

DRAFT MINUTES

STATE COUNCIL ON EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITY FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

November 20, 2008

2:00 p.m.

State Office Building Room 307B

Members present: Commissioner Mark K. McQuillan; Justin Bernier, Executive Director, Office of Military Affairs; Valerie Nelson, Superintendent's designee, Groton Public Schools.

Non-voting members: Shelia McKay, CAFE; Laura Anastasio, Dept. of Education

1. What is the Interstate Compact?
 - Discussion of the Compact, member states, status of the Commission.
2. Role, authority and operation of the Interstate Commission discussed
3. Role, authority and operation of the State Council discussed
4. Military Family Education Liaison
 - Discussion of the role, responsibilities and duties of the Liaison
 - The State Military Family Education Liaison may be best situated with the submarine base. The appointment of the Liaison needs to be discussed further with Captain Ginda and other State Council members.
5. Operation of the Compact in Connecticut
 - Discussion of the compact requirements, Connecticut statutes, and compliance with the Compact:
 - Education records: The Compact requires that parents be provided with an unofficial copy of the student records and that an official copy be forwarded within ten days. If students owe money for damaged or lost educational materials, the schools would still need to forward all records within ten days. Parents should not be charged for copying records if they wish to obtain an unofficial copy of student records.
 - Immunizations: The Compact requires enrollment within thirty days. Thirty days should be sufficient to obtain proper immunizations and physicals pursuant to state law.
 - Age of Enrollment/course continuation: Kindergarten enrollment should not be a problem for Connecticut because the requirement is later than most states (a child is eligible to attend Kindergarten if his or her birth date is on or before January 1 of the school year.)
 - Eligibility: Most districts allow for power of attorney for actions requiring parental decisions. Connecticut law provides for the right to attend school if the child resides in the district—therefore, a school would

not charge tuition to a child living with a non-parent. Extracurricular activities could be a problem for transferring students—districts need to be educated on the Compact provisions to ensure that military children are afforded the opportunity to participate if otherwise qualified.

- Placement: It will be necessary to inform districts of the Compact requirements and for the Department of Education to assist districts in placement issues and in the awarding of credits. Transportation could be an issue if a student transfers from one district to another temporarily due to the deployment of a parent. It would make sense to allow the student to continue his/her attendance at the school of origin. However, transportation costs could be considerable if born by the school districts. Families could choose to stay in the school of origin without being charged tuition, but the families would need to provide transportation. With respect to allowing students excused absences to spend time with active duty parents on leave or recently returned from deployment, districts need to be aware that this provision of the Compact exists and needs to be honored. However, there is a possibility of abuse—districts may need guidance or assistance on a case-by-case basis.

- Graduation: There may be concerns that arise on a case-by-case basis. Districts may need assistance in implementing any waivers or arranging for the previous district to award a diploma.

- Training, education and outreach to ensure Connecticut's compliance with the compact:
 - The Commissioner will prepare and disseminate a Circular Letter that will detail the Compact's rules with respect to enrollment, placement, graduation, and eligibility.
 - The question was raised as to whether the State Council could address "quality of life" issues for military families and provide education/assistance to school districts in assisting families with such issues.

7. Interstate Compact Commission Conference

- Discussion of the Conference in Phoenix, Arizona.
- The next Compact Commission Conference will be in California in November of 2009.

8. Rules that the State Council would like the Interstate Commission to promulgate.

- The Interstate Commission has the authority to promulgate rules and regulations to clarify any issues with compliance. The Commission has designated a Rules Committee that can address such issues.
- If there are any issues, problems or concerns with the Compact that any member feels may need to be clarified, please raise the issue for discussion at the next State Council meeting. The Compact Commissioner (or his designee) can then raise the issue to the Rules Committee on behalf of the State Council.

9. The next State Council meeting will be in February of 2009. For the convenience of the members who are in the Groton/New London area, we will consider the possibility of having the meeting in Groton.