

**2024 ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES  
October 16-17, 2024**

**Call to Order**

National Commission Chair Ernise Singleton (LA) called the meeting to order on Tuesday, October 16, at 8:05 AM MT.

**Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Chair Singleton welcomed members and guests to the 2024 Annual Business Meeting (ABM) and encouraged the attendees to explore and enjoy Albuquerque, New Mexico. She welcomed new members from Alaska, Arizona, California, Delaware, Hawaii, Indiana, North Dakota, Texas, and West Virginia; Ex-officio representatives from Blue Star Families (BSF) and Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC); and proxies from Arkansas, District of Columbia, Missouri, and Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA).

**Housekeeping Items**

Chair Singleton discussed various housekeeping items regarding the meeting. She asked the members to fill out the Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest forms that were placed at their seats and to place the papers in the boxes located by the room entrance. Chair Singleton reminded the members that the meeting and presentations would be recorded and would be posted on the website. Members were asked to mute their microphones to reduce noise and were advised to state their first and last name followed by their state/organization when speaking. Chair Singleton stated the presentations would list the corresponding Docket Book page in blue (i.e. "DB p5") at the bottom of each slide.

**Roll Call**

Executive Director (ED) Cherise Imai called the roll, and a quorum was established.

STATE	SAL.	NAME	STATE	SAL.	NAME
ALABAMA	Dr.	Douglas Ragland	MICHIGAN	Mr.	Michael Price
ALASKA	Mr.	Don Enoch	MINNESOTA	Mr.	Daron Korte
ARIZONA	Mr.	Peter Laing	MISSOURI	Ms.	Hilary Bales*
ARKANSAS	Ms.	Andelyn Wright*	MONTANA	Mr.	Ray Shaw
CALIFORNIA	Mr.	Dominick Robinson	NEBRASKA	Mr.	Brian Halstead
COLORADO	Dr.	Keith Owen	NEVADA	Ms.	Felicia Gonzales
CONNECTICUT	Ms.	Laura Anastasio	NEW HAMPSHIRE	Ms.	Kathleen Murphy
DELAWARE	Ms.	Jennifer Davis	NEW JERSEY	Mr.	Tony Trongone
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	Mr.	Joseph Hood*	NEW MEXICO	Ms.	Teresa Ferenczhalmy
FLORIDA	Mr.	Terrance McCaffrey	NEW YORK	Dr.	Debra Jackson
GEORGIA	Dr.	Curtis Jones	NORTH CAROLINA	Mr.	Nickolas Sojka, Jr.
HAWAII	Mr.	John Erickson	NORTH DAKOTA	Mr.	Mark Vollmer
IDAHO	Dr.	Spencer Barzee	OHIO	Mr.	Pete LuPiba
INDIANA	Ms.	Brooke Huntington	OKLAHOMA	Mr.	Will Jones
ILLINOIS	Dr.	John Price	OREGON	Ms.	Tenneal Wetherell
IOWA	Ms.	Laura Kacer	PENNSYLVANIA	Ms.	Barbara Clemmer
KANSAS	Mr.	Dale Brungardt	RHODE ISLAND	Ms.	Rosemarie Kraeger
LOUISIANA	Dr.	Ernise Singleton	SOUTH DAKOTA	Ms.	Ann Pettit
MAINE	Dr.	Laura Cyr	TENNESSEE	Ms.	Deanna McLaughlin
MARYLAND	Ms.	Mary Gable	TEXAS	Ms.	Jessica Snyder
			UTAH	Mr.	Ben Rasmussen

VIRGINIA	Mr.	Daniel Dunham	BSF**	Mr.	Tom Porter
WASHINGTON	Mr.	Greg Lynch	MISA**	Mr.	Kyle Fairbairn
WEST VIRGINIA	Mr.	Nick Lambruno	MCEC**	Mr.	Kyle Wood
WISCONSIN	Ms.	Shelley Joan Weiss	NFHS**	Mr.	Davis Whitfield
WYOMING	Mr.	Chad Delbridge	USDOD REP**	Ms.	Dianna Ganote

\* Proxy, \*\* Ex-officio (non-voting member)

NOT IN ATTENDANCE		
STATE/ORGANIZATION	SAL.	NAME
KENTUCKY	Mr.	Steven Bullard
MASSACHUSETTS	Mr.	J. Clarke Orzalli
MISSISSIPPI	Ms.	Kristen Windham
SOUTH CAROLINA	Dr.	Tremekia Priester
VERMONT	Mr.	Rene Sanchez
NMFA**	Ms.	Eileen Huck

### **MIC3 National Office**

1. Cherise Imai, Executive Director
2. Lindsey Dablow, Training and Operations Associate
3. Allie Thomas, Operations Coordinator
4. Darren Embry and Samantha Nance, General Counsel

### **Host City Welcome**

Chair Singleton yielded the floor to Commissioner Teresa Ferenczhalmy (NM), who welcomed members to the state of New Mexico. Commissioner Ferenczhalmy introduced School Liaison Sara Williams, who shared a case from her installation and explained how she resolved her student's education transition issues using the Compact. Commissioner Ferenczhalmy then introduced Colonel Jason Okumura, Commander of the 377<sup>th</sup> Mission Group at Kirtland Air Force Base. Colonel Okumura shared his educational background, experiences in the Air Force, and his perspectives of the Compact as an installation Commander and father of military-connected children.

### **Awards**

Chair Singleton recognized state Commissioners and Ex-officio Representatives who received the Commission's Merit Award for their years of service. Commissioners Steven Bullard (KY), Barbara Clemmer (PA), Teresa Ferenczhalmy, and Felicia Gonzales (NV) were awarded pins for five years, and Commissioners Mary Gable (MD) and Greg Lynch (WA) were awarded for fifteen years along with Ex-officio Representative Kyle Fairbairn from MISA.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

**Commissioner Terrance McCaffrey (FL) motioned to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rosemarie Kraeger (RI). The motion carried unanimously.**

### **Approval of the 2023 Annual Business Meeting (ABM) Minutes**

**Commissioner Curtis Jones (GA) motioned to approve the minutes from the 2023 ABM. Commissioner McCaffrey seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **Public Comment**

Executive Director (ED) Cherise Imai stated the Commission had not received any submissions for public comment.

## **Executive Reports**

**Executive Committee** – Chair Singleton reported over the past year, the Executive Committee (EXCOM) addressed matters regarding the administration of the Commission and collaborated across the standing committees to execute the strategic plan and meet the Commission's Strategic Plan year two (2) goals. In conjunction with General Counsel, the EXCOM approved two policy amendments and a legal advisory; addressed concerns by members regarding the Penn State Study and provided feedback to the researchers and the US Department of Defense (DoD) State Liaison Office; and developed a Good, Better, Best document on state implementation of the Compact requested by the US Secretary of Education. The EXCOM also reviewed inquiries from Commissioners regarding open records; a request for and cost analysis for contracting a private shuttle for the ABM; and a state-level point of contact for the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), US Public Health Service (USPHS), and US Coast Guard.

As discussed at the 2023 ABM, the EXCOM worked with the Finance Committee to examine costs and discuss the future format and options for an in-person or virtual meeting; as well as the future and financing of the organization to meet our mission and support military students. Based on the Finance Committee recommendation to hold the 2024 ABM in person, the EXCOM approved moving forward with the event in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and the 2025 ABM in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Committee also approved their recommendation to secure an external consultant to conduct an organization and staff assessment, and market study.

**Executive Director** – ED Imai reported that the National Office provides a wide range of programs and resources developed by the commission's standing committees to support member states in their administration of the Compact to support successful education transitions of school-aged military students. In addition to providing administrative support to the executive and standing committees, the National Office provides technical assistance, training, and education; disseminates collaterals and resources; provides administrative support for commissioner and state council meetings, and briefs at national and state meetings on request.

With the approval of the third strategic plan at the 2022 ABM, the National Office was focused on the second-year targeted goals and activities. While the first strategic plan focused on staffing alignment and identifying organization needs and gaps, the second plan targeted program development based on assessments. The third plan builds on the foundation established in prior years and enhances current programs and resources while identifying new opportunities and gaps to fulfill our statutory requirements and ensure the Commission's financial future.

ED Imai highlighted several ways the National Office supported Commissioners and their states, with the primary focus on education and outreach. The National Office provided administrative assistance and/or attended council meetings for member states, attended national meetings and conferences, hosted webinars on a variety of topics including special education, continued to sustain current and establish new partnerships, and worked with states on the citation correction process.

ED Imai reported in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, the National Office onboarded seven (7) new Commissioners and two Ex-officio members, which included reviewing roles and responsibilities, compact rules training, information on finance and elections, and identifying state-specific needs and gaps. ED Imai referenced the Case & Inquiry Report and noted 56 cases received in FY2024, primarily from parents. While only a third of the cases were Compact related, Commissioners were able to refer or direct parents to other resources or assist with the

case resolution. ED Imai noted the report described the cases received only by the National Office and stated most cases are resolved at the commissioner and school levels. ED Imai concluded her remarks by thanking members for their continued support and hard work.

**Vice Chair** - Vice Chair Daron Korte (MN) reported FY2024 was significant for the Ex-officio members with the acceptance of Blue Star Families' application at the 2023 ABM, welcoming Mr. Tom Porter, Vice President of Government Operations, as the organization's representative to the Commission. The Commission bid farewell to Ms. Amanda Woodyard and welcomed Mr. Kyle Wood, Chief Operating Officer, as the representative for MCEC. Vice Chair Korte reported the Ex-officio representatives continue to meet quarterly to share insights into the Commission's work and strategic progress and discuss their organization's initiatives and activities and he provided highlights of each organizations' yearly goals and accomplishments.

**General Counsel** - Chair Singleton stated the Commission retains outside General Counsel to provide guidance for the Commission and its Committees with respect to legal issues, related to their duties and responsibilities under MIC3s by-laws and rules. Actively participating in both dispute resolution and litigation matters related to enforcement of the Compact provisions and rules, Counsel also advises the Commission on issues pertaining to investigation, compliance, and enforcement responsibilities. Note: For member state legal assistance requests, contact Executive Director Cherise Imai in accordance with policy 3-2017 *Accessing Legal Counsel*. She yielded the floor to Ms. Samantha Nance.

Ms. Nance defined what a compact is and explained how General Counsel works to support the Commission and its statutes. She reviewed the member state responsibilities, which included: state Compact compliance, State Council coordination and annual meetings, adherence to the case resolution process, community outreach and stakeholder engagement, and mission-centered leadership. She also emphasized that the compact is a contractual agreement among member states, and states should not amend or revise their compact statutes in accordance with the commission's promulgation process.

Ms. Nance reported General Counsel provided legal analysis and memorandums on various topics and assisted with the following: provided a legal advisory on *Scope of SEC 5.104 Placement Flexibility*; advised on legal matters involving a Proposed Rule within the Rules Committee; prepared a letter to the Defense-State Liaison Office regarding preparation of certain reports required by the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA); drafted compliance communications to multiple member states' appointing authorities to facilitate the filling of vacancies of Commissioner roles and state councils and completion of state reporting requirements; and advised on legal matters regarding state statutes; records requests, and state default cases

### **Standing Committee Reports**

**Compliance** – Compliance Committee member, Commissioner Designee Daniel Dunham (VA), briefed on behalf of Compliance Chair and Commissioner Steven Bullard (KY), who was unable to attend the meeting. He referenced the Compact Rules, Chapter 700 *Oversight, Enforcement, and Dispute Resolution*, which provided the Compliance Committee with its mission as well as Chapter 800 *Coordination Between States and Commission*, which the Committee used this year to produce tools and resources that inform and assist states with compliance tasks and deadlines.

Commissioner Designee Dunham reported the Commission welcomed seven (7) new Commissioners in FY2024. He reviewed the State Compliance and Coordination graphic, which

outlined the states that had membership requirements to fulfill for 2024 and which states were granted extensions. As outlined in *#1-2017 State Coordination Policy*, Commissioner Designee Dunham noted each member state was required to submit the following by June 30th of each year to the National Office: State Council Membership roster; identify or confirm two points of contact for their state; and provide a summary of accomplishments, activities, and presentations for the previous year. Forty-nine (49) states submitted their FY2024 End-of-Year Reports, fourteen (14) of which were received after the deadline.

Commissioner Designee Dunham reported that the Compliance Committee released two graphics in 2024. The Case Resolution graphic was initially produced in 2019 to clarify the case resolution process followed by the Commission when cases or inquiries are received by headquarters or within a member state. Assigned as a joint task to the Rules and Compliance Committee under the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan, the graphic describes the case resolution process utilized by the Commission and general points of contact that can assist within the member states. The Public Comment Process graphic was a self-assigned task by the Committee to demonstrate the process by which members of the public can offer comments at the ABM and Standing Committee meetings, as outlined in the Commission's governing documents. The graphic combines that information into an easy-to-understand visual aid.

The Committee also produced the Compact Rules Compliance Process document to outline the Commission's oversight, enforcement, and dispute resolution process as provided in Compact Rules, Chapter 700, making the escalation process transparent for member states and stakeholders, and amended the End-of-Year Report requirements to include information specific to cases and inquiries received at the Commissioner level, training conducted on the Compact within the state, and resources produced or provided within the state. The amended End-of-Year (EOY) Report format will replace the current forms for fiscal year 2025.

**Training** – Training Chair, Commissioner Kathleen Murphy (NH) reported the Training Committee said farewell to former Committee Chair and Commissioner Shelly Ramos (TX), who accepted a role with the Colorado Department of Education and stepped away from the Commission in July. In 2024, the committee extended MIC3Training.net to include the New Commissioner and Ex-officio Representative Course. The New Commissioner and Ex-officio Representatives Course is the first step in onboarding newly appointed Commission members. During the seven self-paced lessons, new members learn about their role and responsibilities, the Commission structure, and the Compact. To assist newly appointed Commissioner and Ex-officio Representatives, the Training Committee created a Frequently Asked Questions document that outlines the registration process and serves as a guide to expedite the onboarding process, allowing members to begin assisting schools and military families in their state faster.

At the request of the Executive and Finance Committees, the Training Committee reviewed the education and training requirements outlined in the Commission's guiding documents to develop the *Commission Training Model and Cost Analysis* document. During this process, the members reviewed the current training request process and evaluated its components, and the costs associated with the program. This opportunity allowed members to assess and determine what services could and should be offered to address training needs across the Commission.

During the development of the *Commission Training Model and Cost Analysis* document, members requested staff draft a statement of support for the Commission's training program to be provided to the Executive and Finance Committee. The Training Committee intended to acknowledge the Commission's financial outlook while demonstrating support for current

initiatives and highlighting the importance of continuing to educate stakeholders on the Compact.

**Communications and Outreach** – Communications and Outreach Chair, Commissioner Chad Delbridge (WY) reported the Committee continues to focus on identifying and improving the marketing of our resources and programs to assist states with program implementation and educating stakeholders. The Committee's strategic goals this year were to educate and inform about the Compact, identify and highlight state best practices, highlight how the Compact helps students, educate members and partners on the programs and resources available to support their efforts, and to identify opportunities and partnerships to support the Compact's mission.

While the Committee will continue to develop resources and materials, the focus has shifted toward promoting the new and existing products developed by the other standing committees. The Compact Voices: Student Stories videos were recorded and presented at the ABM to highlight how the Compact is implemented at the local level and showcase that it works. Six State Spotlight videos were recorded at the 2023 ABM and four more presentations would be given at the 2024 ABM to highlight the best practices of Commissioners and their State Councils. The National Office continued to mail out collateral items as ordered by stakeholders and placed orders for printing when items ran out of stock. Collaterals were translated in Spanish and posted on mic3.net along with Compact 101 Training sessions in both Spanish and American Sign Language (ASL).

In 2024, the Communications and Outreach Committee approved three annual items: the Communications Plan, which outlines the general information released to the Commissioners and stakeholders through social media, constant contact, our monthly newsletter, and our webpage; a Memorandum on Compact Education and Promotion that asks states to work with their Military Family Education Liaison and State Council to develop a plan to educate and disseminate information to their districts, schools, and stakeholders and utilize the resources developed by their colleagues/standing committees to assist them with their efforts; and the Purple Up! Toolkit, released in January to support April's activities. States reported events, ceremonies, and celebratory activities at the state, district, and school levels. Numerous states issued proclamations recognizing the Month of the Military Child signed by executive offices and/or state legislatures. A special newsletter issue was released to highlight state activities.

Commissioner Delbridge reported the Commission received two congressional resolutions in 2024 that declared April as Month of the Military Child. House Resolution 1151 was sponsored by Representative Joe Courtney of Connecticut and Senate Resolution 643 was sponsored by Senator Mazie Hirono of Hawaii. The Committee also filmed six State Spotlight videos highlighting best practices on implementing the Compact, and the webinar *Supporting Military Families with Special Medical or Educational Needs* was recorded.

Commissioner Delbridge stated the way forward in 2025 would foresee increasing utilization of Commission resources, tools, and training to educate stakeholders on the Compact, and assessing and improving educational resources to ensure delivery of the best tools.

**Rules** – Rules Chair and Commissioner Mary Gable (MD) reported the Rules Committee diligently reviewed the Case and Inquiry Report to identify trends that could be addressed by promulgating a new Rule or an amendment to an existing Rule. The Compact-related questions focused on Course Placement, Kindergarten and First Grade Entrance Age, and Graduation. In 2025, the Rules Committee will review this data to determine if any trends exist that would need

to be addressed through the rule-making process or if it is a matter of increasing communication and training efforts to provide information and clarification on the existing Rule to stakeholders.

In collaboration with the Compliance Committee, Rules amended the Case Resolution Process graphic to clarify the process for stakeholders. The Committee also continues to collect unique cases and review open records requests as provided in policy 2-2022 *Open Records Request*.

The Compact Commissioner for Nevada proposed an amendment to Compact Rule, Chapter 500, SEC. 5.104 *Placement Flexibility*. The Committee reviewed the proposed amendment and had thoughtful discussions about the necessity for the amendment, current education practices in the states, and avenues outside rulemaking to address issues involving missed seat time or misalignment of semesters when military students transition during the school year. The Committee requested a legal advisory from general counsel, 1-2024 *Scope of SEC 5.104 Placement Flexibility*, and reviewed feedback from the Tier Groups and Commission comments. The Committee voted unanimously to table the proposed amendment, allowing the legal advisory to stand and determine whether it provided adequate support or if a Rule amendment is necessary. The Rules Committee issued a memo informing the Commission of its decision.

**Leadership Nomination (LNC)** – Past Commission Chair and Leadership Nomination Chair, Commissioner Laura Anastasio (CT) reported the LNC reviewed feedback from the 2023 ABM and survey responses on the election process. The feedback and responses indicated that the process was smooth and transparent, that it was consistently aligned to the LNC's messaging and actions, and that the LNC had responded to the prior year's feedback and responses. In addition, the feedback and responses noted that commissioners appreciated that the LNC disseminated the application information and election guide ahead of schedule.

The LNC recommended further clarifying in the election packet that nominations would not be accepted from the floor. This recommendation was based upon the advice of the General Counsel, who opined that the Commission could determine its election process – providing that elections were held annually. The current election process provides that all candidates submit the same evidence and documentation within the same timeframe to allow commissioners the opportunity to consider all candidates in advance of the 2024 ABM.

In March 2024, the newly appointed LNC approved the timeline, application form, and election documents to ensure an equitable and transparent application process. Based on the prior LNC's recommendation, it further clarified that nominations would not be accepted from the floor to ensure that the LNC properly vetted and reviewed the candidates, not to prohibit Commissioners from running for office. It also concluded that providing candidates with the opportunity to self-determine the two documents in support of their application would allow for Commissioners with diverse backgrounds the opportunity to participate in the election process, thus supporting candidate diversity.

The 2024 application and guidelines were released in June. In July, the LNC reviewed the submittals for Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer, and verified the three candidates met the specified requirements set forth in the approved election process. The LNC prepared and released the Election Guide in late July.

Commissioner Anastasio presented the slate of candidates, including Commissioners Ernise Singleton for Commission Chair, Daron Korte for Vice President, and Greg Lynch for Treasurer to be re-elected for their second year-long terms.

**Commissioner Anastasio called for a motion to begin the leadership election. Commissioner Michael Price (MI) motioned on behalf of the LNC to accept the slate of candidates. The motioned passed unanimously and the slate of candidates were accepted.** The Commission Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer were re-elected to their positions for second terms.

### **Special Briefs**

**US Department of Defense Representative Report and Defense-State Liaison Office – US DOD Representative Ms. Dianna Ganote** reported the School Liaisons, specifically the state subject matter experts (SMEs) compiled briefs of their best practices and would be sharing the results of the report later in the year. Ms. Ganote was happy to report that the Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) grants were released. She welcomed the new Commissioners and encouraged them to introduce themselves to their state School Liaisons and headquarter liaisons to become familiar with the work that they do to support the Commission.

Ms. Ganote yielded the floor to Ms. Kelli May Douglas, the Pacific Southwest Regional Liaison of the Defense-State Liaison Office (DSLO). Ms. Douglas reviewed the DSLO's accomplishments from 2024 and introduced the key goals and programs that would be the focus for 2025. Ms. Douglas reviewed the final report from the Pennsylvania State University Clearinghouse study that was completed in partnership with the DSLO and invited state Commissioners to contact her with any questions or concerns regarding the reports.

**Impact Aid 101 – Mr. Keith Mispagel**, President of the National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS), presented information regarding the association and explained how Impact Aid funding is granted and distributed to school districts with high numbers of military-connected students. Mr. Kyle Fairbairn, Ex-officio representative from MISA, called attention to the way funds are allocated based on military dependent percentages in each state and the difference between partial funding and full funding.

### **Panels**

**Ex-officio Perspectives: Advocacy and Awareness** - facilitated by Vice Chair Korte, which included:

- ◇ Kyle Fairbairn, Executive Director, MISA; Kyle Wood, Chief Operating Officer, MCEC; Davis Whitefield, Chief Operating Officer, National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS); and Dianna Ganote, US DoD Representative.
- ◇ The panelists answered questions regarding their respective organizations, how they support military-connected students, and their goals and initiatives for 2025.
- ◇ The panelists shared their experiences as partners with MIC3 and expressed how the Compact could support their missions.

**School Liaisons: Supporting Families and Building Partnerships – facilitated by Dianna Ganote (DOD)**, which included:

- ◇ Nanette Pigg, School Liaison Program Manager, US Army IMCOM, Headquarters; Tiffany Koch, School Liaison Officer, Fort Johnson; Patrigna Murphy, Regional School Liaison, Commander Navy Region Southeast; Domineek Haag, School Liaison Program Manager, Mountain Home Air Force Base; and Julie Fulton, School Liaison, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune.
- ◇ The panelists answered questions regarding their duties as School Liaisons and provided examples of cases they had worked that were compact-related.



### **Tier Group Breakout Meetings** (For Commissioners and Ex-officio)

The Tier Groups met respectively to discuss two topics regarding chronic absenteeism and reciprocal diplomas that were provided by Commissioner Designee Dunham. The discussion topics were provided as one-pagers with specific questions for the facilitators to ask their Tier Group members.

- **Tier 1:** Commissioner Nickolas Sojka (NC) reported Tier Group 1 felt the flexibility of the current rule on absences related to deployments was good. Three states have active legislation that correspond to the rule. The group felt there was no urgency or need to rewrite the rule regarding the second topic of graduation.
- **Tier 2:** Commissioner Debra Jackson (NY) reported Tier Group 2 agreed with Tier 1 and felt that changes to the rule for deployment related absences was not necessary. The group was unanimous with their opinion that the flexibility regarding graduation and reciprocal diplomas was already sufficient and did not need to be changed.
- **Tier 3:** Commissioner Rasmussen reported Tier Group 3 states did not identify any major hurdles faced regarding the current rule but most of them did not use that rule often. More scenarios were received regarding the graduation and reciprocal diploma requirements but no changes were needed.
- **Tier 4:** Vice Chair Korte reported Tier Group 4 was in consensus about who had the power to determine whether absences should be excused or not. District of Columbia had a statute that covered deployments as an excused absence. Most states mentioned they were moving away from differentiated diplomas in favor of uniform diplomas and competency-based education. They did not feel that the rule should be changed as the states were already working towards becoming more flexible with their graduation requirements.

### **Video Highlights**

**State Spotlights** – Four states (Alabama, Florida, Michigan, and Virginia) presented their best practices for implementing the Compact and how they support military-connected children education transitions.

**Compact Stories: Student Voices Videos** – Videos from Hawaii, Colorado, and North Carolina were played throughout the meeting and featured compact-related cases, including reciprocal diplomas, graduation requirements, course placement, and course and credit transfers.

**Strategic Planning** (Brief and Breakouts) – Strategic Planning Consultant Ms. Lorna Festa and members of the EXCOM provided an overview of the commission's history and organizational life cycles and explained the process for developing the 2026-2028 Strategic Plan. The two main discussion areas during the small group breakouts were: key factors or drivers that currently impact the success of the Commission and the big rocks or goals that should be the focus for the next three years.

Commissioners and Ex-officio Representatives separated into five groups to discuss the two areas of focus and implementation.

**Chair Singleton recessed the meeting at 5:00 PM MT.**

**Call to Order**

Chair Singleton called the meeting to order on Thursday, October 17, 2024, at 8:10 AM MT.

**Roll Call**

Executive Director (ED) Cherise Imai called the roll for the second day, and a quorum was established.

STATE	SAL.	NAME	STATE	SAL.	NAME
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NEBRASKA	Mr.	Brian Halstead			

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**MIC3 National Office**

1. Cherise Imai, Executive Director
2. Lindsey Dablow, Training and Operations Associate
3. Allie Thomas, Operations Coordinator

#### 4. Darren Embry and Samantha Nance, General Counsel

##### **Special Briefs**

**Strategic Plan** (Report Out) – Ms. Festa reviewed the strategic plan breakout activity and invited the facilitators to report out on their group's discussions.

- **Group 1** – Treasurer Lynch reported the key drivers/factors of Group 1 were high Commissioner turnover rates, the financial stability of the Commission, and increasing global conflicts that impact military families. The big rocks to tackle were strengthening the new Commissioner onboarding and mentoring processes, creating a sustainable long-term dues and budget plan for stability, and increasing the focus on training with school districts to increase recognition.
- **Group 2** – Chair Singleton reported the key drivers/factors of Group 2 were strengthening partnerships and collaborations, addressing the high Commissioner turnover rates, and ethical awareness among the Commission. The big rocks to tackle were funding of the Commission and collaborative engagement, along with operational stability, local implementation of the Compact and best practices, and increasing social media presence.
- **Group 3** – Commissioner Gable reported the key drivers/factors of Group 3 were consistency, sharing case studies, increasing training initiatives and recognition, and onboarding new Commissioners. The big rocks to tackle were increased communications to all stakeholder groups, holding the ABM in person every year, and a necessary dues increase.
- **Group 4** – Vice Chair Korte reported the key drivers/factors of Group 4 were the geographic realities of the states and the associated challenges with communication and engagement, and school choice playing a vital role in the decrease of military dependents in public schools. The big rocks to tackle were having MIC3 act as the coordinating entity among all the state governments and considering the role of private schools in the context of the Compact.
- **Group 5** – Commissioner Anastasio reported the key drivers/factors of Group 5 were funding of the Commission and how the tightening of state budgets impacted the Compact, the decrease in military dependent numbers, and implementation of the Compact in each state. The big rocks to tackle were educating the military families on the Compact, financial responsibility and sustainable financial planning, and transitional planning to accommodate for the high turnover of Commissioners.

**Educational Management Solutions** – Chair Singleton introduced Mr. Fred Corn and Mr. Luis Montelongo from Educational Management Solutions (EMS), who performed and completed an operational and staff assessment requested by the Finance Committee and EXCOM. Mr. Corn provided an overview of the final report, discussing the assessment sections: organizational structure and systems of the Commission; the Commission's relationships with external support organizations; staff development and internal structures; internal equity alignments; external market analysis; and maintenance of Commission practices. He provided recommendations for the Commission to consider as outlined in each section of the report.

##### **Standing Committee Reports** (continued)

**Finance** – ED Imai provided an overview of the Commission's dues, budget, and investments for FY2024. One state was outstanding with its dues payment for FY2024 and the national office was in contact with the Commissioner. ED Imai reported the Commission's annual audit from the Council of State Governments (CSG) and Blue & Company was clean with no significant findings. The final audit report would be available in December.

Commissioner and Treasurer Greg Lynch (WA) reviewed the proposed FY2026 Dues and Budget that were approved by the Finance Committee. The dues formula remained the same at \$1.15 per military dependent residing in each state with the minimum threshold set at \$2,300 and the maximum threshold at \$69,000. The number of dependents in each state was updated from the DoD Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS), while data for the Coast Guard, NOAA, and USPHS dependents remained the same from 2022.

**Commissioner Sojka motioned to approve the proposed FY2026 Dues. Commissioner Kraeger seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Commissioner John Price (IL) motioned to approve the FY2026 Budget. Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion.**

### Discussion

Commissioner Deanna McLaughlin (TN) asked if the line items for salary and wages in the proposed budget included salary increases for staff and if the open Communications Associate position was considered in the increased amount from FY2024. ED Imai responded that the proposed budget did not factor in salary increases for staff and an estimated \$55,000 was allocated for the Communications Associate position. She stated the EXCOM reviews staff appraisals and determines salary increases, if any, annually in June.

Commissioner Shelley Joan Weiss (WI) asked if a new budget would be presented for full Commission vote if wage increases were approved and if so, would the associated timelines be provided to the Commissioners. ED Imai responded that performance appraisals are performed at the end of the fiscal year and then presented to the EXCOM in June. If salary increases are approved then they apply towards the next fiscal year.

Commissioner McCaffrey asked why a reduction of \$70,000 was taken from the ABM section of the budget. Treasurer Lynch responded that the location of the 2025 ABM in Indianapolis, Indiana, with sponsorship from NFHS, helped decrease projected meeting expenses for that FY.

Commissioner Price (MI) asked why the budget listed a \$200,000 deficit to be taken from the reserve fund if the reserve policy specified that funds were not to be used for permanent loss of funds or replace a budget gap. Treasurer Lynch responded that the reserve had been used as intended and that more discussion on the reserve was to come.

Commissioner McLaughlin recommended assessing charges to Ex-officio members for their travel expenses and relative costs to ABM.

**Chair Singleton called for vote on the motion to approve the FY2026 Budget. The motion carried unanimously.** The FY2026 Budget was approved.

Treasurer Lynch reported the Finance Committee had amended two policies that required full Commission ratification and vote. The first amended policy was *1-2024 Travel &*

*Reimbursement Policy* with the recommendation to move reimbursements to a per diem basis at the federal rate as opposed to reimbursing full costs by itemized receipt.

**Commissioner Kraeger motioned to approve the amendments to 1-2024 Travel & Reimbursement Policy. Commissioner McLaughlin seconded the motion.**

### Discussion

Commissioner Weiss asked for more information about what the Commission would be paying for regarding Ex-officio business and travel and how paying for them would support the Compact. ED Imai responded the only Ex-officio expenses received are from the ABM and they are reimbursed the same as Compact Commissioners. Commissioner Weiss asked to examine why this is and to investigate what obligations the states have paying for the attendance of other organizations. Treasurer Lynch responded that more discussion would be had regarding Ex-officio membership and their financial contributions. Commissioner Weiss stated she was not comfortable voting on an amended policy where the definitions are not clear on what would be paid for non-voting members when some states are denied payment for their attendance at the ABM. ED Imai responded that it was her understanding the Compact was founded by five (5) Ex-officio organizations and eleven (11) states; they were the ones who wrote *1-2014 Travel & Reimbursement Policy* to incorporate the Ex-officio members into the reimbursements for their participation and work at the ABM, and that is how it had always been.

Commissioner McLaughlin asked if the travel policy amendments would go into effect this year if passed. ED Imai responded that amendments to existing policies began in January of the following year, so the per diem reimbursements would not be in effect for the 2024 ABM but would apply to the 2025 ABM.

Mr. Fairbairn stated Ex-officios were included in those reimbursed for travel to ABM because the Ex-officio organizations were part of the initial Task Force that drafted the model legislation, advocated for states and the District of Columbia to adopt the legislation, and laid the foundation for and established the Commission. For this reason, Ex-officio members were included as part of the Commission membership. Commissioner McLaughlin stated the Commissioners have a responsibility to their state taxpayers to look at all possible ways to cut costs or increase revenues in the face of a dues increase and Ex-officio expenses were a factor to consider. Chair Singleton reminded the Commission that the motion on the floor was related to the travel policy and not a future dues increase.

Commissioner Pete LuPiba (OH) stated the Compact was founded by the Council of State Governments, the US Department of Defense, and Rick Masters, and not just the Ex-officios alone. He asked why the 51 states, as the only paying members, were paying for the travel of non-paying members. Treasurer Lynch responded the topic became an issue of public funds that would need to be discussed at a different time and called to bring the discussion back to the travel policy at hand. Chair Singleton stated the total reimbursement amount for Ex-officio member ABM travel expenses in 2023 were \$843.83.

Commissioner Price (MI) commented that he was not comfortable approving a policy when it was previously stated that there was still work to be done on the policy. **Commissioner Spencer Barzee (ID) called the question and discussion was suspended. The motion to end the discussion carried unanimously.**

**The motion to approve the amended 1-2014 Travel & Reimbursements Guidelines policy carried with three objections from Commissioner McLaughlin, Commissioner Price (MI), and Commissioner Weiss.**

The second policy amended by the FINCOM was *#3-2020 Reserve Policy*. The Finance Committee wanted to clearly define the purpose and use of the reserve fund and amended the language to provide clarifications.

**Commissioner Kraeger motioned to approve the amendments to #3-2020 Reserve Policy. Commissioner Designee Dunham seconded the motion. The motion carried with one objection from Commissioner LuPiba.**

Treasurer Lynch gave a presentation on the financial responsibilities of the Commission and a five-year fiscal plan for FY2027-2032 that the Finance Committee created and approved. The proposed five-year plan incorporated a dues increase beginning in FY2027 and took rising inflation rates into account. Treasurer Lynch reviewed the Commission operations and programs, the current expenditures and revenues, and projected ABM expenses should the meeting format remain in-person annually or switch to being held virtually every other year. He then reviewed the fiscal work ahead that the Finance Committee had planned for FY2025.

Treasurer Lynch polled the Commission with an online survey program, Poll Everywhere, using questions specific to the budget and his presentation to gain insight from the members on their financial opinions. The outcome of the survey would be released to the Commission once all results were received and analyzed.

#### **Special briefs (continued)**

**Education Commission of the States** – Mr. Ben Zumbahlen, State Relations Associate for the Education Commission of the States (ECS), presented on national education policy trends and explained how they assist state policymakers with education bills. Currently, the top education trends in the States were open enrollment, military-connected trends, K-12 funding, teacher retention and recruitment, and attendance issues and chronic absenteeism. Mr. Zumbahlen provided an overview of each trend and explained how ECS assists the states to work towards resolutions.

#### **Future ABMs**

Chair Singleton announced that the 2025 ABM would be held in Indianapolis, Indiana, with sponsorship from NFHS. She stated the location for 2026 had not been determined.

#### **Announcements and Closing Comments**

Chair Singleton thanked members of the Commission for their time and attendance, as all items on the agenda had been addressed. She reminded Members to complete the post-ABM survey that would be disseminated via Constant Contact following the conclusion of the meeting. ED Imai also reminded Members to review the travel policy and file their reimbursement by November 15, 2024. Submittals could be sent by email or mailed via post to the National Office.

#### **Adjournment**

With no further business to conduct, Chair Singleton adjourned the meeting at 12:00 PM MT and wished the attendees safe travels back home.