

THE SUMMIT REPORT

Ohio MIC3 & Purple Up! Day in April 2019

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Executive Summary

On 24 April 2019, K-12 students, parents, counselors, teachers, principals, school staff and Purple Star Liaisons met at Wright Patterson Air Force Base to celebrate the success of the Purple Star Award program and discuss continuing ways to aid schools and military families making educational transitions. This Feedback Report captures the information shared by those on the front lines of these transitions.

Several big takeaways came out of each breakout discussion, while you may read the full report below, here is a summation of those takeaways:

- Military families just want the best for their children as they transition them academically, socially and emotionally; and often the process of finding resources and tracking past and future course completions/requirements and their experience during their last educational experience leaves these parents frustrated and overwhelmed.
- Schools need to take a large ownership stake in finding these transitioning families and repeatedly communicating military family resources and transition resources through various channels.
- The Purple Star Award is gaining awareness, but more needs to be done by teachers, staff and district personnel to communicate what this means to existing and new families.

Please take a few moments to read the Feedback Report and convey these ideas back to your Purple Star Schools. With the support of so many involved in military family transitions, I look forward to another successful year of growing the awareness of the benefits of Purple Star Schools.

Cordially yours and in the direct support of K-12 Education and the Armed Forces,

Pete LuPiba

Commissioner Pete LuPiba, Ohio MIC3 (Former U.S. Navy)

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Military families need schools to know

This section related to general dispositions, or common backgrounds and reactions, of military families making educational transitions for their children.

- Not all branches are alike, so the way families approach transitions differs based on housing, base outreach, and school outreach programs.
- Oftentimes families do not alert the schools that they are a military-connected family making a transition from/to school.
- Military member attends (or did not attend) the briefing on transitioning but it is the spouse who actually performs the work of transitioning their children's school information, a lot of information is not communicated or lost in this process. Therefore, the new school must go out of their way to capture transitioning military family information and communicate to them the resources at their disposal.
- Previous educational transition experience plays a big role in how military families interact with the new school; often times a bad experience leaves these families frustrated and exhausted.
- At the end of the day, they all want to take care of their child's needs academically, socially, and emotionally.



Data about students from military families that schools need to know

- Graduation requirements and what may have already been met.
- Athletic and other specialized programs the student was involved in with the previous school.
- Specific school-age labels such as gifted, special education, etc.
- NOTE: Schools need to build out multiple avenues for gathering this information and repeated engagements to capture attention at various times of the year, including:
 - Impact Aid Report
 - EMIS
 - ESSA
 - Secretaries
 - Teachers
 - Guidance counselors
 - PTO events, calls, emails about events
 - Social Media
 - Military Appreciation and Orientation Nights
 - Signing Days
 - Hallway and door signage.

Recommendations for how schools can assist with military transitions

- Clearer guidance/template of how class credit, sequencing, labelling is assigned from district to district.
- Provide online resources and helpful print and digital packages specifically for military transitioning families.
- Train and educate the school's front-lines, secretaries and other front-office personnel, regarding:
 - Resources to offer
 - Questions to ask to identify military families
 - How to handle the frustrations these families may have who are overwhelmed with the enormity of a move and past educational experiences.
- Peer support groups for parents and students as well as pen pal sponsors prior to the move.
- Host multiple Military Family Orientation Nights throughout the year to receive information and meet other families, including those within National Guard and Veteran communities.
- Reach out to MFLCs.
- Educate teachers to create effective transitions by building rapport, asking questions, understanding the military transition resources and connected groups that the student and their parents can participate in.

Recommendations for bringing awareness to military families of state and local resource before the transition

- Military Family Orientation Nights (several throughout the year to capture those in-coming partway through).
- RISFAC/ISFAC meetings.
- Military nights at school sporting events with community involvement.
- Parent/student luncheons.
- Central online repository at the state level and within each district for military transitioning students.
- Military unit/base awareness of online resources and local events.



Status of Purple Star Award awareness and ways to increase knowledge

- Purple Star Award awareness is out there but many teachers, district staff don't know what it is or how to communicate it effectively.
- Ways to increase Purple Star Award awareness to help parents find the "right" school include:
 - Teacher and support staff education
 - Visuals on school property, website, social media, digital and print materials
 - Social media images and hashtags created at the state level and shared with Purple Star Schools to use

- Templates created at the state level to give to schools on how to start various initiatives
 - How to start a military family committee
 - Assembly structure for receiving the Purple Star Award
 - How to start the Purple Star Award and what to expect
 - How to implement small military themes into school
- Promote the Purple Star Award Facebook page more broadly
- Create a Purple Star School Liaison only network to share ideas.

Status of MIC3 awareness and ways to increase knowledge

- Awareness of MIC3 is by word of mouth between military families who use the resources, otherwise, awareness is not high.
- Do not think about MIC3 unless there is an issue/problem.

Ways to increase MIC3 awareness in schools and parent/student communities include:

- Website info linked on local command unit/based websites and school district pages
- Add brochure to enrollment package
- Increase visits to local schools.

