

Virginia Council for the Interstate Compact on
Educational Opportunity for Military Children
Minutes: July 18, 2012

Council Members in Attendance:

Senator John C. Miller, Chair
Dr. William C. Bosher, Jr.
Professor Marlena E. Bremseth
Dr. Bobby R. Browder, Superintendent of Prince George County Public Schools
Dr. Patricia I. Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Council Members not in Attendance:

Delegate M. Kirkland Cox
Ms. Susan McIntosh
Dr. James G. Merrill, Superintendent of Virginia Beach Public Schools

Department of Education Staff in Attendance:

Melissa Luchau, Military Family Education Liaison
Anne Wescott, Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Communications
Michelle Parker, Senior Policy Analyst

Senator Miller called the meeting to order and welcomed Council members and guests.

The first item on the agenda was a presentation from Blue Star Families on the 2012 Military Lifestyle Survey Results. A copy of the presentation can be found [here](#). The presentation included the following highlights:

- The key concerns identified by the responding military family members were pay/benefits, with specific emphasis on changes to retirement benefits, the effect of deployment on children, general operational tempo, military spouse employment, and issues surrounding Post Traumatic Stress (PTS), combat stress, and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Eight percent of respondents indicated education was a top issue nationally.
- Parents' perceived benefits for their military child included exposure to different cultures/people, adaptability/independence, and appreciation of the sacrifice parent has made.
- Parents' concerns for their military child included challenges with Permanent Change of Station (PCSing), emotional effects, and deployments.
- 92 percent of respondents were confident that they make positive educational decisions during a deployment.
- 64 percent reported that their spouse's last or current deployment has affected their child's participation in extracurricular activities.

- Virginia's areas of strength included creating a smooth transition into the school, accessibility to previous school records, providing academic and extracurricular activity support, engaging in parent/teacher conference, providing school counseling services, and utilizing peer support programs.
- Areas of possible improvement in Virginia included creating opportunities to celebrate and include the military members in the classroom, use of the Military School Liaison, and adherence to the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.
- The 2012 Military Family Lifestyle Survey recommendations for education included:
 - Work with the Department of Education to increase training for educators about military children.
 - Support the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children at the state level through both additional state participation as well as implementation at the state level through formations of state commissions and allocations of state funds. Additionally, raise awareness of the Compact with military parents and civilian educators so that they understand the requirements of the compact.
 - Develop curriculum and lesson plans to discuss deployment and current military actions so that military children and their civilian peers can process these abstract ideas more easily.
 - Work with school systems to build awareness of and access to the Military School Liaison program.
 - At the university level, support universities that are focusing on the education of military connected students in their teacher education and mental health programs with initiatives such as “Operation Educate the Educators.”

Council members discussed the challenges in identifying military-connected children in schools, and the importance of connecting military-connected children with counselors for academic, social, and emotional support.

The next item on the agenda was a presentation from Old Dominion University's Center for Educational Partnerships on the Teaching, Education and Awareness for Military-connected Children (TEAMS) initiative. A copy of the presentation can be found [here](#). The presentation included the following highlights:

- TEAMS conducted a needs assessment of military-connects schools in Virginia, finding that few educators reported receiving preparation specific to military-connected students, but educators recognize military students as a unique population and report a desire for more specific preparation in how to effectively educate them.
- The categories of school needs identified by principals, teachers, and counselors included academic support, social-emotional support, school leadership and student records, cultural awareness and responsiveness, and school-military community partnerships.

- ODU offers a Military Child and Families Education Graduate Certificate to provide educators with specialized expertise in meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of military-connected students.

Council members discussed specific challenges for military-connected children including:

- Identifying and tracking of military-connected students as they move throughout the year.
- Different curricula from state to state.
- Transfer of IEP records and issues with service delivery.
- Establishing of procedures and routines in the classroom at the beginning of the year, before military-connected children may have PCSed.
- Families not having knowledge of the interstate compact.
- Mathematics and social studies are often areas of particular challenge.

Council members also noted that in many provisions of the interstate compact, the local school division has flexibility in defining the requirements and procedures. There was a suggestion for the TEAMS initiative to include a recognition program for schools, to encourage teams of educators at a school to participate in the program.

The Council then received public comment from two members of the audience. Mr. Bill Flanagan spoke on behalf of Delegate Cox and commended the Council and the Department for the work they are doing to make Virginia a leader on military issues. Mr. Tom Baker noted an opportunity to participate in an Army Educator Tour, a time for community and education leaders to see how the Army operates a training facility for new Soldiers.

Senator Miller closed the meeting by thanking the Council members and guests. The next meeting of the Virginia Council for the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children is scheduled for December 6, 2012.

Presentation materials from the meeting can be found at:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student_family/military/va_council/index.shtml.