

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5071

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As of January 11, 2023

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

**Brief Description:** Creating the purple star award.

**Sponsors:** Senators Nobles, Wagoner, Conway, Hunt, Kuderer, Lovick, Randall, Salomon, Shewmake, Stanford, Trudeau, Wellman, Wilson, C., Wilson, J. and Wilson, L..

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/11/23.

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Purple Star Award to recognize military friendly school districts.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Alexandra Fairfortune (786-7416)

**Background:** The Legislature enacted the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (compact) in 2009 to remove barriers to educational success imposed on children of military families due to frequent moves and deployment of their parents.

Article VIII of the compact requires each member state to have a state council to coordinate compliance with the provisions of the compact. The state council appoints the military family education liaison to assist military families and the state in facilitating the implementation of the compact.

**Summary of Bill:** The Purple Star Award is created to recognize military friendly school districts that show a commitment to students and families connected to the nation's military. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) may collaborate

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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 award shall be awarded every two years beginning in 2024.

A school district must be considered for a Purple Star Award if it completes all the required activities and at least one optional activity. The required activities are:

- have a staff point of contact for military students and families; and
- maintain a dedicated page on its website featuring resources for military families.

The staff point of contact must work jointly with the state military family education liaison; serve as the primary liaison between military families and the school district; complete professional development on special considerations for military students and families; and identify and inform teachers of military-connected students in their classrooms and the special considerations they should receive.

The optional activities are:

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

OSPI must make the following available on its website:

- a simple application for the award;
- a timeline for submitting the application and announcing award recipients; and
- the criteria being used to review the applications and determine which school districts receive the award.

**Appropriation:** The bill contains a null and void clause requiring specific funding be provided in an omnibus appropriation act.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 4, 2023.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Purple Star designation will be led by a group of committed state leaders who seek to support military students and families. Military children face constant change such as new schools, new people, and new environments leaving them vulnerable. This change makes it difficult for military connected students to find support in lonely times. Students of military families can be uplifted through inclusion from staff, students, and the community. Feeling understood makes life easier and the purple star bill aims to achieve this for other students of military families. Military

connected students move 6 to 9 times on average during their education, creating instability. The purple star program will assist in providing the stability for these military connected students, allowing for academic, social, and emotional success. The purple star award would extend the work of the Student-to-Student program which creates a welcoming environment for students and their families. It would also help ensure that schools and districts meet the requirements related to connecting and supporting our military students. The Purple Star award appears to be more of a designation for schools, this language change has been advised.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator T'wina Nobles, Prime Sponsor; AmyJo Rotante; Tammie Perreault, Department of Defense; Krestin Bahr, Peninsula School District; Brendan Masini, Peninsula School District; Isidro (Rey) Ornelas, Medical Lake School District; Nasue Nishida, Washington Education Association; Venus Cariaso, Steilacoom High School; Nykita Steward, Steilacoom High School.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.