

## INFORMATION PAPER

### **Subject: Military Permanent Change of Station (PCS) and School Attendance – the Impact on the Family, Students, and Education Accountability**

#### I. Background:

- a. Eileen Huck, Deputy Director, Government Relations of the National Military Family Association (NMFA), requested that the Commission discuss school policies and procedures when families arrive at a new location having missed a significant number of school days due to a PCS move.
- b. NMFA has received inquiries and concerns from families regarding states and districts imposing stricter attendance policies.
- c. Families could be on the road for several weeks during a PCS. Often moves do not always happen during summer or school breaks. Families who move during the summer have questions if their orders are in August and they are moving to a location with an early school year start date.

#### II. Compact language regarding excused absences:

- a. The Compact is specific and applies only to 'excused student absences as related to a military member's deployment to a combat zone'.
- b. The Compact does not provide guidelines regarding extended absences associated with a PCS move.

#### **Article V, Section E. Absence as related to deployment activities**

*A student whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the uniformed services, as defined by the compact, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted additional excused absences at the discretion of the local education agency superintendent to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian relative to such leave or deployment of the parent or guardian.*

#### **MIC3 Rules, SEC. 5.105 Absence as related to deployment activities**

*A student whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the uniformed services, as defined by the Compact, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted additional excused absences at the discretion of the LEA superintendent or head of school to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian relative to such leave or deployment of the parent or guardian. Notwithstanding the above, the LEA superintendent or head of school may provide a maximum number of additional excused absences.*

#### III. Discussion:

- a. The Compact does not apply to the PCS period in which a family is on route to a new duty station. While military orders provide a mandatory report date for the active duty member, it does not define the timeframe for the transfer. The transition timeframe is determined by the family.
- b. The Commission will ultimately advise school districts to do what is in the best interest of the student and ensure to the best of their ability the continuity of the student's educational experience.

- c. Military families planning a PCS move are responsible for communicating with both the sending and receiving school district and/or school, and obtaining important school dates and information.
- d. Military families must assess the potential impact of taking extended leave prior to arrival at the new duty station on a child's education and promotion to the next grade, especially in cases where a student will miss the start of the school year, or in some cases, the end of the school year.
- e. Early communication is the key to ensuring award of course credit, and exit exams are completed and/or waived appropriately in an end-of-year situation. It can alleviate problems if the student arrives after the start of the school year in the receiving state.
- f. Service School Liaisons Officers (SLO) are a key resource for families during any PCS move. Good relationships between the SLO and the school personnel can assist in resolving many issues - sometimes before they occur.
- g. Engagement between military commanders and the local school district may assist in school personnel awareness that arise from PCS situations.

#### IV. References or resources

- a. Article V, Section E of the [Interstate Compact for Educational Opportunity for Military Children](#)
- b. Chapter 500, Section 5.105 of the [Rules of the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission](#)
- c. [Chronic Absenteeism in the Nation's Schools](#), U.S. Department of Education (<http://www2.ed.gov/datastory/chronicabsenteeism.html#intro>)
- d. [Key Policy Letters from the Education Secretary or Deputy Secretary](#), U.S. Department of Education (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/secletter/110301.html>)
- e. [School Attendance: Focusing on Engagement and Re-Engagement](#), Department of Defense Education Activity (<http://www.dodea.edu/attendance/upload/school-attendance-research.pdf>)

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