

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

1 State of Arkansas As Engrossed: H3/10/25 H3/19/25

2 95th General Assembly

A Bill

3 Regular Session, 2025

HOUSE BILL 1545

4

5 By: Representative K. Brown

6 By: Senator J. English

7

8

For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO AMEND THE ARKANSAS MILITARY CHILD SCHOOL
10 TRANSITIONS ACT OF 2021; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

11

12

13

Subtitle

14

TO AMEND THE ARKANSAS MILITARY CHILD

15

SCHOOL TRANSITIONS ACT OF 2021.

16

17 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

18

19 SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Legislative findings and intent.

20 (a) The General Assembly finds:

21 (1) Arkansas adopted the Interstate Compact on Educational

22 Opportunity for Military Children in 2013, but found it ineffective in

23 supporting National Guard and highly mobile active-duty families;

24 (2) To untether support for military families, Arkansas

25 established the Arkansas Military Child School Transitions Act of 2021,

26 expanding eligibility and resources offered to uniformed services families;

27 (3) Arkansas is the only state that has taken an independent,

28 parallel path outside of the compact to better serve our highly mobile

29 uniformed services families;

30 (4) On December 31, 2024, the United States Department of

31 Defense reported to the United States Congress that, "States could consider

32 the benefits of implementing the Arkansas model for a statute outside the

33 Compact"; and

34 (5) Arkansas is recognized for initiative, innovation, and

35 responsiveness to meeting emerging needs of uniformed services families.

36 (b) This act further improves the Arkansas Military Child School



1 Transitions Act of 2021, § 6-28-101 et seq., by:

2 (1) Eliminating the one-year limitation on eligibility of
3 children of Gold Star families and medically separated or retired families to
4 be covered by this act;

5 (2) Allowing public schools to apply provisions of this act to
6 all students who apply for enrollment in a public school in addition to those
7 students who are dependents of members of the uniformed services;

8 (3) Defining actions for military services families to
9 accomplish when applying for enrollment in advance of their arrival in
10 Arkansas;

11 (4) Expanding authority of receiving districts' special
12 education staff members to proactively collaborate with sending districts to
13 facilitate a smooth transition of incoming students with disabilities; and

14 (5) Providing for the Purple Star School Program development and
15 administration.

16
17 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-28-105 is amended to read as follows:

18 6-28-105. Application.

19 (a) This chapter shall apply to dependent children of:

20 (1) Members of the active duty and activated reserve components
21 of the uniformed services;

22 (2) ~~Members or veterans~~ Veterans of the uniformed services who
23 were ~~severely~~ injured in the line of duty and are medically ~~discharged~~
24 separated or retired ~~for a period of one (1) year following the medical~~
25 ~~discharge or retirement;~~

26 (3) Members of the uniformed services who die while on active
27 duty or as a result of injuries sustained while on active duty ~~for a period~~
28 ~~of one (1) year following the death;~~

29 (4) Dual status military technicians; and

30 (5) Traditional members of the National Guard and reserve
31 components of the ~~United States Armed Forces~~ armed forces who are relocating
32 to the state for employment or to serve as a member of an Arkansas-based
33 reserve component unit.

34 ~~(b) This chapter shall not apply to the dependent children of:~~

35 ~~(1) Inactive members of the National Guard and reserve~~
36 ~~components of the United States Armed Forces;~~

1 ~~(2) Retired members of the uniformed services, except as~~
2 ~~provided under subdivision (a)(3) of this section; and~~

3 ~~(3) Other United States Department of Defense personnel and~~
4 ~~other federal or state agency civilian and contract employees who are not~~
5 ~~considered members of the uniformed services.~~

6 ~~(e)(1)(b)(1)~~ This chapter includes provisions and extends application
7 eligibility beyond the scope of the Interstate Compact on Educational
8 Opportunity for Military Children, § 6-4-301 et seq.

9 (2) In complying with this chapter, sending districts and
10 receiving districts may request the assistance of sending districts and
11 receiving districts outside of the state to provide services to uniformed
12 services families transferring to or from the state who are covered under
13 this chapter but may not be covered under the interstate compact.

14 (c) A public school may extend the provisions of this chapter to all
15 students relocating to the public school district or enrolling in the public
16 school under the Arkansas Opportunity Public School Choice Act, § 6-18-227,
17 or the Public School Choice Act of 2015, § 6-18-1901 et seq.

18
19 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-28-108 is amended to read as follows:
20 6-28-108. Advance enrollment.

21 ~~(a)(1)~~ Members of the uniformed services ~~shall~~ under § 6-28-105 who
22 wish to enroll their children in public school should, as soon as possible,
23 provide advance notice to public schools regarding the enrollment of a
24 student under this chapter to ensure the best opportunity for a smooth
25 transition for their children.

26 (b) Upon receipt of official assignment notice or assignment orders,
27 the parent, foster parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of a
28 child, or person standing in loco parentis to a child of a member of the
29 uniformed services may enroll, register, and coordinate education services
30 for his or her child, including without limitation a child with special
31 education needs or a child with a disability, in the public school of his or
32 her choice by:

33 (1) Determining, in consultation with military and public school
34 district officials, the public school in which he or she prefers to enroll
35 his or her child according to requirements under § 6-18-1909;

36 (2) Contacting the public school's designated military family

1 education coordinator with any questions or issues raised or information
2 needed by the parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of a
3 child, or person standing in loco parentis to a child; and

4 (3) Remotely submitting electronically an enrollment application
5 for his or her child that shall include required documentation, including
6 without limitation:

7 (A) A copy of the official military assignment notice or
8 official assignment orders and military identification credentials of the
9 member of the uniformed services;

10 (B) The child's unofficial education record and
11 immunization records;

12 (C) Current coursework for the school in which the student
13 is enrolled if the coursework is not included in the student's unofficial
14 education record;

15 (D) A copy of the student's individualized education
16 program, family service plan under the Individuals with Disabilities
17 Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq., or plan under section 504 of the
18 Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, as applicable; and

19 (E) A list of any extracurricular activities in which the
20 student participates.

21 ~~(2)(c)~~ When a public school receives notice and an enrollment
22 application from a military family under ~~subdivision (a)(1) of this section,~~
23 the public school shall ~~treat the notice as a provisional enrollment and~~
24 ~~provide the student with materials regarding:~~

25 (1) Provisionally enroll, provide placement for, and enter
26 academic course requests on behalf of the incoming student based on the
27 student's education record provided by his or her family or the sending
28 district;

29 (2) Provide the uniformed services family with information
30 either directly or on a Military Family link on the public school's or public
31 school district's website regarding:

32 ~~(A) Academic courses~~ Career-ready pathways and other
33 academic or education programs offered;

34 ~~(B) Electives~~ Required academic courses for each
35 curriculum and elective course options;

36 ~~(C) Sports~~ School and community-sponsored extracurricular

1 activities, including without limitation individual and team sports, clubs,
2 junior reserve officer training corps opportunities, and Purple Star School
3 program ambassadors; and

4 (D) Contact information for the designated military family
5 education coordinator and the Purple Star School program military family
6 education facilitator, if applicable; and

7 ~~(D)~~(E) Other relevant information regarding the public
8 school.

9 ~~(3)~~(d) A public school:

10 ~~(A)~~(1) Shall, in determining the acceptance of a student's
11 enrollment in the public school, consider the:

12 (A) The student's enrollment application date and the
13 anticipated date of enrollment of a the student under subdivision (a)(1)
14 subsection (a) of this section in light of;

15 ~~(i)~~(B) Class sizes;

16 ~~(ii)~~(C) Course prerequisites or conflicts; and

17 ~~(iii)~~(D) The availability of elective courses;

18 ~~(B)~~(2)(A) May preregister a student in anticipation of the
19 student's enrollment under subdivision (a)(1) of this section; and Shall not
20 deny a student enrollment in the public school or the public school district
21 under this section unless there is a lack of capacity.

22 (B) A lack of capacity may be claimed by a public school
23 district only if:

24 (i) The public school district has reached the
25 maximum student-to-teacher ratio allowed under federal law, state law, the
26 Standards for Accreditation for Public Schools and School Districts, state
27 rules, or other applicable federal regulations; and

28 (ii) The claim of lack of capacity is timely and
29 consistent with state and federal law;

30 ~~(C)~~(3) May seek waivers from the State Board of Education to
31 accommodate a student under this section, including without limitation
32 required class ratios Shall not discriminate on the basis of gender, national
33 origin, race, ethnicity, religion, military family status, or disability;

34 (4) Notify a prospective student's family in writing regarding
35 whether the student's enrollment has been accepted or rejected within fifteen
36 (15) calendar days of receiving the student's enrollment application and

1 supporting documentation; and

2 (5) As soon as practicable, request that a sending district
3 provide a student's official education record as specified by § 6-28-107 to
4 confirm the student's provisional enrollment, placement, and course
5 preregistration conditions.

6 ~~(b)(1)~~(e)(1) A student under this section shall receive equitable
7 access to academic courses.

8 (2)(A) A receiving district may enter academic course requests
9 on behalf of an incoming student under this section based on the student's
10 transcript of information sent by the student's family or the student's
11 sending district.

12 (B) Special power of attorney relative to the guardianship
13 of a student is sufficient for purposes of enrollment and all other actions
14 requiring parental participation and consent.

15 ~~(e)(1)~~(f)(1) A receiving district shall not charge local tuition to a
16 student who transitions to the receiving district under this section and who
17 has been placed in the care of a noncustodial parent or other person standing
18 in loco parentis who lives in a jurisdiction other than that of the custodial
19 parent.

20 (2) A student who has been placed in the care of a noncustodial
21 parent or other person standing in loco parentis who lives in a jurisdiction
22 other than that of the custodial parent may continue to attend the school in
23 which he or she was enrolled while residing with the custodial parent.

24 ~~(d)~~(g) A receiving district shall ensure a student who transitions
25 under this section has the opportunity to participate in extracurricular
26 activities, regardless of application deadlines, and to the extent that the
27 student is otherwise qualified.

28

29 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-28-109 is amended to read as follows:

30 6-28-109. Virtual course enrollment.

31 (a) At the request of a military family, a receiving district may
32 enroll an inbound transitioning child of a military family in virtual
33 distance-learning or digital coursework, if available, to facilitate a smooth
34 transition between the student's previous coursework and the curriculum best
35 suited to ensure educational success in his or her new school.

36 (b) To prevent a student from losing course credit due to absences, a

1 public school may approve a student who has been granted one (1) or more
2 excused absences to:

3 (1) Access school coursework virtually; or

4 (2) Transfer to a virtual coursework program.

5
6 SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 6-28-113(b), concerning requirements a
7 receiving district must adhere to with regard to a student's special
8 education services under the Arkansas Military Child School Transitions Act
9 of 2021, is amended to read as follows:

10 (b) A receiving district:

11 (1) Shall make reasonable accommodations and modifications to
12 address the needs of incoming students with disabilities under this section;
13 ~~and~~

14 (2) May perform subsequent evaluations to ensure a student who
15 transitions under this chapter has been appropriately placed in the receiving
16 district as soon as possible upon the student's arrival at the receiving
17 district;

18 (3) May request a meeting with a student's parents or legal
19 guardians and the individualized education program team at the sending
20 district from which the student transferred before the student's arrival at
21 the receiving district;

22 (4) May, upon review of a student's existing individualized
23 education program and with parental consent, request an evaluation by the
24 sending district, if the student is still enrolled in the sending district;

25 (5) May request an in-person meeting with the student's parents
26 or legal guardians and the student to confirm planned services upon the
27 adoption by the public school of the student's existing or amended
28 individualized education program; and

29 (6) May take any other action to ensure a student's smooth
30 transition under this chapter.

31
32
33 SECTION 6. Arkansas Code § 6-28-116 is amended to read as follows:

34 6-28-116. ~~New student reception programs~~— Military family education
35 coordinators.

36 (a) A Each public school ~~with twenty (20) or more children of military~~

1 ~~families enrolled as students under this chapter or a public school district~~
 2 ~~with at least three thousand (3,000) enrolled public school students~~ district
 3 and open-enrollment public charter school shall:

4 ~~(1) Incorporate into the policies of the public school district~~
 5 ~~specific procedures that outline actions to take in support of students who~~
 6 ~~are the children of military families who transition to and from the public~~
 7 ~~school district; and~~

8 ~~(2)(A)(1) Designate in each public school district a military~~
 9 ~~family education coordinator to serve as the primary point of contact for~~
 10 ~~each child of a military family and his or her parent or legal guardian;~~

11 ~~(2) Annually by September 1 provide to the Division of~~
 12 ~~Elementary and Secondary Education the name and contact information of the~~
 13 ~~military family education coordinator; and~~

14 ~~(3) Post in a section designated for Military Families on the~~
 15 ~~website of the public school the contact information for the military family~~
 16 ~~education coordinator.~~

17 ~~(B)(b) The Each~~ public school military family education coordinator
 18 shall:

19 ~~(i)(1) Have Possess~~ specialized knowledge regarding the
 20 ~~educational needs of children of military families and the obstacles that~~
 21 ~~children of military families face in obtaining an education and unique~~
 22 ~~challenges faced by children of uniformed services families; and~~

23 ~~(ii)(2) Be included in the establishment and adoption of a~~
 24 ~~public school district's and public school's parent and family engagement~~
 25 ~~plan as required under § 6-15-1702; and~~

26 ~~(3) Serve as a navigator for uniformed services families by:~~

27 ~~(A) Connecting the uniformed services families to~~
 28 ~~appropriate public school resources; and~~

29 ~~(B) Connecting families with other uniformed services~~
 30 ~~families in the public school upon request.~~

31 ~~(C) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education~~
 32 ~~shall supply relevant resources for the orientation and training of public~~
 33 ~~school military family education coordinators under this section.~~

34
 35 SECTION 7. Arkansas Code § 6-28-117 is amended to read as follows:

36 6-28-117. Reporting enrollment of children of members of the ~~uniformed~~

1 services armed forces – Definition.

2 (a) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall require a
3 public school to report the enrollment of a student ~~who is a child of a~~
4 ~~uniformed services family~~ with a parent who is an active duty or reserve
5 component member of the armed forces as required by the Every Student
6 Succeeds Act, 20 U.S.C. § 6311, as it existed on January 1, 2025:

7 (1) In the Arkansas Public School Computer Network; or

8 (2) As established by rule if the public school or public school
9 district does not report information through the Arkansas Public School
10 Computer Network.

11 (b) As used in this section, "armed forces" means a member of the
12 active duty or reserve components of the United States Army, United States
13 Navy, United States Air Force, United States Marine Corps, United States
14 Space Force, United States Coast Guard, and National Guard.

15
16 SECTION 8. Arkansas Code § 6-28-204(b), concerning the duties of the
17 Arkansas Council for Military Children is amended to read as follows:

18 (b) The duties of the council are to:

19 (1) Assist state and local education agencies in the promotion
20 ~~and~~, communication, delivery, and assessment of the provisions of this
21 chapter to inform state education authorities, public school district
22 officials, military commanders, and uniformed services families by:

23 (A) Assisting in the development, publication, and
24 distribution through schools and military commands of a digital family
25 guidebook that provides information on the provisions of this chapter;

26 (B) At least biennially publicly surveying uniformed
27 services families to assess awareness of this chapter, provisions of the
28 Arkansas Opportunity Public School Choice Act, § 6-18-227, provisions of the
29 Public School Choice Act of 2015, § 6-18-1901 et seq., available military
30 family resources, and unmet uniformed services family needs; and

31 (C) Developing and promulgating student arrival and
32 departure surveys of uniformed services families to provide an assessment of
33 the effectiveness of this chapter and other related programs;

34 (2) Assist state and local education agencies with the
35 orientation and training of district military family education coordinators
36 and school military education facilitators on provisions of this chapter;

1 (3) Develop and promote the Purple Star School program as
2 required by § 6-28-302;

3 ~~(3)(4)~~ Assist in the development and delivery of programs that
4 inform current and former uniformed services families, including Gold Star
5 families, of the need for self-identification in order to assure accurate
6 accounting of children of uniformed services families enrolled in public
7 school districts to self-identify to assure:

8 (A) They are recognized for their service; and

9 (B) That the student is accounted for in all applicable
10 programs for which the student qualifies; and

11 ~~(4)(5)~~ Assist in the development and administration of programs
12 recognizing education agencies, public schools, and leaders who have
13 established or contributed to programs facilitating successful school
14 transitions of children of uniformed services families.

15
16 SECTION 9. Arkansas Code § 6-28-204(i), concerning administrative
17 staff to support the Chair of the Arkansas Council for Military Children, is
18 amended to read as follows:

19 (i) The council shall post on its website or post by utilizing another
20 form of public notice, including without limitation social media, information
21 for uniformed services families, including without limitation information
22 regarding:

23 (1) The purpose, duties, membership composition, meeting
24 agendas, and meeting minutes of the council;

25 (2) Resources to assist uniformed services families with making
26 decisions concerning school choice and educational freedom accounts;

27 (3) Guidance for advance enrollment;

28 (4) Contact information for military family education
29 coordinators; and

30 (5) Purple Star School Program highlights and contact
31 information for military family education facilitators.

32 (j) The division shall provide administrative staff support to the Chair
33 of the Arkansas Council for Military Children to assist with the achievement
34 of the purpose and the administration of duties of the council.

35
36 SECTION 10. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 28, is amended to add

1 additional sections to read as follows:

2 Subchapter 3 – Purple Star School Program

3

4 6-28-301. Purple Star School Program.

5 (a) Each public school with twenty (20) or more children of military
6 families enrolled annually by October 1 shall:

7 (1) Adopt the Purple Star School Program developed by the
8 Arkansas Council for Military Children and approved by the Division of
9 Elementary and Secondary Education; and

10 (2) Survey arriving and departing uniform services families to
11 assess the effectiveness of programs and services under this chapter as
12 specified by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.

13 (b) The purpose of the Purple Star School Program shall be to:

14 (1) Assist children of uniformed services families by addressing
15 the educational, social, and emotional challenges the children of uniformed
16 services families face during their transition to a new school; and

17 (2) Keep children of uniformed services families on track to
18 enroll and excel in college, enter the workforce, and become life-ready.

19 (c) The council-developed Purple Star School Program required under
20 subsection (a) of this section shall:

21 (1) Require each public school to designate a military family
22 education facilitator to:

23 (A) Identify military-connected students who are enrolled
24 in the public school and inform public school teachers of those students;

25 (B) Serve as the Purple Star School Program point of
26 contact for the public school, each child of a military family, and the
27 parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of, or person standing
28 in loco parentis to a child of a military family; and

29 (C) Assist in determining and coordinating public school
30 services and programs for military-connected students;

31 (2) Require a designated public school district military family
32 education facilitator, public school military family education coordinator,
33 and public school staff to complete council-recommended and division-approved
34 initial and continuing education on identifying the needs and unique
35 challenges faced by children of members of the uniformed services;

36 (3) Require each public school district to include on its

1 website a "Military Families" section that informs uniformed services
2 families of:

3 (A) The student enrollment application process;

4 (B) Available education pathways;

5 (C) Notable public school or public school district Purple
6 Star School Programs;

7 (D) Public school district military family education
8 coordinator contact information; and

9 (E) Public school military family education facilitator
10 contact information;

11 (4)(A) Require each public school or public school district to
12 establish a volunteer student-to-student peer ambassador program that shall
13 be open to all enrolled students who want to contribute.

14 (B) The volunteer student-to-student peer ambassador
15 program required under subdivision (c)(4)(A) of this section shall:

16 (i) Connect and welcome inbound students ahead of
17 their transition to a public school;

18 (ii) Assist with the provision of new student
19 orientation; and

20 (iii) Assist new students with establishing social
21 connections at their new school;

22 (5) Establish school and community events to honor and recognize
23 members of the uniformed services and military-connected students;

24 (6) Ensure that a public school or public school district
25 appoints a volunteer uniformed services member, military spouse, or
26 representative from a military installation or unit to serve on the school
27 community and family engagement committee;

28 (7) Ensure that a public school district's or public school's
29 parent and family engagement plan required under § 6-15-1702 addresses
30 relevant military family issues and resources; and

31 (8) Require public schools and public school districts to
32 collaborate with military commands to encourage uniformed services families
33 to self-identify their military status.

34 (d) The Purple Star School Program required under subsection (a) of
35 this section may authorize public schools and public school districts to
36 expand their Purple Star School Program to include community-level

1 initiatives, including without limitation:

2 (1) Engaging community organizations, local businesses, and
3 military installations to enhance resources and support for military-
4 connected students and their families;

5 (2) Organizing community events that raise awareness of
6 military-connected students and their contributions; and

7 (3) Establishing partnerships with regional stakeholders to
8 enhance Purple Star School Program efforts while fulfilling all requirements
9 for the Purple Star School Program established by the division.

10 (e) As used in this section, a "military-connected student" is:

11 (1) An incoming or a currently enrolled student who is a child
12 or dependent of a current or former active or reserve component uniformed
13 services member;

14 (2) A child of a uniformed services member who died while on
15 active duty or as a result of injuries sustained while on active duty;

16 (3) A student who is a sibling of a uniformed services member;

17 (4) A student who has enlisted in the uniformed services; or

18 (5) A Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps cadet.

19
20 6-28-302. Arkansas Council for Military Children – Purple Star School
21 Program – Duties.

22 The Arkansas Council for Military Children shall:

23 (1) Develop and review biennially and amend as necessary the
24 Purple Star School Program model;

25 (2) When developing, reviewing, and amending the Purple Star
26 School Program as required under subdivision (1) of this section, incorporate
27 provisions prescribed by the council, the Military Child Education Coalition,
28 and other relevant, recognized authorities;

29 (3) Use the Purple Star School Program's application and renewal
30 process along with interdistrict collaboration events to drive continuous
31 improvement of the program;

32 (4) Define required and optional Purple Star School Program
33 provisions established by § 6-28-301 and performance standards;

34 (5) Establish phase-in timing and training, if required, when
35 adopting or amending Purple Star School Program provisions; and

36 (6) Establish a recognition program for public schools, public

1 school districts, and private schools that meet Purple Star School Program
2 standards as defined and evaluated by the council.

3
4 6-28-303. Division of Elementary and Secondary Education – Purple Star
5 School Program – Duties.

6 The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall:

7 (1) Provide relevant resources for the orientation and training
8 of public school district military family education coordinators and public
9 school military family education facilitators under this chapter;

10 (2) Administer the Purple Star School Program;

11 (3) Provide administrative and logistical support to the
12 Arkansas Council for Military Children to develop the program; and

13 (4) Promulgate and incorporate Purple Star School program rules
14 into the rules the division promulgates under this chapter.

15
16 */s/K. Brown*
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