



## **2023 Annual Report – State of Ohio MIC3**

The Thomas D Rutan MIC3 **State Council of Ohio** convened to conduct formal business meetings – both hybrid and in-person; on 9 August 2022, 5 December 2022, and 31 March 2023.

In accordance with By-Laws, we proposed **Chip Merkle**, Education Specialist of the Ohio Army and Air National Guard as the Council Co-Chair; **Ashley Twedt**, Chief Administrator of the Ohio MIC3 site as the Council Vice-Chair; **Michelle Lewis** of the Ohio Association of Purple Star Schools as the Council Historian; and **Jason Scragg** from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) as the Council Secretary. In the Fall of 2022, ODE hired Scragg as an Education Consultant and in this role, he supports Purple Star Schools and state-wide MIC3 Operations. Scragg issues monthly editions of the Bulletin Update for Military Families in Ohio.

**OhioCares** is an expert team of professionals from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (**Adreana Tarrrt**), the Ohio Department of Veterans Services (**Danny Eakins**), Ohio Army and Air National Guard (**Chip Merkle**), and led by the Executive Office (**Tammy Puff**) of the Governor – the **Honorable Mike DeWine**. These MIC3 Council members have partnered with local and regional professionals to connect all military personnel, veterans, military retirees and their families to crucial behavioral health services.



*Members of the Thomas D. Rutan MIC3 State Council of Ohio convened at a Purple Star School.*

Education and Military **Roundtables** were hosted in early August of 2022 by the Ohio Army and Air National Guard. The Ohio Department of Education presented Military Professional Development **Webinars** throughout March of 2023 to support PreK-12 educators.

The first annual **National Convening of Local Purple Star Schools and Communities** was hosted in late October of 2022. This first ever gathering of educators and leaders from Fourteen Purple Star States was led by teams from Kentucky and Ohio. At that point in time, it was believed that the nation included approximately 2,100 Purple Star Schools across some 40 states. The event was honored to have military-connected students in these sessions as well as Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Honorable Admiral Michael G Mullen (United States Navy, Retired) as the Keynote Speaker. The entire Convening was recorded and hosted in Zoom by **Ashland University** in northern Ohio. Ashland has served to support Purple Star Schools from planning to launch in 2015-17. Ashland applied for and was subsequently honored in the Inaugural Class of Collegiate Purple Star in Month of Military Appreciation, May of 2022.



*First Lady, Dr. Jill Biden receives a briefing on the Purple Star Program from MIC3 Commissioner Pete LuPiba and 3rd grade teacher Amber Farkas, March 29, 2023, at Beverly Gardens Elementary School in Ohio. (Official White House Photo by Erin Scott)*

**Joining Forces** is a White House initiative to support military families, which includes families of service-members and veterans, caregivers, and survivors. This work is driven by the experiences of the “American military family” comprised of service-members, spouses, and their families. In support of the program, the **First Lady of the United States of America, Dr. Jill Biden**, visited Ohio in late March of 2023 – ahead of Month of the Military Child, April. Accompanied by the **First Lady of Ohio – Mrs. Fran DeWine**, Dr Biden visited one of Ohio’s very

first Purple Star Schools; **Beverly Gardens Elementary** with **Principal Cristi Fields** of the Mad River District near Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in greater Dayton.

Dr Biden received a briefing on the **Purple Star** program, which is designed to help schools respond to the educational and social-emotional challenges military-connected children face when navigating the challenges of military life. Pete LuPiba shared the history and goals of the initiative, while **Amber Farkas**, a Beverly Gardens third-grade teacher, shared how the program is implemented at a school where approximately 76 percent of students are military-connected. Dr Biden then visited a second-grade classroom where she spoke with students and helped with a mathematics exercise.

This day was made possible by leading MIC3 council members and great Ohioans including Director of Military and Veteran Relations **Tammy Puff** for the Executive Office of the Governor, District Superintendent **Chad Wyen** for Mad River schools, and School Liaison Officer **Trina Pauley** for Wright-Patterson AFB and the State of Ohio. First Lady Mrs. DeWine received her very first-ever Armed Forces Challenge Coin – Ohio's MIC3 and Purple Star Schools Command Coin on this day at Beverly

Gardens.



*First Lady of Ohio, Mrs. Fran DeWine, receiving an Ohio MIC3 Challenge Coin.*



*U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona giving military kids excuse notes for missing class to join him in conference.*

During the Month of the Military Child in April 2023, **U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona** graced Ohio with a visit to an elementary school. Paying tribute to the hardworking Ohio education system, Secretary Cardona engaged in intimate meetings with service members, their supportive spouses, and the resilient children of the military community. In a ceremonial gesture of appreciation, he was awarded the distinguished Ohio MIC3 Challenge Coin, a significant mark of his understanding and solidarity with our military's educational

cause. Esteemed MIC3 Council member, First Lieutenant **Jason Durell**, had the honor of briefing Secretary Cardona on the vital Purple Star School initiatives, elucidating its transformative role within the Ohio military-connected community.

The first annual **School Liaison Janet R. Wynn Memorial MIC3 Award** was presented in the summer of 2022. It was created in 2021 to honor a military kid, as they transitioned with their



military family. This award aims to highlight and celebrate the remarkable achievements of an Ohio military family or school-aged youth who displayed exceptional perseverance, grit, and determination throughout a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move, transitioned between school districts. In addition, nominees had to be currently serving members of the armed forces with school-aged children who encountered a move between schools and communities.

The **Ohio Department of Education** proudly announced that in **April 2023, 165 Ohio schools received the Purple Star designation** as members of the Purple Star Class of 2023. This marks the largest class of awardees to date, with 88 schools receiving the esteemed award for the first time and 77 schools earning a renewal after three years as dedicated Purple



*The 2022 Janet R Wynn Memorial MIC3 Award.*



*Ohio Department of Veterans Services Director, Major General Deborah Ashenhurst (Retired), presenting Hilliard Bradley High School with their 2023 Purple Star Award.*

Star schools. Ohio is home to 511 active Purple Star schools, demonstrating their significant commitment to serving students and families connected to the nation's armed forces. These schools provide unique support and address the wellness and academic needs of Ohio's military-connected youth.

In January 2023, the new General Assembly commenced its legislative session, welcoming several esteemed MIC3 council members to its ranks. Notable members of the new General Assembly include **Senator Terry Johnson, Senator Vernon Sykes, Representative Brian Lampton,** and The Ohio House Minority **Leader Allison Russo.** These individuals bring their expertise and dedication to serve the state of Ohio, ensuring the continued support and progress of the MIC3 statute, its implementation.

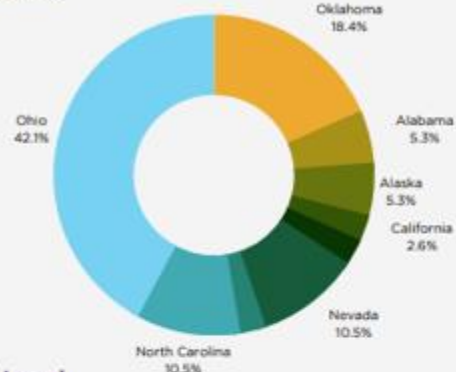
Building upon the collaborative efforts between the **Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)** and the **Center for Public Research and Leadership at Columbia University,** the second edition of the Columbia University

Report was released in February 2023. This report expands on the findings of the initial study conducted across four states, focusing on the implementation and evolution of the Purple Star program. It provides valuable insights on program requirements, administration, the effects of COVID-19, and recommendations at the state, district, and school levels to further improve and expand this initiative.

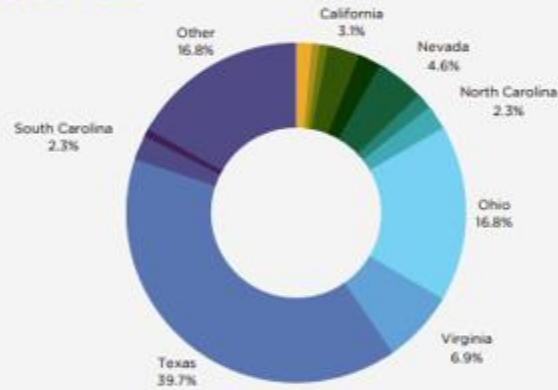
## Appendix D: Demographic Breakdown of Survey Data

### State Representation Across Surveys

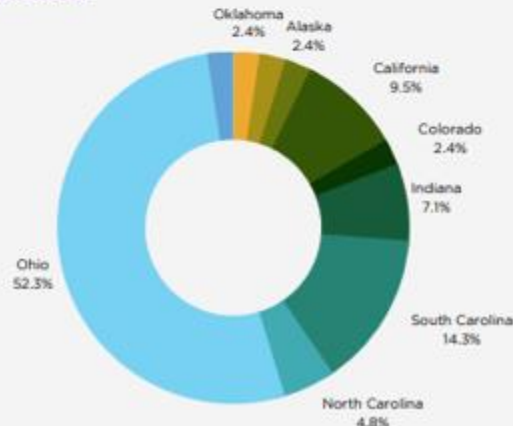
**Graph 1: Family Level**



**Graph 2: School Level**



**Graph 3: District Level**



*The MCEC and Center for Public Research and Leadership at Columbia University second report on the impact of the Purple Star Schools initiative pulled a majority of survey respondents from Ohio, the birthplace of Purple Star Schools.*



*Resolution honoring Month of the Military Child by the Ohio House of Representatives, and accepted by official "MIL Kid," Norah of Bellville Elementary School with her Dad plus Bellville's Purple Star School Liaison, Mrs. Ashley Twedt.*

Throughout the fall of 2022, the State Council of Ohio MIC3 provided professional development briefings to state-wide professional educators' associations, including the **Ohio School Board Association (OSBA)**, **Ohio School Counselors Association (OSCA)**, and **Ohio Educational Service Centers Association (OESCA)**. These briefings aimed to enhance educators' understanding of the MIC3 statute and its implications, ensuring they are well-equipped to support military-connected students and their families within their respective roles.

As Ohio completed the first iteration of its **state MIC3 strategic plan**, the State Council has initiated discussions regarding the second. This comprehensive plan,

developed from 2020 to 2023, has positioned Ohio as a national leader in supporting military-connected students. The proposed second iteration, scheduled for fall of 2023, will continue to raise awareness, provide training, and implement the MIC3 statute to improve educational outcomes for military-connected youth across the state. This new plan is being led by **Matt Cox** (Big Walnut), **Hayley Young** (National Guard), **Julie Gray** (Kent), **Chad Marzec** (Liberty-Benton).

On March 8, 2022, the Chancellor of the **Ohio Department of Higher Education, Randy Gardner**, introduced the Collegiate Purple Star designation for Ohio colleges and universities. The Ohio MIC3 Team and Council Members actively supported these state-wide efforts, collaborating with the Ohio Department of Higher Education to encourage colleges and universities to apply for this prestigious designation. As a result, a total of **46 Ohio institutions** have been designated as **Collegiate Purple Star** campuses since 2022, solidifying Ohio's commitment to supporting students with military backgrounds throughout their education.

On March 7, 2023, the Ohio Department of Education, alongside Ohio Second Lady Tina Husted, hosted a momentous celebration honoring high school students from across the state who have made a **commitment to serve in the U.S.**

**Armed Forces.** This special event, held at the prestigious National Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus, brought together high school seniors and juniors who have chosen to enter service academies or embark on active duty, Reserve, or National Guard service. Their dedication and willingness to serve our nation were commended, highlighting their



*High School graduates enlisting in the U.S. Armed Forces at the State Signing Day Ceremony, saluting Ohio veterans.*



exceptional contributions to the future of our armed forces.



*The first Purple Star preschool in the nation, Studebaker Preschool in Huber Heights next to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. The student gave his MIC3 Uber driver, Commissioner LuPiba, five stars!*

## **The 33,489 reasons each dedicated Council Member serves on behalf of the Ohio MIC3:**

**9,835** Ohio Active-Duty Children of the Armed Forces, and  
**23,654** Ohio National Guard and Reserve-Duty Children of the Armed Forces.

*\*31 December 2022, DMDC of the U.S. DSLO*



*Presenting to J F Burns Elementary on behalf of the Honorable Mike DeWine, a resolution designating November as Military Family Appreciation Month. Governor DeWine additionally proclaimed across Ohio, April as Month of the Military Child.*



Our Ohio sacred and shared mission for the communities of PreK-12 military continues into the 2023-2024 school year. All the gratitude to this all-volunteer force of nearly 600 Ohioans from Lake Erie to the Ohio River. Team Ohio is Team U.S.A.

## **THOMAS D. RUTAN MIC3 STATE COUNCIL MEMBERS**

- Pete LuPiba, State Council Chair
- Thomas D Rutan, Commissioner Emeritus (51 Years serving in Public Education)
- William C Merkle, Ohio Army and Air National Guard & State Co-Chair of Rutan Council
- Ashley Twedt, Chief Administrator of Ohio MIC3 Google Site & State Vice-Chair of Rutan Council
- Tammy Puff (U.S. Army Veteran), The Honorable Mike DeWine – Office of the Governor
- Trina Pauley, School Liaison Officer - Wright-Patterson Air Force Base
- Lieutenant Colonel Roberson Hill, 88th Mission Support Group U.S. Air Force
- First Lieutenant Jason D Durell, U.S. Army Medical Brigade Command Columbus
- Chris Picha, Department of Veterans Services
- Kristin Ronai, Ohio High School Athletic Association
- Shari Obrenski, Ohio Federation of Teachers
- Dr Becky Hornberger, Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators
- Tim Freeman, Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators
- Tom Perkins, Buckeye Association of School Administrators
- Senator Terry Johnson, Senate
- Senator Vernon Sykes, Senate
- Representative Brian Lampton, House of Representatives
- Minority Leader, Allison Russo, House of Representatives
- Darren Miller, Ohio School Counselor Association (Crestview Local)
- Adreana Tartt, Department of Mental Health, and Addiction Services
- Callie Haas, Association of Purple Star Schools (Penta CTC Counselor)
- Dr Kathy McFarland, Ohio School Boards Association
- Chad Wyen, Highly Impacted District Superintendent - Mad River Local
- Jared Shank, Department of Higher Education
- Courtney Tyree, U.S. Army - Education Supports
- Chad Marzec, Association of Purple Star Schools (Liberty-Benton HS Coach)
- Eric Petro, Department of Education – Interim Coordinator of Ohio Troops to Teachers
- Matt Cox, Association of Purple Star Schools (Big Walnut MS Teacher, Former Principal)
- Jenn Davis, Association of Purple Star Schools (Studebaker Preschool Teacher)
- Dr Michelle Lewis, State Historian of Rutan Council
- Jason Scragg, Department of Education - Purple Star Schools & State Secretary of Rutan Council
- Dr Chris Woolard, Interim State Superintendent of Public Instruction





Faithfully submitted on this 30th day of June in the year 2023 on behalf of the Members of the Thomas D Rutan MIC3 State Council in Ohio.

Respectfully authored by Rutan Council Members Ashley Twedt, Jenn Davis, Eric Petro, Michelle Lewis, Chad Marzec, Chad Wyen, Tammy Puff, and Pete LuPiba – on behalf of the Honorable Mike DeWine, 70th Governor of Ohio.

**State Chair of Rutan Council, Pete LuPiba**

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*Military kids from the Anchored for Life Program at Beverly Gardens Elementary, presenting to the Thomas D. Rutan MIC3 State Council.*

