

CHAPTER 108

AN ACT concerning school programs and services for children of military families and supplementing chapter 6 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.18A:6-110.1 “Purple Star Schools Program” established; working group, criteria.

1. a. There is created a Purple Star Schools Program in the Department of Education. Under the program, the Commissioner of Education shall annually recognize as Purple Star Schools those schools that provide for, or have made significant progress to respond to, the educational and social-emotional challenges military-connected students encounter during the transition to a new school when the student’s parent or guardian is an active duty member of the United States Armed Forces and is relocated due to the active duty member’s continued military service. A Purple Star School shall be designated as such if it provides programs and services that include, but need not be limited to, the following:

(1) training for faculty and staff members to ease entry into the new school environment for military-connected students;

(2) student-led programs to help create social connections, including an emphasis on programs for students who arrive mid-year and miss out on the normal cycles of sports and club activities;

(3) a military family webpage on the school website to inform parents and guardians about programs and services;

(4) relevant professional development opportunities for additional school staff; and

(5) holding school-wide military recognition events that raise awareness and recognize the value of military service.

The goal of the programs and services is to ensure that staff can help manage the challenges military-connected students encounter when they move between schools with different cultures, curricula, standards, course offerings, schedules, and graduation requirements.

b. The commissioner shall establish a Purple Star Schools Working Group. The purpose of the working group shall be to develop criteria to be used in the designation of schools as Purple Star Schools. The working group shall consist of members appointed by the commissioner and shall be composed of, but need not be limited to: a school principal; a school administrator; a school board member; an elementary school teacher; a middle school teacher; a high school teacher; a school counselor; a school social worker; and a school psychologist.

c. The criteria established by the working group for a Purple Star Schools designation pursuant to subsection b. of this section shall include, but need not be limited to, the school’s efforts to:

(1) raise awareness and recognize the value of military service, including the sacrifices of military-connected families;

(2) respond to the unique educational and social-emotional challenges of military-connected students;

(3) highlight and promote equity, inclusion, and belonging;

(4) create safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for all students, faculty, and staff;

(5) provide teachers, faculty, and staff with opportunities for instruction in easing the entry into the new school environment for military-connected students; and

(6) provide programs and services that align with those enumerated in paragraphs (1) through (5) of subsection a. of this section.

d. The working group, in consultation with the commissioner, shall establish a scoring system based on the criteria developed pursuant to subsection c. of this section to be used by

the commissioner in the designation of Purple Star Schools. The commissioner shall establish a process by which schools may nominate their school to be designated as a Purple Star School.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved September 15, 2022.