

Virginia Council for the Interstate Compact on
Educational Opportunity for Military Children
Minutes: April 10, 2013

Council Members in Attendance:

Senator John C. Miller, Chair

Dr. William C. Boshier, Jr.

Dr. Bobby R. Browder, Superintendent of Prince George County Public Schools

Dr. James G. Merrill, Superintendent of Virginia Beach Public Schools

Dr. Patricia I. Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Council Members not in Attendance:

Professor Marlena E. Bremseth

Delegate M. Kirkland Cox - Mr. Bill Flanagan, chief of staff, attended the meeting on
Delegate Cox's behalf.

Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Staff in Attendance:

Melissa Luchau, Military Family Education Liaison

Dr. Donna Poland, Specialist, Governor's Schools & Gifted Education

Mr. Michael Bolling, Director, Mathematics & Governor's Schools

Senator Miller called the meeting to order and welcomed Council members and guests. He noted that April is designated as "The Month of the Military Child" to recognize the contributions of children whose parents serve in the military and celebrate their spirit. School divisions are encouraged to take time in April, and throughout the year, to recognize the service of military servicemen and servicewomen, their families and their children.

The meeting began with a presentation from Dr. Donna Poland, VDOE specialist, on navigating gifted education and governor's school programs as a military transfer student. Dr. Poland's presentation included the following main points:

Gifted Programs

- Virginia law allows school divisions to establish gifted education policies and procedures according to the needs and interests of the local division.
- School divisions that offer an enriched curriculum and instruction to all students may find that the regular curriculum meets the academic needs of a gifted child.
- Once a family has established residency, they should contact the new school division's gifted coordinator to determine the educational services that best meet the needs of the child based on the division's available service options.

Governor's School Programs

Academic Year Governor's Schools (AYGS) are established as joint schools by

Virginia school law and, as such, they are managed by a regional governing board of representatives from the school boards of each participating division.

- Once residency has been established, a family should contact the school division's gifted coordinator regarding the student's interest in a governor's school. If the student has moved to the area after the application deadline, he/she will be allowed to complete an application and submit it to the AYGS director or participating school division coordinator for consideration in the AYGS program. If AYGS student selection has already been made, the student's application will be received, reviewed and, if deemed a viable candidate, their name will be placed on a waiting list in accordance with their ranking amongst the other waitlisted applicants.
- School division administration will work with all transferring students to assist in appropriate course placement in either an AYGS program or other high school service options.

Dr. Merrill asked how students who transfer in the middle of the school year are accommodated. Dr. Poland responded that schools cannot hold open a slot for a student that may or may not come, so it depends on space availability in the program or school. Senator Miller asked how many students do not find placement each year. Dr Poland recognized that it is more of an issue with gifted programs because identification and services a student was receiving in another state or locality may not match with the services provided in the new school division. Dr. Wright noted that although a child may be gifted in another state or school division, the receiving school may not identify the student as gifted because the student's academic needs are met by the enriched curriculum and instruction offered to all students. She also indicated that there is an appeals process for families related to gifted programs and governor's schools.

The meeting continued with a presentation from Prince George County Schools, highlighting their efforts as a military k-12 partner. Some of the initiatives underway in schools to assist military connected children include:

- Student to student mentoring in middle and high schools
- Deployment support groups
- "Soldiers in our School" program, in which soldiers participate in physical education classes with students
- "Wall of Honor" in every school
- Memorial garden to honor military families
- Care packages and pen pals
- Fort Lee quarterly meetings with military leaders
- Fort Lee military and civilian council
- DoDEA Grants which have allowed Prince George to implement more professional development activities, after school tutoring, and intervention services to increase student achievement.

Senator Miller asked how military students are identified. Ms. Renee Williams, assistant superintendent for Prince George County Public Schools, noted that all schools in the division are responsible for identifying military children in the school. Dr. Browder

noted that the professional development programs and school tutoring and intervention services would not have been possible without the DoDEA grant funding.

The meeting also included a presentation from Melissa Luchau, military family education liaison. Mrs. Luchau discussed the celebrations surrounding April as the "Month of the Military Child," and encouraged school divisions to take time to recognize military families and children in the community. She also discussed updates to the military families' resource webpage (http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student_family/military/index.shtml) which include additional tools and guidance documents for families and school divisions.

Council members suggested adding a link to the resource page from the VDOE homepage. Dr. Merrill noted that the Virginia Beach City School Board recently adopted a resolution honoring April as the "Month of the Military Child," hosted a reception and art contest to honor military families, and participates in regional meetings twice a year with military installation leaders to discuss important issues.

The Council received public comment from two members of the audience. Mr. Bill Flanagan, chief of staff for Delegate Kirk Cox, expressed his gratitude for efforts of the Virginia Council to assist military families. He asked Dr. Browder about the school division's loss of funds, and Dr. Browder indicated that state funding has decreased and federal funds/impact aid has been cut. Mr. Chris Dixon, regional school liaison officer, commented that the military families' resource webpage is user friendly, but it would be helpful to have a link to the page on the VDOE homepage. He also suggested the creation of a Smartphone application to access the material.

Senator Miller closed the meeting by thanking the Council members and guests.

The agenda, presentation materials, and video of the meeting can be found at:
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student_family/military/va_council/index.shtml.