

MIC3 State Council Meeting Minutes

October 16, 2025

Council Members Attended:

- Mr. Nickolas Sojka, Commissioner (Executive Branch Appointment)
- Rep. Donnie Loftis (Senate Appointment) (Chair)
- Rep. Erin Pare (House of Representatives Appointment)
- Ms. Jamie Livengood, (Student & Family Support Coordinator, Wayne County Public Schools)

Opening Items:

- Call to Order - (10:00am) Mr. Nick Sojka (North Carolina MIC3 Commissioner)
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Welcome by Commissioner Sojka, Rep. Loftis and Rep. Pare
 - Commissioner Sojka welcomed and thanked all for their attendance.
 - Rep. Loftis welcomed everyone and then shared as he was in Cherokee working on a few items, the passing of SB 118 was a major positive talking point. He shared how the work to pass the Bill has been since 2013. He thanked all who were a part of the process and supporting members on the impact made everyday with military-connected families.
 - Rep. Pare thanked all for their attendance, and Rep. Loftis for his remarks about SB 118. She also shared although they are not in session, they are still working hard on education related items such as, standards, budget, and teacher's pay.
- Approval of the Agenda
 - Ms. Livengood moved to approve the agenda as printed
 - Commissioner Sojka second
 - The motion carried
- Approval Previous Meeting Minutes
 - Commissioner Sojka moved to approve the March 13, 2025 meeting minutes
 - Second by Rep. Pare
 - Minutes approved

General Updates NCDPI:

- Welcome New Council Support Members, Howard Lattimore
 - Julie Distelhorst (Military Liaison, Moore County Schools)
 - Khalil Shakeel (Military Liaison, Harnett County Schools)
 - Brittney St. Cere (School Liaison Officer, MCS Lejeune-New River)
 - Julie Deming (Military Liaison, Onslow County Schools)
- Farwell of Support Members, Howard Lattimore
 - Danielle Merrell (Military Liaison, Onslow County Schools) Returned to school counseling
 - Reggie Fields (Military Family and Youth Liaison, Cumberland County Schools) Retirement
- MIC3 Professional Developments Dates, Howard Lattimore
 - Mr. Lattimore shared with council members the MIC3 101 training dates and requesting district and school POCs to submit their certificate of completion
 - October 21 @ 7am
 - November 13 @ 7pm

- Commissioner Sojka asked who the target audience was. Mr. Lattimore share the district military affairs POCs and if possible, the school POCs. This will educate them on MIC3 Rules and assist school administrators with decision making
- SY2025-2026 Purple Star Award Applications Updates, Howard Lattimore
 - Mr. Lattimore shared applications opened September 1 and will close February 1, 2026.
 - Growth from SY2024-2025, 59 additional schools received the Purple Star Award therefore, 59 more school POCs are familiar with MIC3 Rules. A total of 453 schools were awarded
 - Commissioner Sojka shared the positive impact of the initiative, especially with the Student 2 Student transition programs, and social emotional support even within LEAs that do not have a high population of military-connected students. He also gives credit to formal State Superintendent Truitt for her leadership on initiating the PS initiative
- School Report Card Rates
 - Priority of State Superintendent Green's Article. Linked to the agenda
 - Commissioner Sojka gives credit to formal State Superintendent Truitt for her leadership on initiating looking into the reform.
 - Ms. Livengood shared the importance of educating the public on how report card grades are formulated and it's not just from EOGs or EOCs
- State Superintendent and State Board Strategic Plan "Achieving Educational Excellence" adopted August 2025; linked to the agenda
 - Mr. Geoff Coltrane, DPI's Senior Director of Government Affairs and Strategy, shared details from the initiation to adoption of the plan
- State Superintendent Public Forum Regional Tour dates and locations; linked to the agenda

Legislation Updates:

- Rep. Loftis
 - Shared his sentiments on the passing of SB 118; linked to the agenda
- Rep. Pare
 - Shared her sentiments and information on the stalemate and hopeful negotiations towards approving the budget. She also shared the strong bipartisan on pay increase for teachers and state employees.
 - Rep. Loftis shared how the years of talks about education pay increases have now turned into putting funding on paper and have made giant leaps. They are working towards both beginning and tenure teachers
 - Ms. Livengood thanked Legislators for listening and putting into action requests coming from the field

MIC3 Updates:

- Brittney St. Cere
 - Celebrations:
 - Increase of Purple Star school designations
 - Approval of SB 118
 - Challenges:
 - Placement and course flexibility with students who arrive later in the school year

- IEP & 504 services compliance
- Teacher vacancies, mainly related to pay
- Accepting of ½ credit
- Ms. Livengood shared how NCVPS has assisted with some of the challenges

MIC3 Cases:

- Support members shared MIC3 cases with council members they have worked since the last meeting
 - The main cases were on students enrolling with ½ credits
 - Rep. Loftis shared how we need to be door openers versus gate keepers by educating and supporting principals, so they are equipped to make the positive decision
 - Commissioner Sojka shared due to other states operating differently, we are continuing to experience such cases and how we need to construct a way to structure consistency and provide guidance to central office staff and school administrators so they are comfortable with making quicker decisions. His thoughts on the most efficient way to get guidance out to the field is starting with a working group/committee to construct a white paper to submit to the state board for a policy
 - Rep. Loftis agrees to start with a policy through the state board and to legislation if needed to provide a solution
 - Rep. Pare also recommends guidance or direction from legislators to the state board in hope that a state board policy be strong enough to enforce decision making
 - Commissioner Sojka shared his experience, if it's in writing coming from higher such as DPI, we should be okay. Once again, start with a working group to construct a white paper to submit to the state board
 - Ms. Livengood shared how the working group can start with Policy Grad-009 (7)
 - Both legislators are on board and will stand by for guidance and support when needed

MIC3 Commissioner Updates:

- 2026 DoD State Policy Priorities
 - Solutions for Military Homeschoolers
 - State Support of Military Families with Special Educational Needs
 - Open Enrollment Flexibility
 - Commissioner Sojka recommends referencing the Military OneSource website for more information on the policy priorities
- Commissioner Sojka shared that he plans to represent NC by attending the National MIC3 Conference in Indianapolis
- Commissioner Sojka thank the council for approving the MIC3 annual dues increase
- Support members are still experiencing the in-state/out-state enrollment concerns with military-connected students
 - Need to consult with the UNC-Chapel Hill enrollment POC for guidance
 - Need to also consult with the Community College System
- Next Schedule Meetings:

- March 19, 2026 at 10:00am at Eastern NC Regional Skills center, Jacksonville, NC
 - November 19, 2026 at 10:00am at Education Building, Raleigh, NC
- Adjourn