

## **2022-2023 Alabama MIC3 End of the Year Report**

**Submitted by Dr. Douglas L. Ragland, Alabama Commissioner**

**There have been excellent accomplishments during the 2022-23 year in the state of Alabama in relation to MIC3 and Military Families in general, as well as other governmental issues in our state and they are as follows:**

- The Honorable Governor Kay Ivey approved a Military Proclamation for Month of the Military Child on April 15, 2023. I have attached the Proclamation to this email.**
- The Honorable Governor Kay Ivey approved a Commendation for the Alabama Council under the leadership of Dr. Douglas L. Ragland on June 22, 2023. I have attached the Proclamation to this email.**
- I am currently a member of the Legislative Appointed Alabama Purple Star Schools Committee. This committee, along with the support of the Alabama State Superintendent of Education have increased the number of Purple Star Schools to 175 as it stands for 2023. This is an increase of 122 additional schools that were designated Purple Star School status in 2023.**
- We have successfully resolved all cases pertaining to our Military Families in Alabama for 2022-23.**
- The River Region Summit was held in February and March 2023 in Phenix City and Huntsville Alabama. These summits are professional development opportunities for the local school systems on MIC3, S2S programs, and overall support for Purple Star School Program (PSSP).**

**Erica Lewis, School Liaison Officer for Redstone Arsenal has displayed excellent leadership as a School Liaison Officer in her community for 2022-23 are as follows:**

**\*SLO, along with the Redstone Arsenal Garrison Commander, COL Brian Cozine, participated in the Impact Aid kickoff with our 3 local school districts (Huntsville City Schools, Madison City Schools, and Madison County Schools). Throughout the campaign, information was shared with RSA workforce and residents on Impact Aid.**

**\*SLO partnered with Lindsay Dablow to facilitate a virtual Compact 101 training for educators and administrators in Madison County School System. The training was very informative, and the staff were very appreciative.**

**\*Successfully re-established the weekly RSA Home School Program.**

**\*SLO coordinated with local schools to have over 120 people from RSA organizations participate in Read Across America. Volunteer readers went to 12 different schools across 3 school districts to read to students on Dr. Seuss's birthday. They shared stories and the importance of reading. \*SLO and RSA Garrison Commander, COL Brian Cozine shared opening remarks for the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) 360 Summit. The SLO talked with educators about the role of a School Liaison Officer and thanked them for the vital role teachers' play in easing the transition of military-connected students.**

**\*SLO served as a reviewer for the state's 2022 Purple Star Schools applications. All 3 school districts in Madison County are now Purple Star Districts.**

**\*SLO conducted a parent workshop titled "Kindergarten Here We Come" to help parents and their children prepare for the transition to kindergarten. Parents learned about developmentally appropriate tasks that are indicators of readiness for kindergarten as well as ways they can start preparing their child for kindergarten. At the end of the presentation, participants were given a copy of The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn.**

**\* SLO presented to teachers at Williams Elementary School on "Connecting Military Youth During Transition- Social and Emotional Considerations School Response and Support." The staff was very receptive of the information presented.**

**\*SLO held the annual Kindergarten Boot Camp for children in the Strong Beginnings program in May. 35students were able to rotate through stations to help them see what a day of kindergarten will be like once they start school. Ms. Tenisha Cummings, principal of Williams Elementary School, came out to talk to the students about what to expect as a kindergarten student. It was a fun event for all.**

**The following report from Maxwell Air Force for Robert Richert and Katherine Ganster, highlights MIC Issues, Non-MIC3 Issues, Legislative Actions, Purple Star Schools and Community Partnerships:**

#### **MIC3 Issues**

- A Military student transferred to AL from TX (mid-year) with enough HS credits to graduate on time in TX but not in AL, thus AL school would not allow on-time graduation. The School Liaison office connected the two districts and requested to invoke Compact rule SEC.4.103 Transfers during Senior Year. The student completed TX coursework in AL and received a TX diploma in AL this past May (2023).**

- **A Military student transferred to AL from CA with enough HS credits to graduate on time in CA but not in AL, thus AL school would not allow on-time graduation. The School Liaison office connected the two districts and requested to invoke Compact rule SEC.4.103 Transfers during Senior Year. The student completed CA coursework and Senior Project (Community Service) in AL and received a CA diploma in AL this past May (2023).**
- **Consultation with local Jr. High School Principal about MIC3 and additional excused absences for dependents of active duty departing for/returning from deployment, SEC.5.105, Absence as related to Deployment Activities.**

### **Non MIC3 Issues**

- **Consultation with parents who received a truancy letter from the County Attendance Officer. The parent was under the impression that the child's absences were excused due to his active-duty status. Upon further discussion with the parent, it was determined that the absences were unexcused as they were not related to him departing for/returning from deployment (SEC.5.105, Absence as related to Deployment Activities). School Liaison advised the parent to contact the Case Officer and determine how to best resolve the issue.**
- **An incident was reported at a school board meeting regarding a drug search of a student's (not military) vehicle at a local HS. Concern was expressed to the Superintendent about who was responsible to search the vehicle (RSO, Principal vs responding police officer on scene). The district is working with local police to determine processes/protocols for future searches on school property.**
- **An incident was reported at a school board meeting regarding a student (not military) in possession of a handgun on the campus of a local HS. The incident was reported to school administrators by a fellow student. The school board/Superintendent established a "State of School" meeting to inform parents of the issue and how districts/schools are responding.**
- **The parent (not military) addressed the school board over her concerns regarding recent events (fighting, gun possession) at the local Jr. HS. She expressed concern for her child and other children's safety on campus. She also relayed her displeasure at how the school failed to notify parents of the issues on campus.**
- **The local school board discussed instituting a clear bag policy on school campuses as a result of recent incidents at local schools (gun/drug possession). Several parents raised concerns to the Superintendent/School Board about incidents of weapons, drug searches, and fights in HS/Jr. HS campuses.**
- **Bullying issue at local school. The parent contacted the school liaison seeking guidance on how to address the bullying issue which (in her opinion) was not being**

handled properly by the school administration. School Liaison advised the parent of the school's bullying policy and provided the school's form to file an official complaint. The bullied child was provided with a safety plan for the remainder of the school year.

**Legislation (we are following)**

- **Alabama HB43 - To amend Section 16-28-4, Code of Alabama 1975, relating to the minimum age for attendance at public schools; to require a child to complete kindergarten or demonstrate first-grade readiness before entering the first grade; to provide for circumstances under which a child who is under five years of age on September 1 may be admitted to public kindergarten; to provide for circumstances under which a child who is under six years of age on December 31 may be admitted to public school first grade; and in connection therewith would have as its purpose or effect the requirement of a new or increased expenditure of local funds within the meaning of Section 111.05 of the Constitution of Alabama of 2022.**

- **Sponsor – Pebblin Warren**

**Introduced (50% - Passed in the House) – February 23, 2023**

- **Alabama HB90 - Relating to special education; add Section 16-39-3.1 to the Code of Alabama 1975, to provide that certain students with an intellectual disability are entitled to certain educational services up to the student's twenty-sixth birthday.**

**Sponsor – John Rogers**

**Introduced (25%) – March 7, 2023**

- **Alabama HB164 - Relating to public high schools; to require students to complete a personal financial literacy and money management course before graduation; to provide for the creation and administration of a financial literacy examination; and to require the reporting of a summary of examination results to the State Department of Education.**

**Sponsor – Andy Whitt**

**Introduced (75% - Passed in the House and Senate) – March 21, 2023**

- **Alabama HB218 - Relating to public K-12 education and the Alabama Accountability Act of 2013; to amend Sections 16-6D-3, 16-6D-4, 16-6D-6, 16-6D-8, and 16-6D-9, as amended by Act 2022-390, 2022 Regular Session, Code of Alabama 1975; to change the designation of a failing school to a fully supported school and the designation of a nonfailing school to a non-fully supported school; and to require the State Board of Education to reflect those changes in terminology when amending or adopting rules relating to the Alabama Accountability Act of 2013.**

**Sponsor – Artis McCampbell**

**Introduced (25%) – March 23, 2023**

- **Alabama HB261/SB211 - Relating to two-year and four-year public institutions of higher education; to amend Section 16-1-52, Code of Alabama 1975, to prohibit a biological male from participating on an athletic team or sport designated for**

**females; to prohibit a biological female from participating on an athletic team or sport designated for males; to prohibit adverse action against a public K-12 school or public two-year or four-year institution of higher education for complying with this act; to prohibit adverse action or retaliation against a student who reports a violation of this act; and to provide a remedy for any student who suffers harm as a result of a violation of this act.**

**Sponsor – Susan DuBose/April Weaver**

**Introduced (75% - Passed in the House and Senate) – April 5, 2023**

- **Alabama HB269/SB181 - Relating to K-12 public education; to amend Section 16-1-14, Code of Alabama 1975; to provide legislative findings; to provide a uniform system of procedural due process protections for students facing suspension or expulsion for violating the student code of conduct or state law; and to require the State Board of Education to adopt rules to implement this act.**

**Sponsor – Terri Collins/Rodger Smitherman**

**Introduced (25%) – April 5, 2023/Indefinitely Postponed – May 31, 2023**

- **Alabama HB280 - Relating to the Military Family Jobs Opportunity Act; to amend Section 31-1-6, Code of Alabama 1975, as amended by Act 2022-92, 2022 Regular Session, to extend professional license reciprocity to spouses of United States Department of Defense civil servants; and to make nonsubstantive conforming changes to the law.**

**Sponsor – Phillip Rigsby**

**Introduced (25%) – April 11, 2023/Indefinitely postponed – May 2, 2023**

- **Alabama HB295/SB202 - Relating to education; to establish the Parental Rights in Children's Education (PRICE) Act relating to K-12 education; to secure the fundamental constitutional rights of parents to direct the education of their children; to create the PRICE Program; to establish a three-year phase-in period; to provide definitions; to establish the roles and responsibilities of the Parent Advisory Board, the Commissioner of Revenue, and the Department of Revenue; to create a process for granting education savings accounts; to establish funding mechanisms for the costs of education savings accounts and the administration of the program; to specify qualified expenses; to create requirements for education service providers; to establish an auditing, denial, and appeal mechanism for expenses, parents, participating students, and education service providers; to provide safeguards against any additional state control over or interference with nonpublic schools, their students, and their families; and to provide for legal remedies.**

**Sponsor – Ernie Yarbrough/Larry Strutts**

**Introduced (25%) – April 11, 2023**

- **Alabama HB354 - Relating to education; to amend Section 2 of Act 2022-290, now appearing as Section 16-40A-5, Code of Alabama 1975; to prohibit classroom instruction related to gender identity or sexual orientation in public K-12 schools at certain grade levels and in any grade level in a manner that is not age or developmentally appropriate; to require parents to be notified if there is a change in services or monitoring relating to his or her child's mental, emotional, or physical health; to require parents to be notified of health care services available to students and to allow a parent to opt his or her child out; to require parental consent for certain health care screenings or questionnaires for K-12 students; to provide parents with procedures to express their concern with a local board of education's compliance with certain policies; and to provide a remedy in certain situations.**

**Sponsor – Mack Butler**

**Introduced (25%) – April 20, 2023**

- **Alabama HB363 - Relating to the Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act; to amend Sections 16-6F-5, 16-6F-6, and 16-6F-10, Code of Alabama 1975, to change the appointment process for the Alabama Public Charter School Commission; to authorize the commission to hire staff; to require commissioners to receive annual training; to provide additional guidelines for the authorizing and application review process; to provide further for the operational and categorical funding of public charter schools in their first year of operation; and to clarify the per pupil federal, state, and local funding of conversion public charter schools during their first year of operation.**

**Sponsor – Terri Collins**

**Introduced (75% - Passed in the House and Senate) – June 1, 2023.**

- **Alabama SB37 - Relating to the Military Family Jobs Opportunity Act; to amend Section 31-1-6, Code of Alabama 1975, as amended by Act 2022-92, 2022 Regular Session, to extend professional license reciprocity to spouses of United States Department of Defense civil servants.**

**Sponsor – Sam Givhan**

**Introduced (75% - Passed in the House and Senate) – March 7, 2023**

### **Purple Star Schools**

- **122 additional schools were designated Purple Star School status in 2023. Bringing Alabama's total to 175 Purple Star Schools. 53 schools achieved Purple Star Status in 2022.**

### **Community Events/Partnerships**

- **SL office coordinated guest speakers/service members to present at local schools for Veteran's Day.**

- **SL office coordinated the delivery of over 200+ thank you cards for Veterans at area Veterans Homes (Alex City) and Hospitals (Tuskegee/Montgomery)**
- **Coordinated three resiliency events with School Liaison Office, Military Family Life Counselor, and local high school students. More than 100 students served.**
- **SL office coordinated a base visit by the local HS Marching Band and Culinary Arts/Hospitality program for the Month of the Military Child. Opportunity to showcase activities/programs of local HS to base families and educate HS students about life behind the gates at Maxwell AFB.**
- **Partnered with MCEC Parent Support Programs and offered several "Tell Me a Story" programs for school-age children. Air Base Wing Vice Commander was our most recent featured guest reader.**
- **Along with Operation Homefront coordinated a base event featuring information booths from fifteen community partners and provided 260 backpacks filled with school supplies to students.**
- **SL office coordinated with Retirement Systems of Alabama (RSA) to light Montgomery's RSA tower in Purple to honor and recognize Purple UP! Day for Month of the Military Child. We also collaborated with the Montgomery Chamber of Commerce to light the downtown fountain purple and the Prattville Chamber of Commerce to celebrate Purple Up Prattville (a recognition event for military children and the month of the military child)**
- **SL Office in conjunction with Air University K-12 Working Group coordinated a Proclamation from Governor Kay Ivey, for April's Month of the Military Child**
- **SL Office collaborated with MCEC and conducted three MIC3 101 training sessions for school/district office personnel MCEC's 360 conferences during the winter/spring sessions. Trained 85 school personnel.**
- **Coordinated base visit by over 200+ students to participate in Operation Welcome Home (VW traveling memorial)**
- **Kim Kozel has been so successful in resolving cases for families stationed at Ft. Novosel,( Formerly Fort Rucker) in Alabama and has been very successful in showing leadership in the community for our Military fFamilies, as well as making the community aware of MIC3. In Kim's community in Southeast Alabama Also in her Community in Southeast Alabama, all of Dale County Schools received the Purple Star School Distinction and two more school were awarded the distinction in Ozark City Schools, thus making all schools in the Ozark City School system Purple Star Designated Schools. Kim has also been very instrumental in Story Board**

**Events in the schools in her community and I have attached those events to this report.**

**In closing, As the Alabama Commissioner for MIC3, I am very proud of my Military Education Family Liaison, Department of Defense Military Representative, and School Liaison Officers, for their excellent work and leadership in resolving all cases related to the Compact, assisting those individuals with concerns out of the jurisdiction of the Compact, serving their respective communities with a Spirit of Excellence in creating partnerships benefiting military families via schools, government, and community organizations, and helping to bring awareness to the Compact, and other Military Interests.**