

Virginia Council for the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military  
Children  
Minutes: May 4, 2011

Council Members in Attendance:

Senator John C. Miller, Chair  
Dr. Patricia I. Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Professor Marlena E. Bremseth  
Dr. James G. Merrill, Superintendent of Virginia Beach Public Schools  
Dr. Winston O. Odom, Superintendent of Hopewell City Public Schools

Council Members not in Attendance:

The Honorable M. Kirkland Cox, House of Delegates  
Dr. William C. Boshier Jr.  
Ms. Susan McIntosh

Department of Education Staff in Attendance:

Melissa Luchau, Military Family Education Liaison  
Anne Wescott, Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Communications  
Michelle Vucci, Director of Policy

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

Michelle Vucci provided the members with an update regarding recent guidance documents issued by the Department, on behalf of the Council. This guidance covers the treatment of: 1) tests taken in other states; 2) coursework completed in other states and how it should be evaluated in Virginia as it relates to on-time graduation; and 3) Department of Defense schools. Ms. Vucci also indicated that guidance would be issued soon regarding kindergarten entrance age. Ms. Vucci indicated that Virginia accepts a number of substitute tests for credit towards graduation and many of these tests are nationally recognized. Professor Bremseth asked a clarifying question about these tests. Guidance issued by the Department can be found at:  
[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student\\_family/military/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student_family/military/index.shtml).

Dennis Jarrett, Chief Financial Officer for York County Public Schools, provided the members with an overview of the federal Impact Aid program. He provided a history of this program and how funding is sent from the federal government to individual school divisions to compensate the local school divisions for lost property tax revenue due to the presence of tax-exempt federal property. Mr. Jarrett also provided information regarding 'best practices' for the reporting of data by school divisions to the federal government to maximize the amount of the dollars distributed for Impact Aid. Senate Miller expressed an interest in contacting the federal government to express support for the program and

the need to fully fund the program to the best extent possible. Dr. Odom indicated that he would like to have more information on best practices.

There was a panel discussion regarding assistance provided to military transfer students as they are entering Virginia public schools. The following individuals participated:

- Cheryl Hiatt, Supervisor of Secondary Counseling and Student Support Services, Prince William County Public Schools
- Marian Leverette, Mid-Atlantic Regional School Liaison Officer, Naval Station Norfolk
- Dr. Alveta Mitchell, Director – Office of Guidance Services and Student Records, Virginia Beach City Public Schools

Melissa Luchau moderated the panel and each member provided an overview of their responsibilities and of the assistance that they provide to military families coming to Virginia.

Ms. Luchau asked the members about what they thought were the most pressing issues/needs in their respective areas. Dr. Mitchell indicated that Virginia Beach provides a great deal of assistance in the area of helping children handle anxiety and helping with other transition issues. Ms. Hiatt indicated that Prince William tries to provide as many resources as it can to military families, including camps where military children can enroll. Ms. Leverette indicated that school choice is an issue for the families that she works with and that she does get involved in deployment/custody issues. Panelists also indicated that they often assist military children with course placement and issues related to state assessments.

Ms. Luchau asked about challenges for families and improvements that could be made related to the compact. Dr. Mitchell responded that consistency of implementation is an issue. Ms. Hiatt indicated that guidance issued has been helpful and that more information is needed regarding the graduation requirements in other states. (Senator Miller asked Ms. Luchau to contact the compact national office to obtain more information about other states' graduation requirements.) Ms. Leverette echoed this need and indicated that she would also like to have contact information for individuals in other states. Ms. Leverette also mentioned that interscholastic sports is an issue.

Professor Bremseth asked about how families deal with bullying and all panel members indicated that this is an important issue and programs are in place to help families. Dr. Odom asked Ms. Leverette about how many families are affected by the deployment of both parents. Ms. Leverette indicated that about 6 out of 10 families she works with may have both parents deployed.

Ms. Luchau then discussed the communications plan for the Council. She provided an overview of the activities that have taken place since the Council first met in early 2010 and discussed plans to provide information about the Council in 2011. Ms. Luchau also

discussed the work that has been done to enhance the resources that can be found on the Virginia Department of Education's Web site devoted the Compact.

The Council then received public comment from two members of the audience. One commenter asked about the role of local school boards and about working with local parent-teacher associations. Another commenter asked if the Council could consider working with federal government to have Impact Aid data released that is needed by states to understand the demographics of the population.

Dr. Odom announced his retirement as the Superintendent of Hopewell City Public Schools effective June 30, 2011, and his resignation from the Virginia Council. He thanked members of the Virginia Council for their outstanding work on behalf of military families.

Senator Miller announced that the next Virginia Council meeting will take place on August 22, 2011 (time and location TDB). He closed the meeting by thanking the Council members.

Presentation materials from the meeting can 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).