

**KENTUCKY STATE COUNCIL
MILITARY INTERSTATE CHILDREN'S COMPACT COMMISSION**

Minutes

January 30, 2025 1:00PM EST

MS Teams, hosted from the Kentucky State Capitol

1. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Steven P. Bullard, Commissioner, Kentucky State Council
Called to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of January 30, 2024 meeting, along with the 2024 Annual Report, were shared by email following last year's meeting and prior to this year's meeting. Meeting contributors included Commissioner Bullard, Military MIC3 Representative Colonel Chris Ricci (Fort Knox Garrison Commander), Hardin County Schools Superintendent Teresa Morgan, Tracey Leath representing Christian County Public Schools Superintendent Chris Bentzel, State Senator Mike Wilson, Kentucky Department of Education Director of Government Relations Dr. Brian Perry, Fort Knox School Liaison Officer Brenda Weatherington, Fort Campbell School Liaison Officer Laquvia Garrett, Lindsey Dablow of the national MIC3 office staff, and Stacey Shane (KCMA). State Representative Myron Dossett was unable to participate.

3. NATIONAL OVERVIEW OF MIC3

Cherise Imai, National MIC3 Executive Director, presented an overview of current national MIC3 programs and briefly reviewed the 2024 Annual Business Meeting (ABM) held in October in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Developed in 2006 by the U.S. Department of Defense and the Council of State Governments, by 2015 it was adopted by all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The Compact eases educational challenges that military-connected students encounter and supports easing transfers between public school districts and U.S. Department of Defense schools. Issues covered by the compact include enrollment, placement and attendance, and graduation. Executive Director Imai said the Compact also features six ex-officio members with the addition of Blue Star Families this Fall. The other ex-officio members are Department of Defense, the Military Child Education Coalition, the Military Impacted Schools Association, the National Federation of State High School Associations, and the National Military Family Association.

Executive Director Imai noted that Kentucky State Commissioner Bullard was unable to attend the ABM due to illness. Commissioner Bullard continues to serve as the national Compliance Committee Chair, a role he has held since 2022. His report to the ABM as the Compliance Committee Chair was delivered in his stead by Compliance Committee member Commissioner

Dan Dunham of Virginia. Bullard was additionally scheduled to present an overview of Kentucky's state MIC3 program and related military activities/installations. That report will now be presented at the 2025 ABM in Indianapolis, Indiana this Fall.

Imai noted that the Finance Committee presented on an annual dues increase proposal that will be presented at the 2025 ABM. Commissioner Bullard will do a thorough review of that proposal later in today's meeting. She closed by reviewing how MIC3 builds awareness through resources to educate parents and schools. Available resources include free guides and brochures; monthly Compact 101 training; webinars in Spanish and American sign language; and training on request. The commission also launched a free online, on-demand training portal at mic3training.net.

4. STATE OVERVIEW OF MIC3

Commissioner Bullard was appointed by the Governor on August 20, 2019 to serve as the state commissioner for this national program as an additional duty for the Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs. The Kentucky MIC3 State Council was created by the Kentucky General Assembly during their 2008 session, through Senate Bill 68, sponsored by the late Senator Tom Buford.

Commissioner Bullard said Kentucky submitted our 2024 MIC3 Annual Report on June 30, 2024 and paid our annual dues on May 14, 2024. The MIC3 year runs July through June annually and payments are due by September 30. They are paid through the Department of Military Affairs, as KCMA has no budget function. This year's amount was \$10,355, based on K-12 dependents of military personnel assigned. Bullard submitted his mandatory annual Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest forms for 2025 online in November 2024. Bullard unfortunately was unable to attend the 2024 Annual Business Meeting due to illness (Covid). He was kept abreast of activities by national MIC3 staff.

Commissioner Bullard said that MIC3, which ensures smooth transfer to new school districts, is very effective here in Kentucky. We have a great partnership with Kentucky Department of Education and our DODEA school liaisons at Fort Knox and Fort Campbell. All elements continue to go well, he briefed. Our MIC3 State Council membership is full, and cases are at a minimum, with no cases thus far this current fiscal year thanks to the outstanding work of our school liaison officers at Fort Campbell and Fort Knox.

Commissioner Bullard said Kentucky MIC3 has no legislation pending for the 2025 or 2026 sessions. He noted that Kentucky's military community had an outstanding state legislative session in 2024, featuring House Bill (HB) 200, which fixed a technical error (common to all states due to citation error in initial implementation) in the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3) statute (KRS 156.730) and added the National Guard and Reserve to state MIC3 protection (KRS 176.735). In addition, HB 200 recognized the new U.S. Space Force and created a Space Force license plate, created a Legion of Merit medal license plate, and corrected the name of the Army Reserve Aviation Command at Fort Knox in our KCMA statute.

Additionally, the following military/veterans related bills passed during the 2024 session:

- HB 56 – KCMA and DOD priority Social Work Occupational Licensing Compact membership
- HB 397 – Support for military personnel and spouses in occupational licensing
- HB 453 – DOD priority Child Abuse case reporting to military installations
- HB 471 – Support for Advance Enrollment of military connected students
- HB 469 – Kentucky Purple Star Schools enabling legislation
- HB 715 – Military Family Assistance Trust Fund benefits expansion

In related activity, Commissioner Bullard noted that First Lady Brittainy Beshear visited Fort Knox DODEA schools on April 19, 2024 to promote the Month of the Military Child, meet installation leaders, and promote military family readiness. During the 2025 calendar year, the Kentucky Purple Star Schools program brought on over 50 new participating schools, bringing the number to well over 120 statewide. We expect Hardin County to become an all-Purple Star Schools county in 2025. We continue to utilize the outstanding videos filmed by the Governor and First Lady in 2021 and 2022 highlighting the Month of the Military Child, and issued a Governor’s proclamation honoring April’s Month of the Military Child on April 15, 2024.

5. OLD BUSINESS

Following the success of last year’s launch of Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood Plus (MCCYN-Plus) in Kentucky, Tennessee has now come on board and launched the program, to be benefit of Fort Campbell soldiers. Commissioner Bullard reviewed recent priorities outlined by the Commanding General of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and Fort Campbell, including child care provisions and the recent funding in the National Defense Authorization Act for a new Child Care Center. Fort Campbell has been authorized by the U.S. Army to launch a pilot child care program for military spouses, with Department of Defense funding home child care business opportunities. Fort Campbell has asked for assistance from the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, which has indicated their support, pending further information from the installation garrison command.

6. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Bullard led a discussion on a proposed national MIC3 dues increase. He said he has given both the State Budget Director and the Executive Director of the Kentucky Department of Military Affairs, which is charged by the Governor with paying this annual bill, a heads up for future planning, starting with the SFY2027 budget. Bullard said it looks virtually certain (overwhelming national support) that we’ll get an increase in our state Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission (MIC3) annual dues, likely around \$6,000 in SFY2027. The national MIC3 Finance Committee has published an information “toolkit” for all states to consider during the planning and evaluation process, which Bullard shared with the state council prior to today’s meeting. The national MIC3 council is seeking approval at this Fall’s national MIC3 Annual Business Meeting for an annual dues increase.

National MIC3 has only had one dues increase since its inception in 2007, and that was in 2017. Dues have not been indexed to inflation. Significant inflationary pressures have

created a need. Bullard said he is personally fully confident the national MIC3 staff and leadership team are exercising excellent judgment in the manner in which they administer the program, with appropriate legal and financial vetting.

Kentucky's portion of the annual national dues currently is \$10,355.00, based on K-12 dependents of full-time military personnel assigned to Kentucky. As noted earlier, per direction of the Governor, our annual national MIC3 dues are paid through the Kentucky Department of Military Affairs' budget process, which should be taken into account by state government. DMA is a fully supportive partner in this effort.

Kentucky is currently paying \$1.15 per tracked K-12 military dependent. The dues increase proposal would bring this to \$1.78 per child in dues year 2027, rising steadily to \$2.34 per child by dues year 2034. The associated cost for Kentucky (based on current military assignment numbers) would be \$16,104 in 2027, rising to \$21,170 in 2034. These are approximate numbers, because the actual number of dependents will change somewhat each year.

Bullard said that in his opinion as Kentucky's state MIC3 commissioner, member of the national MIC3 executive committee, and executive director of the Kentucky Commission on Military Affairs, Kentucky should support a national MIC3 dues increase for continuing support to military families in accordance with KRS 156.730/735. He noted support does not require a yes or no vote from our state council (nor does it require action by the Kentucky General Assembly outside the standard budget process); however, he wanted to ensure everyone's situational awareness and obtain a consensus from the committee at today's meeting. During today's discussion, state council members acknowledged the situation and expressed no reservations at all about supporting the proposed dues increase. Commissioner Bullard plans to vote in favor of the increase at the 2025 Annual Business Meeting.

7. OPEN DISCUSSION

Commissioner Hardin, superintendent of Hardin County Public Schools, noted that the Kentucky Purple Star Schools' two-year reapplication cycle creates an additional and unwelcome administrative burden on already overwhelmed school staff. Commissioner Bullard noted the cycle is primarily intended to keep points of contacts updated and schools engaged. Discussion ensued about possibly creating a much shorter reapplication form to ease the burden, a concept Commissioner Bullard will take to the Purple Star Schools Advisory Board in his role as chair of that organization.

8. NEXT MEETING

January 2026, actual date to be determined.

9. ADJOURN

2:05 p.m.