

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1346

As Passed Legislature

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

Brief Description: Creating the purple star award.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Shavers, Berry, Couture, Leavitt, Morgan, Simmons, Timmons, Lekanoff, Paul and Donaghy).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/24/23, 2/2/23 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/16/23, 96-2.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 4/5/23, 48-0.

House Concurred.

Passed House: 4/13/23, 94-2.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes the Purple Star designation (designation) to recognize school districts that demonstrate educational and social-emotional supports to students of military service members.
- 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 designation.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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.

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Shavers, Vice Chair; Rude, Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Callan, Eslick, Ortiz-Self, Pollet, Stonier and Timmons.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives McEntire, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Harris, McClintock, Sandlin and Steele.

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.

Interstate Compact.

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 Substitute Bill:

Creation and Issuance of Purple Star Designation.

The Purple Star designation (designation) is created to recognize school districts that demonstrate educational and social-emotional supports to students of military service members as they face transitions to a new school. Beginning in 2024 the designation is to be issued every two years, and school districts that earn the designation will receive a 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 kindergarten through grade 12 population to establish and administer the designation.

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

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

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

Designation Eligibility—Required and Optional Activities.

To be considered for the designation, 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 designation, 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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The frequent relocations of military families can create significant challenges for students. Children in military families attend an average of six to nine schools. This disruption impacts issues related to different academic standards, socialization, and other factors. This bill will provide resources to families and kids. The bill provides a helpful signal to military families and children, and should be adopted to honor the sacrifices of our military families.

Washington has 26,000 active duty military affiliated children. The Purple Star Program (program) is implemented in 35 states and provides benefits to military students and the entire student body. These programs can help to bridge communities and have provided benefits in other states.

Stakeholders support the bill and its intention to recognize social and emotional supports for military kids. The program would be better named as a designation program rather than an awards program, and changes to the first paragraph are suggested.

Some local schools have already been using the program to support military families. The program promotes school efforts to create a supportive culture for military students. The program also recognizes and honors the hard work of schools and districts, giving parents the peace of mind to know that their students will be supported at school. This bill is a win for families, schools, and communities.

School districts are ready to implement the program and it will be led locally by individuals who are devoted to supporting military families and students.

This bill and the program are widely supported by military-connected school districts. Many districts are not properly trained in the implementation of the Compact. This bill will provide a framework for training and encouraging partnerships. Unlike previous versions of the legislation, this bill recognizes districts, not schools. This bill also has less financial impact through modified implementation requirements.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Clyde Shavers, prime sponsor; Krestin Bahr, Brendan Macini, and Natalie Wimberley, Peninsula School District; Amy Jo Rotante; Tammie Perreault, Department of Defense; Nasue Nishida, Washington Education Association; and Kirsten Rue, North Thurston Public Schools.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.