COMMON GROUND PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM SUMMARY



Revised 10/27/2026

Mission of the Common Ground Partnership

Since 2011, a growing group of government, community and military-based organizations has teamed up on a collective mission, supporting the success of all students in West Virginia. The West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) facilitates quarterly meetings where partner representatives share unique programs, initiatives, activities, and resources that can make a positive impact in the lives of children and assist those who provide their education. Together, partners strive to enhance West Virginia schools' capacity to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to meet the West Virginia Board of Education's (WVBE) career readiness goal that all students will pursue postsecondary education, employment, and/or enlistment (the three Es) upon graduation.

The partnership is also committed to assisting schools in meeting the unique needs of military-connected children, who experience on average between six and nine school transitions during grades K-12. Students experiencing school transitions or the deployments of family members can benefit from having school staff understand strategies and identify resources that can effectively meet the student's academic, social, emotional, and physical needs. This type of educational support allows military service members to focus on the vital tasks they must conduct to serve and protect our communities, state, and nation.

Partnering Organizations

- 338th Recruiting Squadron of Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio
- Department of West Virginia Marine Corps League
- Military Entrance Processing Command Beckley
- Military Officers Association of America for West Virginia
- Navy Talent Acquisition Group Ohio River Valley
- Navy Talent Acquisition Group Pittsburgh, PA
- Office of the Governor of West Virginia
- Prevent Suicide West Virginia
- United States Army Recruiting Battalion Columbus, OH
- United States Army Recruiting Battalion Richmond, VA
- United States Marine Corps Recruiting Stations in West Virginia (KY and MD Command)
- West Virginia American Legion
- West Virginia Board of Education
- West Virginia Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc.
- West Virginia Department of Education
- West Virginia Department of Veterans Assistance
- West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission Office of Veterans Education and Training Programs
- West Virginia National Guard
- West Virginia Task Force Miner
- West Virginia University Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math Technical Assistance Center
- West Virginia Veterans of Foreign Wars
- West Virginia Veterans Upward Bound
- West Virginia Wing of the Civil Air Patrol
- United States Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Huntington

Common Ground Partnership Activities

The following pages provide a description of activities designed to support the success of West Virginia students.

Speaker Series

The West Virginia Department of Education provides an online system where school staff may request a military guest speaker visit on a wide variety of topics including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Career exploration**
- **Promoting literacy**
- **Importance of staying in school and graduating**
- **American flag protocols**
- **Patriotic holidays or events**



Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) Mentors and Resources

The partnership's website offers information assisting schools in having the ASVAB administered and helping school counselors and educators understand how the results can be used to support students. Opportunities for requesting assistance with improving mathematics (arithmetic reasoning and mathematics knowledge) and English (paragraph comprehension and word knowledge) scores include online and in-person options.

Military-Based STEM Programs

Military partner organizations offer a wide variety of programs which help educators boost student engagement and explore career fields related to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).



West Virginia Wing of the Civil Air Patrol offers qualifying students the opportunity to participate in an auxiliary of the Air Force. Their Cadet Wings Program offers a pathway for students to pursue a Private Pilot Certificate. The Aerospace Education Member Program is designed to offer educators access to STEM kits and opportunities to experience aviation via Teacher Orientation Flights.

Visit the Common Ground Partnership's website for a complete list of STEM programs.

wvde.us/commonground/military-based-stem-education-programs



Career Exploration for Educators and Students

West Virginia Veterans to Teachers Program

Veterans come from a wide variety of career fields that West Virginia students will aspire to become a part of as they grow into adulthood. The advanced skillsets and top-notch leadership qualities military service members possess makes them ideal candidates for positively impacting classrooms across the state. In West Virginia veterans may qualify for an accelerated pathway to become a certified teacher and a hiring preference within county school districts. The Teach West Virginia website at *www.teachwv.com* offers specialized information that encourages veterans to pursue teaching careers and helps them understand requirements for initial licensure.





Exploring and Understanding the Military

Military partner organizations offer events designed to strengthen mutual appreciation between soldiers and educators while immersing them in career exploration. Awareness and knowledge of these opportunities among educators leads to students becoming more educated on career opportunities made available in the military. JROTC, NDCC, and the Future Leaders Program provide students further familiarity with jobs of the military and build leadership skills that can help them experience successes throughout their lives.



scan to watch →

Connecting Educational Content to Military Careers

The partnership is continually seeking opportunities to bring content experts and career professionals who use related skills together in exciting new ways. Recently, the West Virginia Air National Guard cooperated with the West Virginia Department of Education to highlight mathematical habits of mind used in military careers as part of the Common Factor video series for educators and students.



Support for Veterans and Military Families

Month of the Military Child, Purple Up Day and Spirit Week

In April, the West Virginia Department of Education collaborates with the Office of Family Programs at the West Virginia National Guard to encourage and assist schools in celebrating, "Spirit Week" including "Purple Up Day" which honors the strength and resiliency of military-connected children during times of deployment.



Care Packages for Elementary Schools

As West Virginia educators learn that students are experiencing deployments or transitions due to active-duty military orders of any U.S. military branch, they may use an online system to request care packages from the Office of Family Programs at the West Virginia National Guard, which include information about useful strategies and resources to assist military-connected children and their families.

MIC3 MILITARY INTERSTATE CHILDREN'S COMPACT COMMISSION

The West Virginia Council hosts its website on the partnership's homepage. Provisions of MIC3 are found in W. Va. Code, Chapter 18, Articles 10F-1 and 10F-2. They help qualifying military service members with children transitioning between public school systems of different states experience success. Details may be found at *www.mic3.net*.

Operation Recognition

As a team effort between the West Virginia Department of Veterans Assistance and the West Virginia Department of Education, Operation Recognition provides qualifying veterans of World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam Conflict with a high school diploma.



MILITARY SIGNING WEEK

THE 5TH ANNUAL MILITARY SIGNING WEEK OCCURRED ON

APRIL 20-24, 2026

Schools were encouraged to conduct local events celebrating students attending high school who made a special commitment to serve and defend the public as a member of the United States Armed Forces. While some events occurred outside of the recognized week, all provided students a unique opportunity to learn about military career paths which may be available to them upon graduation.









45 *West Virginia Military Signing Week and related events*

211 *Students recognized for commitments to military services*

- **55** *Army National Guard*
- **34** *Active or Reserve Army*
- **16** *Air National Guard*
- **49** *Specific Branch Unidentified*
- **22** *Active or Reserve Air Force*
- **18** *Active or Reserve Navy*
- **16** *Active or Reserve Marines*
- **1** *Active or Reserve Coast Guard*

ACCESS COMPLETE DETAILS AT
wvde.us/commonground

Published: June 2026

MILITARY SIGNING WEEK

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MILITARY SIGNING WEEK IN WEST VIRGINIA

The Common Ground Partnership is committed to supporting the success of all students and helping them become career ready to pursue post-secondary education, employment or enlistment at graduation. Since April of 2022, this initiative has celebrated students entering public service in the United States armed forces with the following results:





First Military Signing Week on April 25 – 29, 2022, and related events

10 Schools participated

Second Military Signing Week on April 24 – 28, 2023, and related events

35 Schools participated

181 Students recognized

Third Military Signing Week on April 22 – 26, 2024, and related events

46 Schools participated

259 Students recognized

Fourth Military Signing Week on April 7 – 11, 2025, and related events

49 Schools participated

288 Students recognized

Fifth Military Signing Week on April 20 – 24, 2026, and related events

44 Schools participated and one county-wide recognition

211 Students recognized

To learn more about Military Signing Week and the Common Ground Partnership, please visit http://wvde.us/commonground. View and post images or videos of partnership activities at #commongroundwv.



Survey on the Purple Star Award's Impact in West Virginia Schools

West Virginia is dedicated to leading the nation in how it offers educational supports to military-connected students and their families. The West Virginia Department of Education and Common Ground Partners encourage county school districts and their schools to apply for Purple Star Awards. The recognition is issued for a period of three school years. During the 2024-2026 school years, administrators and military family points of contact at schools which received the award during the 2021-2022 school year (1st and 2nd class award recipients) and 2022-2023 school year (3rd class award recipients) were surveyed, to understand the award's impact on education and the community. The following are the results of this survey:

270 West Virginia schools received the Purple Star Award in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023

249 *Schools participating in the survey*

21 *Schools not participating in the survey*
**(five closed, one consolidated, and 15 had no response)*

285 School administrators and military family points of contact which responded to the survey

116
Administrators

169
Military Family Points of Contact

How would you rate the award's overall impact within your school and community?

40% *Very Positive*

48% *Positive*

12% *Neutral*

**No negative or very negative ratings were reported.*

Which best describes your school's overall experience in meeting requirements of the award?

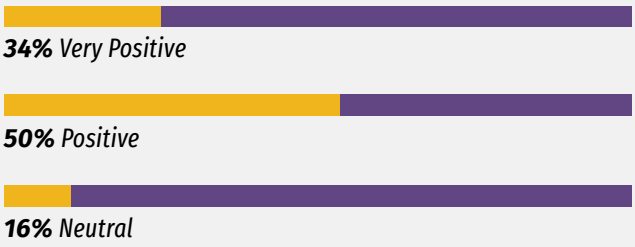
- **97%** - Our school felt award requirements were appropriate with an acceptable degree of effort to receive the recognition.
- **3%** - Our school felt the award requirements were either inappropriate or too demanding of staff efforts to receive the recognition.

Published: *September 2026*

How would you describe the Purple Star Informer newsletter and professional development offered on the Purple Star Award section of the Common Ground Partnership website?

- **37%** - Very useful and informative
- **61%** - Useful and informative
- **2%** - Not useful and/or informative

Describe the impact you feel this initiative and your local plan has had on your school's ability to foster a military-friendly environment and culture.



***34%** Very Positive*

***50%** Positive*

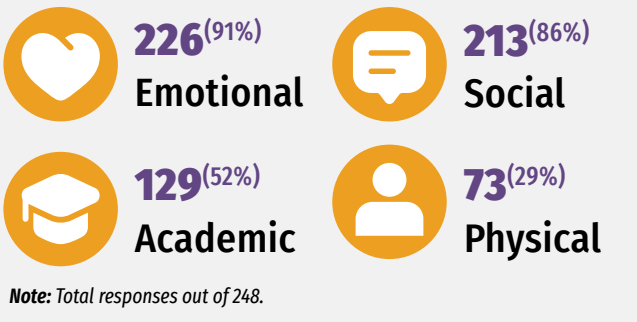
***16%** Neutral*

**No negative or very negative ratings were reported.*

Do you believe by seeking and implementing requirements of the Purple Star Award, it has empowered your school to improve the well being of military connected students in one or more of the following areas: academically, socially, emotionally, or physically?

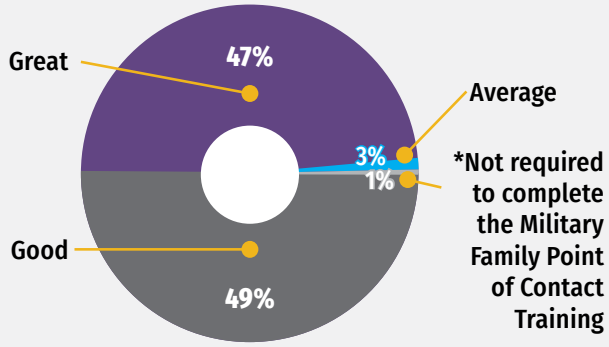
- **Yes** | 248 responses or 87%
- **No** | 37 responses or 13%

If you believe by implementing requirements of the Purple Star Award, it has empowered your school to improve the academic, social, emotional, or physical well-being of military-connected students, identify the following areas that have been positively impacted:



***Note:** Total responses out of 248.*

How would you rate information provided in the award's military family point of contact training?



***Note:** No poor ratings were reported.*

**Administrators who are not military family points of contact.*

Has a military-connected child at your school **experienced a deployment of a family member or school transition** due to military orders during the award period?

- **24% Yes**
- **76% No**

For those military-connected students who experienced a deployment or transition, did you feel like the professional development and resources offered on the Common Ground Partnership's website were adequate and beneficial to you in your efforts to support that child and their family's well-being?

- **87% Yes**
- **13% No**

Did the school make meaningful contact with the parent(s) or guardian(s) of these children to plan for supporting them?

- **91% Yes**
- **9% No**

***Notes:** Percentages are rounded to the closest whole number. When survey responses were received by an individual more than once for a school, only the most recently received responses were included in these surveys. If an individual serves as a military family point of contact at more than one school, only one set of responses for each school were included in these surveys. This ensures each respondent has only one response for each question within the survey for each school.*

Common Ground Partnership:
Purple Star Award

PURPLE STAR AWARD
WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Purple Star Award recognizes districts and schools committed to supporting military-connected students and their families for a period of three years. These children transition between schools on average six to nine times during their K-12 educational experiences. Purple Star Schools and Purple Star Districts are uniquely focused on meeting the needs of students experiencing deployments by creating an inviting and caring culture. This allows soldiers to focus on complex missions conducted in the best interest and defense of our nation.

Purple Star School Requirements Summary:

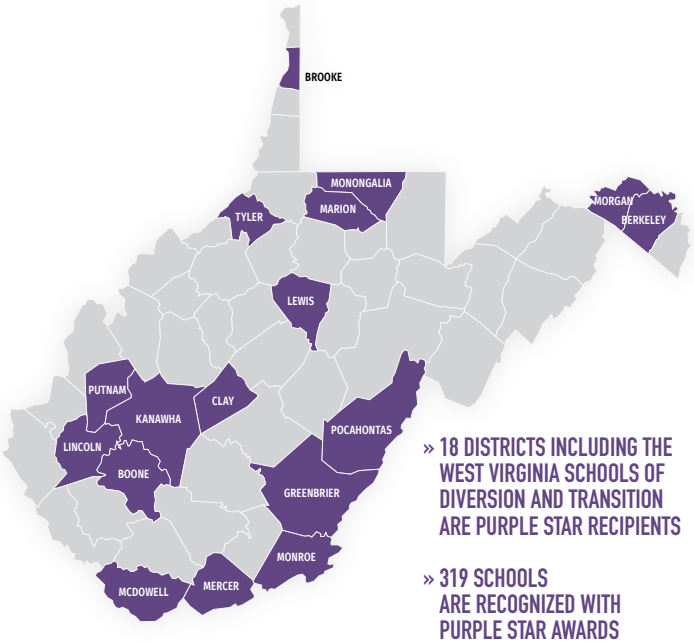
» Identify the school's military family point of contact, who successfully completes training on supporting military-connected children and their families.

» Provide a link to the Common Ground Partnership's homepage, which features a wide variety of useful resources for military families, on the school's website.

» Describe a local plan for the school to support military children and their families.

» Commit to annually celebrating Purple Up Day, on a day of the school's choice, during the month of April (the Month of the Military Child).

» Conduct two qualifying military support activities and commit to two annually.



» 18 DISTRICTS INCLUDING THE WEST VIRGINIA SCHOOLS OF DIVERSION AND TRANSITION ARE PURPLE STAR RECIPIENTS

» 319 SCHOOLS ARE RECOGNIZED WITH PURPLE STAR AWARDS

Purple Star District Requirements Summary:

» Identify a military family point of contact who successfully completes training on supporting military-connected children and their families.

» Provide a link to the Common Ground Partnership's homepage on the school district's website.

» School board passes a resolution or takes documented action publicizing information about the school system's support for military-connected students and their families.

» All schools within the district have received a Purple Star Award within the past three school years.

Visit the Common Ground Partnership's homepage at http://wvde.us/commonground/purplestaraward for complete award details.

Published: May 2026



PLEASE VISIT

wvde.us/commonground

to view a complete list of Common Ground Partnership activities



Michele L. Blatt
West Virginia Superintendent of Schools

wvde.us