

State Council on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

Annual Meeting

Wednesday, August 11, 2021 2:30 p.m.

Participants and Guests use Zoom Link for remote participation:
<https://educationne.zoom.us/j/93651444105>

Minutes

The Nebraska State Council on Educational Opportunity for Military Children held its annual meeting on August 11, 2021. Publicized notice of the meeting was given by posting notice on the Department's website on the Internet, which gave the date and time of the meeting.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Brian Halstead, Deputy Commissioner of the Nebraska Department of Education and Council Commissioner of the State Council on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, called the meeting to order at 2:34 p.m.. The following members were present via ZOOM: Brian Halstead, Council Commissioner; Matthew L. Blomstedt, Commissioner of Education; Sara Hulac, Military Family Liaison and NDE Legal Counsel; Dr. Jeff Rippe, Superintendent, Bellevue Public Schools; Nikki Nader, Deputy Director for Installation Support, 55th Mission Support Group, 55 MSG/DD, Offutt Air Force Base serving as Col. Cooley's designee and Nicole Barrett, representative for Nebraska Senator Lynne Walz.

Phil O'Donnell, Military Affairs Liaison, Commission on Military and Veterans Affairs, Alexandria Evers, Government Relations Officer, Nebraska National Guard, as well as Tanya Butler and Roz Johnson, representatives from the Offutt Air Force Base located in Sarpy County, Nebraska, were also in attendance.

Brian Halstead announced the placement of the Open Meetings Act.

3. APPROVAL OF 2020 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Dr. Blomstedt, second by Sara Hulac: To approve the minutes of the September 16, 2020, State Council on Educational Opportunity for Military Children meeting.

Voting Yes: Blomstedt, Halstead, Rippe, Hulac and Nader
The motion passed.

4. REPORTS BY MEMBERS ON ACTIVITY OR ISSUES

Brian Halstead, Compact Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Nebraska Department of Education, stated that shortly after last year's annual meeting the NDE was contacted by the parents of a student who lived in Colorado and the father was deployed. The student was moved to Nebraska to reside with an aunt and uncle as the Colorado school was not allowing any extracurricular activities due to the pandemic, while the mother remained in Colorado. The Nebraska school district would not let the student participate in basketball due to an NSAA rule that requires a student to reside in the district for 90 days since neither legal parent were residing there. The mother was attempting to get a waiver of that requirement due to hardship. Compact Commissioner Halstead, along with legal counsel, did not believe this factual situation was covered under the Compact. Compact Commissioner Halstead reached out to the National Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3) wherein MIC3 agreed with this interpretation. The mother of the student accepted the decision and felt that they had exhausted all of their options.

Sara Hulac, Military Family Liaison and NDE Legal Counsel, stated that this past year she is not aware of any other issues than what was described above.

Dr. Jeff Rippe, Superintendent, Bellevue Public Schools, reported that the Bellevue Public Schools has not heard of any MIC3 issues this past year. Dr. Rippe expressed his appreciation of everyone's efforts and is looking forward to another great year.

Nikki Nader, Deputy Director for Installation Support, 55th Mission Support Group, 55 MSG/DD, stated that they were aware of the situation discussed above and have no other comments and reports no issues. Ms. Nader resonances Dr. Rippe's appreciation of Nebraska being very accommodating and military friendly, and the Offutt Air Force base is very cognizant of same.

Nicole Barrett, Policy Research Analyst, indicated that Senator Lynne Walz's office did not receive any indication of issues pertaining to the Compact this past year.

5. NEBRASKA COUNCIL POSITION ON INCLUSION OF GUARD/RESERVE

Compact Commissioner Halstead stated that he served on a Task Force for MIC3 to address the issue of possibly expanding language in the Compact to include Guard and Reserve personnel. Compact Commissioner Halstead provided the report concerning the development of a state position on the National Guard and Reserve. The MIC3 would like each state council to meet and develop a position on the issue and provide a report by the 31st of August regarding their state's position on same.

Phillip O'Donnell, Military Affairs Liaison, State of Nebraska Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs, has provided information to this Council regarding how this consideration could affect Nebraska.

Mr. O'Donnell introduced himself and thanked the Nebraska Department of Education for its effective, efficient, and student-focused implementation of the State Council on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

Mr. O'Donnell went on to state that while the State of Nebraska's Commission on Military and Veterans Affairs has not taken an official position regarding the potential expansion of the Compact to include members of the National Guard and Reserve, he would offer that informal conversations with a number of stakeholders suggest that this potential expansion makes sense for the State of Nebraska. Mr. O'Donnell stated that he will continue to field technical and demographic questions.

Mr. O'Donnell personally thanked Compact Commissioner Halstead for his service and leadership on the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission's National Guard and Reserve Task Force. These efforts matter in strategic basing decisions and in the lives of those who defend our country.

Dr. Rippe stated that he is very supportive of those students associated with National Guard and Reserve families and sees no reason to not include them in the Compact.

Nikki Nader stated that they see no impediments and if decided to include, it would be a welcomed addition.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD (NONE)

Compact Commissioner Halstead stated that seeing there were no objections he will offer to the Compact that the Nebraska Council supports National Guard and Reserve members having the same opportunities as active duty military members.

There being no further business to come before the Council, Compact Commissioner Halstead adjourned the meeting at 2:48 p.m.

***Support Materials for this meeting are available for inspection in the NDE's Legal Services Office**