**MIC 3**

**Alabama State Council Meeting**

**Thursday, July 27, 2017**

**10.00 am**

**Dr. Douglas L. Ragland, Alabama Commissioner**

Attendees:

Dr. Douglas L. Ragland, Alabama Commissioner

Michael Meyer, Military Family Education Liaison

Christian Beecraft- Education Policy Advisor to Governor Kay Ivey

Dr. Diane Flournoy, Daleville City Schools Superintendent

Randy Stokes, Maxwell AFB School Liaison Officer

Kim Kozel, Ft. Rucker School Liaison Officer

Dr. Ragland began the meeting by introducing himself, acknowledging his wife who was in attendance, and allowing introductions by each council member as well. He also thanked Michael Meyer and Brooke Robinson for their hospitality in hosting the meeting, as well as their leadership in communicating and putting everything in order for this meeting to occur. He stated that he was appointed to the position on March 16, 2017, by former Governor Robert Bentley. He stated that his first case occurred within a few days after being appointed Commissioner, and it made him realize the need and urgency for Superintendents’ to gain and distribute knowledge of this Compact to their employees because school systems will be held accountable for violating the Compact. He also stressed the need for this meeting because the Alabama Council had never met before and this was a historical moment. He stated that we will have future meetings either by conference calls or in person and everyone will be kept up to date on information regarding the Compact. After the introductions were made, Guides and Brochures were handed out to each council member, and Dr. Ragland presented a slide presentation on the Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission. Dr. Ragland discussed the origin of the Compact in terms of where it can be found in the Alabama Code as well as its’ Sponsor, Representative Craig Ford, who is an Alabama State Council Member. Dr. Ragland stated that the purpose of the Alabama Council is to ensure smooth transitions for our Military Students attending public schools, due to a parent(s) assigned duty station. He further stated that seventy six percent of military affiliated students attend public schools, and the average military child will attend 6-9 different schools.

The meeting was interactive and engaging as we discussed all Articles of the Compact, respective case studies for each Article, and its’ sub components and the Military Identifier. Each council member read the case studies and we were 100% correct in answering the questions after each case study.

We discussed the key issues affecting Military Children by age groups.

Randy Stokes, Maxwell AFB SLO, stated that he had an issue with a child from a European Education Background that should be in 3rd grade being told they had to be in 2nd grade by Alabama Standards. The Alabama Schools can test and place the child in the grade they feel appropriate based on their test results.

We discussed how the Military Interstate Children’s Compact assisted those in need of Special Education Services. Again, the receiving school can work with the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) from the sending school for 30 days, but will have the option to evaluate the student based on respective district special education guidelines in respect to creating a new IEP to ensure proper placement. If a child arrives at a new school with no IEP, the receiving school will test to create a new IEP.

The topic of high school athletic tryouts was discussed. Military families moving in the summer months often miss the spring tryouts or conditioning sessions during the summer months. The Compact states that these children “shall have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities, if qualified, regardless of application deadlines”. Dr. Flournoy mentioned that this problem had been addressed with the schools surrounding Ft. Rucker and that through parent education/school athletics education they had agreements with the schools on how and when students arriving after tryouts could have the opportunity to do so. It has been working well for the past three years.

A video in reference to the state of Kentucky depicting real issues and challenges of Military Families in regard to the Military Interstate Compact was shown. It reinforced our understanding and perspective of how the Compact is utilized and its importance in our educational institutions from state to state. With the high Department of Defense (DOD) Civilian Workforce in Kentucky, they have extended their Compact demographics coverage to include civilians.

Randy Stokes asked if the Compact would apply to International Military Members. After discussion, it was decided that it would probably not be extended to International Military Members.

Randy Stokes spoke to the group about the failing schools in Montgomery, Alabama. He stated all the public schools are failing and there is no other school to attend other than the magnet schools, which have waiting lists and a lottery in the spring. If a military family moves to Montgomery in the summer, the lottery has already taken place and families will be at the bottom of the waitlist. He was proposing that the magnet schools hold open a few slots for incoming military families. This request has not been formalized. Kim Kozel mentioned that although they don’t have magnet schools, the VPK programs in the three Ft. Rucker surrounding districts have a lottery in the spring and incoming military families will have to go on the wait- list once arriving at Ft. Rucker. Dr. Ragland in essence told Randy that the Compact did not apply to Magnet Schools in this respect and the local board of education will have to make changes in policy in regards to saving slots or spaces for military families. He did however say that he would check with Cherise Imai to confirm this point and to see if there are any other alternatives for military families to be placed in Advanced Schools after missing the deadline for registration in such schools. Upon finding out this information, Dr. Ragland said that he will provide Randy with an update.

Although our meeting was successful , our group agreed that there is an overall lack of knowledge of the Compact and how it can benefit and assist transitioning military families in the state of Alabama. As a result, it was agreed upon by everyone that the understanding of the Military Interstate Children’s Compact by School Superintendents is absolutely critical and must be passed on to other school staff members as a means of professional development and understanding of the law in successfully and fairly applying the Compact in respective school systems throughout the state and the nation.

In closing, Dr. Ragland declared that our first-ever meeting went very well. Everyone was in agreement that the meeting went well, was very informative, and very helpful in providing the understanding and knowledge in working successfully with military families as they transition in our respective schools in the state and throughout the nation.

A request was made to send all council members the powerpoint presentation and Dr. Ragland stated that every council member will receive a copy of the presentation via email.

The meeting concluded at approximately 11:30 am and everyone seemed to be fulfilled, excited and eager to meet again.