

2025 Summary of Tier Group Meetings

Meeting Dates: June 23, 2025; July 9, 2025; July 15, 2025; July 16, 2025

Overview

Each Tier Group meeting was convened by its respective facilitator (Commissioners Nick Sojka (NC), Debra Jackson (NY), Ben Rasmussen (UT), and Laura Cyr (ME)). A roll call was conducted, noting that a quorum was not necessary as the Tier Groups are not formal committees of the Commission. The discussion centered on three topics: the proposed dues increase and rule amendment, 5-year historical case and inquiry data, and a case from Pennsylvania regarding grade point averages (GPA) and class ranking.

Item #1 - Finance: Proposed Dues Increase

Commission Treasurer and Washington Commissioner Greg Lynch presented the proposed dues increase across all Tier Groups. The proposal includes a 4% increase for each state, raising the minimum threshold from \$2,300 to \$4,000 while eliminating the maximum cap. Members were provided with the Dues Increase Toolkit and the FY2026–2034 Projection Spreadsheet for distribution to state councils and payment authorities.

1. Support Expressed

- Commissioners from North Carolina, Maryland, Nevada, Arkansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, Idaho, Vermont, Oregon, Wyoming, Minnesota, West Virginia, and several other states indicated support for the increase. Some emphasized that the projected multi-year dues schedule allows for improved long-term planning.

2. Concerns

- Texas noted biennial budget constraints and indicated that special processes might be needed to secure funding if the increase takes effect in FY2027.
- Nevada and other states with biennial budgets expressed that delayed payments may be necessary depending on legislative cycles.

3. Key Notes

- Utah proactively adjusted its statute to prepare for the dues increase.
- As the proposal raises smaller states (Tier 4) from \$2,300 to \$4,000, these states noted the impact would be marginal as they already pay the minimum.
- Maryland and Texas highlighted the need for engagement with education departments or advisory boards before formalizing positions for the Annual Business Meeting (ABM).

Item #2 - Pennsylvania Case Discussion: GPA and Class Rank Policies

A case involving district policies on GPA calculations and class ranking was introduced in all Tier Groups. The issue highlighted challenges faced by transferring students, particularly military-connected students, when local calculation methods differ significantly.

Common Themes Across States

- Local Control:** Most states reported that GPA and class rank policies are determined at the district or school level, with limited intervention from state departments of education.
- State Examples**

- North Carolina uses a statewide system (Infinite Campus) that standardizes GPA and rank.
 - Texas and Florida allow districts to set independent GPA policies.
 - Texas recently enacted Senate Bill 1191 to establish a uniform GPA methodology statewide.
 - Wisconsin integrates GPA into accountability systems.
 - Maine applies policies designed for highly mobile students.
3. **Concerns:** Challenges were noted in reconciling grade scales across states, the potential punitive effect of restrictive district policies, and inequities for military students in competitive academic recognition (e.g., valedictorian eligibility).
 4. **Conclusion:** Most Commissioners viewed the case as an isolated occurrence. They acknowledged that national consistency could benefit highly mobile students. However, they also noted the variance of GPA policies across districts within states, and agreed the achievement of uniform standards across states would be challenging.

Item #3 - Five-Year Historical Case and Inquiry Report (2020-2024)

At the request of the Rules Committee, a Cumulative Case and Inquiry Report, summarizing the trends over the past five years, was provided for member feedback on trends within their states.

Key Trends

1. **Common Topics:** Course placement, graduation requirements, enrollment, reciprocal diplomas, and eligibility for programs and activities.
2. **State Examples**
 - Louisiana – course placement issues, especially in districts distant from installations.
 - Kansas – special education placement and sports participation.
 - Missouri – graduation requirement waivers (e.g., Constitution course/exam).
 - Alaska – diploma issuance and DOE challenge processes.
 - Ohio – monitoring the impact of the new open enrollment law.
 - Oregon – deployment-related absences and eligibility for special programs.
3. **Feedback:** Many confirmed that the data reflected issues observed in their states. Some stated that increased training efforts have improved resolution at the district level and parent awareness.

Other Items:

1. **MIC3 Race to the Finish Graphic:** The “Race to the Finish” graphic, which tracks states’ completion of compliance requirements by Tier Group, was reviewed in all Tier Group meetings. Group 2 was recognized as completing all requirements first, with final results to be announced at the 2025 ABM.
2. Commissioners were reminded to register for the ABM and of hotel reservation cut-offs.
3. State Council End-of-Year Reports and meetings were due by June 30, 2025. Extensions could be requested by states as needed.

Conclusion: The conversations provided insight on the proposed dues increase, GPA and class rank challenges, and case trends over the past five years. Most states supported the dues increase, though some states flagged budget timing issues. The Pennsylvania case demonstrated how hard it can be to balance local control with the needs of highly mobile military students, and that a single national standard would be tough to achieve. The feedback will be shared with the Executive Committee, Rules Committee, and Pennsylvania for follow-up.