

**INTERSTATE COMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR MILITARY CHILDREN
HAWAII STATE COUNCIL
GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING**

Brig Gen (Ret) Kathleen Berg, Hawaii State Commissioner

NOTICE OF MEETING

**Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street, Room #414
Honolulu, HI 96813**

**Friday, January 20, 2017
10:00 a.m. – 12 noon**

MINUTES

Attendance:

Council Members Present:

- Brig Gen (Ret) Kathleen Berg, State Commissioner, Hawaii State Council, MIC3
- Lt Col Michael Brooks for Col Sean Killeen, Marine Corps Base Hawaii (MCBH)
- COL Stephen Dawson, Commander, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii (USAG-HI)
- CDR John Dewey, Staff Judge Advocate, U.S. Coast Guard (US CG) 14th District
- Mr. Richard Fajardo for CAS Heidi Armstrong, Complex Area Superintendent, Leeward: Campbell-Kapolei, HIDOE
- Mr. Raymond Fujino, Executive Director, Oahu Interscholastic Association
- Mr. Jordan Garrett for Senator Michelle Kidani, Hawaii State Legislature
- Ms. Lanelle Hibbs, Complex Area Superintendent, Kailua-Kalaheo, HIDOE
- Mr. Thomas Lee, Military Liaison, Office of Governor David Ige
- Ms. Wendy Nakasone-Kalani, School Liaison Officer
- Ms. Cherry Okahara, Military Liaison, HIDOE
- Col Peter Santa Ana, Director, J1, U.S. Pacific Command
- Mr. Stephen Schatz, Deputy Superintendent, HIDOE
- Mr. Calvin Shimomura for CAS John Erickson, Complex Area Superintendent, Central: Aiea-Moanalua-Radford, HIDOE
- Ms. Teri Tabiolo for CAS Robert Davis, Complex Area Superintendent, Central: Leilehua-Mililani-Waialua, HIDOE

Unable to Attend:

- CAPT James Jenks, Chief of Staff, Navy Region Hawaii
- Col Renzy Smith, Commander, Hickam Air Force Base, 647th Airbase Group
- Representative Roy Takumi, Hawaii State Legislature

1. Call to Order: 10:00 a.m.

2. Welcome/Farewell

The following guests were welcomed:

- Hawaii's First Lady, Mrs. Ige (Dawn Amano-Ige)
- Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3) Executive Director Cherise Imai
- Council of State Governments (CSG) and MIC3 Legal Counsel Rick Masters

3. Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes: The minutes from the May 17, 2016, meeting were approved unanimously with minor corrections.
4. Report: MIC3 Executive Director Cherise Imai reported that over the past six months the Commission developed its mission and vision, launched a strategic plan that was approved in October at the Annual Business Meeting (ABM), and was rebranded with a new logo. Additionally, they released new collaterals and resources to educate stakeholders on the Compact. Focus areas over the next year include the following: development of a new website that is more user friendly and easier to navigate; standing committee alignment to the strategic plan in its meetings and activities; development of new partnerships with organizations and other stakeholders to inform and educate them about the Compact. She thanked the Hawaii State Council for their support and engagement and recognized Brig Gen Berg for her leadership, commitment to the Compact, and support for military children.

5. Old Business

a. Update: Training/Meeting Report

HIDOE Military Liaison Cherry Okahara reported that training sessions on the Compact were provided at the following events and meetings by former HIDOE Military Liaison Cherise Imai, State Commissioner Berg, and/or current HIDOE Military Liaison Okahara:

- 11 March 2016 - Marine Corps Base Hawaii (MCBH) School Liaison Officer (SLO) Updates for Family Readiness Officers (FROs), Cherise Imai and Commissioner Berg
- 21 April 2016 – Castle Kahuku Complex Areas, Cherise Imai and Commissioner Berg
- 10 June 2016 – MIC3 Hawaii Briefing for NOAA and USPHS Uniformed Members, Cherise Imai, Cherry Okahara, and Commissioner Berg
- 26 July 2016 – MCBH Parent & Principals Meet & Greet, Commissioner Berg on Panel Discussion
- 28 July 2016 – Military and Family Life Counselor (MFLC) Orientation Training, Commissioner Berg
- 15 September 2016 – Military Culture Course (Presentation to various educators from various military impacted schools), Commissioner Berg

Commissioner Berg noted that part of the HIDOE Military Liaison's job is to identify and train new principals. Ms. Okahara reported that next month she and some of the SLOs will be presenting at the Honolulu District Principals meeting.

b. Hawaii Case Matrix – Commissioner Berg explained that two issues have been consistent concerns raised by families both in Hawaii and on the national level: Kindergarten entrance age and on-time graduation.

It was noted that since the 2014-15 school year in Hawaii, children must be five years of age on or before July 31 of the school year to enter kindergarten. (The previous cutoff-date was December 31.) Commissioner Berg and Ms. Okahara commended the SLOs for helping to resolve and answer questions from their level. Ms. Okahara will update our state case matrix with two recent cases: Kalaheo High School graduation and Solomon Elementary Kindergarten entrance.

c. State Compact Dues – \$21,226 was paid by the HIDOE to MIC3 for this year's dues. Dues are \$1 for every school-aged military dependent living in the state per the military database, DEERS (Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System).

d. MIC3 Rules Committee – Temporary Housing Issue – As noted in the last meeting, concerns were raised at the national level regarding placement of students in a school near their family's temporary lodging facilities (TLF) upon arrival in a state, and then subsequent movement of the child to a new school/district once the family's permanent housing was

secured. Questions were asked about how the various locations/schools/states where this is happening a lot were handling this extra transition burden. Hawaii was identified as one of the states that could provide the Rules Committee with information so they might more fully understand the situation and evaluate what help might be offered by MIC3. Commissioner Berg brought those comments and feedback to the MIC3 ABM in October 2016. After much discussion, it was decided that the Rules Committee would not change or create a rule for this, since there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and most commissioners felt that a rule could restrict a district's flexibility in resolving these issues. In addition, the issue is actually an "intrastate" transition versus an "interstate" transition, and a rule could be interpreted as overstepping the Compact's authority.

- e. Position Vacancy: Military Family Education Liaison (MFEL) – In many states, this position essentially would be someone like our HIDOE Military Liaison. Our council had previously selected a SLO for our MFEL, because they are so key to military families' successful transitions. However, the DoD ruled that it was an ethics violation for any federal employee to hold such a state position. We still have a vacancy and will send out the position description. The MFEL could be a military spouse or someone from our military impacted schools. A connection to military families is desirable, because the MFEL is to provide outreach to them. Army SLO Wendy Nakasone-Kalani inquired about the two-year commitment, and Commissioner Berg said we would appreciate whatever time commitment could be made by an applicant.
- f. USPACOM Information on Current Combat Locations – Commissioner Berg provided some background on this matter. It is related to the Compact rule requesting "additional excused absences" related to visits with the parent/guardian relative to their "deployment to a combat zone or a combat support posting." In the Compact, "deployment" means "the period one (1) month prior to the service members' departure from their home station on military orders through six (6) months after return to their home station." In Hawaii, our rule extends that to three (3) months prior to departure. The Joint Venture Education Forum (JVEF) took on a project over a year ago to formalize such requests from families to school principals. An ad hoc committee drafted a form and process that was to be trialed in some schools in the Windward District. Part of that package included a letter from USPACOM defining a "combat zone or combat support posting" and it is an update on that letter and process that this Old Business item addressed. The size and tempo of such deployments slowed considerably over the last couple of years. Coupled with the reduced operations tempo, JVEF's series on the importance of school attendance, and other factors, requests for such excused absences declined significantly. So this topic became much less urgent. Col Santa Ana shed light on the current situation and told the council that his office was working on a more elegant solution than a yearly letter. He noted that the combat zone locations have not changed since the first letter was issued. He will work with JVEF and Commissioner Berg to update the USPACOM piece of the application process still under refinement.
- g. GPA Calculation: HIDOE Documentation/Website Postings – Commissioner Berg explained that a process had begun last year with the MIC3 executive director at that time, Stephen Hogan, to help resolve the misunderstandings that parents had brought to the MIC3 National Office related to the GPA recalculations done when students transfer from one school to another. The problem stems from states using different grading scales (4-point versus 5-point scales, for instance) and different rules for "weighting grades" for various kinds of honors courses like Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) curricula. Commissioner Berg and then HIDOE Military Liaison Imai began a process to have the HIDOE's GPA calculation procedure documented and posted on the HIDOE website so that parents could do their own calculation the same way the HIDOE does the recalculation of transferring students' grades. Our state would then lead the way to helping parents understand how this process is done to integrate their children from their sending school's system into

the receiving school's system. Receiving schools never change grades, but the students' grades are translated from the sending school's scale to the receiving school's scale using the receiving school's rules for weighting grades and for awarding credit for graduation requirements. A draft document was provided to Ms. Imai by the HIDOE, and now with changes in personnel at the HIDOE, it is time to catch up on the project and get a final document approved and then posted to the HIDOE website. Our new HIDOE Military Liaison, Ms. Cherry Okahara, will follow up on the status of the documentation.

6. New Business

Kindergarten Entrance Age Rule:

Conditions for Exceptions to Hawaii Law on Age Requirements for Enrollment

Commissioner Berg reminded the council members that since the 2014-15 school year in Hawaii, children must be five years of age on or before July 31 of the school year to enter kindergarten, noting that the previous cutoff-date was December 31. She explained that until the change, Hawaii had probably the lowest Kindergarten entrance age of all states, and this has been a disservice to students on at least two counts. The early entry age had resulted over the years in Hawaii having grade cohorts that were essentially six months younger than those in most other states. One consequence of that was lower standardized test scores for each grade because the students were so much younger than the norm. By raising the entrance age, they increased the level of readiness for school and increased the chances of academic success for students. They also prevented the problem of 17-year-old high school graduates. Graduating so early has been a problem especially for those not going to college, because many of the other career paths require individuals to be 18 years old for entry.

She explained that this entrance age is set by law. Unlike in most other states, where schools have some discretion as to how young a child can be to enter Kindergarten, in Hawaii they have to be five years old by July 31. Hawaii now has the oldest entry age for Kindergarten, and this has resulted in a lot of disappointed military parents and challenges to our law. The only exception is that provided by the Interstate Compact, because compact law supersedes state law. But the compact rule that allows a four-year-old military student entry to Kindergarten in Hawaii is complicated.

Commissioner Berg read from the Compact Rules Desk Reference ("little red book" pages 7 and 8) Section 3.102, (b) and provided handouts of this section. This rule allows students who have already enrolled and attended Kindergarten in the sending state to continue their enrollment in Kindergarten in Hawaii provided that four conditions are met and documented. These requirements have not been well understood by our schools and by military parents, resulting in some difficult situations and some enrollments being allowed that, in fact, violated Hawaii law because they did not meet the Compact requirements. Commissioner Berg made a formal request to the MIC3 National Office for a legal ruling on the application of this Compact. Because MIC3 Legal Counsel Rick Masters was a guest at this state council meeting, he was asked to assist with the subsequent discussion that included questions about the residency requirement and the required transcript showing record of attendance and academic information, as well as the applicability of the Compact Sec 5.102 – Educational Program Placement in cases where students are not Kindergarten ready. Mr. Masters qualified his statements because he had not yet finished the requested legal review. He outlined many of the factors that will go into his review and assured council members that the document would be available upon review and approval by the MIC3 Executive Committee. Discussion revealed some complications with issues of residency as well as sensitivity that only military families have the advantage that the Compact rule provides—children of civilian families moving to Hawaii have no such right of continuation in Kindergarten for their young children even if they meet the additional conditions in the Compact. The group had a rich discussion that spilled over into the Public Comment period where attendees other than council members and official guests offered information and asked questions.

7. Next State Council Meeting – Ms. Okahara will contact council members to seek out possible dates in May for the next meeting.
8. Public Comment
 - a. In answer to a question, MIC3 Executive Director Imai shared that for membership in the National Honor Society for incoming students, receiving schools can check with the sending school.
 - b. In response to a question, Executive Director of the Oahu Interscholastic Association Ray Fujino provided some examples of how he works with out-of-state transfers of high school athletes. For example, for a swimmer who came in after the qualifying meets, he explained to the school Athletic Director in Hawaii that he could get the qualifying time from the student's sending school. There is no deadline for out-of-state transfers.
 - c. Ms. Jean Grice, who works for the Department of Defense Education Agency (DoDEA) at USPACOM, shared that the Kindergarten age for DoDEA overseas schools is birth by December 2 based on the International Date Line.
9. Adjourned at 11:57 a.m.

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