

Training Efforts Support Commission Outreach

By Lindsey Dablow, MIC3 Training and Operations Associate

February 12, 2020 - Since the Commission celebrated the adoption of the Compact by 50 states and the District of Columbia in 2014, it has shifted its focus from securing member states towards regulatory compliance, awareness and educating stakeholders who support our mission of "successful educational transitions".

Though the Commission has always strived to inform schools and parents about the Compact the organization's first strategic plan in 2016 initiated the restructuring of the national office, to direct efforts toward building stronger partnerships with stakeholders and ex-officio member organizations.

Under the 2016 strategic plan, the Commission restructured two associate staff positions - one focused on Communications and Outreach, and the second on Training and Operations. As the MIC3's Training Associate, I am responsible for developing, implementing, and maintaining training for the Commission, in addition to administrative operations responsibilities. Over the past two years, the Commission has expanded training options offered to the states. In addition to the *101 Compact Brief* which outlines the foundation and provisions, a second interactive *Case Study* session and a third session featuring several Commissioners presenting unique cases and perspectives from their states were developed.

In collaboration with State Commissioners, we've provided 11 training sessions for over 500 stakeholders - school district personnel; state council members; and Air Force, Army, and Marine school liaison officers (SLO). These sponsored events are in addition to the independent trainings conducted by State Commissioners and military school liaison officers. The Commission also works with other stakeholder groups to inform and support military families. "The MIC3 was a key partner in planning and running Air University's September 2019 Public K-12 Education Symposium," said Dr. Brian Selmeski, Chair of the Public K-12 Education Working Group. "With the Commission's help, we educated over 240 civic leaders, school administrators, teachers, and parents about the challenges faced by military-connected children and what they can do to help!"

The feedback from stakeholders has been overwhelmingly positive. After a recent training in Washington State, Anacortes Public Schools Assistant Superintendent K.C. Knudson emphasized the importance of awareness. "The training helped parents deepen their understanding of the guidance and the support available to them." he said, "the (session) eased stress, helping the parents and school administration realize there are laws and people ready to support them through these critical transitions."

In September 2017, the MIC3 Executive Committee signed the first memorandum of understanding with the Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA), an ex-officio member since the Commission's inception. This collaboration led to MISA school districts, heavily impacted areas that serve military dependents, hosting seven trainings sessions - covering 60 school districts and 205 participants. With additional sessions scheduled in 2020, the collaboration benefits the school communities serving military students and families transitioning into the school system. "The initiative is a win-win for schools and families," said Kyle Fairbairn, MISA's Executive Director, "educating stakeholders about the Compact also allows MISA schools to share best practices and solutions that support students and families."



Both initiatives have increased the demand for the Commission's training publications which are available at no cost to states. In 2018, the Commission distributed 13,990 parent guides and brochures compared to 8,925 in 2017 - a 57% increase in only one year. In 2019, 21,256 collaterals were requested, an increase of more than 50% from the prior year.

With the adoption of MIC3's second strategic plan at the Annual Business Meeting this past October, the Commission will explore other avenues to educate on the unique challenges of military children and ease their education transitions. "The Commission's initiatives are due to the commitment by members to work together and knowing what we do makes a difference," emphasized MIC3 Chairman and Arkansas Commissioner John I. "Don" Kaminar.

For more information contact Lindsey Dablow at ldablow@csq.org or 859-244-8067.