

PURPLE STAR SCHOOLS

BEST PRACTICES PARTNERSHIP TOWN HALL REPORT 2025

FEATURING: OHIO & SOUTH CAROLINA



Executive Summary

A Joint-State Purple Star School “Best Practices” Town Hall was hosted by leaders from Purple Star School pioneer states, Ohio and South Carolina, mid-December 2024. Three groups of Military-Connected Community Stakeholders to include (1) Students, (2) Parents, and (3) Military Liaisons, engaged in collaborative and open discussions through an unscripted live Q&A session facilitated by Ohio Military Interstate Children’s Compact (MIC3) Commissioner, Pete LuPiba and South Carolina MIC3 Commissioner, Dr. Kim Priester. Purple Star School District and Campus-based Military Liaisons were contacted and provided volunteer opportunities for their Military-Connected Community Stakeholder involvement (Student, Parent, and Military Liaison) to participate and represent their respective State.

Town Hall Facilitators provided a safe and active listening environment which encouraged high levels of participation from session attendees. Top three key findings were identified as follows: (1) The definition of “military-connected” youth must not solely identify as Active Duty status, (2) Cultivating community partnerships and relationships with military-connected youth and families must be a top priority for Purple Star Schools; Military-connected families may not feel “at home” until those relationships and connections are established, and, (3) The significance of a coalition consisting of family, community, and school is needed for Purple Star School mission impact; “Coalition” includes various professions and numerous individuals across the community’s involvement. A comprehensive list of Key Findings with Recommendations can be found on Page 13.

Key words: *Military-Connected Students, Military-Connected Parents, Military Liaisons, Coalition, Purple Star Schools*

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Introduction from OH MIC3 Commissioner

Good day to you this stellar of a Purple Star School Year:

When Ohio went to work in developing the PreK12-MIL framework, the mission of #PurpleStarSchools during 2015-2017, we had no idea that the Great State of South Carolina would call on over and seek meaningful partnerships from school to community to family. Us, Buckeyes have loved every day since!

On 11 December 2024, for the first time ever, two Purple Star States sat down across from one another, virtually – for more than four hours in a Town Hall-styled format. South Carolina MIL Kids connected with Ohio MIL Kids. Ohio service-members and their spouses, MIL Kiddo parents shared with their “brothers and sisters” over in South Carolina. And just as special of a bond and profession, more than two dozen Purple Star School Liaisons and Educators and Leaders from Ohio and South Carolina collaborated on best practices and new ideas.

MIC3 (Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission) State Councils are simply where the boots hit the ground. 50+1 commissions of professionals in support of their MIL Kids and State Laws and Purple resources. We in Ohio are honored to serve with Dr. Tremekia K. Priester of the Great State of South Carolina. Thank you, Commish – Ohio Loves South Carolina.

As you will read in this excellent Joint States report, expertly authored by Dr. Sara Jane Ginn Arnett of the Great State of South Carolina (State Coordinator for Military Child Education Coalition), we have a Purple standard and all the Dandelion room to grow and take our shared mission to the next level. Thank you ever so kindly, Dr. Arnett for offering-up your pure ‘Honorary Ohioan’ leadership out East with us here in the Buckeye State.

To the 40+ Purple Star States across our union and in mission with Team South Carolina and Ohio ...we hope this sacred document will serve as a blueprint, a roadmap in supporting one another, once again, in all the Purple Star School Years to come!

Very respectfully yours in purple partnership,

Pete LuPiba
*U.S. Navy/Operation Iraqi Freedom Veteran and
Dad to Military-connected Youth*

Event Overview

On December 11, 2024, a first of its kind virtual Town Hall was hosted by Joint-State Purple Star School “Best Practices” leaders from Purple Star School pioneer states, Ohio and South Carolina. Both states have promoted growth, development and continue to remain at the forefront of education and military policies-supports. Three groups of Military-Connected Community Stakeholders to include Students, Parents and School Military Liaisons, engaged in meaningful discussions through an unscripted live Q&A session facilitated by Ohio MIC3 Commissioner, Pete LuPiba and South Carolina Commissioner, Dr. Kim Priester.

Military-Connected Community Stakeholder Event Attendees

South Carolina Military Liaisons

- Richland Two School District *Military Liaison* - Kelsie Carter
- Northeast High School *Military Liaison* - Regina Cherry
- Camden High School *Military Liaison* - Pam Chickering
- Coosa Elementary School *Military Liaison* - Evelina Fair
- Thomas Sumter Academy *Military Liaison* - Dixie Hardy
- St. Joseph Catholic School *Military Liaison* - Lisa Leonard
- Beaufort County School District *Military Liaison* - Latoshia Middleton
- Aiken County School District *Military Community Liaison* - Sondra Thomas



South Carolina Military-Connected Parents with Military Branch Affiliation

- Sumter - Katie Baker/AIR FORCE
- Richland II - Randall Brewster/SC ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
- Beaufort - Missy Clampitt/ARMY
- Columbia - Briaana Duncan/ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
- Richland II - Raquel Gentles /ARMY
- Beaufort - Brittany Kaczor/MARINES
- Richland II - Amy Messenger/ARMY
- Charleston - Marley Ott/AIR FORCE
- Beaufort - Meghan Quasney/NAVY
- Charleston - Karli Paradise - Sabecky/AIR FORCE

South Carolina Military-Connected Students (Participating Schools and # of Students)

- Blythewood Middle School (2)
- Camden High School (3)
- Coosa Elementary School (1)
- Richland Northeast High School (2)

South Carolina Stakeholders

- Military Child Education Coalition *State of South Carolina Coordinator* - Dr. Sara Jane Arnett
- South Carolina Department of Veterans' Affairs *Military Affairs Coordinator* - Jason Fowler
- US Army Ft. Jackson *School Liaison Officer* - Fred Henley
- South Carolina *Military Interstate Children's Compact Commissioner* - Dr. Kim Priester
- MCAS Beaufort-Parris Island *School Liaison* - Kim Wiley

Military-Connected Community Stakeholder Event Attendees

Ohio Military Liaisons

Saint Albert the Great *Purple Star Liaison* - Barb Barbo

Studebaker Preschool *Intervention Specialist & Purple Star Liaison* - Jenn Davis

Morton Middle School *Purple Star Liaison* - Brittany Edwards

Beverly Gardens Elementary *Principal & Purple Star School Liaison* - Cristi Fields

Clear Fork Elementary Schools *Purple Star Liaison* - Rich Hoover

Jackson Local *Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment;*

Purple Star Military POC - Dr. Monica Meyers

Hamilton Township High School *Purple Star School Liaison* - Corey O'Brien

Medina County Career Center *School Counselor, Military Liaison & Purple Star Co-Advisor* -

Patrick Shaughnessy

Bellville Elementary School *Purple Star Liaison* - Ashley Twedt

Ohio Military-Connected Parents with Military Branch Affiliation

Olentangy Local School District - Jason Durell/MARINES and ARMY RESERVES

Beavercreek City Schools - Ratisha Hill/AIR FORCE

Hamilton Local Schools - Corey O'Brien/ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Clear Fork Valley Local School District - Sabrina Snider and Matt Bulanda/ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Vandalia-Butler City Schools - Cassie Hendrickson, Holly Maser and Kerri Walton/ACTIVE DUTY

Ohio Military-Connected Students (Participating Schools and # of Students)

Beavercreek High School (2)

Bellville Elementary (2)

Clear Fork Valley High School (3)

Clear Fork Valley Middle School (3)

Jackson Memorial Elementary (1)

Morton Middle School (7)

Sauder Elementary (1)



Ohio Stakeholders

Ohio Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission *Member* - Jenn Davis

Beverly Gardens Elementary *Principal & Purple Star School Liaison* - Cristi Fields

Ohio Military Interstate Children's Compact *Commissioner* - Pete LuPiba

Ohio Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission *Co-Chair* - Ashley Twedt

Q: Why did your school decide to become a Purple Star Award School?

First of all I want to thank you for having this venue to speak. It was very emotional for me, listening to the children. They did a phenomenal job. I'm a military daughter, a military mom, and military grandma, so these programs are very important in our school. We were already serving our troops and Veterans and I was interested in the state program to see how we could improve upon our efforts. -OH, Barb Barbo

Thanks for having us. It's been kind of a timeline for us as we looked at this a couple years ago and were trying to put things into place to have this become a reality. A couple years ago, we felt like we weren't quite there with what we needed to do. Then this past spring, we went down to the educators workshop for the Marines down at Parris Island and then began working with them and getting some support set here at the school; we felt like that was something that we were going to be able to do for our students. We started to realize the number, the larger number of students, that we actually had that were from military families. So that was surprising, then it became a no brainer at that point to put this [Purple Star School Program] into place. -OH, Patrick Shaughnessy

The Purple Star Program was something that was a no brainer for us and we were waiting on something like this as a platform to be able to be a part of so that we could showcase a lot of the work that we were already doing but it wasn't consistent. We didn't have a structure, if that makes sense. So when this Purple Star School Program came about, it was just like, OK. This is what we've been waiting for! Our Superintendent was really intentional about the work that we were doing for our families, in particular our military connected families; it was a no brainer because we have the highest number of military connected students in our state (in our school district). Our school district has Fort Jackson, literally in our backyard. We are the school district that's zoned for Fort Jackson so it just makes sense to be able to have our whole district become a Purple Star District. And from there, it's just been a blessing. -SC, Kelsie Carter

We have a very highly impacted elementary of about 75 plus percent of our kids from military families here and we felt that it was necessary for us to apply to be a Purple Star School to make sure that families knew that we were welcoming to them and that we were going to have resources for their kids and families; To make sure that their kids were taken care of as they transition to the school. We just felt like it was very important for us as a district and as a school in particular, Beverly Gardens, to have that Purple Star rating. -OH, Cristi Fields

Q: What positive changes have you seen in your military-connected youth and school?

I have definitely noticed that the culture and community in our schools has vastly changed since we received the Purple Star designation. Not only is our staff more knowledgeable about what these kids and families are potentially going through, but our kids are proud to say that they're military kids. Previously, the older kids didn't really want to talk about things ... Our kids are excited to tell people their military kid, they want to tell you what they've done in their Purple Star lunch bunches and their snack groups and all the different things from our group. -OH, Jenn Davis

The one thing that stands out a lot to me is that our reserve and National Guard children did not see themselves as military connected until we got the designation. -SC, Sondra Thomas

Q: What has been the most challenging thing about being a Purple Star School or Purple Star School District?

I think I can answer one for everybody. It's time. It's difficult because oftentimes I know we're pulled in different directions for different reasons, so time is a tremendous hurdle.

-SC, Dr. Kim Priester

Staff buy in from staff who don't understand the culture and trying to get them to understand that, yeah, sometimes your kiddos are gonna have harder days than others, depending on what's going on at home. And it's OK to give them a little grace and that just because your plan is you have a test, let them make it up in a study hall the next week. Sometimes it's more important for them to have that connection in the social/emotional aspect with their peers who are living the same things that they're going through than it is for them to take a planned reading test that day, for example. -OH, Jenn Davis

It's really going back to time. When I first started with this military liaison position, I didn't realize how much myself and the liaisons from our other buildings really wanted to grow the program. But with teaching and being a parent, it was a lot of work so we actually, just this year, were able to put it in our teacher contracts as a paid position which really made a huge difference because our Superintendent saw all the work that we were putting as unpaid, hours and hours for football games, after school and basketball games, with our personal funding that we were using for our classrooms. So we worked with our Superintendent and Treasurer ...the extra time is worth it to be putting it in. -OH, Brittany Edwards

We have a very highly impacted elementary of about 75 plus percent of our kids from military families here and we felt that it was necessary for us to apply to be a Purple Star School to make sure that families knew that we were welcoming to them and that we were going to have resources for their kids and families; To make sure that their kids were taken care of as they transition to the school. We just felt like it was very important for us as a district and as a school in particular, Beverly Gardens, to have that Purple Star rating. -OH, Cristi Fields

Q: How can you partner with other schools in your district to support the Purple Star School Program?

I'd like to acknowledge our Purple Star community as we have two of our School Liaisons on this call, Kim Wiley from Parris Island/Beaufort and Fred Henley at Fort Jackson. South Carolina has a robust Purple Star community where it is also a very important aspect to include and gather information from all of our stakeholders across the state and districts. We are blessed to be in a Purple Star community that shares investment from multiple different agencies as far as government, education, military and nonprofit. Shared investment from likeminded partnerships are sure to manifest and foster sustainable Purple Star School partnerships. -SC, Dr. Sara Jane Arnett

This is not a role a job that we can do alone, and often times, we're stuck in agencies, and if you're in an agency, you know that sometimes you can do your job 100% and sometimes you're doing somebody else's 25% and 50% of something else. So we try. But you all are the lifelines to our military connected families and students outside of these agencies. When you think outside of the box, partnerships most definitely broker partnership and support.

-SC, Dr. Kim Priester

MILITARY-CONNECTED PARENTS

Q: What is the first thing you look for in a school system after you receive PSC orders?

I know one of the first things that I look for are the programs especially now being that Purple Star Schools is a thing. When I was a youth whose father was in the Marine Corps, military-connected youth programs and support wasn't something that was always around. -OH, Ratisha Hill

I try to ask questions such as, "does the community have a positive view about the school?" I also look at the academic performance, the after-school programs and in-school programs available. And then have additional questions and ask if my kids are going to fit in with the students and are there other military kids nearby. -SC, Missy Clampitt

The area where we want to live in order to tell where the school we are zoned for where we narrow down from there; Once we figure out where we're going to live then education becomes the next thing we research. We tried to narrow down where we wanted to send our child according to the school district, then once we found out about, I started to look at the academics, sports, and all the different things that they have to offer. It was at this point, I started to dive into those different things and just tried to figure out how to make it be a part of our life. Basically, get involved as soon as possible. -SC, Raquel Gentles

Q: Describe things that have been helpful for your child when attending a Purple Star School.

I think what's been helpful for them is just finding out who else in their building or in their district even is also a military kid and then having the liaison at each building has been really helpful. They know they can go to that, like a trusted teacher and share with them or ask them questions ... I think just the connections that they form in each building because I have kids in all the buildings, it seems like they have those in every building. And then even when the whole district's involved, all of my kids get to be connected. -OH, Brittany Edwards

I'm a traditional reservist so my experience is a little bit different, but I did just want to mention that my children moved to the Vandalia district about five years ago. My children were in junior high and high school when we did transition over here and having Miss Edwards in this program really helped my children because she said they were connected. So we've always had some sort of a military aspect in their lives. Knowing that they could go to a school with children that knew the same lifestyle that we have made an impact. Their program put my two youngest children in the Purple Star Program together in a class which made my kids feel a bit more connected because they had each other. While transitioning from one school district to another, we transitioned from a school district that was not military affiliated, so this gave them a really good sense of connectivity. -OH, Holly Maser

The Purple Star program is amazing, but it really boils down to who's in the job. Having Mrs. Tweet here, day in and day out, is just a touchpoint for the kids to know that they have somebody that they can go to as a reservist. Those that are new to Purple Star don't really know what it's about so I can't speak enough about how great it's been for the kids. -OH, Matt Bulanda

MILITARY-CONNECTED PARENTS

Q: What are the hardest things for your family that a Purple Star School has been helpful with?

I will say here in the district, they have given the kids journals prior to deployment and we we've talked to Ashley at great length before I get ready to deploy and let her know what's coming. And then there's that build. Prior to deployment, it's helping the kids out and trying to put some tools in their hands to help them through the deployment. But I think the biggest, the biggest piece, is that continuous day-to-day touchpoint. I think this is one of those programs that is really important to get the right people in the right places because we have some absolute rock stars in the district for sure, but you can absolutely see that some liaisons obviously are better than others. -OH, Matt Bulanda

So much of what makes the role important is just developing relationships with the parents. That's how I love military families and parents. So, to me, it's not just looking to answer their questions, but develop relationships with them. I just think that's so important, but I'm taking my military community liaison hat off and I'm speaking as a parent because my husband served and retired from the United States Air Force. When we first PCS'd to South Carolina, I was looking for academics and my children's best fit. We were coming from Okinawa where my kids were in a Japanese school. We didn't have them go to school on base in Kadena Air Force. They were really doing well. My daughter was doing quite well academically. And so we were looking for a place that could keep her on track for academics; But then, most importantly, my son is on the spectrum. So for me, that's always very challenging when you move and moving is hard enough as it is, but when you have a child who has autism and you are moving constantly, it's very difficult and you have to have systems in place and people understand that dynamic. Our need for him was that he could transition into a place where they're going to not miss a beat and support him. So I was doing my checklist and asking all the questions and looking for an environment that was welcoming to my family.

-SC, Kelsie Carter

Q: What are the biggest challenges for your child in preschool, elementary school, middle or high school?.

I will say I was really quite astounded to know that there was a preschool in Ohio that was a Purple Star School because when my son was younger, early intervention was really important for him. It warms my heart to know that there are preschoolers who won't go through what my son went through because there are Jenn Davis' out there now. But I just know as high schoolers now, I think one of the hardest things for them is that they're going through peer group challenges because a lot of their friends have been together since those early years of elementary school. -OH, Ratisha Hill

So one of the challenges for my elementary school kids concerns my kids missing school for unexcused absences either to travel to see their military serving parent or having a mental health day and them not wanting to be able to really cope with going to school. Having to send them to school because then they'll get an unexcused absence while opting for South Carolina's school of choice comes with strict parameters concerning absences. Because we chose a school of choice we could be removed from the school. -SC, Missy Clappitt

The area where we want to live in order to tell where the school we are zoned for where we narrow down from there; Once we figure out where we're going to live then education becomes the next thing we research. We tried to narrow down where we wanted to send our child according to the school district, then once we found out about, I started to look at the academics, sports, and all the different things that they have to offer. It was at this point, I started to dive into those different things and just tried to figure out how to make it be a part of our life. Basically, get involved as soon as possible. -SC, Raquel Gentles

MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS

Q: What is the first thing you do once you move or relocate as a military family?

The first thing we do when we learn we are going to move or relocate, my mom likes to tell us months before when we do things, that way we already know we can say our goodbyes. We can make our Hangouts. Save the very best, the best for it. I would like it when my mom researches for show choirs around that area so I could go out for it because I really enjoy show choir; so looking for interests would probably be one of the first things I would look for and she [mom] likes to take us to explore. Like almost as soon as we move to our new area, we go to those places and we also see different houses. We think about what we would like in our rooms just so we can be a part of the process of looking for a house and looking for a school so we know what we're getting into.
-OH HS Student

I remember we were looking for like a new school where we flew out there multiple times to look for houses and look for different schools to go here. And when I saw that this school was a Purple Star one, I decided to go to this one. I thought the Purple Star was pretty cool. Then I could actually be around people that have experienced the same thing, but it is still initially hard because I have to find new people to hang out with and like, make new friends and start all over. And it's just hard because like, I don't want to, like, start off on the bad foot and just that's just how people expect me to be and. Because it's just hard for me to like, especially at this time and age, to make friends and be with people I enjoy because I'm new and I don't know how things work out; people just assume that I know how things work out. I came from Yuma, AZ to Ohio. The hardest part is normally schools. Finding a school that suits me and my dad's fit. We believe knowledge is power and that doesn't compare to anything else. We love sports. Football is my main sport. I like to find good programs. This program has been really good for the past two years. And that's about it. I know friends. They come and go. Not to worry about friends right now, but I don't have any other struggle than that. Thank you for asking. - OH MS Student

So we look for different sports teams, football, basketball, baseball. But definitely schools come first because if you're not at a good school, less likely to meet good friends plus high likely for a not-so-good environment. So, schools are our big target. My parents always look for nice schools. And my dad usually takes the lead on looking for housing. When my dad came down here to South Carolina before our family moved from Michigan, we looked at probably 20 different houses before he found the best fit for our family's needs.
- SC HS Student

Q: Describe how you and your family cope with emotions of moving (or PCSing)?

I mean, my family. We just move with the change. We don't really think about it much. It just kinda happens. I'd say the hardest part though, is we do it every two years. - SC HS Student

There are times we come with our emotions and just lean in on communication, talking and expressing how we feel about before we move, and that's a great place for us, you know, and communication really is big with our family and yeah, throughout the moving process, communicating throughout the process with each other. - OH HS Student

The big thing for me for coping with emotions is music. I just escape the world, where it was just like this gray place, and music was like this first color that I ever saw. So I listened to music a lot and I feel that music is how I cope with anything that I'm struggling with. - OH MS Student

About a year and a half or something, I had moved away from my friends here and then right as I started kind of letting go of them, I made really good friends over at Kansas and then right then I had moved back. I was happy to see my friends again, but then I missed my friends from Kansas. You just have to roll with it. It's kind of how it is. - OH MS Student

MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS

Q: What do you want the general public to know about military kids?

I would like the general public to know that we go through a lot of different experiences. We see friends and often times instead of them leaving, we are the ones that have to leave because of our parents. There are a lot of people that don't understand. - SC HS Student

I want public to know that it's hard for military kids to be away from their family and the ones that they love the most and it can be really stressful and sad. It's not easy to have a family member gone for so long, deployed or going on patrol. - OH Elementary Student

I just wanted to talk about things that they need to know like being able to identify and express sympathizing instead of empathizing. Like, they can't put themselves in my shoes, because they've never been in my shoes. I have to deal with all these things that's going on. and have to learn new ways to cope in school. It's just not worth having my dad gone while I'm crying in my room listening to music because it's just not the same. And they don't understand. - OH HS Student

One thing I wish a lot of people knew about military brats, or military youth known today, is that we are normal people too; some people think we're either really cool or really weird, depending on branch of service our parent is in. We're normal kids. I mean, I just came from a different state than you did. - OH HS Student

Q: What are some of your favorite things about being a military-connected kid, student and youth?

What's cool about being a military kid at Belleville is that there's these lunches that you get to do and go in a room with other military kids where you get to talk about stuff and you get to read books, and make stuff for your family, and it's really fun. And also sometimes we go on field trips and we go to military museums. - OH Elementary Student

So my sister, this is what she wanted to say, but she's kind of too shy to say it but every Friday in her third grade class, they have something fun once a month in her class where she gets to color and eat food and just hang out with all the military people. And she likes that. - OH Elementary Student

Being a military kid definitely builds you up. Not just your character, but just how resilient you are and how you respond to different situations and kind of builds your relationships a little stronger because you don't get hung up over the little stuff. Like, you're not worried about who's saying what and what you're going to do. You know your resources are going to be there for you and they can use them to your advantage. Resources are a big thing, whether it's a person, whether it's a group of people, a sport or a hobby. No matter what you do, you can always kind of relate it to the military, finding something to do, finding how to do it. And using all your stuff or using all your resources to your own advantage, and definitely having a dad military that is pretty hard on you. My dad will get you straight and growing up with three brothers, it's kind of a big challenge in itself, especially working and going to school in my senior year and finishing that up. It's a big weight, but having all those resources and having the experience I have had moving several different states, schools, and friends has helped me for where I am right now. - SC HS Student

It's the new experiences that are always really cool. Like I said, moving to new places been all over the world. Overseas, every single time. It's just everything new that's really cool, in my opinion. If you get to see, you know, new food, new cultures, all that kind of stuff, new environments. And I just think it's really cool especially. Knowing these people, that's a good thing. - SC HS Student

Key Findings & Recommendations

- **The Definition of “military-connected” youth must not solely identify as Active Duty status.**

Recommendation. Reserve Duty, National Guard, Veteran-status, and sibling-connected should be included in defining “military-connected” within the Purple Star mission. According to the Military Child Education Coalition’s MSI Position Statement (2025), “a military-connected student definition in data reporting systems that include students with a parent on active duty, full-time or part-time National Guard or Reserve duty in the armed forces (Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Space Force, Coast Guard). Additionally, MCEC strongly recommends identifying students (K-12) with a parent who is a military retiree (including retired Reserves) or veteran (including service members who died on active duty) to ensure support of Gold Star children and youth caregivers.” https://militarychild.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/MCEC_MSIPosition_20250324.pdf

- **Cultivating community partnerships and relationships with military-connected youth and families must be a top priority for Purple Star Schools; Military-connected families may not feel “at home” until those relationships and connections are established.**

Recommendation. Establish a Welcome Committee, host regular community events, create a Mentorship Program, and develop partnerships with local Organizations; By implementing these strategies, Purple Star Schools can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for military-connected youth and their families, helping them feel more at home.

- **The Point-of-Contact/Military Liaison must be visibly prominent on the Purple Star School website/webpage to include email address and phone number; Responsive email, phone number, and liaison are crucial for the integrity and fidelity of any schools’ Purple Star School program. Ensure all information is helpful with incoming and outgoing military-connected students and families.**

Recommendation. Ensure contact information is current and up-to-date to include all active and working links listed on website/webpage; Secure email address specifically for Military Liaison’s availability and prompt responsive time (within 48 hours, if possible); Recommendations for additional community resources: List title as “Military Resource Page,” Link to district website, Link to installation school liaison, EFMP program, and other Child & Youth Services, MIC3 state commissioner point of contact information and MIC3 Compact Rules, Educational records requests, transfers, and academic planning process for military families, School/district welcome and withdraw process, and District map and/or zones.

<https://militarychild.org/programs-and-initiatives/purple-star-schools/#PSSVirtualTraining>

- **The significance of a coalition consisting of family, community, and school is needed for the Purple Star School mission impact; “Coalition” includes various professions and numerous individuals across the community’s involvement.**

Recommendation. Create opportunities for cross-sector fields (education, military, government, industry, non-profit, etc.); Include Veteran-owned businesses to encourage, cheer, and invest in their local military-connected youth.

- **In regard to the role of Purple Star School Military Liaison, this Point-of-Contact educator/administrator can enlist additional colleagues, co-workers, and community leaders to serve on a School Team. The grandest of Coalitions begins with one, asking for another teammate.**

Recommendation. To effectively build a School Team, identify key stakeholders, communicate the vision, provide training and resources, recognize and celebrate contributions, and set clear goals and metrics; The Military Liaison can build a strong, supportive coalition that effectively addresses the needs of military-connected students.

- **The Army & Air National Guard serves a grateful Nation and a single State. Each State has an Education and Family Outreach Team at work for their military-connected youth and families.**

Recommendation. Collaborate with the Education and Family Outreach Team routinely (at a minimum quarterly basis) to ensure all military-connected families feel supported and are included.

- **Deployment supports by a Purple Star School for military-connected youth must also include Redeployment supports.**

Recommendation. OhioCares delivers both deployment and redeployment supports for the Service-member, Veteran, Spouse, and their families. <https://ohiocares.ohio.gov/servicemembers>.

Feedback from Town Hall Participants

Q: What aspect(s) of the Town Hall did you find most beneficial?

- Hearing everyone's opinions
- Shared experiences, resources, first person insights
- The student section where they gave ways for schools and personnel to help them, as well as how they can help themselves!
- All the different experiences
- Great conversation and learning about other's experiences
- The various perspectives, knowledge base, collection of SMEs in one place, quality of questions coupled with the quality of answers. Incredible event
- Sharing of ideas; sense of community
- I always learn about a way to support our military connected students and families; the networking is so valuable
- I love the collaboration and ideas from each state!
- Hearing from the kids on what they like and want
- Hearing the student and parent perspectives, I really enjoyed listening to what they had to contribute
- The student perspectives from the different locations and military connectedness (active vs guard)
- Hearing the parents and students perspective was very beneficial.
- The overall collaboration and making connections
- Student panel

Additional Feedback

"Richland Two was so thrilled to be a part of the first annual Purple Star Joint Town Hall with Ohio, where it all started! The Palmetto State is growing with leaps and bounds with its initiatives to support our military-connected students and families. Richland Two will continue to partner with organizations like Military Child Education Coalition, SC's Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission, SC Department of Veterans' Affairs, MilitaryOneSource and all of our neighboring installations in support of our military-connected students and families. We are committed to our Purple Star School status and will uphold the principles and guidelines set forth. Purple Star Schools is a phenomenal program and movement towards a better understanding, better communication, and better resources for our military community. It has provided us with a network of collaborations between professionals nationwide, learning best practices to provide the best services for those who serve."

- Kelsie Carter, *Richland Two School District Military Liaison*

"It was an honor to be a part of the first Purple Star Joint Town Hall with South Carolina. Serving preschool to collegiate military-connected youth in the state of Ohio wouldn't be possible without strong partnerships and support from Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, Military Child Education Coalition, Ohio's Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission, Ohio Department of Veterans' Services, Ohio Cares, Ohio's two exceptional School Liaison Program Managers (SLPM), Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio National Guard, Military One Source, and the outstanding collaboration with the other Purple Star states, such as South Carolina! Thanks to Purple Star Schools, the mission to serve military-connected youth and families has spread across 47 states, providing resources, education, opportunities, and collaboration to best serve all who serve!"

-Jenn Davis, *Studebaker Preschool Purple Star Liaison*

Conclusion from SC MIC3 Commissioner

South Carolina and Ohio have stood together as colleagues and collaboration partners since the Purple Star School takeover many years ago! We have thoroughly enjoyed working with Pete, Jenn and the Ohio Team and always seem to find opportunities to showcase our most valued partnership. The Town Hall event between our great states reinforced the integrity of our relationship we continue to develop throughout our many years working alongside our Ohio compadres. Thank you #OhioPurpleStar for your support, friendship and never-ending passion serving our Nation's military-connected communities.

To South Carolina's military-connected students, families and military liaisons ... THANK YOU for your service. You remain ever-present in our daily thoughts as you continue to serve in your own roles alongside your service member. Last, but certainly not least, to our service members who tirelessly serve our country ... it is an honor to be part of your community. Thank you.

To our dear friends in Ohio, we look forward to continuing our collaboration with your community and know that we are better and stronger together.

May the report findings contribute to the growth, development and global impact of the Purple Star School vision.

With gratitude,
Dr. Kim Priester
SC MIC3 Commissioner

2025 SAVE THE DATES

BEAUFORT, SC MCEC 360 SUMMIT 19-20 MARCH
COLUMBIA, SC MCEC 360 SUMMIT 31 MARCH - 1 APRIL

OHIO PURPLE STAR SCHOOLS SUMMIT 18 JUNE

SOUTH CAROLINA MIC3 ANNUAL MEETING IN JUNE

OHIO MIC3 STATE COUNCIL'S START OF SCHOOL MEETING EARLY AUGUST

PURPLE STAR USA: NATIONAL CONVENING OF SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES 28 OCTOBER

INTER-STATE TOWN HALL IN DECEMBER

Acknowledgements

A huge “Thank You” to Ohio and South Carolina’s Military-Connected Students and Families and to all of our Military Liaisons for making the first-ever Inter-State Purple Star School Town Hall such a success!

Partnerships



Partnership Websites

<https://mic3.net/state/south-carolina/>
<https://mic3.net/state/ohio/>
<https://ohiocares.ohio.gov/home>
<https://scdva.sc.gov/>
<https://militarychild.org/>



For report inquiries,
please contact Dr. Sara Jane Arnett at saraarn@mail.regent.edu.

APPENDIX

A. Best Practices Partnership Town Hall Flyer

B. Best Practices Partnership Questions

C. South Carolina Purple Star School Map

D. Ohio Purple Star School Map

BEST PRACTICES PARTNERSHIP TOWN HALL

12.11.24
Wednesday
1 – 4:30 pm
Virtual Event

First of its kind virtual Town Hall facilitated by Joint-State *Purple Star Best Practices* leaders from Purple Star School pioneer states, **Ohio and South Carolina**. Both states have promoted growth, development and continue to remain at the forefront of education and military policies-supports. Three groups of Military-Connected Community Stakeholders to include Students, Parents and School Military Liaisons, will engage in meaningful discussions through an unscripted live Q&A session. There will be a published report expected in January 2025 with key findings.



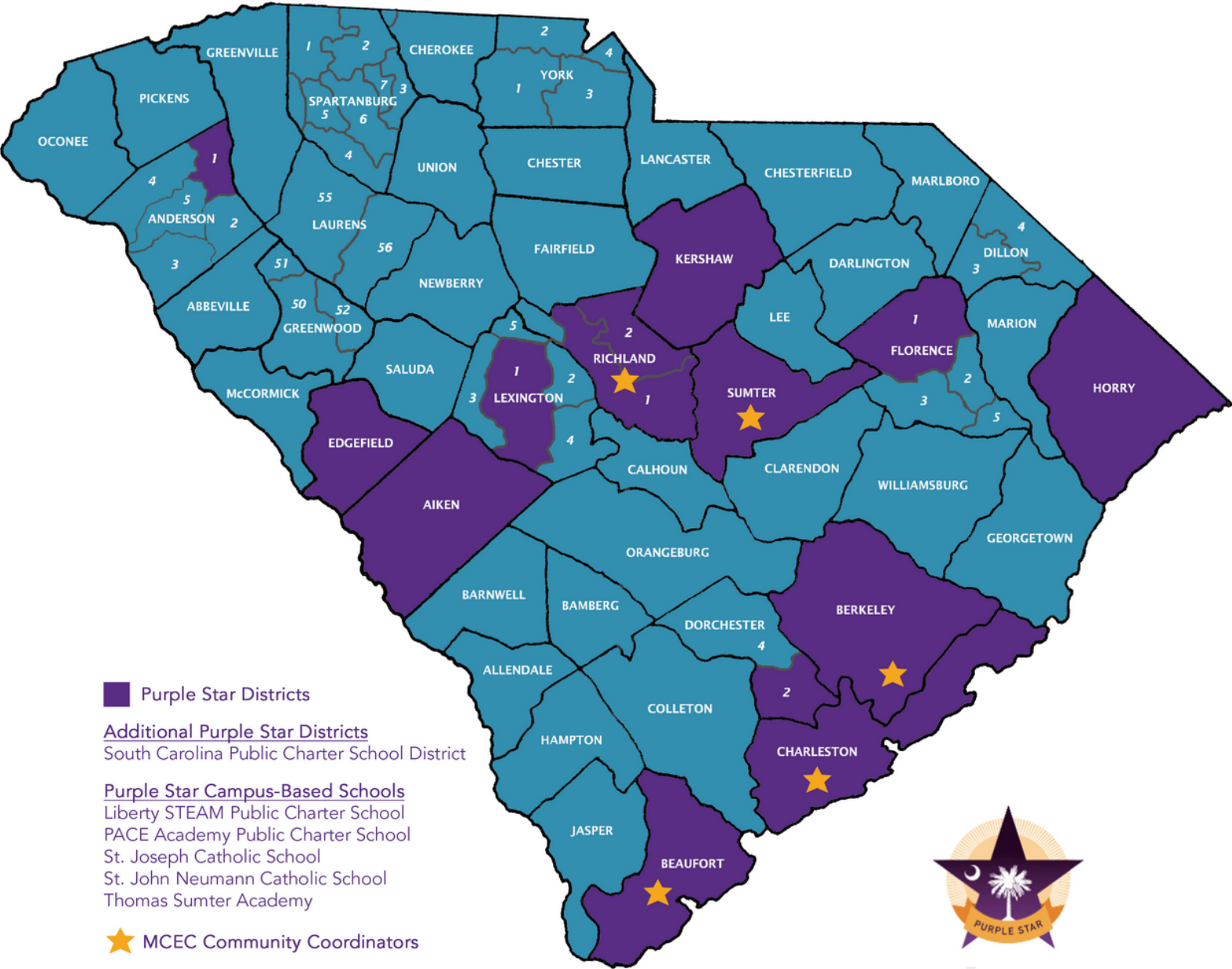
*Connecting and Empowering Parents,
Schools & Communities*

 jennifern.davis@myhhcs.org

 sarajane.arnett@militarychild.org

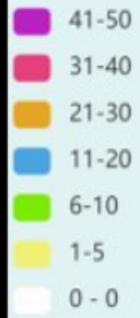
South Carolina Purple Star Campus-Based Schools & Districts

PURPLE STAR SCHOOLS



*MAP UPDATED 14 DECEMBER 2024

Ohio Online Schools



MILITARY LIAISON QUESTIONS

1. Why did your school decide to become a Purple Star Award School?
2. What positive changes have you seen in your military-connected youth and school?
3. What has been the most challenging thing about being a Purple Star school?
4. How do you cultivate positive relationships with military-connected youth and create a sense of class community?
5. How do you include parents and communities in military-connected youth's education?
6. How do you maintain your professional development, and what areas would you select for personal growth?
7. We know that schools are organic organizations with regular turnover of staff and students. Please explain how your school ensures Purple Star program continuity.
8. How do you identify military-connected youth in your district?
9. How do you communicate with your staff information about your military-connected youth and the resources that are available to them?
10. How can you partner with other schools in your district to support the Purple Star Program?
11. How do you secure funding for your program?

MILITARY-CONNECTED PARENT QUESTIONS

1. What is the first thing you look for in a school system when you receive PCS orders?
2. Describe things that have been helpful for your child when attending a Purple Star School.
3. What are the hardest things for your family that a Purple Star School has been helpful with?
4. What things do you wish you had more support from your child's school? Can you give ideas of things that would be beneficial?
5. What are the biggest challenges for your child in preschool, elementary school, middle/junior high, and high school as a military-affiliated student? And as a parent of a child in each of these grade levels.
6. What are some of your favorite experiences that your child has had in school being military-affiliated?
7. Describe how Purple Star designated Schools support you as a parent.
8. Why do you think schools should apply to be a Purple Star School?
9. If you have had experiences with your child(ren) attending Purple Star Schools vs. non Purple Star Schools what are the differences you have noticed?

MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENT QUESTIONS

1. What is the first thing you do or plug into once you move or relocate as a military family?
2. Describe how you and your family cope with the emotions of moving or PCSing.
3. What were the biggest challenges being a military child in elementary school, in middle/junior high school, and in high school? What could the schools have done differently to support you during these struggles?
4. What do you want the general public to know about military youth?
5. What are some of your favorite things about being a military-connected youth?
6. What changes would improve military-connected youths' experiences in school? Why do you think schools should apply for the Purple Star Award?
7. And describe ways that Purple Star schools could support you?