

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5762

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to creating the purple star award.

Brief Description: Creating the purple star award.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Wagoner, Lovick and Nobles).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/22/22, 2/24/22 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes the Purple Star Award (award) to recognize military friendly schools that show a commitment to students and families connected to the nation's military.
- Establishes related administrative duties for the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), including authorizing the OSPI to collaborate with a qualifying entity in administering the award, and requiring the OSPI to include an award application on its website.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Ybarra, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berg, Bergquist, Callan, McCaslin, McEntire, Ortiz-Self, Rude, Steele and Stonier.

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:

Legislation adopted in 2009 made Washington a member state of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (Compact). All 50 states are member states under the Compact.

The purpose of the Compact, which applies only to public schools, is to remove barriers to educational success imposed on children of military families because of frequent moves and deployment by their parents. The Compact, in part, is intended to:

- facilitate the timely enrollment of children of military families and ensuring that they are not placed at a disadvantage due to difficulty in the transfer of education records or variations in entrance and age requirements;
- facilitate the student placement process through which children of military families are not disadvantaged by variations in attendance requirements, scheduling, sequencing, grading, course content, or assessment;
- facilitate the qualification and eligibility for enrollment, educational programs, and participation in extracurricular academic, athletic, and social activities; and
- promote flexibility and cooperation between the educational system, parents, and the student in order to achieve educational success for the student.

Each member state, either through the creation of a state council or the use of an existing body or board, is required to provide for the implementation of the Compact. In Washington, the Interstate Compact Council (State Council) has been established to fulfill those obligations.

The Compact requires the State Council to include: the Superintendent of Public Instruction; a superintendent of a school district with a high concentration of military children; a representative from a military installation; one representative each from the legislative and executive branches of government; and other offices and stakeholder groups the State Council deems appropriate.

The Compact also requires the State Council to appoint or designate a military family education liaison to assist military families and the state in implementing the Compact.

Summary of Bill:**Creation and Issuance of Purple Star Award to Military Friendly Schools.**

The Purple Star Award (award) is created to recognize military friendly schools that show a commitment to students and families connected to the nation's military. Beginning in 2023, the award is to be issued every two years, and schools that earn the award will receive a special purple star recognition to display on site.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) may collaborate with a state

agency or nonprofit organization that has experience serving military-connected students and families to administer the award.

The OSPI must make available on its website an application for schools or school districts to submit for consideration to receive the award. The application must:

- require evidence of meeting applicable requirements;
- include a timeline for submittal of an application and announcement of the award recipients; and
- describe the criteria used to review the applications and determine which school or schools will receive the award.

Award Eligibility—Required and Optional Activities.

To be considered for the award, a school must:

- have a staff point of contact for military students and families. The school staff point of contact must:
 - work jointly with the state military family education liaison of the State Council to serve military families;
 - serve as the primary liaison between military families and the school;
 - complete professional development on special considerations for military students and families under relevant state and federal law; and
 - identify and inform teachers of military-connected students in their classrooms and the special considerations military families and students should receive under the Compact; and
- maintain a dedicated page on its website featuring resources for military families.

To receive the award, a school must also complete one or more of following optional activities:

- provide professional development for additional staff on special considerations for military students and families;
- be a part of a district that passes a resolution publicizing the school's support for military children and families; or
- host a military recognition event that demonstrates a military friendly culture.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is a voluntary program, but more than 25 states currently participate in the

award program. Military families often transfer in the middle of the year, and this bill incentivizes schools to pay special attention to the needs of military children and will help to promote smoother transitions for students that change schools. This bill also gives students a chance to learn more about the military. The United States Department of Defense has assisted with the legislation.

Some schools already have organized practices to recognize new students and would like to be recognized as a purple star school. The professional development training is an especially important part of the bill.

The bill describes a designation process, so references to "award" in the bill should be changed to "designation." The first paragraph should also be modified.

This bill helps to alleviate challenges for transferring military students. Each year, 185,000 military students transfer from one school to another. The intent of this bill is not to provide an advantage to military students, but rather to level the playing field. Washington should join the 28 states that have adopted the award program or similar program.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Keith Wagoner, prime sponsor; Tammie Perreault; Jessica Potts, Steilacoom High School; and Nasue Nishida, Washington Education Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.