

IOWA INTERSTATE COMPACT COMMISSION FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

PROGRESS REPORT FOR ACADEMIC
YEAR 2014-2015



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Background

Iowa is the temporary home to approximately 1,000 active duty military service members and their families, and the long-term home for 19,400 plus military Guard and Reserve personnel and their families. Iowa has almost 20,000 military dependent school-aged children. Families belong to the Iowa National Guard, the US Army Reserves, the Iowa Air National Guard, the Marines, the Marine Reserves, the Navy, the Navy Reserves, and the US Army. Iowa has military installations located in Des Moines (Fort Des Moines), and Johnston (Camp Dodge). The state has a series of Guard, Reserves, or Armed Forces Reserve Centers across the state.

The Iowa Compact Commission for Educational Opportunity for Military Dependents (known in short form as the Iowa Compact) is designed to assist military families with their transition to Iowa and our public school system. The Iowa Compact addresses key educational transition issues encountered by military families including enrollment, placement, attendance, eligibility, and graduation. Children of active duty members of the uniformed services, National Guard and Reserve on active duty orders, and members or veterans who are medically discharged or retired for one year are eligible for assistance under the Iowa Compact. The Iowa Compact uses a comprehensive approach to provide a consistent policy in every school district that military dependents choose to join. The Iowa Compact has no funds to support an annual meeting, pay dues, etc. Finally, it should be noted that the Iowa Compact applies only to interstate transfers, not in-state transfers.

Status Report

Iowa was the 14th state to sign on to the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. Since then, all 50 states and territories have signed on to the Interstate compact. The Iowa Compact was introduced in House File 214, and is in the Iowa Code under Chapter 256H. The membership of the Iowa Compact must, at least, include the following:

- Department of Education Director's Designee—Currently serving in this position is Tom Beasley, Education Program Consultant, Veterans and Military Education, Bureau of Career and Technical Education, Iowa Department of Education. Tom is also serving as the liaison between the Iowa Compact and the Iowa Department of Education.
- One Superintendent—Mr. Patrick Coen, Superintendent, Burlington Community School District (Mr. Coen was not appointed, but has agreed to sit on the committee.)
- One Gubernatorial Appointee—Chaplin (CPT) Martha Kester, Iowa Army National Guard
- One Legislative Appointee—Senate President and House Speaker must agree on a designee by a particular date.

The other Iowa Compact members are appointed by the Governor. Currently, the Iowa Compact has no member from the Iowa Legislature and no *appointed* school superintendent (Mr. Coen was not appointed, but has agreed to sit on the committee). Among those currently appointed (Beasley and Kester), some will have their terms expire, and consideration needs to be given to their replacements.

In academic year 2014-2015, the Iowa Compact had no issue come before it and the Iowa Compact did not meet in person. Iowa paid its 2015 Military Interstate Compact Commission (MIC3) dues assessment in July 2015.

Issues

Nevertheless, there have been ongoing issues that have persisted for quite some time. In 2012, Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds and Major General Timothy (Tim) E. Orr, the Iowa Adjutant General (TAG), co-chaired a “re-engagement event” on the subject of military children issues within Iowa school districts. The following is a partial list of items that need to be addressed:

1. A representative from the Iowa Legislature needs to be appointed. Representative Todd Prichard (D) has expressed an interest to serve.
2. The Iowa Compact needs to have a superintendent. There has been a recommendation that the Johnston School District Superintendent be asked/approached since his district has the largest military student population.
3. One recommendation from the “re-engagement event” was to embed the Iowa Compact within the Iowa Home Base Initiative. The Iowa Home Base Initiative is seeking to make Iowa attractive for military veteran relocation for employment and friendly for their families, including ease of entry into Iowa school districts, the main focus of the Iowa Compact. An outgrowth of this recommendation should be the appointment of a representative from Iowa Home Base Initiative to the Iowa Compact.

Addressing the above issues should help determine the future role of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, how to make the Iowa Interstate more effective, and how the Iowa Compact could better serve Iowa’s primary military child demographic (children of Guard and Reservists) and enhance Iowa’s Home Base initiative and intent to recruit separating service members and their families back to Iowa.



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