

# Purple Star Campus Designation



## **What is a Purple Star School?**

A Purple Star School is a public or charter school that has committed to supporting the unique educational and social-emotional needs of military-connected children.

These schools recognize that military-connected students must move whenever their active-duty parent receives a relocation order (called a Permanent Change of Station) and will uproot and change schools far more often than their civilian peers.

In fact, a military-connected child can expect to move six to nine times from kindergarten through their high school graduation, with approximately 200,000 students transitioning to a new school in any given year.

## ***How they help***

Purple Star Schools help military-connected students transition successfully with measures that include:

- Training a staff member to ease entry into the new academic environment,
- Student-led programs to help create social connections,
- A military family webpage on the school website to inform parents, and
- Relevant professional development opportunities for additional school staff.
- State programs may require schools to meet additional criteria such as holding school-wide military recognition events that encourage tolerance and inclusion.

A primary goal of these programs is to ensure that staff can help manage the challenges military-connected children face when they move between schools with different cultures, curricula, standards, course offerings, schedules and graduation requirements.

Purple Star Schools are especially attentive to students who arrive mid-year, missing out on the normal cycles of sports and club activities.

Finally, Purple Star Schools acknowledge that every military-connected child has left behind friends and support networks and may be dealing with a parent who is away from home on deployment.

### ***State-led programs***

A national, grassroots effort, the Purple Star School initiative encourages states to develop a certification program that designates qualifying schools as friendly to, and familiar with, the unique education and social-emotional needs of military-connected children.

While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to Purple Star School programs, most states create an application process in which schools apply for designation as a Purple Star School by showing they have, at a minimum, met the four basic criteria noted above. Learn more about the criteria under the requirements section below.

The initiative has been so successful in certain states, military parents now routinely seek out Purple Star Schools for their children due to the level of support they can expect from these schools and their awareness of the challenges of life in a military family.

### ***School District programs***

The Purple Star School initiative is intentionally flexible: individual school districts are encouraged to start a program when their state department of education is unable to do so. MCEC can provide comprehensive guidance and consultation for states and school districts seeking to launch a program.

### **Why does America need Purple Star Schools?**

Eighty percent of America's military-connected children attend public schools. In every state with a military installation, there will be military-connected children transitioning into and out of nearby public schools because of a parent's Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders.

With an estimated 1.2 million active-duty military-connected children enrolled in schools in the United States and abroad, the number of children affected by these transitions is significant.

To date, there are only nine states with Purple Star School programs. MCEC's goal is that every state in the nation should commit to our military families by initiating a Purple Star School designation program.

Why states should start up a Purple Star Schools Program:

- **It will help the military service members who make their home in your state while they serve our country.** The Purple Star certification lets them know that a school is dedicated to helping their child gain the educational skills necessary to be life-, work- and college-ready. The certification signals that a school supports the social and emotional wellbeing of military kids adjusting to new schools and the absence of a parent during deployment.
- **It is consistent with your state's commitment to helping military-connected children transition into new schools.** All states have obligations under the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. A statewide Purple Star School program shares the Compact's goals of ensuring that military children transition successfully into new schools and stay on track for graduation.
- **It will help protect your state revenue.** The U.S. military is now including the quality of K-12 schools near military facilities as part of its calculus in deciding future basing and personnel decisions. Communities with Purple Star Schools can help retain bases and attract military families who bring economic benefits to local communities.