

Draft Minutes

State Council for Educational Opportunities for Military Children

March 21, 2019
9:30 a.m. (following the MSLC meeting)
Submarine Force Library and Museum
1 Crystal Lake Road, Groton

Attendees present: Dr. Andrea Ackerman, Bob Ross, Capt. Whitescarver, Jason Hartling, Laura Anastasio, Miranda Chapman, Louis Tallarita, Susan Austin, Kristea Francolino, Michelle McCarthy.

1. The minutes from the October 3, 2018 meeting were approved.
2. Proposed legislation: House Bill 7245 regarding charter and magnet **provide**. <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2019/TOB/h/pdf/2019HB-07245-R00-HB.PDF> Because the MSLC discussed this piece of legislation in the previous meeting, Bob Ross provided a summary of the concerns raised by the MSLC members. While the bill addresses magnets and charters state-wide, the true impact of this legislation hits the southeastern region of the state the most. The magnet school, the charter school and the districts in southeastern Connecticut have already addressed this problem, and the remedy seems to be working well. Currently, there is one intradistrict magnet (the Marine Science Magnet) and one charter school that would be impacted by this legislation. The Marine Science Magnet keeps several slots open through the month of September to provide accommodations for military families who might move in after the lottery has been completed. These slots may also accommodate non-military families in transition who move into the area after the lottery has been completed. If these slots are not filled by these families before October 1 (which is the date the SDE uses to calculate the state grant based upon the number of students enrolled in the school), they are opened up for students that are on the waitlist. Therefore, the school may fill its seats prior to October 1 so it can receive the full state reimbursement. The proposed bill does not specify the length of time that families would be allowed to apply. Therefore, it could be an added cost to the schools if the empty slots are not filled prior to October 1 (the magnet could lose approximately \$13,000 per empty seat). Because the districts and the magnet school have already addressed this problem for highly mobile families, the group concluded that the legislation is unnecessary and may have unanticipated negative consequences for the schools and for students on the waitlist. In addition, it was noted that the bill only addresses military-connected students. However, non-military families in transition move mid-year and cannot access these programs.

Attorney Anastasio asked the members present to provide any additional feedback via email if they thought of anything that might be problematic after the meeting.

3. Proposed legislation: regarding data collection for military-connected students. <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2019/TOB/h/pdf/2019HB-06775-R01-HB.PDF> House Bill 6775 requires school districts to collect information on military connected students, and it expands the

definition of military connected student to include children of separated service members and children of veterans (who may not be included under the interstate compact). It also requires school districts to connect families with services and programs available from the Department of Veterans Affairs and other community program providers.

Superintendent Hartling noted that this is another unfunded mandate. Assistant superintendent Austin commented that districts surrounding the submarine base already provide many of these services. In addition, it requires an additional data collection by collecting information on the separation status or current active status of parents. With any data collection, there is a possibility of groups trying to access that data, which could implicate FERPA and privacy concerns for the parents.

4. Attorney Anastasio reported on MIC3 activities. First, MIC3 is tracking legislation in the state legislatures re: advanced registration. MIC3 also conducted a national query on chronic absenteeism and deployment related absences, multiple testing. There were a small number of states that experience the same issues with respect to double testing of students. However, the number was very small. The issue that arose in Connecticut was in part due to the testing company not being able to share information between states, and the Connecticut ESSA plan that requires each child located in the school to be tested without consideration of whether the child has already been tested. The solution may lie with the SDE and AIR rather than a group of similarly situated states.

Chronic absenteeism is still a concern that has been raised in other states. Specifically, Hawaii has had some success with a public relations campaign to promote the importance of keeping kids in school. Superintendent Hartling noted that counseling parents to keep the students in school is important—the benefits of time-off for deployment can be outweighed by the problems a student faces by being behind in his or her classes. Assistant Superintendent Austin noted that students who are not military-connected may leave for extended periods due to family activities in foreign countries, which is also detrimental to a student's progress.

Currently MIC3 is having discussions with the US Air Force regarding its initiative to rate public schools located near Air Force bases. Attorney Anastasio commented on the difficulty of selecting specific indicators that can define the quality of a particular school.

5. Public relations and outreach. Miranda Chapman and Attorney Anastasio conducted a professional development session with school psychologists and Waterford.

6. Month of the Military Child Activities. Attorney Anastasio submitted a request to the Governor's office that the Governor designate the month of April as a month of the military child in Connecticut. In the alternative, she asked that he consider selecting a day in the month of April as a Purple up! Day for the state of Connecticut.

Announcements:

April 12th is Purple Up! Day for Groton Public Schools.

Submarine Day at the NLON Submarine base will be April 13th.

Volunteer Breakfast in May: The MSLC will be asking Governor Ned Lamont to be the guest speaker.

The Change of Command ceremony for Captain Whitescarver to transfer command of the NLON Submarine Base to his successor will be May 3, 2019.

DRAFT