

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 3785

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 20, 2021

Sponsored by:

Senator VIN GOPAL

District 11 (Monmouth)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes “Purple Star Schools Program” in DOE to recognize public and nonpublic schools which emphasize importance of assisting children of military families.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee on November 15, 2021, with amendments.



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

4
 5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
 6 *of New Jersey:*

7
 8 1. a. There is created a Purple Star Schools Program in the
 9 Department of Education. Under the program, the Commissioner of
 10 Education shall annually recognize as Purple Star Schools those public
 11 and nonpublic schools that provide for, or have made significant
 12 progress to respond to, the educational and social-emotional
 13 challenges military-connected students encounter during the transition
 14 to a new school when the student's parent or guardian is an active duty
 15 member of the United States Armed Forces and is relocated due to the
 16 active duty member's continued military service. A Purple Star
 17 School shall be designated as such if it provides programs and services
 18 that include, but need not be limited to, the following:

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

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

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

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

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

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

34 b. The commissioner shall establish a Purple Star Schools
 35 Working Group. The purpose of the working group shall be to
 36 develop criteria to be used in the designation of public and nonpublic
 37 schools as Purple Star Schools. The working group shall consist of
 38 members appointed by the commissioner and shall be composed of,
 39 but need not be limited to: a school principal; a school administrator;
 40 'a school board member;'¹ an elementary school teacher; a middle
 41 school teacher; a high school teacher; a school counselor; a school
 42 social worker; and a school psychologist.

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

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **【thus】** in the above bill is
 not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Senate SMV committee amendments adopted November 15, 2021.

- 1 (1) raise awareness and recognize the value of military service,
2 including the sacrifices of military-connected families;
- 3 (2) respond to the unique educational and social-emotional
4 challenges of military-connected students;
- 5 (3) highlight and promote equity, inclusion, and belonging; (4)
6 create safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for all
7 students, faculty, and staff;
- 8 (5) provide teachers, faculty, and staff with opportunities for
9 instruction in easing the entry into the new school environment for
10 military-connected students; and
- 11 (6) provide programs and services that align with those
12 enumerated in paragraphs (1) through (5) of subsection a. of this
13 section.
- 14 d. The working group, in consultation with the commissioner,
15 shall establish a scoring system based on the criteria developed
16 pursuant to subsection c. of this section to be used by the
17 commissioner in the designation of Purple Star Schools. The
18 commissioner shall establish a process by which public and nonpublic
19 schools may nominate their school to be designated as a Purple Star
20 School.
- 21
- 22 2. This act shall take effect immediately.