

THE PURPLE STAR AWARD PROGRAM

The Purple Star Award is a state-sponsored recognition for individual schools' dedication and support of military-connected youth. The mission of the Purple Star Award Program is to **instill a sense of connection and strengthen resilience within Kentucky's military-connected youth**. The Purple Star Award designation lets military parents know, whether they are on active duty or in the National Guard and Reserves, that **a school is dedicated to helping their child gain the educational skills necessary to be college-, workforce- and life-ready**. The program is supported by the US Department of Defense, Military Child Education Coalition and the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission and currently 33 US states implement the program in their schools and school districts.

Why should my school seek the Purple Star Award designation?

According to 2018 Kentucky Incentives for Prevention (KIP) survey **there are approximately 50,000 (41.14%) military-connected youth in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12**. This includes students whose family members (i.e. parent(s), sibling(s), grandparent(s) or caregiver(s)) are current or former military (i.e. Active Duty, Reserve, or National Guard). Military-connected youth can be affected by their family member's deployment and military service. State-wide KIP survey data shows military-connected youth report higher rates of bullying, serious psychological distress, self-harm, thoughts of suicide, and substance use, compared to non-military connected youth. The Purple Star Award helps increase protective factors and reduce risk factors for substance misuse and behavioral health issues with military youth by providing a caring school climate and increasing school engagement and involvement from parents and other adults in the school and community. According to a national evaluation report by The Center for Public Leadership and Columbia University on the Purple Star program, **77% of schools report a positive impact on the school and has significantly improved their relationships with military families**. By creating a more supportive environment within the school and broader community, military-connected youth have better academic and social-emotional experiences.

How does my school qualify for the Purple Star Award?



Designate a school liaison

Liaisons serve as the point of contact for military students and their families, completes the required professional development training and shares the training information with school staff.



Establish a resource webpage

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.



Host one military recognition event

Events honor and increase awareness of military connected students, families, and staff and help families integrate into their new communities.

Once the school completes the required activities, they submit an application to the statewide advisory board for review. The Purple Star Advisory Board, formed by the **Kentucky departments of Education, Higher Education, Veterans Services and Behavioral Health**, reviews the applications twice a year and designates the school as a Purple Star School. Purple Star awardees receive a special recognition to display at their school along with statewide recognition and a press conference for their achievement.

Every military youth in Kentucky receives what they need to succeed.

For more information and resources on earning the Purple Star Award visit www.kypurplestar.org or contact Sarah Jemison at sjemison@sevencounties.org

