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SB-920 California Purple Star School Designation Program. (2023-2024)

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Senate Bill No. 920

CHAPTER 923

An act to add Article 4.6 (commencing with Section 51255) to Chapter 2 of Part 28 of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education Code, relating to school recognition.

[Approved by Governor September 29, 2024. Filed with Secretary of State September 29, 2024.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 920, Seyarto. California Purple Star School Designation Program.

Existing law requires the State Department of Education to establish a formal liaison with the United States Department of Defense and school districts and county offices of education that enroll military dependents to, among other things, create model memoranda of agreement between military bases and school districts or county offices of education regarding enabling schoolage military dependents to experience a smoother transition from one school to another school. Existing law authorizes a governing board of a school district and a county office of education to undertake certain activities to properly address the needs of military dependents.

This bill would require the State Department of Education to establish a nonmonetary California Purple Star School Designation Program to reduce the burden on military-connected pupils and their families and to publicly recognize and designate public schools that meet certain requirements related to supporting military-connected pupils and their families' unique needs, as provided. The bill would require the department to develop an annual application process and adopt application criteria for the California Purple Star School Designation Program, as specified, and would provide that a Purple Star School designation is valid for 3 years, after which a schoolsite seeking to renew its designation is required to reapply.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Article 4.6 (commencing with Section 51255) is added to Chapter 2 of Part 28 of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education Code, to read:

Article 4.6. California Purple Star School Designation Program

51255. (a) The department shall establish a nonmonetary California Purple Star School Designation Program pursuant to this article in order to achieve both of the following goals:

- (1) Reduce the burden on military-connected pupils and their families by articulating the most critical transition supports for military-connected pupils and their families.

(2) Publicly recognize and designate schools that meet certain requirements and signal which schools are the most committed and best equipped to meet military-connected pupils and their families' unique needs.

(b) (1) The department shall develop an application process that provides annual opportunities for schoolsites to earn the Purple Star School designation by demonstrating compliance with the application criteria adopted pursuant to paragraph (2).

(2) The department shall adopt application criteria for schoolsites seeking the Purple Star School designation. The department shall consider including, as part of the application criteria, a requirement that a schoolsite do all of following:

(A) Demonstrate an active status designation, as identified by the department on the department's internet website.

(B) Designate a staff member to serve as a point of contact, who shall act as a liaison between military families and the schoolsite, easing military-connected pupils' enrollment and acclimation period, and assist with pupils' graduation requirements.

(C) Provide professional development opportunities to train staff on the unique considerations for, and needs of, military-connected pupils.

(D) Develop a dedicated webpage on the schoolsite's internet website with easily accessible information and resources for military-connected families.

(E) Provide a transition program to welcome and socially acclimate incoming military-connected pupils. This transition program may be pupil led.

(F) Provide programming and events to include, celebrate, and honor service members and military-connected pupils and families, including community members.

(c) (1) Once a schoolsite is awarded a Purple Star School designation, it shall display its active status designation, as identified by the department, on the schoolsite's internet website.

(2) A Purple Star School designation shall be valid for three years, after which a schoolsite seeking to renew its designation shall reapply pursuant to subdivision (b).

(3) The department may request additional information to verify if a schoolsite that has earned a Purple Star School designation continues to adhere to the Purple Star School designation criteria adopted pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (b).

(4) (A) Notwithstanding paragraphs (1) and (2), if the department finds that a schoolsite that has earned a Purple Star School designation ceases to comply with the criteria adopted pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (b) during the three-year designation period, the schoolsite shall lose the designation.

(B) A schoolsite that loses the designation pursuant to subparagraph (A) may reapply pursuant to subdivision (b).

(d) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Military-connected pupil" means a schoolage child who is either of the following:

(A) A dependent of a current or former member of any of the following:

(i) The United States military, serving in the United States Air Force, United States Army, United States Coast Guard, United States Marine Corps, United States Navy, or United States Space Force on active duty.

(ii) The California National Guard.

(iii) A reserve force of the United States military.

(B) Was a dependent of a member of a military or reserve force described in subparagraph (A) who was killed in the line of duty.

(2) "Schoolsite" means a publicly funded school serving pupils in kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive.