

Iowa Interstate Compact Commission for Military Children Progress Report for Academic Year 2016-17



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State of Iowa
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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). There are many Guard, Reserves, and 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 to the 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 enter. 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.

Statutory Requirements

Iowa was the 14th state to sign on to the Interstate Compact in 2009. Since then, all 50 states and territories have signed on to the Interstate Compact. Iowa paid its 2016-17 Military Interstate Compact Commission (MIC3) dues assessment in August 2016.

Pursuant to Iowa Code section 256H, the Iowa Compact is a Governor-appointed council that has been established for the purpose of removing barriers to educational success imposed on the children of military families because of frequent deployment of their parents (Iowa Code section 256H.1.1). The seven-member commission consists of a school superintendent or designee; the Iowa Department of Education Director or designee; four gubernatorial appointments, one whom is appointed as the Iowa Compact chairperson and another is the military families' education liaison; and a joint appointment made by the Iowa Legislature (Iowa Code section 256H.2.2).

The Iowa Compact is required to meet at least once each calendar year for the purpose of addressing issues involving the dependents of military families seeking resolution such as:

1. official, unofficial, or hand-carried education records or transcripts;
2. continued enrollment at the same grade level when transferring between states;
3. course and program placements, including special education services, in all subject areas;
4. waiving of course and program prerequisites and other preconditions; and
5. granting of additional absences due to situations related to deployments.

A full description of the issues is detailed in Iowa Code sections 256H.1.4, 256H.1.5, 256H.1.6, and 256H.1.7.

Current Status

No student issues were brought before the Iowa Compact during the 2016-2017 academic year.

The Iowa Department of Education continues to explore ways in which to reconvene the Iowa Compact for the upcoming school year. Last year's report stated that the plan for fiscal year 2017 was an attempt to reenergize and refocus the Iowa Compact to ensure that the statutory requirement was being met.

Due to recent personnel changes, there is currently not a Commissioner assigned to the Iowa Compact. The Director of the Iowa Department of Education has directed staff to reestablish the Iowa Compact. Staff is developing a plan to have the Iowa Compact fully functional in fiscal year 2018.