

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Office of the Governor



EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 1561

WHEREAS, Mississippi's dedicated military-connected families live and work in every county in the State; and

WHEREAS, in 2020 there were over 7,300 children of active duty military members under the age of 18 in the State of Mississippi, many attending public schools and charter schools in the State; and

WHEREAS, military children face unique challenges related to military transitions and parental deployment; and

WHEREAS, military children and their families are an essential source of support and encouragement for armed service members; and

WHEREAS, military children should be acknowledged and supported for the sacrifices they make and celebrated for the courage they display as the children of our nation's armed service members; and

WHEREAS, public and charter schools are uniquely situated to support military children and their families; and

WHEREAS, every student enrolled in a public or charter school that is a dependent of a current or former member of the United States military serving on active duty in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, or Coast Guard, or a reserve component of any branch of the United States military or the Mississippi National Guard, will benefit from a program designed to help schools respond to the educational and social-emotional challenges military children face during their transition to a new school.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Tate Reeves, Governor of the State of Mississippi, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of Mississippi, do hereby direct the Mississippi Department of Education ("Department") to create and administer a program, to be known as the Military Star School Program, to recognize schools that maintain a school culture supportive of military children.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Department will adopt a criteria for school eligibility that requires a school applying for the Military Star designation to:

1. Designate a staff member as a Military Ambassador;
2. Maintain a webpage on the school's website which includes resources for military students and their families;
3. Maintain a peer-to-peer transition program that assists military students in transitioning into the school; and
4. Offer professional development training opportunities for staff members on issues relating to military students.

The Department may establish additional criteria to identify schools that demonstrate a commitment to or provide critical transition supports for military-connected families, such