
Education Committee

HB 1346

Brief Description: Creating the purple star award.

Sponsors: Representatives Shavers, Berry, Couture, Leavitt, Morgan, Simmons, Timmons, Lekanoff, Paul and Donaghy.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes the Purple Star Award (award) to recognize military-friendly school districts 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.

Hearing Date: 1/24/23

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Purple Star Programs.

Numerous states have established Purple Star Programs (programs) to address education, social, and emotional difficulties that children of military parents can experience resulting from frequent school transfers. These programs often designate schools as military friendly if they demonstrate a commitment to students and families connected to the nation's military and meet other criteria, such as designating school staff as a point of contact for military students and families, and establishing a website page with resources for military families.

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.

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.

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 School Districts.

The Purple Star Award (award) is created to recognize military friendly school districts that show a commitment to students and families connected to the nation's military. Beginning in 2024, the award is to be issued every two years, and school districts 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 the needs of a diverse K-12 population to establish and administer the award.

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

- require evidence of meeting applicable requirements; and
- include a timeline for submittal of an application and announcement of the award recipients.

The OSPI's website must also describe the criteria used to review the applications and determine which school districts will receive the award.

Award Eligibility—Required and Optional Activities.

To be considered for the award, a school district must maintain a dedicated page on its website featuring resources for military families. The school district must also have a staff point of

contact for military students and families that:

- works jointly with the state military family education liaison of the State Council to serve military families;
- serves as the primary liaison between military families and the school district;
- completes professional development on special considerations for military students and families under relevant state and federal law; and
- identifies and informs teachers of military-connected students in their classrooms and the special considerations military families and students should receive under the Compact.

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

- provide professional development for additional staff on special considerations for military students and families;
- pass a resolution publicizing the school district'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.