

Newly Launched Purple Star Award Program Recognizes Washington's Military-Friendly School Districts

Award program created by state legislature honors 12 school districts across Washington

OLYMPIA, WA, USA, April 5, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Washington state is home to thousands of military-connected families, including active-duty service members, reserves members, and veterans. To recognize school districts that have incorporated military-friendly practices and demonstrate a commitment to military-connected students and families, the 2023 Legislature created the [Purple Star Award Program](#).

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) administer the program jointly. Today, OSPI and WASA are announcing the 2024 Purple Star Award winners.

To receive the award, school districts must successfully address the educational, social, and emotional barriers that students may experience when their parents/guardians are deployed or when relocating and transferring to a different school. School districts must also demonstrate a commitment to military-connected



families and students by providing students with the tools and supports needed for success in their education and in their futures—whether they pursue postsecondary education, military involvement, or other careers.

“Every day, thousands of parents, guardians, and family members across Washington protect and strengthen our country by serving in the military,” said State Superintendent Chris Reykdal. “We thank these individuals for their service, and we are honored to recognize the school districts across our state that create welcoming and supportive environments for students from military-connected families. Congratulations to these districts for working to support the success of all students!”

There are 12 school districts across Washington that applied for and earned the Purple Star Award in 2024. They will retain the designation for two years.

“We are honored to be partnering with OSPI to recognize the dedication and hard work of the districts awarded the 2024 Purple Star Award,” said Joel Aune, Executive Director of WASA. “These districts exemplify a commitment to supporting the unique educational needs of military-connected students in Washington state. By fostering environments that address the unique social, emotional, and academic challenges these students face, the Purple Star Districts are ensuring their students are poised for a successful school experience. We commend these districts for their effort and focus on these students and their families.”

The Washington state Purple Star Award is established through [House Bill 1346](#), which became law in July 2023. To be eligible for this distinction, school districts must meet the following requirements:

1. The district maintains a dedicated page on its website featuring resources for military families.
2. The district has a staff point-of-contact for military families that:
 - Works jointly with the state military family education liaison of the Interstate Compact Council to serve military families;
 - Serves as the primary liaison between military families and the school district;
 - Completes professional development on special considerations for military students and families under relevant state and federal law; and
 - Identifies and informs teachers of military-connected students in their classrooms and the special considerations military families and students should receive under the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

The school district must also provide professional learning opportunities for additional staff on special considerations for military-connected students and families; pass a resolution publicizing the district’s support for military-connected students and families; or host a military recognition event that demonstrates a military-friendly culture.

OSPI and WASA congratulate the 2024 recipients of the Purple Star Award:

- Bremerton School District
- Central Kitsap School District
- Clover Park School District
- Medical Lake School District
- North Mason School District
- North Thurston Public Schools
- Oak Harbor Public Schools
- Peninsula School District
- Steilacoom Historical School District
- Yelm Community Schools

The application for the 2025 Purple Star Award will open this summer.

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