



# Purple Star Schools Program

Maryland State Department of Education

Presented By | Mary Gable, Assistant State Superintendent  
Dr. Kaitlin Quigley, Coordinator of Special Projects  
Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy

September/  
October 2023

# Presentation Outline

1. Introduction
2. Application Requirements
3. Additional Elements
4. Submission Guidelines and Support



1. Introduction
2. Application Requirements
3. Additional Elements
4. Submission Guidelines and Support

# Introduction

*Background on Military-Connected Students and the Purple Star Schools Program*

# “Military-Connected Student”

The term “military-connected student” refers to those who are the dependents of current members of the United States Military serving on either active duty or in the reserve forces of the:



- Army
- Navy
- Air Force
- Space Force
- Marine Corps
- Coast Guard
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Commissioned Officer Corps
- Public Health Service Commissioned Corps
- Maryland National Guard

# Challenges Facing Military-Connected Students

- Military-connected students will transfer schools **three times more** than their civilian peers during their academic journeys.
- Frequent transferring presents a unique set of obstacles for military-connected students to overcome, including (but not limited to):
  - Establishing new social and academic connections;
  - Adapting to school norms;
  - Compensating for potential academic gaps or deficits; and
  - Navigating the emotional difficulties that accompany leaving friends behind.

# COMAR 13A.06.10 *Purple Star Schools Program*

- The Purple Star Schools Program was established by Education Article § 7-129, approved by the Maryland General Assembly in 2022.
- Its purpose is to support the unique needs of students whose parents or guardians serve in our country's armed forces by recognizing those schools that go above and beyond in providing them support during and beyond transition to the new school.
- COMAR 13A.06.10 *Purple Star Schools Program* outlines the criteria schools must meet to receive Purple Star designation. These include:
  1. A designated military liaison;
  2. A webpage of resources for military-connected students and their families;
  3. A peer-led transition program; and
  4. Professional development for staff regarding the challenges faced by military-connected students.



1. Introduction
2. Application Requirements
3. Additional Elements
4. Submission Guidelines and Support

# Purple Star Schools Application

*An Overview of the Purple Star Schools Application and Requirements*

# Application Basics

- The application is hosted through Qualtrics. Supporting documentation should be emailed to [DOSS.MSDE@maryland.gov](mailto:DOSS.MSDE@maryland.gov).
- The application consists of questions related to:
  - How many military-connected students are enrolled in your school and which branches of the armed forces are represented
  - Who is involved in the programming and services for military-connected students
  - How the school identifies and conducts outreach to the military-connected students and their families
  - Services and programs offered to military-connected students and their families
  - Professional development opportunities for staff
  - Digital resources available to military-connected students and their families
  - Additional measures taken to support military-connected students and their families



# COMAR Requirements

COMAR 13A.06.10 outlines **four** minimum criteria that must be met for a school to earn Purple Star Designation.

## 1. Military Liaison:

A staff member should be designated as military liaison, serving as the point of contact for newly enrolled military-connected students and their families. This person is also tasked with:

- Coordinating support programs for military-connected students;
- Connecting the students to needed resources;
- Generally aiding in their transition into the school; and
- Establishing a process to identify and track military-connected students.

# COMAR Requirements Continued

## 2. Digital Resources:

The school's website must have an easily accessible page of resources for military-connected students and their families. This page should include information that facilitates a smooth transition to the school, including:

- the process for enrolling in the school and transferring records;
- preparing for moving schools;
- academic requirements; and
- available support services.

# COMAR Requirements Continued

## 3. Peer-Led Transition Program:

Whenever possible, schools should offer a student-led program tasked with orienting the student to both the physical and academic environments of the school through activities such as:

- Campus tours;
- A special orientation for military-connected students; and
- The option for military-connected students to have a student leader escort them through the hallways during the first week of school.

# COMAR Requirements Continued

## 4. Staff Training

School staff should receive appropriate training and professional development aimed at **fostering an understanding of the unique challenges faced by military-connected students** so that they may provide appropriate support. These training opportunities will be coordinated by the school's designated military liaison.

If any of these four elements are missing from an applicant school's program for military-connected students, the school does **not** qualify as a Purple Star School.



1. Introduction
2. Application Requirements
3. **Additional Elements**
4. Submission Guidelines and Support

## Additional Elements

*An Outline of Additional Program Elements Schools may Choose to Include to Strengthen Applications*

# Additional Program Elements

While inclusion of the four required COMAR elements is a *necessary* condition for Purple Star designation, it is not necessarily *sufficient*.

Purple Star Designation will be reserved for those schools that have clearly demonstrated through their applications that they are providing **top-notch support** for military-connected students.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has reviewed the offerings of Purple Star Schools in other states and compiled a list of additional activities Maryland schools may consider adding to their programs to bolster their support for military-connected students.

# Examples from Purple Star Schools

Some support activities for military-connected students offered by Purple Star Schools across the country include:

- Professional development for the military-liaison related to understanding life as a military-connected student
- Training for parents and/or community members
- Development of a long-term plan for improving the support program
- Partnership with local military organizations or installations
- Participation in Month of the Military Child and/or Month of the Military Family
- Military appreciation night at an extracurricular event
- Fundraisers to support active-duty military or veterans
- Solicitation of feedback from military-connected students, their families, and school staff on effectiveness of programming
- Information for school staff related to the needs of military-connected students



1. Introduction
2. Application Requirements
3. Additional Elements
4. **Submission Guidelines and Support**

## Submission Guidelines & Support

*Application Due Date and Other Important Information*



# Application Submission

The Purple Star Schools Application is due **Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>** by close of business

- The application itself should be submitted via Qualtrics
- You will be asked to provide supplemental materials as evidence of your school's activities to support military-connected students
  - Evidence includes things such as PowerPoint slides, program agendas, participant feedback surveys, program advertisements, etc.
  - All artifacts should be emailed to [DOSS.MSDE@maryland.gov](mailto:DOSS.MSDE@maryland.gov)
  - Be sure to carefully label all artifacts that are submitted
- If the Qualtrics application is received but the supplemental materials are *not*, the application will be considered incomplete.

# Tips for a Strong Submission

## Submit Supporting Materials

Be sure to submit all requested artifacts, and that submitted documentation does a good job of telling the story of your support program.

## Consult the Rubric

Compare each element of your program to the Purple Star application rubric. In addition to ensuring all required elements are present, schools should aim to score in the “exemplary” element for each category.

## MSDE Support

MSDE is here to guide and support you in completing your applications. To that end, MSDE is offering four technical assistance sessions and three office hours sessions.

# Evaluation Rubric (Sample)

## Staff Training

Professional Development	Developing	Satisfactory	Exemplary	Score
Staff professional development opportunities offered	The military liaison offers insufficient opportunity for professional development related to understanding issues of military-connected students transferring to new schools and/or the professional development opportunities offered do not adequately address these issues.	The military liaison offers opportunities for professional development related to understanding issues of military-connected students transferring to new schools and the professional development opportunities offered adequately address these issues.	The military liaison regularly offers opportunities for professional development related to understanding issues of military-connected students transferring to new schools. The professional development opportunities offered go above and beyond expectations in fostering understanding of challenges faced by these students.	<input type="checkbox"/> Developing <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Exemplary
Supporting documentation	The documentation does not provide a clear picture of the professional development activities offered and/or fails to establish a connection between the professional development activities and fostering an understanding of the challenges faced by military-connected students transferring schools.	The documentation provides a clear picture of the professional development activities offered and establishes a connection between the professional development activities and fostering an understanding of the challenges faced by military-connected students transferring schools.	The documentation provides substantial evidence of the professional development activities offered and establishes a strong connection between the professional development activities and fostering an understanding of the challenges faced by military-connected students transferring schools.	<input type="checkbox"/> Developing <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Exemplary
Total	Developing _____	Satisfactory _____	Exemplary _____	

# MSDE Support

## Technical Assistance Sessions:

- Thursday, October 5th from 1-2 pm
- Tuesday, October 10th from 3-4 pm

## Office Hours:

- Thursday, October 19 from 10-11 am
- Wednesday, October 25 from 10-11 am
- Friday, November 3 from 10-11 am.

# Questions

**Mary Gable**

*Assistant State Superintendent*

Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy

[mary.gable@maryland.gov](mailto:mary.gable@maryland.gov)

410-767-0472

**Kaitlin Quigley**

*Coordinator of Special Projects*

Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy

[kaitlin.quigley@maryland.gov](mailto:kaitlin.quigley@maryland.gov)

410-767-0476