

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

Monday, December 19th, 2016

10:30 a.m.

Jefferson Conference Room, James Monroe Building
101 N. 14th Street, Richmond, VA 23219

Minutes

The following Council members were in attendance: Delegate M. Kirkland Cox (Chairman), Jill Gaitens, Dr. John B. Gordon, III, Secretary John Harvey, Dorothy McAuliffe, Dr. Steven R. Staples, and Brad Williams.

The following Council members were absent: Senator Mamie Locke and Dr. Aaron Spence.

Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Delegate Cox called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and welcomed Council members and guests.

Delegate Cox introduced Secretary John Harvey and welcomed him to the council.

Approval of the May 23, 2016, Meeting Minutes

Mr. Brad Williams made a motion to adopt the May 23, 2016, minutes as drafted. Dr. Jill Gaitens seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

Special Presentation of Resolution

Delegate Cox presented a resolution recognizing Melissa Luchau's contributions to the Council and for her service as the Virginia Military Education Liaison, on the occasion of her departure from the position. A copy of the resolution is provided below.

January 10, 2017

As Chairman of the *Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact*, it is my honor to recognize your service to the Council and military families in Virginia.

During your time at the Virginia Department of Education, in the role as Director of Board Relations and Military Family Liaison, you served as the primary staff support to not only the Virginia State Board of Education, but also to the *Virginia Council*. In this role you have been a leading force supporting Virginia's efforts to educate stake holders across the Commonwealth on principles related to the Interstate Compact. Your work to elevate the state's discourse on the educational needs of military families and students through trainings, outreach, commemorating Month of The Military Child and Purple Up Virginia day, and serving as the Virginia Commissioner's designee at National Interstate Compact meetings, has been vital to the *Council's* success.

Your steadfast commitment to the care and education of the children of those serving in our armed forces will be missed by us here at the *Virginia Council*, but will serve you well as you transition into a career in school guidance counseling. I am confident that your passion for helping students and families combined

with your dedication to ensuring that all Virginia students reach their full potential will serve you well in your future endeavors.

On behalf of the *Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children*, you have my sincere congratulations and gratitude for a job well done.

Sincerely,

M. Kirkland Cox
Chairman
Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact

Remarks from Council towards Melissa Luchau

First Lady of Virginia Mrs. Dorothy McAuliffe took time to also thank Melissa Luchau for all her work on behalf of military families across the Commonwealth. Dr. Staples shared his satisfaction of Melissa's logistical work for the council. Mr. Brad Williams and Dr. Gordon each expressed their personal appreciation for Melissa's assistance when both joined the Council. Jill Gaitens expressed her pleasure with Melissa's work with school liaison officers (SLO's) and for personally assisting her as she came aboard the Council. Secretary Harvey committed on Melissa's satisfactory performance making a point that she would be welcomed if she ever chose to return to this form of public service.

Introduction of Daniel Dunham, VDOE Military Student and Families Specialist

Melissa Luchau introduced Mr. Dan Dunham as the newly appointed Military Student and Families Specialist. She indicated that he would assume her responsibilities of coordinating council meetings and responding to transitional needs of military families.

Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3) Annual Business Meeting DEBRIEF

Mr. Dunham provided the Council with a DEBRIEF of the MIC3's annual business meeting. He highlighted that Virginia is now home to more military connected students than any state in the nation making the work of the Council even more impactful. During the annual business meeting the Commission's executive committee shared that it would be undergoing strategic planning realizing that the timing to be right with the appointment of a new Executive Director and having reached key milestones. The Strategic Plan will include five major strategies and action goals. Mr. Dunham went on to share that he joined the Commission's Rules Committee. By participating on this committee Mr. Dunham believes his time and understanding of state, federal and community partnerships will be of value. In addition, since the Rules Committee will be working on Key Strategy 3: *Establish and cultivate partnerships that leverage the vision of MIC3*, Mr. Dunham felt it opportune to serve on the committee so that he may take full advantage of the outcomes of their work.

Mr. Dunham then reviewed the outcomes from discussions held during breakouts on two rule change proposals sent to the commission. They were;

1. Temporary Housing and the impact on Student Intrastate Transitions
2. Military Interstate Compact inclusion of the Non-Title 10 Guard and Reserves.

It was the consensus of the state commissioners that warranting a rule change would not be required for either topic. On the rule change related to temporary housing, the majority felt the Interstate Compact, as written, covered students until they were permanently enrolled. Mr. Dunham went on to say that the respondents felt residency requirements by nature were complex and best resolved at the state and local level. On the rule change related to redefining active duty to include full time guardsman, the majority response was that the current definition was satisfactory seeing as the Interstate Compact's definition covers National Guard and Reserve families under active duty orders. They also felt that the request was one which concerned an intrastate move and not an interstate move and that the reasoning behind most intrastate moves was voluntary on part of the parents and not tied to active duty orders for which the Interstate Compact would cover.

Dr. Staples thanked Mr. Dunham for representing the State of Virginia at the MIC3 annual meeting.

Mrs. McAuliffe asked if the Council should insure, if not already denoted, that those families of National Guardsman on active duty orders are covered under the Interstate Compact rules. Dr. Staples and Mr. Dunham both indicated that they would look to see that the compact language contains that notation.

Report on the Virginia Military School Liaison Summit

Mr. Dunham provided the Council with an overview of the Virginia Military School Liaison Summit. He shared that school liaison officers (SLO's) from across the state gathered in October at the Virginia War Memorial to share best practices and challenges they faced. Mr. Dunham indicated that the challenges presented by SLO's mirrored those challenges presented earlier in the year by Virginia Beach counselors Amanda Yoder and Megan Graman. His review of the challenges and suggestions for improvements included:

1. SLO's seek semi-annual updates on the challenges and/or successes of the Interstate Compact.
Mr. Dunham is in favor of providing these types of reports. He shared that he is tracking all inquiries and will be in a position to report trends and use data to guide future trainings.
2. SLO's are requesting that there be a statewide review of spaces at specialty centers, academies, IB programs, etc., as there is a strong need and interest from military students to enroll into these programs. The cutoffs vary by division, but many programs require applications by late winter, well before military families have moved to the division. This should be carefully considered for transitioning students after deadlines/cutoffs.
Mr. Dunham believes that the Compact currently provides school divisions with the flexibility to enroll students into these programs outside of the cutoff so long as space remains available. Any move to create an additional system whereby the school division must hold seats for future military student enrollees should only be done under careful consideration. Doing so limits the school division's ability to meet current demand. Mr. Dunham expressed that he believes that every effort should be made to inform incoming families of the programs prior to their coming and to permit them to apply prior to their

arrival and/or permit them to be placed on the waiting list should they learn of the program after their arrival.

3. SLO's also stressed that some transitioning families are having difficulty registering for school while in temporary housing, especially when they are staying in temporary lodging not located in the school district for which the student will reside permanently. Mr. Dunham again pushed for the need to develop guidance for school divisions on the issue of residency in order to reduce the likelihood that the student will endure unnecessary transitions.
4. SLO's called on the need for routine Military Culture Training for teachers, counselors and staff that work or interact with military families and students. Mr. Dunham agreed with this need and added that he also felt it would be useful for routine training to be developed for School Liaison Officers.
5. SLO's are concerned with the academic gaps that exist for students who move from a Common Core state. Pacing and content do not align to the VA SOL's, especially in the area of mathematics. Mr. Dunham indicated that he has plans to review this matter with the VDOE mathematics specialist in order to better understand the supports available for these students and their schools.
6. SLO's shared that they have students who struggle with courses weight calculations that adversely affect their overall GPA, thereby possibly limiting their competitive advantage when applying to college. Mr. Dunham informed the Council that the procedure currently calls for a school to provide clarification of a sending schools grading scale on a transcripts but does not call for them to explain a change in GPA as a result of the reduction to course weight. Mr. Dunham suggested that guidance needs to be developed at VDOE so school counselors are better equipped to explain these occurrences on student's transcript.
7. SLO's also expressed problems encountered by military families who move during the last two months of a school year. Mr. Dunham expressed the need for SLO's and school counselors to stress to parents the importance of connecting with the receiving school prior to their departure to reduce the likelihood of a student not being able to officially end their school year. He also recommended the VDOE look at developing guidance for school division who find the need to support a student who needs to end their year prior to departure because the receiving school has already ended their school year.

Delegate Cox asked Mr. Dunham how he will prioritize schools for training and also asked when he sees the training occurring and to what degree. Mr. Dunham responded that it is already occurring to some degree in Fairfax, Prince William and Stafford Counties. Fort Belvoir SLO's Jamie Albers and Wendy O'Sullivan confirmed they have been actively training school counselors in Fairfax County Public Schools and will be training staff in Prince William in the near future. Mid-Atlantic Regional SLO Debbie Patch confirmed plans to conduct similar trainings in school divisions across Hampton Roads. Mr. Dunham went on to point out that he will be working with Mr. Joe Wharff to develop proposals for presentations at state association meetings with immediate plans to submit a proposal to the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principal in the hopes of presenting at their annual conference in June of 2017.

Secretary Harvey thanked the SLO's for participating in the SLO summit and hopes that they can make it a semi-annual event. He went on to say that the plan is for SLO's to be invited to future

VMAC meetings so the body can be kept abreast of K-12 issues of importance to the military community across the Commonwealth. He ended by recommending that we continue to place emphasis on communication so the Council and others are always informed of what is occurring in the field.

Dr. Gordon then asked if guidance would be forthcoming concerning weighted courses and GPA calculations. Mr. Dunham indicated that the goal is to develop guidance for school counselors so they can better prepare transcripts for transfer students and calculate the weighted courses these students took previously.

Mrs. McAuliffe then shared that the Council should be out front in statewide support for providing guidance to school personnel on all matters affecting the education of military connected children. She went on to say that we should remain vigilant and rely on both the data and anecdotal evidence shared by counselors and SLO's as many military families aren't likely to voice concerns to the state level. Lastly, Mrs. McAuliffe shared that the taking of SOL tests for verified credit has been problematic for many military connected students, adding that many are required to take these assessments months after completing the course in a previous state. She wanted clarification that the guidance being developed also addressed these concerns. Mr. Dunham responded that the guidance will include support for counselors who are working with families to resolve issues like awarding verified credits.

Discussion of Goals for Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact for the Educational Opportunities of Military Children

Mr. Dunham then reviewed the goals he believed the Council should focus its attention on for the coming year based on the direction of MIC3 as well as the feedback gathered from counselors and SLOs. Mr. Dunham emphasized the needs of three stakeholders: Military Students and Families, School Divisions, and School Liaison Officers. The list below outlines the priorities he expressed. After each priority was shared the council commented on the goals communicated.

Priority Issues for Military Students and Families:

- Residency While in Temporary Housing
- Verified Credit Support
- Accessibility to Specialty Programs
- Mid-Year and End of Year Support

Needs of School Divisions

- Annual Military Awareness and Interstate Compact Training
- Guidance Around Verified Credits /Testing
- Guidance for Mid-Year and End of Year Support
- Impact Aide: Source Checks

Needs of School Liaisons

- Annual Training on State, School and Community Policy and Supports
- Routine Reports on Issues Concerning Military-Connected Students that reach VDOE

- Updated Policy Statement(s) from VDOE on Interstate Compact and other Policies Impacting Military- Connected Students
- VDOE Support with Impact Aide and Marketing Program Support Efforts

Comments from Council on Priority Issues for Military Students and Families:

Mrs. McAuliffe wanted to clarify that the accessibility concern is with the family who arrives after the deadline has passed and this should include access to extracurricular programs as well. Mr. Dunham acknowledged her clarification and explained that all aspects of the issue will be addressed.

Dr. Staples informed the Council that there were a number of experts, Brad Williams and Dr. Gaitens, on their Council whose experience may be helpful when addressing transition issues. He went on to point out that many of the issues can be resolved at the school level but there may be a hesitancy on the part of new counselors to make the decision to assist the student because of their not being aware of the flexibility to do so. Dr. Staples then addressed the issue concerning residency. He shared that there looks to be a need to connect residency to Federal Impact Aide counts. He went on to say that if school divisions would stand a better chance of garnering support to accept a military connected child into their school division if they communicated the link of Impact Aide dollars received by the federal government to augment the costs associated with educating these students.

Mr. Williams agreed that sometimes the problem of a military connected student not receiving the proper support during transition lies with those new to the counseling field. He added that there are other areas that prevent counselors from working out solutions of benefit to the student. That these are tied to local board issues. He ended by sharing that he and others in the field would welcome guidance from VDOE.

Dr. Staples concurred that Mr. Dunham is correct on the need to improve professional development (PD) for those in the field. He shared that Mr. Dunham will be connected to the newly hired PD professional at VDOE to support his development of this training. In addition Dr. Staples will look to add the Interstate Compact to orientations of new state superintendents.

Mrs. McAuliffe wanted to underscore that it's not just the length of time a counselor is working in the field but also at issue is the fact that some in the field feel that it is an individual decision making processes when in fact they should be seeking guidance from outside. Mr. Dunham acknowledged this point and expressed his goal to build a culture of trust so individuals don't feel they are alone in this process.

Comments from Council on Needs of School Divisions

Dr. Gordon expressed the need to encourage school divisions to clearly communicate timelines and due dates on their websites. Mr. Dunham acknowledged his response and made it known that Fairfax County had a model website that addresses many of the transitional needs of military families.

Secretary Harvey shared that many military service members are protective of their personal information as they are trained to do so. When it comes to Impact Aide reporting, the matter is a complex issue and one that perhaps warrants further investigation from the Council.

Dr. Staples shared that VDOE and the US Department of Education are engaging on the topic of Impact Aide source checks and that the discussions are ongoing. He concluded that the conversation should now be taken from an interagency level to the national level for resolve.

There were no comments from the Council following the presentation on the Needs of School Liaison Officers.

MCEC Convening

Ms. Joan Barrett provided a presentation on the Virginia Convening to be held in March 2017. She shared that this convening will involve a gathering of leaders from the education, community, and military for the purpose of working collaboratively to develop strategic plans focused on ensuring the community's support of its military-connected children and families. The facilitated process will guide participants in the development of a refined set of action steps to address challenges faced in the areas of academics, social emotional, and accessibility to opportunity.

Dr. Staples thanked Ms. Barrett for the presentation and sees this as an opportunity to connect all stake holders around issues outlined by Mr. Dunham previously.

Mrs. McAuliffe expressed her appreciation to Ms. Barrett for MCEC's work with Norfolk on their convening and shared her desire for MCEC to include superintendents at the upcoming state convening. Ms. Barrett acknowledged this point and shared that it was their intent to include superintendents or their designee. She also shared that it was their intent to include district level Directors of Student Services and a school principal from a highly impacted school within the division.

Open Discussion

Secretary Harvey shared that BRAC will be re-emerging as an issue in the near future and that the work of the Council to improve all aspects of the educational pursuits of military connected children will be an important factor when BRAC considerations begin. He further stated that Virginia is and will continue to be a national leader in addressing the transitional needs of military-connected children and that he takes great pride in being a member of a Council that insures these students receive the support they need.

Mrs. McAuliffe said that the council is a work of passion. She shared that she takes pride in having been a member of the Council. She also stated that she is no stranger to working with federal entities having worked with Secretary Harvey on the military identifier. She went on to say that she is open to working with military leaders on efforts to push federal agencies to work together on issues affecting military families. She ended by noting that the Council wishes go to on record with the acknowledgement of deployed active duty and Guardsman during this holiday, with particular emphasis on the families for their resilience and sacrifice, especially during this time of year.

Public Comment

Delegate Cox opened the floor for public comment

SLO's from across the state presented Melissa Luchau with congratulatory and appreciative remarks for her service to the military families. These remarks included; On behalf of the Air Force, Joint Base Langley Eustis, Gwen Lee, On Behalf of the Army, Fort Belvoir, Wendy O'Sullivan, On behalf of the Navy, Norfolk Naval Base, Debbie Patch.

Closed Session

Dr. Staples made a motion for the Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, hereafter referred to as the Virginia Council, convene in closed session pursuant to Section §2.2-3711(A)(2) of the Code of Virginia to discuss matters that would involve the disclosure of scholastic records of Virginia students and the disclosure of data collected from the identification of uniformed services-connected students, which is prohibited by Section § 22.1-287.04 (D) and that Virginia Department of Education staff Melissa Luchau, Daniel Dunham and John Brooks remain for the closed session to work with the Council. The motion was seconded by Secretary Harvey and carried unanimously. The Council went into closed session at 12:08 p.m.

Dr. Staples made a motion that the Council adopt a resolution certifying that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting in which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed session were heard, discussed, or considered by the Virginia Council. The motion was seconded by Delegate Cox.

In accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, a roll call vote was conducted:

Dr. John B. Gordon, III: yes

Dorothy McAuliffe: yes

Delegate M. Kirkland Cox: yes

Dr. Steven R. Staples: yes

Dr. Jill Gaitens: yes

Mr. Brad Williams: yes

Secretary Harvey: yes

Closing Remarks

Delegate Cox adjourned the meeting at 12:25 p.m.

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