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2026 Purple Star Award Recipients Announced

OLYMPIA—APRIL 7, 2026— Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA), in partnership with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), is pleased to announce Purple Star District Awards for 2026 and 2027. Now in its third year, the Purple Star Award program recognizes school districts that demonstrate a strong commitment to military-connected students and families through the implementation of military-friendly policies and practices. Districts that meet the program requirements earn a two-year Purple Star designation.

"In Medical Lake Schools, supporting our military-connected students and families isn't just a program—it's a core part of who we are. We recognize the unique strengths and challenges that come with military life, from the pride of service to the hurdles of frequent transitions. By fostering a culture of belonging and specialized support, we ensure that every student feels seen, heard, and empowered to succeed, no matter where their journey has taken them or where it leads next," said Rey Ornelas, Military Family Advocate, Medical Lake School District, Purple Star District Award Fiscal Years 2024, 2025, 2026, & 2027.

Purple Star Districts are dedicated to addressing the unique educational, social, and emotional needs of students from military families, including challenges related to frequent school transitions and parental deployments. By earning this designation, districts affirm their commitment to providing military-connected students and families with the resources, supports, and tools needed for academic success and future readiness – whether in higher education, military service, or technical career pathways.

The Washington State Purple Star Award was established through [Senate House Bill 1346](#) and recognizes districts that meet the following eligibility requirements:

- The district maintains a dedicated webpage featuring resources for military families.
- The district has a designated staff point of contact for military families who:

- Collaborates with the State Military Family Education Liaison of the Interstate Compact 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 Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

Optional criteria (districts must complete at least one):

- Provides professional development for additional staff on special considerations for military students and families;
- Adopts a resolution publicly affirming the district’s support for military children and families; or
- Hosts a military recognition event that demonstrates a military-friendly culture.

“Across Washington, our schools play a vital role in supporting students whose lives are shaped by military service,” said WASA Executive Director, Jeff Snell. “The Purple Star Awards recognize districts that go above and beyond to ensure these students and their families feel seen, supported, and connected. At WASA, we are proud to honor this work and the leadership behind it, building school communities where every student can succeed, regardless of where their journey begins.”

OSPI and WASA are proud to formally recognize and congratulate the 2026 recipients of the Purple Star Award:

ESD	School district
101	Cheney School District
101	Medical Lake School District
113	North Thurston Public Schools
113	Yelm Community Schools
114	Bremerton School District
114	Central Kitsap School District
121	Clover Park School District
121	Peninsula School District
121	Steilacoom Historical School District
121	Sumner-Bonney Lake School District
189	Oak Harbor School District 201

The FY25 Purple Star District Awards are available for viewing [here](#) for those who are interested.

Districts interested in applying for the Purple Star Award should note that OSPI and WASA anticipate opening the next application window in early September 2026.