

Virginia Council for the Interstate Compact on
Educational Opportunity for Military Children
Minutes: April 29, 2014

Council Members in Attendance:

Delegate M. Kirkland Cox, Chair
Dr. William C. Bosher, Jr.
Dr. Bobby R. Browder
Senator John C. Miller
Mrs. Tammy Smith

Council Members not in Attendance:

RADM David O. Anderson
Mrs. Marlena E. Bremseth
Dr. Patricia I. Wright

Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Staff in Attendance:

Melissa Luchau, Military Family Education Liaison
Anne Wescott, Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Communications

Delegate Cox called the meeting to order and welcomed Council members and guests. Delegate Cox noted that April is the “Month of the Military Child.” He also noted that Dr. Patricia Wright, Superintendent of Public Instruction, will retire effective May 1, 2014. Dr. Wright was state superintendent when Virginia joined the Interstate Compact and has served as the Compact Commissioner since its inception.

The meeting began with a presentation from the Virginia National Guard Youth Program, represented by Drew Davis, lead child and youth coordinator, and Allison Mecadon, child and youth coordinator. A copy of their presentation is available online (http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student_family/military/va_council/meeting_materials.shtml#apr042914).

Mr. Davis noted the Virginia National Guard armories throughout the Commonwealth, and the disbursement of National Guard youth. The Virginia National Guard Youth Program provides the following supports:

- Youth development
- Youth programming
- Information and referral
- Briefings to service members and families
- Deployment support
- Building community capacity

Senator Miller asked if the National Guard has school liaison officers, similar to other military branches. Mr. Davis noted the Virginia National Guard Youth Program has a different structure, which makes partnership even more important. Delegate Cox asked

about how connections with National Guard youth are made. Mr. Davis noted that summer camps are the best way to involve and connect with National Guard youth. Ms. Mecadon also noted a teen panel which provides helpful feedback on what is needed for National Guard youth. Mr. Davis also noted the free services tutor.com provides to military youth.

The meeting continued with an update from Mrs. Anne Wescott, assistant superintendent for policy and communications at the Virginia Department of Education. Mrs. Wescott noted recent guidance issued by the Department related to the physical education requirements for transfer students. A copy of the guidance document is available online (http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2014/098-14.shtml).

Mrs. Melissa Luchau provided the Council with a summary of “Month of the Military Child” celebrations in the Commonwealth. A copy of the presentation is available online (http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student_family/military/va_council/meeting_materials.shtml#apr042914). Dr. Boshier commended the celebrations and noted the importance of students feeling the connection between their classrooms and their parents’ service.

The meeting continued with a discussion of the Council’s goals, priorities, and strategies for communicating with families and educators. Delegate Cox opened the floor for public comment. There were four speakers:

1. Chris Dixon, Navy Region Mid Atlantic school liaison, presented three ideas to the Council:
 - a. A letter to all superintendents including three ways to welcome military families – menu button on homepage of school Web site, invite school counselors to Virginia Council meetings, and display brochures for military families in school offices.
 - b. A letter to all principals including three ways to welcome military families – student sponsor teams and deployment support groups, facilitate partnerships with commands for military volunteers, full page yearbook ad with information about the Compact, school liaison officers, and military families.
 - c. Certificates of Compact membership for all schools.
2. Megan O’Day and Wendy Sullivan, Ft. Belvoir school liaison officers, noted two obstacles:
 - a. With the high turnover rate for educators and a lack of mandatory training, many student records are corrected after the fact
 - b. There is a lack of formal school division operating procedures to apply the provisions of the Interstate Compact

Ms. O’Day and Ms. Sullivan proposed that every school division submit a Comprehensive Compact Training Plan, and that the Department of Education create 15-30 minutes mandatory online training applications.

3. Nancy Elzie, Ft. Lee school liaison officer, noted that many educators are aware of the Interstate Compact, but many military families are still not aware. More education needs to be done for military families. She suggested incorporating information about the Compact into the in-processing process, and getting buy in from the installations.
4. Liz Barnes, Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall school liaison officer, reiterated the lack of knowledge of many military families when it comes to the Interstate Compact. She suggested a YouTube video or webinar to highlight the components of the Compact. She also expressed concern that our schools do not know who the military children are because there is not a standard way to identify military youth at enrollment.

Dr. Browder suggested that the military family education liaison contact organizations like the Virginia Association for School Superintendents, Virginia School Boards Association, VA Parent Teacher Association, etc. to speak about the Compact at their annual conferences. He also noted that local governing bodies, like city councils and boards of supervisors, need education on the Interstate Compact. Senator Miller noted that identification of military children is critical to providing resources. Dr. Boshier noted that impact aid is one way to identify military youth, but it is often an undercount. Dr. Boshier also asked for more information about the transience of educators. Ms. Smith noted the need for a standardized means of identifying military youth on school enrollment forms. Delegate Cox asked Ms. Luchau to report back to the Council at its next meeting about the implications of a standard military identifier on the Student Record Collection.

Delegate Cox closed the meeting by thanking the Council members and guests. The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for August 19, 2014 at 1:00 pm.

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.