Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

BILL:	House Bill 782	**DATE:**	February 17, 2021
SUBJECT:	Public Schools-Purple Star School Program-Establishment	**COMMITTEE:**	Ways and Means
POSITION:	Information Only		
CONTACT:	Zachary Hands 410-767-0504 (Annapolis) Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov		

EXPLANATION:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is providing information for consideration regarding **House Bill 782 - Public Schools-Purple Star School Program-Establishment**, which establishes the Purple Star School Program to recognize public schools that provide strong services and supports for military-connected students and their families.

HB 782 requires that the MSDE administer the Purple Star School Program, which results in the recognition of public schools that provide strong services and supports for military-connected students and their families. Schools will have to apply to the MSDE and qualify for the designation. The MSDE estimates that part-time staff will be needed to establish the program, including developing guidelines and related forms and documents to administer the program. After the guidance and other documents are developed and finalized, the part-time staff member will need to provide professional development to schools and school systems to raise awareness and explain the requirements of the program. In addition to those responsibilities, the part-time staff member will need to review school applications to determine if applicants meet the qualifications for becoming a Purple Star School. There are many schools that service military families in Maryland and reviewing applications will take time and expertise. Operationally, the MSDE must develop regulations to implement the program. There will also be a fiscal need for banners, certificates, or some other recognition of the designation of a school as a Purple Star School.

All schools in Maryland currently participate in the Military Interstate Children's Compact. The compact provides technical assistance to schools in areas such as transitions, enrollment, immunizations, placement and attendance, and graduation of military-connected students, and describes the supports and services recommended for them. Military facilities across the State have designated school liaisons offices to help families with transitions and enrollment. All school systems have a person designated as the military point of contact who works with schools to ensure smooth transitions for military-connected children. The MSDE convenes The Maryland State Council for the Compact annually. Participants include local superintendents, representatives of the military, local school system liaisons, and a member of the House of Delegates.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate **HB 782**. For further information, please contact Zachary Hands, at 410-767-0504, or Zachary.hands1@maryland.gov.