

# Virginia 2023 End-of-Year Report

First Name: Dan  
Last Name: Dunham

I am the Compact  
Commissioner for: Virginia

The membership of the  
state's MIC3 council  
consists of the  
following:

## STATE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Dr. Lisa Coons, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Virginia  
Department of Education, Compact Commissioner  
Rear Admiral Christopher Gray, Commander Navy Mid-Atlantic,  
United States Navy, Military Representative Member  
Honorable Senator Mamie E. Locke, Virginia State Senate  
Representative  
Honorable Delegate Anne Ferrell H. Tata, Representative from the  
Virginia House  
Dr. Victor Shandor, Superintendent, York County Schools, Member  
representing a highly impacted school division  
Michelle Norman, Military Spouse Member of Virginia Department of  
Education Military Student Support Process Action Team (MSSPAT),  
Executive Director and Founder of Partners in PROMISE  
Tian Olson, Parent Member, Education Advocate, Attorney, McClean  
Raul Vargas, Citizen Member, President of VARCom Solutions;  
Founder, CEO, Chairman of American Latino Veterans Association,  
Fairfax.  
Shawnee Edwards-Zollar, Citizen member  
Daniel Dunham, Council Coordinator and Commissioner Designee

Two points of contact  
for issues related to the  
Compact in my state  
are: Mr. Daniel Dunham, [dan.dunham@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:dan.dunham@doe.virginia.gov)  
Dr. Samantha Hollins, Assistant Superintendent, Department of  
Special Education and Student Services, Phone: 804-786-8079

Accomplishments: The Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact for the Educational  
Opportunities of Military Children did not hold a meeting during 2023.  
The change in State administration and challenges that occurred with  
the Governor appointments prevented our meeting to occur. That  
said the Virginia Department of Education and the State  
Commissioner Designee, Mr. Dan Dunham was able to stay the course

in providing support to military parents, schools and military school liaison officers and exceptional family member program coordinators.

Activities:

The VDOE Military Student and Families Specialist is in regular communication with the SLOs and EFMPs via email, phone, and at trainings. These regular communications serve as opportunities to discuss issues with implementation of the Interstate Compact, share updated resources, and link families to local and state supports that often times fall outside the scope of the Compact.

The VDOE, on behalf of the Virginia Council, has developed and maintains webpages dedicated to the Military Compact (<https://www.doe.virginia.gov/programs-services/student-services/military-families>), with resources for military families and educators. The site features guidance documents to help school divisions interpret key provisions of the Compact, including printable brochures and guides. The resource pages contain links to pertinent Virginia laws related to the education of military children, as well as contact information for military school liaisons officers. The website highlights best practices of school divisions to assist military-connected children, provides training materials, and contains links to numerous military-affiliated support organizations. The Department has also maintained a webpage dedicated to the Virginia Council that includes the Council's meeting schedule, agendas, and minutes from previous meetings and presentations given at Council meetings.

With resources provided by the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3), VDOE, on behalf of the Virginia Council, has distributed guidance documents to school liaison officers and school divisions that can be used in trainings for school division staff and in meetings with military families. The resources include:

Guidance for Military Families with Students in Special Education, a 16-page document provides information and answers to questions that military families with school-aged children might have about special education programs in Virginia public schools. Topics include enrollment, special education services, parental consent in Virginia, Section 504, dispute resolution, and procedural safeguards. This document was updated in March 2020.

Desk Reference for the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children: Compact Rules, is shared with

school liaison officers as they work with educators in implementing the provisions of the Interstate Compact; and

Guide for Parents, School Officials and Public Administrators, provides information to families, military leaders, and educators about the Interstate Compact

VDOE Modules:

Supporting Our Military–Connected Children in School Settings: Moving them from Risk to Resilience Module 1 and Module 2, provides school staff online professional development on the unique needs of military connected students and their families

New in 2022, Building Awareness of the Social Emotional Impacts of Military Family Transitions, provides school staff online professional development on the stressors that military families face routinely and provides clarity on how best to support these families during periods of heightened stress.

In November, VDOE announced that one hundred and eighty-nine schools across Virginia were honored with Purple Star Designation. To qualify for a Purple Star in Virginia, schools must have a staff point of contact (POC) for military students and families. The POC serves as the primary link between the military family and the school. In addition, schools must meet four measures that help to build awareness within the school community and foster peer transition support.

One hundred and one of the one hundred and eighty-nine schools honored this year were second time recipients of the distinction. This is the fifth year the VDOE has designated Purple Star schools. Since 2018, the VDOE and The Council on the Interstate Compact on the Educational Opportunity of Military Children have selected three hundred twenty-eight schools across Virginia for the award of which one hundred and ninety-two have been twice honored.

According to the Military Identifier End of year Count SY 2021-2022 there were military 81,224 connected students in 132 of the 134 school divisions. The Virginia Council and the Virginia Department of Education will continue encouraging school divisions to identify and reach out to the military-connected students in their schools.

The VDOE Military Student and Families Specialist as Commissioner Designee attended the 2022 Annual Business Meeting (ABM) of the

Interstate Commission on Educational Opportunities for Military Children as Virginia's Commissioner's designee. The ABM provided valuable opportunities for the VDOE Military Student and Families Specialist to dialogue with other state commissioners / designees about the implementation of the Interstate Compact and on best practices for navigating challenging issues. During the meeting, Commissioners learned of the need to revise the Compact language. Currently, there is an incorrect citation in the model language of the Compact in Article II(A) and in Article III(A)(1), both of which refer to "members of the National Guard and Reserve on active-duty orders pursuant to 10 U.S.C. Section 1209 and 1211." (emphasis added). These provisions should both cite instead to 10 U.S.C. Chapter 1209 and 1211. This is a scrivener's (i.e. technical) error in a section of the Compact which controls its coverage area, and as such it is best practice that the citation error should be corrected in each impacted state. VDOE included the need to correct this technical error in Virginia Code in their submission of the Governor's working papers.

#### Conclusion

The VDOE and Virginia Military Families Specialist continued to provide support and technical assistance to both individual families and schools during 2022.

The network that encompasses the Military Student Support Process Action Team (MSSPAT), SLO's and EFMP's continue to be impactful. These partners routinely help to review Purple Star applications, conducting trainings and providing expertise for support improvements to students, parents and schools.

In nearly every community in Virginia, there are children with parents or guardians on active duty, Reserves, National Guard, NOAA or USPHS. While their parents honorably serve our nation and our Commonwealth, we should recognize the contributions of military-connect students and celebrate their spirit. To this end, the VDOE is honored to support the transitional needs of military connected students and their families.

#### Presentations:

##### Trainings

The VDOE, on behalf of the Virginia Council, has provided training on the Compact and the Virginia Council to thousands of educators, military families, and other interested stakeholders since its creation in 2009. The SLOs throughout Virginia frequently provide training on

the Interstate Compact to educators in their region as well. In 2022, The Virginia Military Student and Families Specialist attended and presented at number of these training endeavors. These included:

Prince George County Public Schools: Interstate Compact Overview and State Laws supporting military connected students May 4, 2022

PEATC MILCON: VDOE Staff presented on the Unique needs of Military Connected Children and Purple star School programming. May 8-9, 2022

VDOE's Department of Special Education's Office of Family Engagement continued its work to provide exceptional trainings to school personnel and military families. In May this office and VDOE Military Student and Families Specialist partnered to provide a Military Families Symposium for military families with students in special education. This in person symposium provided attendees with an opportunity to learn more about state level support, self-advocacy, Due Process, the I'm Determined program, Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) and Virginia Commonwealth University's Center for Parent Involvement.

A number of SLO's and EFMP's attended the Connect for Success Conference in September. The VDOE's office of Family Engagement provides this professional development opportunity to those who work in Parent Resource Centers. This opportunity helped to foster collaboration between the school divisions and military partners.

The Family Engagement Network formed a military student and family sub-committee in 2022. This body will investigate the building of resources and programs aimed at strengthening support for military families in the care of students with special needs.

The Military Student and Families Specialist was a panelist at the Military Child Education Coalition Conference held in Washington D.C. in July. He was and others leading the way for Purple Star programming in Ohio, Texas and South Carolina spoke to the value that Purple Star has had on student wellbeing and school climate.