

State Council on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

Annual Meeting

Nebraska Department of Education, 301 Centennial Mall South, State
Board Meeting Room, 6th floor
Lincoln, NE

AND

Bellevue Public Schools Welcome Center Board Room, 2600 Arboretum
Drive, Bellevue, NE
Wednesday, September 16, 2020 9:00 a.m.

Visitors may watch and use Zoom Link for remote participation:
<https://educationne.zoom.us/j/93125707145>

Minutes

The Nebraska State Council on Educational Opportunity for Military Children held its annual meeting on September 16, 2020. Publicized notice of the meeting was given by posting notice on the Department's website on the Internet, which gave the date, time and locations of the meetings.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Brian Halstead, Deputy Commissioner of the Nebraska Department of Education and Council Commissioner of the State Council on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, called the meeting to order at 9:13 a.m.. The following members were present at the 301 Centennial Mall, Lincoln, NE site: Brian Halstead, Council Commissioner; Matthew L. Blomstedt, Commissioner of Education; and Sara Hulac, Military Family Liaison and NDE Legal Counsel

The following member was present at the Bellevue, NE site: Dr. Jeff Rippe, Superintendent, Bellevue Public Schools.

Michelle Pridell, School Liaison Officer, Airman & Family Readiness Center, was in attendance at the Bellevue site.

Nikki Nader, Deputy Director for Installation Support, 55th Mission Support Group, 55 MSG/DD, serving as Col. Dayton's designee and Nicole Barrett, representative for Senator Mike Groene, attended via ZOOM.

Brian Halstead announced the placement of the Open Meetings Act.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Phillip O'Donnell, Military Affairs Liaison, Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs, reported that the recently released "Support of Military Families" assessment (see attached) for Offutt AFB indicates that Bellevue Public Schools as well as the surrounding urban and rural schools fared well in the report. This assessment was a result of a February 2018 memorandum from the Service Secretaries to the National Governors Association emphasizing that the quality of schools near bases would be taken into account in future basing decisions. The Department of the Air Force Strategic Basing Office is currently using the "Support of Military Families" assessment in basing evaluations.

Mr. O'Donnell thanked the Nebraska Department of Education for its effective, efficient and student-focused implementation of the State Council on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

3. APPROVAL OF 2019 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Sara Hulac, second by Dr. Blomstedt: To approve the minutes of the September 9, 2019, State Council on Educational Opportunity for Military Children meeting.

Voting Yes: Blomstedt, Halstead, Rippe, and Hulac

Absent: Col. Alan Dayton

The motion passed.

4. REPORTS BY MEMBERS ON ACTIVITY OR ISSUES

Brian Halstead, Compact Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Nebraska Department of Education, stated that he has received no requests for services under the Compact. School districts are working diligently and Compact is not utilized. Mr. Halstead did state he is serving on a Task Force for MIC3 and that Task Force as well as the Executive Committee are addressing the issue of possibly expanding language in the Compact to include Guard and Reserve personnel. Personnel in the Guard and Reserve can have interstate travel because of training and other issues. This action wouldn't necessarily affect children in the State of Nebraska.

Sara Hulac, Military Family Liaison and NDE Legal Counsel, stated that this past year she is not aware of any issues.

Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D., Commissioner of Education, stated that the Council is a great source of pride and is very appreciative of Bellevue Public School and area schools' efforts to serve military families. He acknowledges that a lot of effort and collaboration goes into making sure military families transitions into schools smoothly.

Dr. Jeff Rippe, Superintendent, Bellevue Public Schools, reported that the Bellevue Public Schools has not heard of any MIC3 issues this past year.

Michelle Pridell, School Liaison Officer, Airman & Family Readiness Center, has not had any Compact issues serving as school liaison and reported that the State of Nebraska is a leader in the country in serving military families. Ms. Pridell reported that while not observing any Compact issues, there are some COVID related issues, specifically surrounding virtual school. Most school districts are flexible and the Enrollment Option choice is helpful. A lot of families are waiting for next semester for virtual school if they so choose. Ms. Pridell states that the Center is very impressed with the safety measures the school districts are putting into place and expect new families to start arriving in December 2020.

Commissioner Blomstedt stated that he is impressed with the efforts and strategies of Bellevue Public Schools to assist in students returning to school in person.

Nikki Nader, Deputy Director for Installation Support, 55th Mission Support Group, 55 MSG/DD, concurs with Ms. Pridell's comments and reports no issues.

Nicole Barrett, Policy Research Analyst, indicated that Senator Mike Groene's office did not receive any indication of issues pertaining to the Compact this past year.

5. DISCUSSION OF NEBRASKA'S PARTICIPATION IN AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE INTERSTATE COMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR MILITARY CHILDREN

No Council member had any concerns or issues to report.

There being no further business to come before the Council, Brian Halstead adjourned the meeting at 9:26 a.m.

***Support Materials for this meeting are available for inspection in the NDE's Legal Services Office**