

Announcement:

Kansas Purple Star School Recognition Program



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On October 11, 2022, the Kansas State Board of Education unanimously voted 10-0 to approve the **Kansas Purple Star School Recognition Program** designed to help schools respond to the educational challenges military-connected children face during their transition to a new school and keep them on track to be college, workforce and life-ready. Launched as a grassroots initiative in Ohio in 2017, there are now active or developing Purple Star initiatives in 33 states. The Purple Star program is a ground-up initiative with no central governing body. As such, each school district may use their discretion to enact, design, and administer its own program.

To qualify, schools and districts in Kansas must meet the following requirements:

[See MCEC study/report for guidance, recommendations and resources](#)

Component	Function	Recommendations
Designating a staff point of contact (POC) for military students and families * school wide activities	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.	The best POCs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Are trained in the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, – Have passion for and knowledge about the military lifestyle, – Have time to commit to the position, and – Are accessible to families 12-months of the year
Establishing and maintaining a dedicated webpage with resources for military families * district wide activities	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"> – Solicit family feedback to determine which resources are most relevant for inclusion – Set routines that prompt regular updates to the page – Leverage and link to social media channels on your page
Enacting a student transition program * school wide activities	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"> – Keep programming simple and empower students to guide activities – Train student ambassadors – Encourage ongoing relationships between students – Find ways to get parents involved
Providing professional development for staff * optional under district wide activities	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"> – Train all staff and faculty annually, especially if there is high turnover at the school – Simulate the challenges of high-mobility with interactive activities – Customize training content for the military populations in your areas
Hosting military recognition events * military support activities	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"> – Use various modalities, pairing larger spectacles with more low-key activities – Recognize all members of the community -- not only active-duty personnel, but also reserve personnel, veterans, and military-connected students and spouses
School Board Resolution * optional under district wide activities	Publicize school support for military students and families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include a copy of the resolution and date of approval with school district application.

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

For further recommendations on how to implement a robust Purple Star program in your school district, visit the KSDE webpage: [Military Families \(ksde.org\)](https://ksde.org/military-families).

The Purple Star program is anchored by two parallel goals:

1. schools and districts can establish a more supportive environment for military-connected students and families, and
2. help families be aware of schools and districts that are best prepared to meet their needs.

Application Process:

By February 1, schools and districts may apply for designation by submitting to the Kansas State Department of Education an application that demonstrates their fulfillment of the program requirements.

The [Kansas Military Children Education Council \(KMCEC\)](https://ksde.org/kmcec) will review all school district applications and recommend those meeting the criteria to the Kansas State Board of Education for approval at their March meeting. In April, all schools that earn the award are certified and publicly recognized by the Kansas State Board of Education.

Schools will maintain their status for three years. At the end of year three, schools must reapply to remain recognized.

Timelines:

October – Application available for Purple Star School Designation (fillable PDF). Provide examples of your military support activities.

February 1 – All applications are due. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

March – The Kansas State Board of Education will receive recommendations.

April – Schools receiving the award will be announced.

Resources and Guidance to Apply for the Purple Star School Designation:

- Visit the Kansas State Department of Education website: [Military Families \(ksde.org\)](https://ksde.org/military-families).
- If you have questions, email [Craig Neuenswander](mailto:cneuenswander@ksde.org), Deputy Commissioner at the Kansas State Department of Education or call (785) 296-3871.

For more information, contact:

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