

MIC3 NORTH CAROLINA STATE COUNCIL

Minutes

November 15, 2024

10:00am - 12:00pm

IN PERSON:

BOARD ROOM, CUMBERLAND COUNTY SCHOOLS, 2465 GILLESPIE ST. FAYETTEVILLE, NC 28306

1. **Call to Order:** Commissioner Sojka opened the meeting at 10:00AM and gave his welcoming remarks

- Mr. Fields introduced the 82nd ABN DIV Chorus who entertained us with a couple of Airborne chants followed by the National Anthem.
- Presentation of Colors: Jack Britt High School JROTC presented the colors during the National Anthem
- Commissioner Sojka asked for any discussion on previous meeting minutes from February 20, 2024. There was no discussion; Commissioner Sojka approved by unanimous consent.
- Commissioner Sojka announced that representative Donnie Loftus, our state Senate appointee, was absent due to another commitment in his legislative duties.
- Representative Pare extended her welcoming remarks with an exciting way to start the meeting with the chorus and look forward to a productive meeting.
- Commissioner Sojka thanked Cumberland County Schools' Board members, Superintendent Dr. Marvin Connelly Junior, Cabinet members and Executive leadership members for attending the meeting.
- Dr. Connelly thanked all in attendance from their respective districts and roles to help military connected children and families.

2. **General Updates NCDPI:**

- Mr. Howard Lattimore gave updates on MIC3 Professional Developments left in 2024 **(Dec. 9 @ 1200)**
- Mr. Lattimore gave updates on MCEC Global Summit Notes
 - Increase information with NG & Reserves, Meet with Education Liaisons
 - As Purple Star Schools increases = MIC3 Rules Awareness Increases
 - District POCs recommended to receive MIC3 101 Training
 - Transitions and Graduation "cookie cutter" December & June-August & Graduation Requirements
 - MIC3 on website in Spanish
 - Increase Community Mental Health Care for Military-connected Students
- Mr. Lattimore gave updates on 2024-2025 Purple Star Award Applications: (Increased 58 Schools in 2024: 2023=336 2024=394) and Top 10 Priority LES for 2024-2025 based on numbers and percentages
- Commissioner Sojka shared his sentiment on how the Purple Star work is more important than ever post pandemic. He shared information about how the interactive

map on the NCDPI Supports Military Students Website shows just how widely dispersed our military connected students and families are throughout the state. He commends State Superintendent Truitt on insisting upon knowing where all of our military connected students are, and salutes DPI for your continued emphasis on Purple Star.

Commissioner Sojka also emphasized the fact that we have military students, connected students everywhere in this state, and they all deserve the same support. He stated how he shares Purple Star information at regional Superintendent groups and school board association functions.

- Mr. Anthony Hinson, the Regional Accountability coordinator for the central portion of the state, presented school year 2023-2024 testing data desegregated for military connected children versus the non military connected children. **(3-5 ELA and Math proficiency rates; 5 & 8 EOG Science proficiency rates; Biology & English II EOG proficiency rates)**
- Rep. Pare asked if he could drill down on those supports and how it directly correlates to? Mr. Hinson agreed to share with Mr. Lattimore and he will share with all council members.

3. MIC3 East meeting: Ms. Julie Fulton presented notes from the MIC3 meeting she attended

(Highlights, Challenges, Best Practices, State Legislation or Policy, and a Resource)

- Mr Lattimore shared how the North Carolina Military Affairs Commission, is a big supporter of our MIC3 and on the same mission to spread awareness.

4. Legislation Updates:

- Commissioner Sojka presented on the ASVAB Testing legislation (§ 115C-76.70. Every PSU shall provide students in grades 10-12 the opportunity to take the ASVAB). He asked for all in attendance to go out and spread the good news throughout the districts in North Carolina, particularly, our most military populated districts.
- JROTC Instructor SGM Ruby Murraray shared her concerns of how a lot of the students are coming back with low ASAP scores lower than a 31 in areas covered, reading comprehension, word problems, and math. She expressed her concerns on how to bridge the gap before students their next test.
- Mr. Lattimore shared about the CCRG & ASVAB Project Dr. Royster and I are supporting the efforts to bridge the gap starting with the 5 school districts with the lowest trend average ASVAB scores.
- Council member Bill Liner questioned, how does this equate to the students' record overall? For instance, does the ASVAB become part of the student record?
- SGM Murraray shared how ASVAB scores are used to assist students to get into elite schools such as VMI, West Point, Citadel with the scores of 60 or higher and so that's why it's so important that we start off with 10th graders. The ASVAB is not just to put students in uniform, but give them options in life. ASVAB scores are good for two years.
- Dr. Godwin questioned will we track over a 10-20 year period how many actually entered the military? Mr. Lattimore shared how school counselors and the recruiting battalions track post secondary enlistments.

- Ms. Angela LeMay, Assistant Director for Career and Technical Education at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, shared that once JROTC becomes a CTE pathway and students become concentrators, that's when they are tracked where they go after they leave their programs
- Ms. Kristie Kewitt, Counselor Coordinator with CCS, shared that although plans change, students must self-report in their computer platform their post secondary intentions prior to graduation. She also shared the use of the national clearinghouse data they now have access to from DPI.
- Mr. Lattimore and Ms. LeMay shared information that during the SY25-26, CTE will officially include a JROTC pathway (Approval SBE June 2024)
- SGM Murray asked that CCS be a part of the transition process because they have a few questions such as, where will funding for uniforms and name tags come from.
- Ms. LeMay shared how all credentials are optional and how funding and support are available. Ms. LeMay also shared if there's other credentials that are relevant, it could be added. This is just a starting point and so conversation can be had.

5. MIC3 Commissioner Overview:

- **Hot topics -**
- The Commissioner started with "The need for the MIC3 National Organization to revise its fee structure." He shared how all work done by the MIC3 National Office is accomplished with a budget of less than \$1,000,000 a year. He mentioned that number just because that seems absurdly small. He goes on to say our state contribution to the MIC3 national organization to support this work is a little over \$50K annually. The initial dues when formed in 2008 were \$1.00 per military connected student from each state. However, there was never any adjustment mechanism for that funding model. But, because of budgetary pressures and inflationary pressures in 2018, there was a dues increase and that resulted in the dues model that we pay today of \$1.15 per military connected student per state. There is a need for another revision of that dues model and this time the sense is that we need to build a permanent model that will work going into the future for the MIC3 National Organization. The proposal that was discussed was a one time, catch up dues increase to go from \$1.15 per student to \$1.78 per student that would not be effective until fiscal year 27.
That would yield annual dues of \$78,000 a year and then build in an inflationary factor of 4% per year and that's based on input from outside auditors and economists.
- Rep. Pare shared information about the 3 year graduation opportunity (Section 8A.6(k) – (s) of S.L. 2023-134; As amended by Section 2.6 of S.L. 2023-132, high school students to be given the opportunity to graduate from high school within three years of entering 9th grade)
- She shared how the three-year graduation opportunity is sort of in line with what's been seen with the general assemblies, commitment to educational freedom and choice and education. This was passed along with that main bill that included the Opportunity Scholarship extension of the program last year and the House and the Senate take up the potential Veto override next Tuesday.

- That's heavily geared toward low income but thinks with the expansion of the Opportunity Scholarship program and this new three-year graduation requirement is just in line with that overall push from the General Assembly to make sure that we are meeting the needs of students with regard to choice.
- Ms. Kewitt shared that CCS have 8th graders currently having conversations with their school counselors, so starting next year they will be on a plan to graduate as a junior.
- **JROTC - SGM (R) Ruby Murray** "You Have Hit the Lottery" shared how JROTC is more than Drill and Ceremonies but how they are a forever family, and how the program and instructors turn student's lives around.
- **Eligibility for Enrollment** - (N.C. Gen Stat. 115C-366(a10); if that student resides in that local school administrative unit with a parent, legal guardian, or legal custodian on active military duty who is assigned by official military orders to a military installation or reservation in the State)
- The Commissioner shared his experiences with this stature throughout the state. CCS will enroll the student
- Ms. Fulton shared the Osborne Case.
- **MIC3 Cases/Scenarios for awareness** - The Osborn Case (Neither Onslow County nor DoDEA would allow Hunter to enroll in school because the Osborns' do not have "court-ordered" custody)
Possible COA – Update language in the School Attendance and Student Accounting Manual to allow students under guardianship orders from other states to attend NC schools.
- Mr. Commissioner shared his comments about the case. The conclusion he reached was there had to have been legal custody somewhere down the line in the sense that a Department of Social Services has legal custody and as a part of that the parents have been approved as proper foster care
- Mr. Commissioner comments - This is one of those areas where he thinks it's possible that the office of General Counsel for the state Superintendent of State board DPI could address this, like possible ambiguity. That perhaps there is an area where the office of General Counsel could provide more consistent guidance across all the districts; there's always an opportunity to try to fix things with legislation.
- Rep. Pare states, I would be happy to help with this, so if it is legislation or clarity from the state working with DPI, I'm happy to do that.
- **Public Comments** -
- Council member Jamie Livengood - The majority of students PCSing into Wayne County Schools are coming from Algebra 1, Geometry, and algebra 2. Can that be at least a consideration or pieces of conversation that could be brought to light with the military child specifically being advocated for when it comes to those math standards being changed?
- Council member Jamie Livengood - Would love more guidance regarding transcripts, grades, academic placement on Project Grad 009 proposal where as, #7 being added or suggested being added where it talks about out of North Carolina public school transfer students and and that includes private out of state out of country, homeschools,

etcetera into North Carolina public schools. Sneha presented on this at the state board meeting.

- Ms. Fulton - For the March meeting, could we possibly get an update on the School Report card criteria revisions?
- Mr. Lattimore shared how it has been placed on pause until transition of the State Superintendent
- LTC Ramos - Female recruiting effort called "Project Mosaic", an effort to get these female Soldiers out to show students that they could be like them, incredible leaders.
- **Final Remarks** -
- Comments were shared how it was good to visit a new location and to possibly have another meeting in a different county.
- Mr. Lattimore shared how DPI members and Mr. Commissioner will collaborate to accommodate.
- Mr. Commissioner thanked all stakeholders who were involved with coordinating and executing the meeting, especially Mr. Fields and the technology team.
- **Schedule Meetings for 2025** -
Thursday, March 13, 2025 at 10:00 at Education Building, Raleigh, NC
Thursday, October 16, 2025 at 10:00 at Education Building, Raleigh, NC

5. **Adjourn:** Meeting was adjourned at 12:00PM