

TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Carey M. Wright, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Schools

DATE: September 24, 2024

SUBJECT: COMAR 13A.06.10
Purple Star Schools Program
Permission to Publish



Purpose

The purpose of this item is to request permission to publish an amendment to COMAR 13A.06.10 *Purple Star Schools*.

Regulation Promulgation Process

Under Maryland law, a state agency, such as the State Board of Education (State Board), may propose a new or amended regulation whenever the circumstances arise to do so. After the State Board votes to propose such a regulation, the proposed regulation is sent to the Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review (AELR) Committee for a 15-day review period. If the AELR Committee does not hold up the proposed regulation for further review, it is published in the Maryland Register for a 30-day public comment period. At the end of the comment period, MSDE staff reviews and summarizes the public comments. Thereafter, MSDE staff will present a recommendation to the State Board to either: (1) adopt the regulation in the form it was proposed; or (2) revise the regulation and adopt it as final because the suggested revision is not a substantive change; or (3) revise the regulation and re-propose it because the suggested revision is a substantive change. At any time during this process, the AELR Committee may stop the promulgation process and hold a hearing. Thereafter, it may recommend to the Governor that the regulation not be adopted as a final regulation or the AELR Committee may release the regulation for final adoption.

Background/Historical Perspective

In 2022, the Maryland General Assembly approved Education Article § 7-129 establishing the Purple Star Schools Program to recognize public schools that provide strong services and support for military-connected students and their families when, as a result of military service, a military-connected student transfers schools. In 2024, the Maryland General Assembly passed House Bill 1026/Senate Bill 707 *Armed Forces – Support of Military Families and Addition of Space Force*. This legislation adds students who are dependents of a current member of the Space Force or the National Guard of any other state to the definition of “military-connected student” for the purposes of the Purple Star Schools Program.

Additionally, the regulation “establishes a Purple Star Schools Program to recognize public schools that provide strong services and support for military-connected students and their families when, as a result of

military service, a military-connected student transfers schools.” To share the opportunity to recognize the support needed for all military students in all schools in Maryland, the amended regulation adds **nonpublic schools** to the list of schools that may apply for and be awarded the Purple Star designation. The inclusion of the opportunity for public and nonpublic schools meets Maryland’s commitment to support the men and women in military service and their families whether the student attends a public or a nonpublic school.

Executive Summary

The State Board voted to adopt COMAR 13.A.06.10 *Purple Star Schools Program* in February 2023. The proposed amendment to the regulation adds dependents of members of the National Guard of any other state to the definition of military-connected student to align with the new legislation. Dependents of members of the Space Force are already included in the regulation. The amendment also adds nonpublic schools to those schools that can participate in the Purple Star Schools Program.

Action

MSDE requests permission to publish amended regulation COMAR 13A.06.10 *Purple Star Schools Program*.

Attachments

COMAR 13A.06.10 *Purple Star Schools Program*

Title 13A STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Subtitle 06 SUPPORTING PROGRAMS

Chapter 10 Purple Star Schools Program

Authority: Education Article, §§2-205 and 7-129, Annotated Code of Maryland

.01 Purpose.

The purpose of this action is to implement Education Article, §7-129, Annotated Code of Maryland, which establishes a Purple Star Schools Program to recognize public *and nonpublic* schools that provide strong services and support for military-connected students and their families when, as a result of military service, a military-connected student transfers schools.

.02 Definitions.

A. In this chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated.

B. Terms Defined.

(1) "Department" means the Maryland State Department of Education.

(2) "Military-connected student" means a student who is a dependent of:

(a) A current member of:

(i) The United States military serving in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard on active duty;

(ii) The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps;

(iii) The Public Health Service Commissioned Corps;

(iv) The Maryland National Guard; *[or]*

(v) The National Guard of any other State; or

(vi) A reserve force of the United States military; or

(b) A member of a military or reserve force described in §B(2)(a) of this regulation who was killed in the line of duty.

.03 Criteria.

A. To be eligible for designation as a Purple Star School, a public *or nonpublic* school shall:

(1) Designate a staff member as a military liaison, whose duties include:

(a) Identifying military-connected students who are newly enrolled or soon to be enrolled at the school;

(b) Serving as the point of contact between the school and the newly enrolled or soon to be enrolled military-connected students and their families;

(c) Determining appropriate school services available to newly enrolled or soon to be enrolled military-connected students;

(d) Assisting in coordinating school programs for newly enrolled or soon to be enrolled military-connected students;

(e) Providing information, resources, and professional development to school staff on the needs of military-connected students and their families; and

(f) Generally aiding with a military-connected student's transition to a new school;

(2) Establish on the school's website an easily accessible webpage that includes resources for military-connected students and their families, including information regarding:

(a) Relocation to, enrollment at, registration at, and transferring records to the school;

(b) Preparation for a move from a student's current school to the school at which the student will be newly enrolled or is soon to be enrolled;

(c) Academic planning, course sequences, advanced classes, and graduation requirements;

(d) Special education and related services; and

(e) Counseling and other support services available for military-connected students transitioning into the school;

(3) Maintain a transition program led by students at the school, whenever appropriate, and overseen by the designated military liaison that assists military-connected students enrolled at the school by:

(a) Facilitating guided tours of the campus;

(b) Organizing an orientation to familiarize the new student with school information; and

(c) If requested, accompanying the student throughout the campus during the first week of school during school hours;

and

(4) Offer professional development to school staff on issues related to military-connected students transferring to new schools.

B. A public school may partner with the county board to fulfill the criteria described in §A of this regulation to qualify as a Purple Star School.

.04 Application and Renewal.

A. To be considered for designation as a Purple Star School, a public *or nonpublic* school's military liaison shall complete an application available on the Department's website.

B. The Department will release the Purple Star School application on December 1 of each year, beginning with the 2023-2024 school year.

C. A public *or nonpublic* school that receives the Purple Star School designation shall hold the designation for a period of two school years and be eligible to reapply for the designation in the final year of the two-year period.

D. A public *or nonpublic* school that fails to receive the Purple Star School designation is eligible to reapply for the designation the following year.

.05 Selection Process.

A. The Department shall identify a panel of stakeholders to review Purple Star School applications based on the criteria described in Regulation .03 of this chapter.

B. The Department shall issue its decision on a Purple Star School application no later than the end of the school year in the local school system [where] *in which* the applicant school is located.