



Compact Training Raises Awareness to Support Military Students

By: Cherise Imai, MIC3 Executive Director

This year marks 15 years of ensuring “*successful educational transitions*” for military-connected students. The Compact’s purpose is to replace the widely varying state education policies affecting military children; and leverage consistency to keep students on grade level and on track to graduate. To achieve this goal, building awareness of the Compact with schools is crucial.

Since 2018, the Commission has partnered with the Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA) to host training in school districts. While the COVID-19 pandemic postponed in-person training efforts, it’s anticipated to resume this year. “We’re excited to get back into schools,” said Kyle Fairbairn, MISA’s Executive Director, “the front office staff, registrars, counselors, and school leaders need to know how the Compact helps students.”.

Due to high demand, in late 2021, the Commission expanded training efforts by offering monthly Compact 101 and quarterly 201 virtual sessions that are accessible to state and school district personnel, state council members, military school liaisons, and military families. Training is provided at no cost – yep, it’s free – and to date, over 700 individuals completed the session. Training is also available on request. Over the past year, MIC3 South Carolina Commissioner Kim Priester conducted virtual and in-person sessions for a variety of stakeholders. She noted “MIC3 tailored sessions to meet our needs, it was interactive, and attendees left with a better understanding of what the Compact covers.”

The Month of the Military Child also provided opportunities to collaborate with organizations such as the Specialized Training of Military Parents (STOMP), Exceptional Children’s Assistance Center (ECAC), and the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC). As they provide services and support for families, their awareness adds to their system of supports.

The uptick has also increased the demand for Compact materials and resources. *A Guide for Parents, School Officials, and Public Administrators* and quad fold brochure provides an overview and supplements training materials. Digital versions are available to download from

mic3.net or may be ordered at no cost by emailing mic3info@csg.org. Utilizing social media through new Tik Tok and Instagram accounts has promoted the training, webinars and the Compact overall.

So what's next? In the works is a learning management system which will provide on demand training to users. The first video on Graduation was developed in 2021, and four videos focused on Compact Article V are scheduled to be released this year. The videos will be made available in Spanish and American Sign Language, which will further expand awareness. "We know many households are dual language speaking, and it's important we make the information available to them," said Laura Anastasio, Connecticut Commissioner and Commission Chair.

Anastasio is the longest serving member of the Commission and was one of the inaugural member states. Reflecting on the Commission's past, she recognized the organization's maturity and the positive impact of the Compact. "While it may not address every education related issue a student may encounter, Commissioners try their best to assist," she said. "Doing the right thing for kids is what is important."