



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Bay District Schools Recognized as a Purple Star District**

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Bay District Schools is proud to announce that every school in the district has earned the prestigious Florida Purple Star School of Distinction designation, culminating in the district being named one of only five Purple Star Districts in the state. Governor Ron DeSantis visited yesterday to celebrate this milestone, highlighting the district's unwavering commitment to serving military families and supporting their children.

To earn the Purple Star School of Distinction designation, schools must meet rigorous requirements, including:

- Designating a military point-of-contact to serve as a liaison for military families.
- Maintaining a school webpage with military-specific resources like academic planning and transition support.
- Implementing a student-led transition program to assist military students entering the school.
- Providing professional development for staff to identify and respond to the unique needs of military families.
- Reserving at least 5% of open-enrollment seats for military-connected students.
- Offering three elective opportunities to further connect schools with military communities, such as hosting military recognition events, offering JROTC programs, or conducting service projects.

“This is a proud moment for Bay District Schools and a testament to the extraordinary dedication of our teachers, staff, and community partners,” said Superintendent Mark McQueen. “As a veteran and military-connected husband and father, I understand the challenges military families face. These distinctions reflect our commitment to ensuring their children feel welcomed, supported, and equipped to succeed. Our partnerships with Tyndall Air Force Base, NSA Panama City, and the Coast Guard underscore how vital this work is, and we are honored to stand alongside these incredible organizations in service to our military community.”

The Purple Star School of Distinction program was established in 2021 by the Florida Legislature to recognize schools that go above and beyond in supporting military families. Since

its inception, nearly 400 schools statewide have earned this designation. One hundred percent of the schools in Bay District Schools have earned this honor.

Bay District Schools joins Brevard, Citrus, Okaloosa, and Santa Rosa counties as Florida's inaugural Purple Star Districts, demonstrating a district-wide commitment to meeting the needs of military-connected families and ensuring a seamless transition for students in our schools.

To learn more about the Purple Star program and view a complete list of designated schools, visit <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/family-community/activities-programs/parental-involvement/purple-star.stml>.