

MINUTES

STATE COUNCIL ON EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

April 4, 2014
10:00 a.m.

Submarine Force Library & Museum (USS Nautilus)

Members present: Bob Ross, Elizabeth Gianacoplos, Hamlet Hernandez, Valerie Nelson (and Superintendent Michael Graner, Groton Public Schools), Laura Anastasio, Louis Tallarita
Non-voting members present: Miranda Chapman, Captain Carl Lahti.

1. The state council welcomed its newest member: Hamlet Hernandez, Superintendent of Branford Public Schools will be representing the Connecticut Association of School Superintendents.

2. Valerie Nelson will be retiring at the end of this year. Dr. Graner (or his designee) will be representing Groton Public Schools.

3. The minutes from the meeting on April 12, 2013 were approved.

Vote: in favor—6 (Laura Anastasio, Valerie Nelson, Louis Tallarita, Bob Ross, Beth Giancopolos, Hamlet Hernandez); opposed—0.

4. Update on the Interstate Commission

- The Commission held its sixth annual meeting in San Diego, C.A. The state of Oregon has just joined the Compact. Forty-seven states (excluding New York, New Hampshire, and Minnesota) plus the District of Columbia have joined the Compact.
- Of note: New Hampshire's non-membership in the Compact may have an impact on the Groton submarine base since servicemen may be temporarily assigned to Portsmouth when a ship is sent there for maintenance. Families tend to either stay in Groton or move to Maine. (Maine is a Compact state.)
- Special education was an important topic at the annual meeting. The State Council discussed the Rhode Island case and the legal opinion from the MIC3 attorney.
- The Interstate Compact states are continuing to discuss the adoption of a military identifier for member state data systems. There are a number of states that have already included a military identifier—Connecticut has not done so yet. Consensus was that such an identifier could be helpful and would not unduly burden schools. Schools with large military populations already identify such children, but there is no ability to do so in PSIS.
- The function of the compact within the state.
 - Valerie Nelson noted that there was one situation where a family attended Kindergarten in Connecticut for one day to attain Kindergarten eligibility in the state to which the family moved. The differences in the entry age for Kindergarten continue to be an issue for families moving out of Connecticut.

- Attendance policies: many states are adopting attendance requirements that may present a problem for military families that wish to take time off to spend time with a spouse who is on leave or who is about to deploy. So far, there have not been any significant conflicts with the SDE attendance guidelines.
- The predominant issue for the schools with high military populations is getting records transferred in a timely manner, even from other Compact states. However, most issues can be resolved on a local level.
- With most states having joined the Compact, the focus of MIC3 is now on outreach and training. The website has a lot of resources available for parents, guardians, and school administrators. Dr. Graner noted that in his district (and many others) there are many new principals and office staff who may need training on the Compact. Outreach in areas of Connecticut not associated with the submarine base continues to be a challenge. One suggestion was to offer some outreach activities on holidays such as Veteran's Day or Memorial Day to make other superintendents more aware that they may have military families in their district. MCEC also offers professional development sessions for counselors. Cost is an issue since the state council does not have any funding to conduct outreach and training.
- Bob Ross noted that the National Guard should have a representative on the state council. Captain Lahti also noted that the Coast Guard should have a representative as well. They offered to contact them.
- Valerie Nelson asked if homeschooling has become a greater issue because of the significant differences in how states treat homeschoolers. Connecticut is relatively permissive, but other states may have more requirements. The Compact does not include home schooling. However, many military families home school their children.
- Bob Ross discussed a new app called "dash lane" that can create personal files in a data cloud. It might be worth investigating this further since it might prove helpful to military families.
- Bob Ross also raised the possibility of creating a list of accomplishments and outcomes. It would be helpful to hear stories on how the Compact is working in the state and throughout the country.