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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Pope/Hemphill ORIGINAL DATE 2/13/21
LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____
SHORT TITLE Purple Star Public School Program SB 271
ANALYST Chilton

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY21	FY22	FY23	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total		\$75.0	\$75.0	\$150.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Related to Senate Bill 272

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Office of the Attorney General (NMAG)

Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 271 would add a section to the Public School Code, Section 22-1 NMSA 1978, directing the Public Education Department to develop a “purple star public schools program” to honor schools that work to welcome and recognize military families and ease their children’s transition into a new school. In addition, for schools not located near military installations, schools could achieve the designation by honoring the military and its members for their accomplishments.

Schools with students from military families could achieve this recognition by training staff members on the needs of these children and families, giving these families a point of contact within the school, addressing military families in the school website, making information about resources to meet military families’ needs available, and submitting resolutions to the school board recognizing military families’ needs and publicizing the intention of the school to apply to be a purple star school.

Schools without military families would apply through emphasizing the importance of military service and the importance and achievements of veterans in the community, the National Guard,

and active and reserve military members; celebrating students committed to military service; sponsoring special events recognizing military service; and submitting resolutions to the school board recognizing military families' needs and publicizing the intention of the school to apply to be a purple star school.

There is no effective date of this bill. It is assumed the effective date is 90 days following adjournment of the Legislature.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no appropriation in Senate Bill 271.

PED indicates, “Minimal costs may be associated with program development at the local educational agency (LEA) level. The PED may incur costs not provided for in the proposed bill. The department would be required to oversee and manage all LEA designees, host electronic program information, and publish materials and information online. Funds from existing divisions or programs may need to be leveraged and applied without an appropriation.”

The table above contains an estimate of cost to PED, based on having 1 FTE assigned to developing and maintaining the Purple Star School Program.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC; www.militarychild.org) states it is “the national advocate for Purple Star Schools,” noting that “military children move every two to three years. The Purple Star School program is designed to help schools respond to the educational and social-emotional challenges military-connected children face during their transition to a new school and keep them on track to be college, workforce, and life-ready. Military-connected refers to children of service members on active duty, and in the National Guard and Reserves.”

In a very recent report commissioned by MCEC from the Columbia Center for Public Research and Leadership, the following points are made, among others:

Military-connected (MC) families are tough and agile. Moving three times more often, on average, than their civilian counterparts, parents and students quickly learn to become fierce advocates for themselves, lobbying schools to provide the basic educational services and social-emotional supports to which all American children are entitled. But this advocacy becomes exhausting and draws time away from the other pressing demands of relocation and family life. What relief might parents feel if they did not have to constantly put on their armor to fight these battles? And what more could students accomplish if they did not have to settle for good enough? One promising new initiative — the Purple Star School designation program (Purple Star program) — seeks to reduce this burden on families. By articulating the most critical transition supports for military-connected families and publicly designating schools that meet those requirements, the program signals to military-connected families which schools are the most committed and best equipped to meet their needs.

The Purple Star program has already gained traction and motivated hundreds of schools and scores of districts to improve services for military-connected (MC) students and

families. This is especially notable given that the program has been in place for less than three years in most states, with a third of that time overlapping the COVID-19 health crisis.

New Mexico's active military bases include

- Cannon Air Force base in Curry County,
- Holloman Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range Army Base in Otero County,
- Kirtland Air Force Base in Bernalillo County, and
- Los Alamos Demolition Army Base in Los Alamos County.

There are at least three New Mexico schools on military bases: Holloman Air Force Base outside Alamogordo and Kirtland and Sandia Base Schools in Albuquerque. It would be expected that Purple Star Schools would be especially important to military families in areas around these military installations, and the estimated 142 thousand military veterans living in New Mexico would likely use Purple Star Schools as a point of pride and places to be involved in the communities in which they live.

Through PED, information was obtained about Alamogordo Schools in particular:

According to [Alamogordo Public Schools](#), the Purple Star School program was started in Ohio in 2016 to help military families as they experience permanent change of status (PCS) from base to base. Historically, Purple Star Schools are attentive to military students transitioning to their new school, especially when it is a mid-year PCS. Purple Star Schools, typically, have staff who are trained to help students deal with frequent moves and parent deployments. Additionally, ten states now have the Purple Star School Program: Ohio, Virginia, Indiana, North Carolina, Georgia, Texas, North Dakota, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Arkansas. Should SB271 be passed, New Mexico would become the eleventh state to have a statewide Purple Start School Program.

Currently, there are over one million Americans serving in the Armed Services. Over [5,000 military dependents live in New Mexico with 1,062 military dependents](#) enrolled in Alamogordo Public Schools. Purple Star Schools are military friendly campuses that are dedicated to helping military students gain education skills important to make them life, work, and college-ready. Purple Star Schools support a military student's social and emotional well-being as they transition to a new school and all aspects of military life.

RELATIONSHIP

Relates to Senate Bill 272, which would require school districts to allow military families about to transfer into a district to register their children in school before being actually present in New Mexico.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

The bill does not make it clear whether purple star recognition would be extended to schools meeting all of the criteria for the award or just one or several of those criteria.

NMAG identifies the following inconsistency: "In paragraph B(5) of SB 271, the term 'students

of military families’ is changed to ‘military students.’ Consider changing the term to ‘students of military families’ to be consistent with the remaining body of the bill.”

LAC/sb