

# The Purple Star School Program

The Purple Star School program is designed to help schools **respond to the educational and social-emotional challenges military-connected children** face during their transition to a new school and keep them on track to be college, workforce, and life-ready.

## Why should my school seek designation?

A [2020 Columbia University/MCEC study](#) found that the Purple Star designation can help schools:



### Centralize and make knowledge accessible to all stakeholders

Purple Star programming helps schools and districts aggregate and centralize resources so that critical information is easily accessible to students, families, as well as school and district faculty and staff.

Schools noted that the designation process helped them improve and bundle existing programming into a unified suite of resources and supports.



### Develop stakeholder networks

The program creates robust networks of local, state, and national stakeholders. In just a few years, the program has already spurred the development of a number of local and regional networks.

These networks can help schools and districts learn from each other and continuously improve programming.



### Cultivate and demonstrate cultural competency

Purple Star program can help schools with less robust programming build the cultural competency needed to effectively serve military students.

For institutions with mature programming already in place, the designation acts as a beacon to attract incoming families by demonstrating military-friendliness.

“I would choose to be Purple Star because it's a constant reminder to be motivated, to do more and to think of new ways to serve the military population and the students...**We want to continue to earn it.** We feel honored that we have it. So it keeps us motivated. It keeps us accountable. It keeps us on our toes.”

-Counselor at a Purple Star-designated school

For information and resources on earning Purple Star designation visit [militarychild.org/purplestarschools](http://militarychild.org/purplestarschools) or contact [COO@militarychild.org](mailto:COO@militarychild.org)



## What does my school or district need to do to become designated?

11 states currently have their own designation granting body, and the program is still expanding nationally. [Contact your local department of education to find out if your school is in a Purple Star state!](#)

Typically, to earn the designation, schools or districts must meet some or all of the requirements captured below. [For further recommendations on implementing robust Purple Star programming, access the Center for Public Research and Leadership \(CPRL\)/MCEC report.](#)

Component	Function	Recommendations
Designating a staff point of contact (POC) for military students and families	POCs serve as the primary link between the school and military-connected families, helping students navigate the transition into and out of the school and connecting them to resources and information on an ongoing basis.	<p>The best POCs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are trained in the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children,</li> <li>• Have passion for and knowledge about the military lifestyle,</li> <li>• Have time to commit to the position, and</li> <li>• Are accessible to families 12-months of the year.</li> </ul>
Establishing and maintaining a dedicated webpage with resources for military families	Dedicated webpages signal military friendliness to incoming families, centralize critical information about enrollment and school life, and provide families with links to relevant resources and supports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solicit family feedback to determine which resources are most relevant for inclusion.</li> <li>• Set routines that prompt regular updates to the page.</li> <li>• Leverage and link to social media channels on your page.</li> <li>• For detailed guidance on resources to include, access the <a href="#">CPRL/MCEC report</a>.</li> </ul>
Enacting a student transition program	New student transition programs help incoming students acclimate to their new campus and community, spurring ongoing connections in the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep programming simple and empower students to guide activities</li> <li>• Train student ambassadors</li> <li>• Encourage ongoing relationships between students</li> <li>• Find ways to get parents involved</li> </ul>
Providing professional development for staff	Professional development for all staff helps familiarize administrators and faculty with the Compact, cultivates awareness of and empathy for military-connected students, and equips staff to support families and students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train all staff and faculty annually, especially if there is high turnover at the school</li> <li>• Simulate the challenges of high-mobility with interactive activities</li> <li>• Customize training content for the military populations in your areas</li> </ul>
Hosting military recognition events	Events honor and increase awareness of military-connected students, families, and staff and help families integrate into their new communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use various modalities, pairing larger spectacles with more low-key activities</li> <li>• Recognize all members of the community -- not only active-duty personnel, but also reserve personnel, veterans, and military-connected students and spouses</li> </ul>