



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 2120

RICHMOND 23218-2120

September 17, 2020

Ms. Cherise Imani
Executive Director
Military Interstate Children Compact Commission
1776 Avenue of the States
Lexington, Kentucky 40511

Dear Ms. Imani:

As coordinator of the Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, and in accordance with the reporting requirements outlined in Article VIII of the model compact language, *Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children*, I am pleased to submit the following annual report from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The report provides information regarding the meetings of the Virginia Council, as well as other actions taken during 2019 to disseminate information regarding the Compact to school divisions, military families, and other affected entities.

I am grateful for the ongoing support offered by your office and I look forward to another successful year supporting military-connected children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Daniel L. Dunham".

Daniel L. Dunham
Military Student and Families Specialist
Office of Student Services

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Enclosure



Report on the Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

Presented to
National Office of the
Military Interstate Children's Compact
Commission

August 28, 2020



Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

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Virginia Department of Education

Ms. Mamie Locke, Senator
The Senate of Virginia

Ms. Nancy Guy, Delegate
The Virginia House of Delegates

Mr. Carlos Hopkins, Virginia Secretary of Defense and Veterans Affairs
(Governor's Designee)

Dr. Dede Bailer, Coordinator
School Psychology Services
Fairfax County Public Schools

Dr. Aaron C. Spence, Superintendent
Virginia Beach City Public Schools

Mr. Brad Williams, School Counseling Director
Tabb High School
York County Public Schools

CAPT Joey Frantzen, Commanding Officer Joint Expeditionary
Base Little Creek-Fort Story
United States Navy

Mr. Daniel Dunham, Council Coordinator
Military Student and Families Specialist
Virginia Department of Education

Summary of Activities

The Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (The Compact) held four public meetings in 2019. The meetings were attended by military school liaison officers, school representatives, students, parents, military officials, and members of educational organizations, Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) staff, and other members of the public. The meetings were streamed live on the VDOE's webpage and recorded for archival purposes. The meetings' agendas covered a number of issues related to the education of children of military families in the Commonwealth. Additional details about the meetings are included below.

- February 13, 2019 Virginia Council Meeting
Richmond, Virginia

During the February 13, 2019 meeting the Council heard from two speakers, Mrs. Debbie Patch, Naval District Mid-Atlantic Regional School Liaison Officer and Mr. Christopher St. Jean (Retired Army Colonel), Associate Director and Veterans Liaison, Office of Admissions, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Mrs. Patch provided an overview of the activities of Virginia School Liaison Officers (SLOs), Exceptional Family Member Program Case Managers (EFMPs), Tutor.com, and Military Family Life Counselors (MFLCs). She also highlighted the financial assistance that Virginia schools have received through recent Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) grants, Impact Aide, and from the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI).

Mr. St. Jean provided the Council with a better understanding of current admission practices used at Virginia Polytechnic University and other schools that utilized the Coalition application. The information presented was well received and appreciated by the Council. Mr. St. Jean emphasized that academic rigor and performance in advanced course work were important factors considered by admission reviewers and that course weight and/or GPAs less likely to affect admissions as they had previously. He went on to share that schools utilizing the Coalition Application were all quite similar in their approach to the application review. The Council learned that the application provided many opportunities for military-connected students to share details concerning the courses they took while in high school. Lastly, Mr. St. Jean explained that this new process removes a lot of unconscious bias that existed previously.

The Council also voted and approved the addition of seven schools for Purple Star Designation.

Mr. Dunham, Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Military Student and Families Specialist, presented on activities out of his office and on matters that the Council wished to know more about during the October 24, 2018 meeting. He presented information on Compact-related interactions with families and schools out of his office, updated Council on implementation of the open enrollment policy in Accomack County, and on the

number of federally connected students who would likely benefit from the possible expansion of Compact eligibility.

- May 8, 2019 Virginia Council Meeting
Richmond, Virginia

During the May 8, 2019 Council meeting, Ms. Carol Beville, Educational Specialist, United States Navy Recruiting District Richmond, and Master Chief Wayland, provided a presentation on the eligibility requirements for entering into the United States military. Ms. Beville specifically addressed those items that could affect military service eligibility for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and others who may have medical or cognitive conditions. In summary, Ms. Beville indicated that having an IEP or graduating with a Virginia Applied Studies Diploma does not necessarily prevent a student from being eligible for service. The presentation included ideas for possible partnerships between recruiting commands and educators with the goal of better informing students and staff of occupational pathways offered through service in the United States Military.

Mr. Dunham presented on Compact related engagements with schools, families, partners, and Virginia governmental agencies. He took time to highlight Month of the Military Child celebrations conducted around the Commonwealth and spoke about the presentation given at the recent Virginia Military Advisory Council meeting. Mr. Dunham also provided an overview of [Senate Bill 1249](#) and its sister bill, [House Bill 1623](#), pointing out how remote registration will work to ease the transition challenges military families face, especially those whose students receive special education services. He concluded his presentation by listing those trainings he had conducted and those scheduled for the months of June through August 2019.

During the public comment, period Ms. Christine Stiefel, school liaison officer with Fort Eustis, addressed the presentation made on military service eligibility for students with IEPs. She expressed as a parent how her son, a child with multiple disabilities, was approached by a recruiter and told to go off his Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) medications. She expressed concern that some recruiters are conducting themselves this way. She went on to explain how this can be problematic to the student's health and how it is of great concern to the parents and other caregivers.

During open discussion, Ms. Beville responded to the comments made by Ms. Stiefel. She re-emphasized how the military service does not wish to discourage anyone from seeking mental health services. She also re-emphasized how eligibility is determined on a case-by-case basis both on the academic side and on the medical side. She appreciated the comments concerning inappropriate conduct by recruiters to suggest students not take their medications to improve their chances of being eligible for service.

- October 2, 2019 Virginia Council Meeting
Richmond, Virginia

During the October 2, 2019 Council meeting, Dr. Jennifer Drake-Patrick, Assistant Professor, Literacy, George Mason University (GMU), College of Education and Human Development, presented an overview of the recently developed online training module designed to educate school personnel and college students on the unique needs of military-connected students, their families, and supports available to assist them. She explained to the Council that the module will be housed on the [Training and Technical Assistance Center](#) (TTAC) site and shared how module completion demographics would be tracked.

The Council was pleased with the overview and asked that a walk-through of the module be presented at a future meeting.

Mr. Dunham presented on Compact-related engagements with schools, families, partners, and Virginia governmental agencies. He also took time to introduce the newly appointed Air Force School Liaison Officer, Mrs. Tammy Edwards. Mrs. Edwards is assigned to serve the families attached to Langley Air Force Base.

The Council then met to vote on Purple Star Designations for schools. During this vote, Council approved designation of 103 schools and later approved 20 additional schools following the review of appeals received. The final number of schools receiving the distinction for school year 2019-2020 was 123.

- December 19, 2019 Virginia Council Meeting
Richmond, Virginia

During the December 19, 2019 meeting, the Council approved the addition of 21 schools for Purple Star Designation. In addition, Council was to discuss and consider the Purple Star timetable; however since Dr. Dede Bailer withdrew her request that Council consider changes no action of the Council was required.

Mr. Dunham presented on Compact-related engagements with schools, families, partners, and Virginia governmental agencies. He also took time to recognize the retirement of Mr. John Hammer, Navy School Liaison Officer at Naval Air Station Oceana, and the appointment of Mrs. Debbie Patch as his replacement. Mr. Dunham then provided updates on the annual business meeting of the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission and on proposed legislation for the Virginia 2020 General Assembly session related to the makeup of Council membership.

Lastly, The Council took action and approved a letter in support of legislation to expand Compact provisions to civilian military workers and federal employees serving under title 22 and Title 50 Title.

All presentations and meeting materials are available on the webpage [VDOE's Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children](#).

Highlights

Throughout 2019, many schools demonstrated a continued interest in the Purple Star Designation program first launched in 2018. This interest resulted in a surge in professional development requests on the Compact and how best to serve military-connected students and their families. It continues to strengthen the partnership between schools and school liaison officers. There are now 189 schools, public and private, that hold the distinction of being Purple Star Designated schools. This is a testament to the willingness of schools and their divisions to ensure these students and their families remain supported.

The Military Student Support Process Action Team continued to be a valuable resource in 2019. The body helped to add clarity on issues of importance to military families and assisted in the revision of the *Guidance for Military Families with Students in Special Education*, and in the reviews of Purple Star School applications. This group continues to serve in an advisory capacity to the VDOE to improve transitional support of military families.

The VDOE continues to see an increase in the numbers of calls from military families seeking Special Needs navigation support. The placement of the Military Student and Family Specialist in the Department of Special Education and Student Services has proven to be very beneficial to both schools and military parents.

Conclusion

Throughout 2019, the Virginia Council took on many important issues related to the education of children of military families. The VDOE Military Student and Family Specialist provided numerous training opportunities and resources to educators and military families on the provisions of the Compact. The Purple Star Designation program is now entering its third year. This initiative has contributed greatly to the building of Compact awareness and support efforts for military-connected students and their families. The effort to strengthen professional development opportunities is ongoing. The launching of the *Supporting Our Military-Connected Children in School Settings: Moving them from Risk to Resilience* online training module will provide school personnel across Virginia a deeper understanding of what is required to ensure military-connected students' transition to and from the Commonwealth is as seamless as possible.

In nearly every community in Virginia, there are children with parents or guardians on active duty with the armed forces. While their parents honorably serve our nation and our Commonwealth, we should recognize the contributions of military-connected students and celebrate their spirit. The Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children is proud to recognize the service of our military service members, their families, and their children.