



**Tier Group 1 Meeting Notes**  
**Monday, July 13, 2026**  
**3:00 – 4:00 PM ET**

|         |                    |                                |                           |
|---------|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| PRESENT | Nickolas Sojka     | New York Commissioner          | Tier Group 1 Facilitator  |
|         | Mary Gable         | Maryland Commissioner          | Commission Vice Chair     |
|         | Greg Lynch         | Washington Commissioner        | Commission Treasurer      |
|         | Dan Dunham         | Virginia Commissioner Designee |                           |
|         | John Erickson      | Hawaii Commissioner            |                           |
|         | Curtis Jones       | Georgia Commissioner           |                           |
|         | Terrance McCaffrey | Florida Commissioner           |                           |
|         | Dominick Robinson  | California Commissioner        |                           |
|         | Jessica Snyder     | Texas Commissioner             |                           |
|         | Dianna Ganote      | US Department of War           | Ex-officio Representative |
| EXCUSED | Keith Owen         | Colorado Commissioner          |                           |
| STAFF   | Lindsey Dablow     | Executive Director             |                           |
|         | Trevin Stevens     | Communications Associate       |                           |
|         | Allie Thomas       | Operations Coordinator         |                           |

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**ITEM 1 – CALL TO ORDER**

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM ET by Tier Group 1 Facilitator and North Carolina Commissioner Nick Sojka.

**ITEM 2 – ROLL CALL**

2. Operations Coordinator Allie Thomas conducted roll call. Per Robert's Rules, a quorum was not necessary as the tier groups are not formal voting committees of the Commission. The meeting was attended by nine Compact Commissioners and one ex-officio representative.

**ITEM 3 – AGENDA**

3. Commissioner Sojka reviewed the agenda with the group.

**ITEM 4 – COMMISSION INFORMATION**

4. Executive Director Lindsey Dablow provided information on the Commission, including the announcement of Tier Group 2 as winner of the Race to the Finish after successfully completing all compliance items by the deadline, an overview of the 2026 State Compliance and Coordination graphic and outstanding compliance items, and reminders regarding registration and hotel reservations for the 2026 Annual Business Meeting (ABM).

**ITEM 5 – NEW BUSINESS**

5. **Proposed Rule Amendments to SEC 1.101 and 4.103** – Ms. Dablow provided an overview of the Rules amendments proposed by the state of Virginia regarding graduation requirements and diplomas of "equivalent stature." Commissioner Designee Dan Dunham (VA) and Commissioner Terrance McCaffrey (FL)

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provided background information and clarification on the case that the amendments were derived from. Commission Vice Chair Mary Gable (MD) asked about states that had only one diploma type for all students, such as Maryland. Commissioner Designee Dunham confirmed that the intent of the amended Rule was for the receiving school to work with the sending school so that the student could receive a reciprocal diploma in that scenario.

6. **Highlighting State Best Practices** – Ms. Dablow reviewed updates made to the *Highlighting State Best Practices* document, formerly known as the *Good, Better, Best: State Best Practices on Implementing the Compact*. Commissioner Sojka stated that the compiled practices were helpful and emphasized their purpose of providing guidance to commissioners. Vice Chair Gable agreed that the language and content were helpful, and the suggestions for retitling the categories were sufficient.

7. Commissioner Curtis Jones (GA) noted that having three categories in a ranked order would always have the same issue of unintentionally creating standards and recommended setting the middle category with the criteria that most states should attain. Commissioner Designee Dunham stated that Virginia experienced similar issues with its Purple Star School requirements and suggested using categories such as “Beginning, Developing, and Expanding,” which worked better for Fairfax County when implementing their requirement checklist.

8. Commission Treasurer Greg Lynch (WA) cautioned against presenting the document as if the National Office was setting standards or expectations for the states and made it clear that meeting statutory requirements was the only thing required of state commissioners. Commissioner Sojka proposed setting the baseline category as “meeting expectations” and being compliant with the Compact statute and Rules and then designating the other two categories for developing and expanding state practices.

9. **Case: Course Credit** – Ms. Dablow provided an overview of a case regarding course credit when transitioning between a 4x4 block schedule and a semester schedule and its applicability to *Article V Course Placement and Attendance*. Ms. Dablow provided the resolution of the case and noted that *Article V Course Placement and Attendance* did not apply to the case. The Tier 1 states were asked whether the Compact addressed awarding credits based on “mastery of the subject or content.” Commissioner Designee Dunham and Vice Chair Gable agreed that a receiving school cannot award credit if it is not theirs to give, and that the student must take the course to earn the credit.

10. The Tier 1 states were asked if their Department of Education had a formal appeals process that families could access. Vice Chair Gable confirmed that Maryland did have a formal appeals process that a local education agency (LEA) appeals board could escalate to. Commissioner Sojka noted that North Carolina encouraged local control without a formal appeals process, and Treasurer Lynch agreed that Washington encouraged local control but noted that LEAs had an option to escalate cases to the state’s Superior Court for judicial review. Commissioner Designee Dunham shared that Virginia had an appeals process for hardship cases and special education.

11. **Commissioner Role and Responsibilities Guidance for Appointing Authorities** – Ms. Dablow reviewed the *Commissioner Role and Responsibilities Guidance for Appointing Authorities* document, highlighting the Commissioner Role and Responsibilities and the Commissioner Responsibilities Checklist. Commissioner Sojka shared that the roles outlined in the documents were fitting for the commissioner position and would be beneficial for appointing authorities. Commissioner Designee Dunham recommended adding the role a commissioner plays in the facilitation of state dues payments, and Ms. Dablow noted that she would bring it forward to the Executive Committee.

12. **Tier-Focused Discussion** – Commissioner Sojka opened the floor for discussion on topics related to the Tier 1 states. Commissioner Designee Dunham shared that he was thankful for Department of War



updates regarding schools in Bahrain and how to assist families as they transitioned to permanent locations. Commissioner Sojka noted that he had received questions regarding the security of Department of War Education Activity schools on installations and heavily impacted public schools in districts near installations, and the measures being taken to make schools safer. He also shared that a member of Congress had proposed an amendment to the Defense Appropriations bill that would provide \$15,000 vouchers to military families for school choice.

#### **ITEM 6 – OTHER BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

13. Ms. Dablow reminded the members that the June 30, 2026, deadline to submit state compliance requirements had passed and encouraged states with any outstanding items to request extensions if they had not already done so.

#### **ITEM 6 – ADJOURNMENT**

14. The meeting was adjourned at 4:03 PM ET.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Lindsey Dablow  
Secretary