



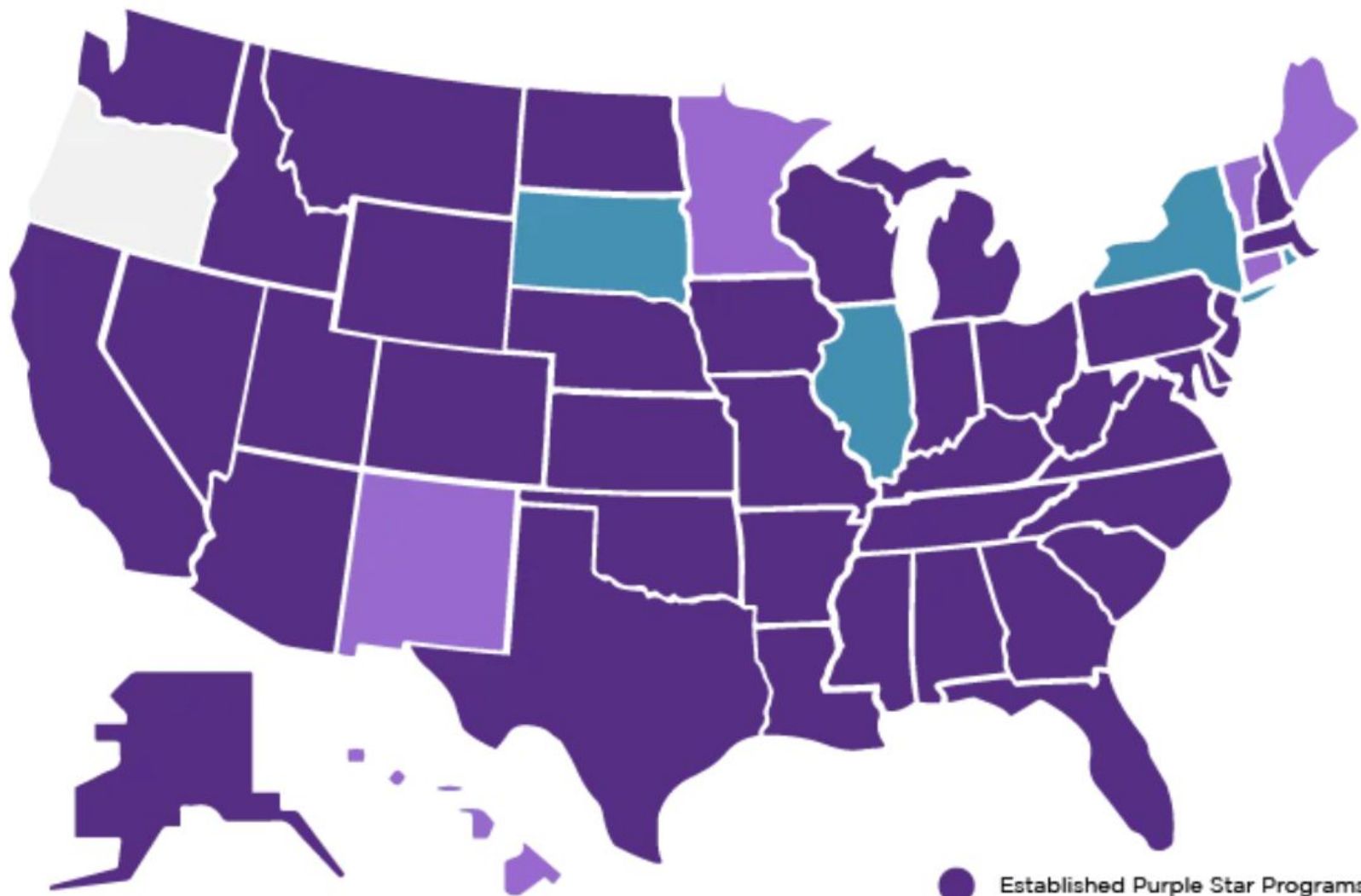
Purple Star Schools

Supporting Military Families in Utah

Utah Purple Star Schools Program

The Utah Purple Star Schools Program is a designation for Utah schools that excel in protecting the educational needs of students and families who are military-connected. This includes annual new school application opportunities and annual verification for existing schools.

- Military-connected children move 6-9 times during their k-12 education (3x more than their civilian peers.)
- Most of our military families in Utah don't live on military bases.
- National Guard or Reserve families also face challenges when deployed.
- Currently, Utah does not have a statewide military student identifier, meaning many schools have no way of knowing which students are military-connected. Federal guidance specifically recommends collecting separate identifiers for: Active Duty families, National Guard families and Reserve families
- Purple Star Schools supply resources and practices to support these students, ultimately supporting the entire school culture.



- **May have local designations



**Utah State
Board of
Education**

School Breakdown

177 total Purple Star Schools in 2026 SY

Alpine School District 45

Charter Schools 20

Davis School District 84

Jordan School District 1

Ogden School District 5

Tooele School District 1

Weber School District 21

New and Existing School Requirements

Designated staff point of contact

Web page with parent resources

Annual professional development for all staff

Military event or board resolution

Student-led transition program

Point of Contact

Designated staff point of contact for military students and families who acts as the primary link between a military family and the school; Must be a full-time school staff member.

Designate a staff member as a military liaison. The military liaison shall have all the following duties:

- a. Serve as the point of contact between the public/non-public school and military-connected students and the military-connected students' parents or guardians.
- b. Advise the school administrative team on appropriate supports available to military-connected students
- c. Assist in coordinating school programs relevant to military-connected students.

Website Best Practice

Website should include:

This site cannot be more than 3 clicks away

Welcome Statement

School Purple Star School Point of Contact - name, email, and phone.

- New Student Orientation - first steps
- Calendar with Specific Events
- Military-connected Tailored Resources- which can be pulled from the USBE website, MCEC and local area.

Optional -

HAFB School Liaison Office contact information.

Upcoming special dates, Events

Photos of previous events

Student-led Transition and Ongoing Support Team/Program

Student-led transition programs should include a student transition team coordinator.

Purpose: To establish a structured, student-led program that assists all military-connected students. The program provides peer-to-peer support for:

- Newly Enrolled Students
- Students experiencing shifts in their peer groups or academic tracks
- Students facing parental absence due to military deployments, training, or extended active-duty assignments.

Student-led Transition and Ongoing Support Team/Program continued....

Key Examples:

1. Student Transition and Ongoing Support Program/Team Coordinator (School staff member, PSS Coordinator)
 - a. Oversight and delivery. Recruits student leads and helps them deliver an ongoing program.
 - b. Collaborates with school staff, parents, and community partners for attendance, new students, student obstacles and challenges, and events. New student orientation, transition and ongoing support checklist packets.
 - c. Student Leads/Ambassadors
 - d. Guide new students through their first month of school or during parental separation.

Student-led Transition and Ongoing Support Team/Program continued...

- d.** Guide new students through their first month of school or during parental separation.
 - i.** Meet new students at the front office, deliver a student-made welcome packet, provide a school tour, meet the student's teacher(s), and ensure they have a designated peer group for lunch and school activities.
 - ii.** Throughout the first week, continue to meet with the student, answer questions, and check on their well-being.
 - iii.** Second week and on-going. Continue check-ins, introduce the student to clubs, sports, interest groups, after school/neighborhood activities, fully assisting them from new student to integrated peer.

Student-led Transition and Ongoing Support Team/Program continued...

- e.** Provide low-pressure, consistent peer support and check-ins for all students.

- f.** Organize and deliver events and programs that support the cohort.

2. Examples of national and local Student-Led Programs.

- a. Student 2 Student (S2S) MCEC S2S
 - b. Anchored4Life Anchored4Life
 - c. Hope Squad Hope Squad

Examples of Military Events

One requirement for Utah Purple Schools is to host at least one military-connected event per school year, though we recommend that schools strive to support our students and families year-round.

Use this page to plan impact driven events, connect with local military commands, veteran service organizations, and promote patriotism amongst our next generation of leaders.

Fall Recommendations:

- Prior to or during the standard back-to-school night or week, host a mini-mixer specifically for military-connected families. Partner with local military command, local community non-profits, and veteran service organizations.
 - Provide school specific resources, student led peer team, handouts and information about local, state, and national military-connected student and family resources.
- School faculty and Staff training

November

- Invite parents, local military commands, veterans
 - Veterans day assembly (local military members, parents, family members)
 - Wall of Honor (photos of parents, staff, family members of training, deployments)
 - Tribute of Heroes
 - Breakfast, Donuts with

Examples of Military Events continued...

Spring

- January/February Winter Warm-up Social
 - A low pressure social event specifically targeting families with a parent away on training, deployment, or on active duty. Could be a hot coco mixer. The student led peer team could lead games with students while parents connect.

April

- Month of the Military Child and Purple Up Day
 - April is the most significant month for Purple Star Schools. Purple Up Day, which is typically the 15th celebrates the resilience of military kids.
 - Encourage the entire student body and staff to wear purple
 - Have an assembly recognizing military-connected students, inviting parents to participate. Invite a military member, parent, community member to speak to the student body about resilience.
 - Have the student-led peer team place purple ribbons on the classrooms, desks, lockers of the military-connected students.

Examples of Military Events continued...

End of School Year

- Departure, graduation social, giving a meaningful send-off,
 - Host a lunch or after school social, provide students with a departure packet that includes a school pennant or a memory book signed by classmates and teachers.
 - Create a Utah and local town “passport” booklet for departing students.
- Graduation
 - Provide military-connected graduates with a special Purple Cord to wear over their cap and gown during the ceremony and recognize them.
 - Host a Senior Sunrise Breakfast

Professional Development

Purple Star Schools must provide **professional development** annually for all school staff on special considerations for military students and families (the date, topic and presenter must be retained). Department of War School Liaison Program. These officers can do on-site training. People who can help provide formal training:

Matthew Mason	matthew.mason.9@us.af.mil	Statewide, HAFB
Janet Seachris	janet.seachris@us.af.mil	Statewide, HAFB
Francesca Suarez	fsuarez@dsdmail.net	Military Support Team in Davis School District.
Michael Miller	mmmiller@utah.gov	UDVMA
Kayle Smith	kaylesmith@utah.gov	UDVMA
Juliann Bernhard	juliann.bernhard.naf@army.mil	Arm, Dugway, Tooele
Alicia Tullis	atullis@tooeleschools.org	MST Tooele
Patricia Dominguez	dominguezp@ogdensd.org	Ogden School District Military Support
Larissa Archuleta	laarchuleta@wsd.net	Weber School District Military Support
Colleen Russell	corussell1@wsd.net	Weber School District Military Support

Military-Connected Student Support Team (optional)

Schools are encouraged to establish a small team if possible that meets periodically to discuss ways to support military-connected students and families. This team may be an existing committee (such as a behavior, counseling, school climate, or family engagement team) rather than creating a new committee.

Suggested Team Members

Include individuals who are most involved in supporting students, such as:

- Purple Star School Point of Contact
- Administrator
- School counselor or social worker
- Teacher representative
- Parent of a military-connected student (when available)
- Student representative (optional)
- Military School Liaison or community partner (as available)

Military-Connected Student Support Team (optional)

cont.

Responsibilities

The team should:

- Identify military-connected students and consider ways to support successful school transitions.
- Review school practices and identify opportunities to improve support for military-connected students and families.
- Coordinate activities such as Month of the Military Child or Veterans Day recognition.
- Share available military and community resources with students, families, and staff.
- Encourage staff awareness of the unique experiences of military-connected students.
- Help maintain the school's Purple Star designation.

Meetings

Meet **at least twice each school year** (or as needed).

Meetings may include:

- Discussing student needs or transition supports.
- Planning school recognition events.
- Reviewing available resources.
- Identifying one or two goals for the coming year.

Military-Connected Student Support Team (optional)

cont.

Community Partnerships

When available, schools are encouraged to collaborate with:

- Military School Liaisons
- Utah Department of Veterans & Military Affairs
- Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)
- Blue Star Families
- Local military installations
- Veteran Service Organizations
- Community organizations that support military families

Resources

Provide staff and families with access to state and national military family resources, including:

- Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3)
- Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)
- Military OneSource
- Utah Military Interstate Children's Compact
- Utah Department of Veterans & Military Affairs
- Utah Parent Center
- SafeUT
- Military School Liaison Program

Rvsd. 7/22/26