is impact aid. Since Fort Lee is expanding, and impact aid is based on the number of students, impact aid to nearby school divisions would increase. However, impact aid payments from the U. S. Department of Education typically lag by several years.

**The Virginia High School League (VHSL): Policies Affecting Military Families:** Mr. Tom Zimorski, Deputy Director, Virginia High School League, gave an overview of VHSL rules that may affect military families. VHSL's transfer rule prohibits the student from participating in VHSL activities for the first 365 days following transfer to a school, unless the transfer corresponds to the family's move into the attendance zone. VHSL doesn't recognize the special power of attorney provision in §§ 22.1-3 and 22.1-360 of the *Code of Virginia* that permits a student to enroll in a school when the parent is deployed and the student is living with a relative or other person who has special power of attorney relative to the guardianship of the student, and executed under Title 10,

United States Code, § 1044b. VHSL doesn't currently have a waiver provision or an exception to this rule, although there is an appeals process. Council members urged VHSL to take another look at this policy as it relates to students whose parents have been deployed by the military.

**Update: Out-of-State Tests, Enrolling in Kindergarten, and the Role of Department of Defense Schools:** Anne Wescott reported that Virginia Department of Education staff is developing guidance to school divisions on these issues. The department is working closely with Interstate Commission on Educational Opportunities for Military Children and with local school divisions with large numbers of military families. The guidance will cover the treatment of tests taken in other states, coursework completed in other states and how it should be evaluated in Virginia Department of Department schools, and kindergarten entrance age.

**Communications Plan:** Anne Wescott briefed the council members on the communications plan and on the work the department has done to communicate the provisions of the compact and the work of the council. A copy of the current plan may be found at:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student\\_family/military/va\\_council/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student_family/military/va_council/index.shtml).

**Discussion: 2011 Session of the Virginia General Assembly:** The council did not propose any legislation for the 2011 Session.

Senator Miller closed the meeting by thanking the council members.