

# *Annual WA MIC3 State Council Meeting Minutes*

2 October, 2024

## **State Council (Present)**

**Superintendent Ron Banner, Clover Park SD**

Representative Travis Couture

**Dixie Gruenfelder, OSPI**

**Superintendent Kimberly Headrick, Medical Lake School District**

**Superintendent Michelle Kuss-Cybula, Oak Harbor SD**

**Superintendent Aaron Leavell OESD 114**

**WA MIC3 Commissioner Greg Lynch**

**Colonel Kent Park, Commander JBLM**

Representative David Paul

**WA MIC3 Vice Chair, Superintendent Erin Prince, Central Kitsap SD**

Senator Emily Randall

**Superintendent Chris Reykdal**

Senator Ann Rivers

**Kelly Scheese, NRNW School Liaison**

**Antoinette Walker, JBLM School Liaison**

**Superintendent Kathi Weight, Steilacoom SD**

Major General Gent Welsh (**Brigadier General Kenneth Borchers**) **Washington National Guard**

**Ex-Officio State Council Members (non-voting members)**

WA Interscholastic Activities Association, Executive Director Mick Hoffman (Justin Kesterson)

Kitsap County Commissioner, Christine Rolfes

WA State Board of Education Executive Director, Randy Spaulding (Arielle Matthews)

## Overview:

At 9:00 AM on 2 October, 2024 Commissioner Lynch welcomed everyone, recognized State Council Members and other invited guests, reviewed today's meeting agenda and provided background information regarding the Interstate Compact. Everyone was reminded the minutes from the last state meeting in 2023 and minutes from today's meeting are/will be available on the OSPI website. The purpose of today's meeting is to meet Compact obligations to host at least one annual MIC3 State Council Meeting, and for the State Council to provide direction to the WA Commissioner for any decisions requiring a vote by the WA MIC3 Commissioner during the MIC3 National Meeting on October 15 in new Mexico. It was pointed out the annual WA MIC3 meeting is the only meeting in WA that regularly brings together the State Superintendent, School District Superintendents, senior military commanders from all services stationed in WA to include the Washington National Guard, legislators, and Executive Directors of a number of other WA organizations.

A key meeting topics summary (with today's slide presentation) was also provided to include a proposed MIC3 National Dues increase, requiring discussion and feedback from State Council Members before the end of the meeting.

Commissioner Lynch introduced State Superintendent and MIC3 State Council Member Chris Reykdal and the following speakers as outlined in the WA State Council Meeting Agenda.

### **Superintendent Chris Reykdal (WA Superintendent of Public Instruction)**

Superintendent Reykdal welcomed everyone and thanked Greg Lynch for Compact leadership, active duty service, Superintendent and the WA MIC3 Commissioner. Thanks were also passed to all meeting participants with emphasis on supporting students, especially those students who are disproportionately impacted by high mobility. It was pointed out that WA is home for a large number of uniformed service members from all branches of the federal government.

Acknowledged that given world challenges around national security uniformed members and their families will continue to deal with the complexities of mobility. Superintendents were encourage to continue to focus on providing support to families who experience high mobility as a significant risk factor. A summary was provided around ongoing work with DoD and the Council of Chief State School Officers involving pathways to the military, which, WA has done via state statute. Another initiative with DoD involving public education and data sharing with the Department of Defense was also mentioned. The connection to several of the initiatives stated is also about improving military service recruiting – there is acknowledgment that west coast military service recruitment is underserved. The summary point was that Washington's goal is to provide students multiple pathways post high school graduation where students are just as likely to serve in the uniform services as they would also select an apprenticeship program or attend a college or a university. Superintendent Reykdal's closing remarks included emphasis on

a data sharing agreement between public education and DoD so that we could better understand the pathways student's choose.

### **Colonel Kent Park (Commander JBLM)**

Colonel Park on behalf of LTG Brunson, thanked Chris Reykdal, legislators, Superintendents, School Liaison Officers and all meeting attendees for the great work and partnerships between public education and the military. Col Park complemented meeting attendees and the MIC3 state council for transparent communications and the opportunity to discuss with state leaders a number of important topics. He emphasized the importance of a strong, caring public education system supporting military connected children, which, allows military parents to focus on their jobs and also enhances both the retention and recruitment of serving and future military service members. He acknowledged the work by school districts around the Purple Star recognition. He acknowledged a number of successes and partnerships with Clover Park School Districts and all the other school districts surrounding JBLM. He mentioned a partnership with University of Washington Center for Autism and serving a high military connected population of special needs children. He discussed the challenges of early learning support and a waiting list of over five hundred families in need of childcare that currently isn't available at JBLM. Another challenge mentioned was fully funding federal impact aid and mentioned Clover Park School District as an example of only being funded at 41% of the full impact aid allocation. Col Park acknowledged the MIC3 Team and all the work in support of national security and public education.

### **Rear Admiral Mark Sucato (Commander Navy Region NW)**

Admiral Sucato acknowledge the importance of the meeting and thanked everyone for their work and participation. Mentioned the importance of continuing advocacy by state leaders for military support and acknowledged and thanked state leaders for passing the Purple Star legislation. Discussed the importance of work around the social and emotional supports for military students in public schools. Called out the challenge of Navy families moving throughout the school year and the impact of children entering and exiting public schools at any time throughout the school year. Other discussion points included specific challenges around the lack of Universal Preschool further complicating the education and support of mobile families to include families who have special needs children of all ages. He acknowledged and expressed his appreciation for all the great support the Navy receives from Washington and attributed success to the high quality of people in the public education system who provide support.

### **Senator Lisa Wellman (Chair Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee)**

Senator Wellman acknowledged the importance of today's discussion and the unique needs of military families. Discussed the importance of an education system that is welcoming and has a system in place to accommodate children who routinely transfer in and out of different school districts. Pointed out the importance of social and emotional support for transitioning students and having sufficient resources available for social workers and school counselors. Discussed the importance of resourcing special education and the state's increase in special education funding

over the last several years. A summary of the state's support of transitional kindergarten was also provided. Senator Wellman received a question about what resources are available to military families, or resources that could target military families who require assistance for accessing programs like early learning. Another comment was offered by a school district superintendent around the importance of supporting military children through partnerships. Senator Wellman specifically made the offer to address any other appropriate topics during the remainder of the meeting.

### **Ron Mabry (SBE Board Member) and Arielle Matthews (SBE Policy & Program Manager)**

Arielle Matthews provided a brief summary of State Board of Education initiatives. Acknowledged the challenges of uniform connected children having to continuously enter and exit the WA education system. Mentioned that the SBE is involved with updating the state's graduation requirements. Made the point that hearing from military families around transition challenges will assist with the identification of better supports for all highly mobile children and also ensure more consistency throughout the education system. Several links were shared in "chart" highlighting the graduation requirement initiative. Also highlighted was a plan to include community feedback as part of the graduation requirement initiative.

### **Kathy Facon (DoDEA Chief Education, Partnership & Resources)**

Kathy Facon thanked everyone for their invaluable work in support of military children. Complemented WA for work accomplished around the military identifier, and the Purple Star Program. Explained DoDEA's role relating to MIC3 and the work done by DoD with respect to understanding how the Compact language relates to DoDEA's policy and procedures. Provided some examples of how MIC3 and DoDEA resolved specific student related challenges involving transition between DoDEA and public schools. Provided information around the DoDEA grant program and highlighted since 2009 WA schools received over \$71 million dollars in DoDEA grant funds.

### **Greg Lynch (WA MIC3 Commissioner)**

Greg Lynch discussed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and the MIC3 study conducted by Penn State University at the direction of US Congress via the NDAA. Provided examples of what was in the report with respect to Washington state and Compact Compliance. Provided an electronic copy of the report via "chat". Provided a proposed national MIC3 dues increase to the WA State MIC3 Council for discussion (see meeting slides for details). The proposal was drafted by the MIC3 National Finance Committee. The National MIC3 Finance Committee is chaired by Greg Lynch. If the dues increased is passed by the National Commission during a Commissioner vote at the MIC3 Annual Business Meeting in fall 2025, it will be effective in FY 27. Today's proposal to the WA State Council is in preparation for final guidance to the WA Commissioner, Greg Lynch, during the next WA MIC3 State Council Meeting in fall 2025 and ahead of the Commissioner national vote following the next State Council

Meeting. A history of MIC3 dues increase was discussed. Key point of the discussion is there has only been one dues increase since the Compact was constituted in 2008. In 2008 the dues/student was \$1.00 for each uniformed connected child enrolled in Washington public schools. The dues amount was increased to \$1.15/student in 2018. The national proposal for a dues increase in FY 27 would be the second dues increase in nearly twenty years. Since 2008 student enrollment has declined thereby decreasing revenue in support of the Compact. The one adjustment of \$1.15 in 2018 has not kept pace with an inflation rate amounting to over 30% since 2008, and the cost of support services has significantly increased since 2018 and accelerated by the global pandemic. Following the dues increase proposal WA MIC3 state council members were invited to ask questions and discuss details. At the conclusion of the discussion State Council Members were asked to provide feedback around support of the dues increase. State Council Members not present would be asked to provide their feedback following today's state council meeting. The initial Zoom poll results supported the dues increase as presented.

### **Justin Kesterson (WIAA Assistant Executive Director)**

Justin Kesterson acknowledged the unique challenges of uniformed connected students as discussed during the meeting today and that the WIAA remains committed to supporting military/uniformed connected students in their transition. Examples of students facing eligibility challenges in Clover Park and Highline School Districts were provided. The WIAA rules amendment process was shared to include additional work completed by the WIAA to adjust eligibility impacting students transferring in and out of Washington public schools. Additional discussion and examples were provided around how uniform connected students are impacted by WIAA eligibility rules and how school leadership, parents, students and the WIAA can work together to provide the best possible support for transitioning students.

### **Dixie Gruenfelder (OSPI Executive Director, Student Engagement & Support)**

Dixie Gruenfelder acknowledged based upon her ten plus years of Compact experience and support how the Compact continues to positively evolve in support of transitioning students through collaboration and partnerships. Provided a summary of the WA Healthy Youth Survey results that includes feedback from military connected students. The feedback from military connected students concerning student health and well-being is positive. Provided an update around the use and implementation of the military identifier in student records allowing WA to analyze support for military/uniformed connected students. Thanks were offered to the DoD Regional Liaison, Tammie Perreault, for her efforts around support of the Purple Star (PS) program implementation in WA, and thanks and appreciation were also offered to School District Superintendents for their support of PS.

Mentioned that last spring twenty-four school districts in WA were asked to provide feedback via a recurring MIC3 Compact implementation survey (survey results were provided in "chat").

The survey has been routinely administered to school districts serving the majority of military/uniformed connected students since WA joined the Compact in 2009. The purposes of the survey is to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the Compact and use the results to improve the implementation/sustainment of the Compact. The return rate of the survey by school districts was 100% validating strong support of Compact implementation and sustainment. The survey provided data from each school district around the implementation of each of the major Compact requirements (outlined in WA Statute) and if each of the requirements was either: substantially, partially or not implemented. Each of the major requirements were reviewed and recognition and thanks were provided to school liaisons, counselors, and school leadership for their support of the Compact. Discussion followed around the importance of ongoing MIC3 professional development for all Compact stakeholders.

### **Kathi Weight (Superintendent, Steilacoom School District)**

Kathi Weight provided examples of Compact implementation and support of the Compact in the Steilacoom School District. Steilacoom School District is adjacent to Joint Base Lewis-McChord and supports a large number of military connected students. Examples were provided around how the Compact assisted students and how transition related challenges were resolved involving school leadership, school counselors, JBLM school liaison officers and the WA MIC3 Commissioner and MIC3 Compact counterparts in other compacting states.

### **Kelly Scheese (Navy Region NW School Liaison)**

Kelly Scheese shared information and examples around the recurring problem of translating student transcripts for students transferring schools between schools and other states and between DoDEA schools and states. Major points included the challenges of credit translation between similar courses; credits are either a direct match with curriculum between schools or are a partial match between schools, and how to avoid disadvantaging students when transferring between schools. A specific point was made around how school liaisons between services play a valuable role in helping to resolve the above challenges. Another discussion point was that in Washington school liaisons in all military services regularly meet as do the Commanders of those services to discuss mutual challenges relating to military transition including entry to and exit from the public education system.

### **Greg Lynch (WA MIC3 Commissioner)**

Greg Lynch invited questions and discussion between all meeting attendees. Ron Banner, Superintendent Clover Park School District, emphasized the need for continual MIC3 training for school staff as a major key to success with maintaining the Compact. State Board of Education (SBE) Board Member Ron Mabry, offered meeting attendees standing SBE assistance with Compact promotion and support.

Superintendent Josh Garcia Tacoma School District, emphasized the continuing need for partnerships with other organizations and used the examples of “vouchers” to assist military families who may not qualify for the “free and reduced” lunch program but would benefit by

additional financial assistance. Emphasis around not only partnerships but also legislative support was also a key point made by Superintendent Garcia. Commissioner Rolfes (Kitsap County Commissioner), emphasized the point around potentially expanding state funding requests that would advantage students of military families. Commissioner Rolfes also emphasized supporting an initiative for military families also means any expansion of funding needs to be inclusive for all families needing assistance. Superintendent Michelle Kuss-Cybula Oak Harbor School District Superintendent, made the point around childcare and the critical shortage and access of/to childcare providers especially for military families with children requiring special education support. Superintendent Kuss-Cybula also discussed the need for additional resources for the transitional kindergarten (TK) program that would directly assist military families and the importance of planning TK resources far enough in advance for schools and military parents to plan as appropriate. Tammy Perreault DoD Regional Liaison, acknowledged WA support of Purple Star and talked about the importance of open enrollment is support of transitioning military families. Tammy Perreault made the point about how open enrollment is directly linked to the shortage of housing, and the challenges for military parents to find housing in a school district where a student will either remain in the school or may need to move to another school given housing availability. Tammy Perreault also reemphasized the MIC3 Penn State study previously mentioned in the meeting and encouraged meeting attendees to access the information that was placed in "chat" at the beginning of today's meeting.

### **Greg Lynch (WA MIC3 Commissioner)**

Greg Lynch meeting conclusion included emphasis on MIC3 Compact training and the ability for school districts to access monthly webinar training and other key MIC3 resources on the MIC3 national website. A reinforcing point to the State Council was mentioned about the pending MIC3 dues increase and contributing to the State Council Zoom poll, and any additional State Council guidance to the WA Commissioner ahead of the national commissioner vote in fall 2025 would be appreciated. Discussed and recognized that a few State Council members were not available to attend today's meeting but would be contacted around today's dues increase discussion over the coming months. Mentioned that Commissioner Lynch, as the MIC3 Committee Chair for the MIC3 Finance Committee, will be delivering a dues proposal presentation to all MIC3 Commissioners during the upcoming annual national MIC3 Business Meeting (ABM) in New Mexico on 15 October, 2024. The proposal is in preparation for a Commissioner vote during the fall 2025 ABM. Following a last call for questions and comments from the audience, and thanks to all meeting attendees especially the State Council and legislators, the meeting was concluded at 11:25 AM.