

ASSEMBLY, No. 3694

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 24, 2022

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman WILLIAM F. MOEN, JR.
District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblywomen Piperno, Eulner and Gove

SYNOPSIS

Establishes “Purple Star Schools Program” in DOE to recognize public and nonpublic schools which emphasize importance of assisting children of military families.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/19/2022)

1 AN ACT concerning school programs and services for children of
2 military families and supplementing chapter 6 of Title 18A of the
3 New Jersey Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

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8 1. a. There is created a Purple Star Schools Program in the
9 Department of Education. Under the program, the Commissioner of
10 Education shall annually recognize as Purple Star Schools those public
11 and nonpublic schools that provide for, or have made significant
12 progress to respond to, the educational and social-emotional
13 challenges military-connected students encounter during the transition
14 to a new school when the student's parent or guardian is an active duty
15 member of the United States Armed Forces and is relocated due to the
16 active duty member's continued military service. A Purple Star
17 School shall be designated as such if it provides programs and services
18 that include, but need not be limited to, the following:

19 (1) training for faculty and staff members to ease entry into the
20 new school environment for military-connected students;

21 (2) student-led programs to help create social connections,
22 including an emphasis on programs for students who arrive mid-year
23 and miss out on the normal cycles of sports and club activities;

24 (3) a military family webpage on the school website to inform
25 parents and guardians about programs and services;

26 (4) relevant professional development opportunities for additional
27 school staff; and

28 (5) holding school-wide military recognition events that raise
29 awareness and recognize the value of military service.

30 The goal of the programs and services is to ensure that staff can
31 help manage the challenges military-connected students encounter
32 when they move between schools with different cultures, curricula,
33 standards, course offerings, schedules, and graduation requirements.

34 b. The commissioner shall establish a Purple Star Schools
35 Working Group. The purpose of the working group shall be to
36 develop criteria to be used in the designation of public and nonpublic
37 schools as Purple Star Schools. The working group shall consist of
38 members appointed by the commissioner and shall be composed of,
39 but need not be limited to: a school principal; a school administrator; a
40 school board member; an elementary school teacher; a middle school
41 teacher; a high school teacher; a school counselor; a school social
42 worker; and a school psychologist.

43 c. The criteria established by the working group for a Purple Star
44 Schools designation pursuant to subsection b. of this section shall
45 include, but need not be limited to, the school's efforts to:

46 (1) raise awareness and recognize the value of military service,
47 including the sacrifices of military-connected families;

- 1 (2) respond to the unique educational and social-emotional
2 challenges of military-connected students;
- 3 (3) highlight and promote equity, inclusion, and belonging;
- 4 (4) create safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for all
5 students, faculty, and staff;
- 6 (5) provide teachers, faculty, and staff with opportunities for
7 instruction in easing the entry into the new school environment for
8 military-connected students; and
- 9 (6) provide programs and services that align with those
10 enumerated in paragraphs (1) through (5) of subsection a. of this
11 section.
- 12 d. The working group, in consultation with the commissioner,
13 shall establish a scoring system based on the criteria developed
14 pursuant to subsection c. of this section to be used by the
15 commissioner in the designation of Purple Star Schools. The
16 commissioner shall establish a process by which public and nonpublic
17 schools may nominate their school to be designated as a Purple Star
18 School.

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20 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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23 STATEMENT

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25 This bill creates a Purple Star Schools Program in the Department
26 of Education. Under the program, the Commissioner of Education will
27 annually recognize as Purple Star Schools those public and nonpublic
28 schools that provide for, or have made significant progress to respond
29 to, the educational and social-emotional challenges military-connected
30 students encounter during the transition to a new school when the
31 student's parent or guardian is an active duty member of the United
32 States Armed Forces and is relocated due to the active duty member's
33 continued military service.

34 Under the bill, a Purple Star School will be designated as such if it
35 provides programs and services that include, but need not be limited
36 to, the following:

- 37 (1) training for faculty and staff members to ease entry into the
38 new school environment for military-connected students;
- 39 (2) student-led programs to help create social connections,
40 including an emphasis on programs for students who arrive mid-year
41 and miss out on the normal cycles of sports and club activities;
- 42 (3) a military family webpage on the school website to inform
43 parents and guardians about programs and services;
- 44 (4) relevant professional development opportunities for additional
45 school staff; and
- 46 (5) holding school-wide military recognition events that raise
47 awareness and recognize the value of military service.

1 The bill also requires the commissioner to establish a Purple Star
2 Schools Working Group. The purpose of the working group is to
3 develop criteria to be used in the designation of public and nonpublic
4 schools as Purple Star Schools. The working group will consist of
5 members appointed by the commissioner and will be composed of: a
6 school principal; a school administrator; a school board member; an
7 elementary school teacher; a middle school teacher; a high school
8 teacher; a school counselor; a school social worker; and a school
9 psychologist.

10 The criteria established by the working group for a Purple Star
11 Schools designation will include, but need not be limited to, the
12 school's efforts to:

13 (1) raise awareness and recognize the value of military service,
14 including the sacrifices of military-connected families;

15 (2) respond to the unique educational and social-emotional
16 challenges of military-connected students;

17 (3) highlight and promote equity, inclusion, and belonging;

18 (4) create safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for all
19 students, faculty, and staff;

20 (5) provide teachers, faculty, and staff with opportunities for
21 instruction in easing the entry into the new school environment for
22 military-connected students; and

23 (6) provide the programs and services necessary to ensure that
24 staff can manage the challenges military-connected students encounter,
25 as enumerated by the bill.