

KMIC3 - March 25, 2009, Meeting Summary

Attending:

Brad Neuenswander – Kansas State Department of Education
Dale Dennis – Deputy Commissioner - KSDE
Debra Baeuchle – Superintendent Ft. Leavenworth Schools
Ron Walker – Superintendent Geary County Schools
Cheryl Gelwix (sub for Donna Shinn) Ft Leavenworth Child Development Center
Bill Luzier (sub for Dennis Chrisco) McConnell AFB
Ann Gordon, Ft Riley School Liaison Officer and State Military Family Education Liaison
LTC David Chase – Ft Riley

Notebooks were distributed to each member. Contents include: State Officials Guide; Adoption of transitional rules; adoption of budget; age of entrance; specific impacts on military children; state-by-state legislative status; House Bill 2002; Kansas members contact information

Budget:

Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner for Education and liaison to the legislature, urged everyone to contact your local representative and senator about the state membership fees (\$1 per military-dependent student). It is hoped that the state will allocate funds to pay the yearly membership fee for Kansas districts. Currently the Department of Defense is funding the commission until October 2009 and then the compact commission will be funded by state membership dues. The budget information is in the notebook. Invoices are being sent this week to states to collect the membership dues. The number of active military dependent students for each state is determined using the July 2008 count by the Department of Defense. Kansas had 14,107 students. If reserves are activated, those students would be added. Home schooled students are also counted. Recently the state of Virginia became the 12th member state in the compact commission. They have the largest number of active military students with approximately 79,000.

Rules:

The “adoption of transitional rules” handout is tentative until they hire a director for the program.

New Council Name:

The members asked to call our council KMIC3 (instead of MCEC) because several of them already receive information from MCEC. The national council (the 12 member states) recently selected the name MIC3 (Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission – MIC3 for short) and K was added in front for Kansas, i.e. KMIC3. Future emails from Brad will have KMIC3 in the subject line.

Age of Entrance:

K.S.A. 72-1107 is the statute which covers the age of eligibility for school attendance is included in the notebook. The statute reads that a child should be age 5 on or before August 31 to enroll in kindergarten. There was much discussion about children coming from other states, and especially other countries, who were enrolled at a younger age. Some additional guidelines for compliance are included below the statute. They state that a child who was enrolled in a program equivalent to the Kansas kindergarten program in another state or country may enter the program in Kansas provided they were five years of age no later than December 31 in the school year they enrolled. Same date applies for a first grader. The superintendents said that this documentation is helpful when dealing with parents when they are trying to enroll their child that doesn’t meet the age requirement. These additional guidelines are for your eyes only.

House Bill 2002:

Dale Dennis discussed the status of House Bill 2002, which will extend the original statute for another four years (2nd count date for military dependents). Rep. Marti Crow explained HB 2002 to the committee and did a great job. Some amendments were suggested, but went back to the original version before being passed out of committee. In addition, Sen. Jean Schoendorf was also very supportive in its passage. This bill will replace K.S.A. 2008 Supp. 72-6448. It passed today (with no amendments) and will now go to the governor to sign.

Specific Impacts on Military Children:

A handout in the notebook provides 7 issues that impact military children. Transfer of records is not a big problem. The district will accept hand-carried transcripts or electronic records at the high school level. Some of the issues discussed in length are summarized below:

Gifted:

Identifying gifted students does cause some angst with parents of children who were in gifted programs prior to moving to Kansas. Kansas is the only state that requires an IEP for gifted students. Other states allocate special state aid called "Gifted and Talented" which fund the gifted program. In Kansas, a student must score in the 97th percentile, however, that also differs from state to state. If a student is enrolled that the parents say is gifted, the IEP team will have to do assessments and testing to see if they meet the criteria of gifted. Depending on the number of students being reviewed and tested, this process can sometimes take three months, and during this time, the student is not receiving gifted services. Kansas has standards set and the administration will follow the guidance set by the state when assessing gifted students.

Special Ed:

Most parents of special ed students do bring the IEP at enrollment. They are finding an increase in special ed students. Some have heard a rumor of autistic centers in the military community.

Course sequencing is not a big issue.

Graduation requirements:

Districts may waive hours or prorate if needed because of student workload. Sometimes a student took a class that Kansas doesn't offer. Some states may require an exit exam before issuing a diploma. Will MIC3 have those exit tests waived for military dependent students? Do they have the right? If a child moves at the end of their senior year during the last semester, could it be waived then? An option to consider – the student enrolls in March, but doesn't have a required class to graduate. Call the sending high school and ask them if we enroll them here and they pass the class, will the sending high school issue the diploma. For high school students, they require transcript records to meet graduation requirements. Question: Does anyone have a problem of the sending school holding student records because of unpaid fees owed by the parent? The superintendents both said that doesn't seem to be much of a problem with the military students.

High school age students coming in may impact graduation requirements (federal guidelines) and cohort groups. This will need further study. It is extremely difficult to follow cohort groups grades 9 through 12 because families leave and sometimes you cannot trace them. If they enroll in a private school or a school doesn't ask for their records, it is difficult to do exit records.

Exclusion from Extra-Curricular Activities:

Ft Leavenworth and Geary County Schools make accommodations for students who enroll after auditions, tryouts, elections and membership recruitments. This is not a problem.

Attendance and the Army Family Covenant:

There was a lot of open discussion on this issue. This issue is addressed in the federal compact bill. The discussion centered on the Army Family Covenant which states that families will be given block leave when a family member who has been deployed returns to the states. Parents will sometimes pull their children from school for a week or two during the school year to reunite with their family. This time may fall within the assessments testing window. Usually the principal will meet with the parents to visit about how their child(ren) being absent for a long period during the school year can affect the learning process, and try to work with them. They will evaluate the student's progress and counsel the parent. However, sometimes the parents will take the child(ren) out of school anyway after being advised of the consequences. These absences on the student's record can reflect negatively on the school's overall Average Daily Attendance (ADA), and will also affect Annual Yearly Progress (AYP), Impact Aid, state assessment scores, and funding. This is especially a problem in Geary County since they may have a battalion return to Ft. Riley, thereby affecting a large number of the school population. There are more students who are military dependents enrolled in Geary County than students from civilian families.

There are no national standards on attendance. Some state's truancy laws state that if a student is absent over 10 days, they won't pass to the next grade. Families want to comply, but also need the family reunion time after an extended time apart. Can flexibility be given on the assessment testing window for students of military families so that they can test at another time if necessary? A soldier may not have the option to adjust leave time so it doesn't interfere with state assessments. A suggestion was made to put a designation in the state KIDS system for "military reunion leave." This would allow the district to identify in a student's individual record (KIDS) a block of time that a student is absent because of a parent reunion and forgive them that time in their attendance records for the school. Currently there is NO flexibility at the federal level for this type of absence in the ADA. There seems to be a conflict with the school complying with the Army Family Covenant, and then being punished on their ADA/AYP records when the students take several days of leave during the school year to reunite with a returning parent.