

## Education Focus Builds Compact Awareness to Help Military Students

Founded in 2008, the *Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission* (MIC3) is the governing body of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children or ICEOMC. Commission members include the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and six ex-officio representatives. In addition to active-duty military, the Compact supports uniformed members of the federal Departments of Commerce, Homeland, and Health and Human Services. The collaborative's mission: ease the educational transitions of school-aged, military, and uniform-connected students attending public schools, to include Department of Defense Education Activity schools worldwide, and also promulgate and enforce the compact rules.

Due to the continual turnover of school personnel and families that become eligible under the program, education, and advocacy across states have been a key focus area of the commission and included in the strategic plans since our inception in 2007. The Training Committee, led by Texas Commissioner Shelly Ramos, focuses on developing resources and programs to assist states in educating stakeholders. "Training is crucial in raising awareness," she said, "and is imperative that schools and parents understand how it can help students stay on grade level and on track to graduate."

The committee launched the monthly Compact 101 webinar series; Compact 101 training in Spanish and American Sign Language; an advanced 201 course focused on case studies; and guides, brochures, and other educational material that may be viewed online in English and Spanish. This past Fall they released an online, on-demand training portal that includes 10 modules that can be completed at the pace of the user. Once completed, a certificate may be issued to meet school district professional development requirements. The best part is that 100% of the training and resources provided are available to stakeholders - states, school districts, and communities - at no cost and funded by the annual state dues.

In 2023, the request for training increased over the previous year by 172%. Of the 68 sessions held, 25%, or 17, were held in person – and [one was funded by the Department of the Air Force in Japan](#). "As the commission allocates only 7% of the overall budget to education, this is a remarkable achievement," highlighted Ramos. While this success is notable and significant strides have been made, education is a constant task. The [2022 Blue Star Families Report](#) stated the Compact can be a useful tool for families with school-aged children however awareness varied among active-duty families. The majority (74%) of active-duty military families with at least one child enrolled in grades K-12 report did not know about the Compact, however, those who have used the Compact to advocate for their child reported positive outcomes.

Part of the achievement is due to the partnership with six ex-officio members: Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA), Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC), National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), National Military Families Association (NMFA), Blue Star Families, and the USDOD. It takes a community to help students, and success is tied to the Commission's growth management approach. "We've learned that becoming a high-impact organization is not just about building a great organization and then expanding it to reach more people. Rather, the Commission and our members work closely with and through our organizations and individuals to create more impact than we could ever have achieved alone," said Ernise Singleton, Louisiana Commissioner and Commission Chair.

*The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children eases educational transitions of military children as they transfer between states in the areas of enrollment; placement and attendance; eligibility; and graduation. The Compact was developed by The Council of State Governments National Center for Interstate Compacts, the U.S. Department of Defense, national associations, federal and state officials, state departments of education, school administrators, and military families. For more information on training, email [mic3info@csg.org](mailto:mic3info@csg.org) or visit [www.mic3.net](http://www.mic3.net).*