



# ★ The Purple Post ★ NEWSLETTER



Spring 2026 Issue

**WELCOME** to the first The Purple Post Newsletter of 2026! In this Spring edition, you'll read updates on the two district grants funded by the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), learn about the exciting ways our schools are honoring military students this April, and so much more!

## PRISM

Proportional Reasoning in  
STEM Missions



Journey Middle's math coach and teachers at STEM Night.

- The PRISM Grant is in Year 2, the first implementation year of the grant.
- Grant Goals: Strengthen proportional and fractional reasoning in elementary and middle school students to better prepare them for STEM careers.
- Middle school math teachers and math coaches explored instructional strategies to deepen student understanding of fractions, ratios, and proportional reasoning at the Ongoing Assessment Project (OGAP) Proportionality Training. By analyzing student work to identify misconceptions and guide interventions, participants are now equipped to drive achievement through more targeted, responsive instruction.
- In December, fourth grade math teachers participated in a professional learning experience focused on fractions and decimals, deepening their conceptual understanding and strengthening their ability to bring these ideas to life through engaging, sense-making instruction. The session included hands-on exploration, meaningful mathematical discourse, and practical strategies designed to make student thinking visible and support understanding for every learner.
- Throughout the school year, the middle school math coaches have been attending monthly professional development meetings that strengthen their skills as effective coaching partners and supports the development and sustainability of a successful coaching program.
- During Journey Middle School's STEM Night, math electives were showcased as math teachers and the math coach provided engaging activities that reinforced course content.

## SPARK

Creating a Spark for STEM  
Career Pathways



Kindergarten students worked collaboratively to build a solar oven

- The STEM Grant is now in year four of its five-year cycle. Our focus is to help military-connected students grow their STEM knowledge and build stronger awareness of STEM careers through both measurable data and real-world experiences.
- Fifth grade students are exploring real community problems. They are working together to find ways to reduce traffic congestion in Madison City. Using data from the city engineer, many groups have created large classroom models, shared proposed solutions, and even met with Mayor Bartlett to discuss the challenge.
- Community partners continue to play a big role in expanding STEM career awareness. Organizations such as The Land Trust of Alabama, The Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District, The Madison Police Department, The Madison Fire and Rescue Department, Madison Utilities Water Treatment Plant, The City of Madison Public Works Department, Griffon Aerospace, Leidos, FBI, Missile Defense Agency, and multiple UAH departments welcomed Madison City fifth graders for tours and hands-on experiences.
- STEM teachers are weaving project-based learning into lessons, giving students age-appropriate skills that grow each year and prepare them to tackle real problems.
- This January, while attending the Future of Education Technology Conference in Orlando, Florida, STEM teachers explored a wide range of innovative educational technologies. They returned with new knowledge and practical tools that enable them to more intentionally integrate AI into daily learning experiences, fostering student thinking, idea generation, creativity and problem-solving skills.

## MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

April is just around the corner, meaning the Month of the Military Child is almost here! Throughout the month, our schools honor and show appreciation for military students and the sacrifices they have made.

April has been recognized as the Month of the Military Child since its establishment in 1986. It honors the resilience, strength, and sacrifices of children in military families.

The district is celebrating Purple Up! Day on Friday, April 17. Show your support for military kids by wearing purple on that day.

Here are a few ways military students will be honored:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Goody bags
- Spirit week
- Rally
- Photo displays
- Cards
- School announcements
- Social media shoutouts
- Purple decorations



## VFW POST 5162 AWARD RECIPIENTS

During the school board meeting on Thursday, February 26th, the local winners of the Madison Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 5162 annual awards were recognized. This year's student competitions centered on the theme: "How Are You Showing Patriotism and Support for Our Country?"



Contest winner Gavin Hill pictured with Art Johnson, Commander of VFW Post 5162, and April Thomas, Junior Vice Commander.

Gavin Hill, a senior at JCHS, received 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Voice of Democracy contest. This audio-essay contest lets high school students express their views on democracy and patriotism.

Neil Dube, an 8<sup>th</sup> grader at JMS, received 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Patriot's Pen contest. This essay contest invites students to reflect on America's history and their own experiences in today's society in a 300–400 word essay.

Adrian Wells, the reading specialist at Horizon Elementary, received 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Teacher Maher Award in the K-5 category. The award recognizes great educators who instill a sense of national pride in students.

## IMPACT AID UPDATE

Impact Aid is a government program that provides financial assistance to schools that have a large presence of military dependent students. It is very important to identify Impact Aid students each school year.

MCS implemented a new platform for Impact Aid collection, and it was a huge success. For the 2025-2026 school year, we recorded 2,583 Impact Aid students which makes up 19% of our student population. Impact Aid allows Madison City Schools to qualify for a variety of grants and funding.

Since 2010, MCS has received numerous DoDEA grants that benefit military students and their civilian classmates. These grants help us establish programs in order to better serve all students, including the DoDEA grant programs highlighted at the beginning of this newsletter. Thank you to everyone that has a student attending a MCS school who completed the Impact Aid Survey!

## MCEC GLOBAL TRAINING SUMMIT 2026

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) has announced the 2026 Global Training Summit (GTS) is coming to San Antonio, TX on June 24th!

Every year, MCEC's Global Training Summit brings together educators, school counselors, military liaisons, and community partners who are dedicated to supporting military-connected children and families.

GTS is a full day of professional development, collaboration, and practical tools that all attending can bring back to their organization to support military-connected children.



# MCEC WEBINARS & CAREGIVING YOUTH PROGRAM

The Military Child Education Coalition offers a Caregiving Youth Leadership Program for youth that are involved in the care needs of a wounded or ill service member. For more information and how to apply, [click here](#).



MCEC offers webinars on a variety of topics for military families. For more information, or to sign up for a webinar, scan the QR code or visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/webinars-4815672>.

## March MCEC Webinars

- Tuesday, March 3:** AI in Education
- Wednesday, March 4:** Early Explorations: Math and Science
- Tuesday, March 10:** Perfectionism: When a 'B' is a Disaster
- Wednesday, March 11:** Math Matters: Middle and High School Students
- Tuesday, March 17:** Wellbeing of Youth Caregivers
- Wednesday, March 18:** Communication Skills for Military-Connected Students
- Tuesday, March 24:** National Guard and Reserve: Supporting the Children
- Wednesday, March 25:** Ups and Downs of Being a Military-Connected Child
- Tuesday, March 31:** Time Management for Young Children

## April MCEC Webinars

- Wednesday, April 1:** Building Connections: How School Liaisons and MCEC Supports Military Families w/SME
- Tuesday, April 7:** Navigating Dyslexia for Military Students: Resources and Strategies w/SME
- Wednesday, April 8:** Topic TBD
- Tuesday, April 14:** Reading: Growing Great Readers
- Wednesday, April 15:** Financial Aid Basics for College-Bound Military Students
- Tuesday, April 21:** Balanced Parenting
- Wednesday, April 22:** Transitions Out of the Military: Supporting Children
- Tuesday, April 28:** Special Needs: Study Skills for Students with Exceptional Needs
- Wednesday, April 29:** What is a Purple Star School?

# ETERNAL SALUTE ESSAY CONTEST

The Honoring Veteran Legacies is currently accepting submissions for their inaugural Eternal Salute Essay Contest for middle and high school students. A monetary award will be given for first, second, and third place. The teacher of student winners will also receive the same cash prize.

- \$1,000 cash prize for 1<sup>st</sup> place high school winner
- \$500 cash prize for 1<sup>st</sup> place middle school winner

For more information on the contest, [click here](#).

# REDSTONE ARSENAL

The Redstone Arsenal offers after-school programs, great deals, and plenty of fun for all ages! To view the flyers, click on their corresponding links below.

**School Age Center and Middle School Teen Center Shuttle Bus Program**

Take the worry out of after-school care! Redstone Arsenal Child and Youth Services offers safe, reliable transportation from more than 50 local schools to our after-school programs.

Children enjoy a safe, fun, and supportive environment with a variety of engaging activities and programs - including homework assistance.

**Single child - \$35 per month**  
**Multiple children - \$50 per month**

**School Age Center - servicing Kindergarten - 5th grade!**  
**Middle School Teen Center - servicing 6 - 12th grade!**

**School Age:**  
Whitesburg Elementary  
Goldsmith Schillman  
Heritage Elementary  
Milbrook Elementary  
Lynn Fanning

**Middle School Teen:**  
Monrovia Middle School  
Glossum High School  
Kingdom High/HS  
Morris Hill Middle School

For more information or to enroll, call  
MST: 256-876-5437 / SAC: 256-876-6395 and/or PCS: 256-876-3294

[Shuttle Bus Program](#)

**Middle School Teen Center Afterschool Programs**

**REGISTER NOW!**

**Free Afterschool program**

**For youth ages 11-18 (Grades 6-12)**

**Open Rec hours: 1 - 6:30pm**

**Homeschool Program every Tuesday**

**Free club activities throughout the week**

**Late Nights (1-2 monthly) includes activities at the center or a field trip off-post**

**Shuttle Bus Transportation**  
Transportation can be provided from surrounding schools to the center. For details or to enroll, please call 256-876-5437.

For more information call 256-876-5437 or 256-876-3704

[Afterschool Programs](#)

**Register Now!**

**CYS FUTURE STARS BASEBALL**

CYS Future Stars is a developmental sports program for ages 3-4. Focus is on fundamentals and fun. Players will practice and scrimmage under the direction of CYS Sports and Fitness Staff and with the help of parents. No referees for scrimmages.

**Fee: \$30.00**  
Includes T-shirt

**March 14 - April 18**  
Saturday mornings  
9 - 10am or 10 - 11am  
Building 3153

**Boys and Girls Ages 3-4**

Open to the public!

Register at CYS Fitness Center Services, Pinkney Medical Center, Bldg 3443, Phone: 256-876-3704  
For Program Information, Call 256-876-2189  
www.RedstoneArsenal.com

[CYS Future Stars Baseball](#)

**SATURDAY FAMILY DAY**  
WEEKLY 12PM - 8PM

**\$65 INCLUDES**

- 2 HOUR LANE RENTAL
- UP TO 6 PEOPLE INCLUDED
- SHOE RENTAL
- A LARGE 1-TOPPING PIZZA WITH PITCHER OF RUBY SODA

(THIS DOES INCLUDE A HAND-SODA REFRESH OF YOUR CHOICE FOR AN ADDITIONAL CHARGE)

OPEN TO ANYONE WITH ACCESS TO REDSTONE ARSENAL

256-876-6634

[Saturday Family Day](#)

**STRIKE & DINE**  
@ REDSTONE LANES BOWLING CENTER

**\$90**

- Every Friday after 4pm
- January - March
- Enjoy 2 hours of bowling
- 1 Large 1-topping pizza, 8 chicken tenders, 1 pitcher of soda (\$10 upcharge for pitcher of beer)
- 4 free shoe rentals

All ages  
Open to the public

For more information, call 256-876-6634

[Strike & Dine](#)

**.50 CENT WING NIGHTS**  
EVERY THURSDAY AT BROOKLYNS

Enjoy .50 cent wings with a purchase of a beverage in Brooklyn's anytime between 4 - 5:30pm.

Each wing order contains a total of 10 wings. All wings are cooked to order.  
No to go orders.

256-876-6634

[50 Cent Wing Nights](#)

# MILITARY PROGRAM CONTACTS



**Karl Fernandez**  
Assistant Coordinator of  
Accountability & Innovative Programs  
kjfernandez@madisoncity.k12.al.us



**Briana Davis**  
DoDEA & Military Program Analyst  
bmdavis2@madisoncity.k12.al.us



**Carol Bohatch**  
DoDEA Grant Administrator  
cbohatch@madisoncity.k12.al.us