

## 2027 Department of Oklahoma Education Engagement Plan

### Get Involved

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Education Committee is to promote quality education for children—especially for military children—and adults. *Standing Rule #6, Mission Outreach Programs.*

Promote quality education for children, especially for military children, and adults.

- Participate in ALA's Give 20 to Education.
  - Present a [Give 20 to Education certificate](#) to members who donate at least 10 items to schools. This pdf fillable form can be downloaded from [www.legion-aux.org](http://www.legion-aux.org); then search for the "Give 20 to Education".
  - Don't forget that later in the school year, students will be needing to restock their school supplies, just like they did at the beginning of the school year.
  - Ask your school(s) what they do with school supplies left over at the end of the year. Some schools throw the supplies away. If that is the case with your school(s), ask if you can come collect them. Store them and re-issue in the Fall when school re-opens.
- Participate in Teachers Appreciation Week.
  - Contact local Parent Teacher Organizations or schools to see what your unit could sponsor or donate (e.g., donating doughnuts to your local schools).
  - Show your appreciation to teachers by designing and presenting certificates of appreciation.
  - Provide Teacher Survival Kits with fun and helpful items such as candy and snacks, tea bags or coffee, restaurant gift cards, or items for the classroom.
  - As of the date of writing this Plan of Action, the 2027 Teachers Appreciation Week date has not been announced. Monitor the national website for that information's release.
- Participate in American Education Week, held every November.
  - Recognize school administrators and staff with special treats and an ALA America Education Week card, available for download at [https://member.legion-aux.org/cmsdesk/ALA/media/PDF/Programs/ALA\\_American\\_Education\\_Week\\_Card-f.pdf](https://member.legion-aux.org/cmsdesk/ALA/media/PDF/Programs/ALA_American_Education_Week_Card-f.pdf)

- Encourage schools to participate in Month of the Military Child and Purple Up! Day in April to honor their students who are military children.
  - Sponsor a Purple Up! Day on April 15 in your school by providing purple items for students to wear.
  - Present the Military Child Table at your school, unit meeting, or at your post.
  - Sponsor a party for the military children in your school.

Encourage schools to invite veterans to speak in their classrooms.

- Work with your American Legion post to participate in [Veterans in Community Schools](#).
- Ask the teacher(s) to have their students make cards for the veteran.
- Work with the teacher(s) to prepare students to ask questions of the veteran.

Support and promote the Education Program and scholarship opportunities of The American Legion Family.

- Promote the American Legion Auxiliary's [scholarships](#).
- Individuals who wish to apply for an American Legion National Scholarship must apply online from [www.legion-auxiliary.org](http://www.legion-auxiliary.org). Applications **must** conform to filing deadline specifications, and be completed and submitted online.
- Promote The American Legion's scholarships by visiting <https://www.legion.org/scholarships> to learn more about the Legion's scholarship opportunities.

Provide scholarships for students who desire a college education.

- Work with your unit to create a scholarship.
- Ask schools to allow you to do a bulletin board about scholarship opportunities within The American Legion Family.
- Publish information in your local newspaper, libraries, and on your unit's social media.
- Host a "Scholarship Night" Zoom meeting to inform students and parents about Legion Family scholarship opportunities.
- Start a partnership with a local college to provide their students with scholarship information.
- Ask the local Board of Education to host a "Scholarship Workshop" in their schools.
  - Work with the schools to invite college administrators to speak.
  - Have volunteers assist students with scholarship applications.

Material is included in this packet that provides tips on how you can contact your school officials during the summer months in preparation for the coming school year.

Do you have a school that has earned the designation as being a Purple School? If you don't know, ask your school contact if that school is a Purple School. Material is included in this Plan that explains what a Purple School does, and it's value to the community and to The Legion Family.

Support legislation that establishes new scholarship opportunities.

- Support The American Legion's efforts by signing up for legislative alerts at <https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/home>.
- Contact your representatives and ask them to support scholarship opportunities, particularly those for veterans, military, and their families.

As of the date of preparing this Plan, the National Education Committee has not released the 2027 Education Plan, national report deadline dates, or information specific to 2027. This Plan may be modified once the National Education Plan has been released.

Serving on your 2027 Department Education Committee is:

Patsy S. Chinn, ALA Unit 17 (Sand Springs), Chair

Debbie Bertalasio, ALA Unit 12 (Bethany-Warr Acres), Co-Chair

Patti Parish, ALA Unit 12 (Bethany-Warr Acres), Co-Chair

## Deadlines/Important Dates

- November, 2026: American Education Week (specific week to be announced)
- March 1: National scholarship applications due to National
- April, 2027: National Military Child Month (specific Purple Up week to be announced)
- April 15: **Report to the Department Chair what your Unit did for this Program**
- May, 2027: Teacher Appreciation Week
- May 1: Unit Education awards submissions due to the Department Education Chair
- May 15: Department chairmen reports due to division chairmen; cc: national chairman
- June 1: National awards submissions due to National from Department Chair.





## **SCHOLARSHIPS**

The Auxiliary supports various scholarship programs that benefit veterans, the descendants of veterans, and The American Legion Family. If you are interested in applying for a scholarship, check out the scholarship links for eligibility requirements, deadlines, and application forms on [www.legion-aux.org](http://www.legion-aux.org).

Thank you for your interest in the American Legion Auxiliary and our scholarship opportunities. Please note that applications for all ALA National scholarships open every year in September and close on March 1<sup>st</sup> of every year.

### **Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship**

15 -\$5,000 scholarships awarded to students across the country

1. Where can a student find the application?
  - The application may be found at [www.ALForVeterans.org/Scholarships/Children-of-Warriors](http://www.ALForVeterans.org/Scholarships/Children-of-Warriors)
  - This is an online application and submission.
2. When is the scholarship deadline?
  - The final deadline is March 1. The application form will close at 11:59 pm Eastern. No exceptions will be made. National Headquarters receives the entries and disperses them to the departments (states) for the first round of judging.
  - Winners will be announced in May via social media and on the national website [www.ALForVeterans.org](http://www.ALForVeterans.org).
  - Letters will be mailed in May to winners and their sponsoring units.
  - A list of winners will be emailed in May to department secretaries and education chairs.
3. Can anyone apply for the National Presidents' Scholarship?
  - Candidates for this award shall be direct descendants of veterans who served in the United States Armed Forces during eligibility dates for membership in The American Legion and were honorably discharged. Membership in The American Legion Family is not required for this scholarship.
    - Applicants must be in their senior year of high school.
    - A student who is not a senior but taking college courses is not eligible.
    - Homeschooled students may apply providing they are the equivalent of a high school senior.

- Students who have already graduated high school and/or are currently enrolled in college are not eligible
4. **Is community service required and how many hours?**
    - 50 hours of volunteer service is required to be eligible for this scholarship.
    - Verification of the time served must be in writing from the recipient organization(s).
    - Hours served volunteering for the ALA and The Legion Family are acceptable
      - For documentation purposes the unit president or post commander should sign off on the hours by writing a letter.
    - Hours may be spread over the course of the applicant's high school career.
    - Hours may be from one organization or spread across several.
      - If spread across several, documentation must come from each organization.
      - The exception being if the various organizations were arranged through the applicant's school. Then a single letter from the applicant's school counselor listing all the organizations and hours will be sufficient.
  5. **My parents aren't comfortable making copies of our FAFSA due to privacy concerns. Are there other options?**
    - The FAFSA is no longer required.
  6. **Where do applicants turn in their scholarship entry?**
    - Applications are submitted online to National Headquarters. No further action from applicants is needed.
  7. **What happens to the scholarship entry after it has been turned in?**
    - Scholarship entries are distributed to the department (state) in which the applicant resides for the first round of judging. If the entry is selected by the state, then the entry is judged and certified one last time at the division level. There will be three winners in each of the 5 divisions. These entries are certified winners and receive the scholarship.
    - Applications of military students residing overseas will be distributed to their sponsor's home state of record for the first round of judging.
  8. **How is the scholarship judged?**
    - Character/Leadership 30%
    - Essay/Application 30%
    - Academic Achievement 40%
  9. **What is the amount awarded?**
    - \$5,000, 3 per division, for a total of \$75,000 annually
  10. **How long does the student have to use the scholarship?**
    - ALA NHQ must receive the Scholarship Certification Form within 12 months of notification (date on the winner's letter). The scholarship money must be used within 24 months of the winner receiving notification.
  11. **How does a winner claim their scholarship money?**

- a. A Scholarship Certification Form will be enclosed with the winner's notification form, which must be completed by the student and their school's registrar (or an equivalent position if no registrar is available).
  - b. Once completed, the Scholarship Certification Form should be returned to the Education Program Coordinator at NHQ.
  - c. Funds will then be released in the form of a check to the school.
12. Does the scholarship winner get the money or does the school?
- The check is paid to the school for tuition and/or room and board.
- o *In some circumstances, a special exception may be made. For example, for a student in the Air Force Academy, which has no tuition or room and board, the check was sent to the US Treasury on the student's behalf to offset expenses (books, uniforms, etc.)*
12. Is the money paid out in one lump sum or installments?
- o The Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship is paid in one lump sum, payable after NHQ receives the completed Scholarship Certification Form.
13. Is the Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship renewable? Can a winner apply for it again?
- o No, since one of the requirements is the applicant must be a senior in high school. A previous winner would no longer be in high school.

## Non-Traditional Student Scholarship

5 - \$2,000 scholarships awarded to Legion Family members, veterans, and spouses of active duty servicemembers or veterans.

1. Where can a student find the application?
  - o The application may be found at <https://www.ALAforVeterans.org/Scholarships/Non-Traditional-Student-Scholarship>.
2. When is the scholarship deadline?
  - o The final deadline is March 1. The application form will close at 11:59 p.m. Eastern. No exceptions will be made. National Headquarters receives the entries and disperses them to the departments (states) for the first round of judging.
  - o Winners will be announced in May via social media and on the national website at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).
  - o Letters will be mailed in May to winners and their sponsoring units.
  - o A list of winners will be emailed in May to department secretaries and education chairs.
3. Who can apply for the Non-Traditional Student Scholarship?
  - o Applicant must be:
    1. A current member in good standing of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, or Sons of The American Legion, must have held membership for the two preceding years (2023 and

- 2024), and be a paid member for the current (2025) membership year, OR
2. A veteran who served in the United States Armed Forces and was honorably discharged, OR
  3. The spouse of an active duty servicemember or a veteran who was honorably discharged.
    - Applicants must also be a student returning to the classroom after some period of time in which his/her formal education was interrupted or a non-traditional student who is just beginning his/her education at a later point in life.
  4. Do I have to be a full-time undergraduate student?
    - No, part time students are eligible, as are other degree students such as masters or doctorate students.
  5. I was a winner of the Spirit of Youth Scholarship. Am I eligible to apply for the Non-Traditional Student Scholarship?
    - No, SOY scholarship winners are not eligible to receive this scholarship.
  6. Is community service required to receive this scholarship?
    - No, there is no volunteer service required.
  7. I am not comfortable making copies of my FAFSA due to privacy concerns. Are there other options?
    - The FAFSA is no longer required.
  8. Where do I turn my scholarship entry in?
    - Applications are submitted online to National Headquarters. No further action from applicants is needed.
  9. What happens to the scholarship entry after it has been turned in?
    - Scholarship entries are distributed to the department (state) in which the applicant resides for the first round of judging. If the entry is selected by the state, then the entry is judged and certified one last time at the division level. There will be one winner in each of the 5 divisions. These entries are certified winners and receive the scholarship.
  10. How is the scholarship judged?
    - Character/Leadership 25%
    - Initiative/Goals 25%
    - Financial Need 25%
    - Academic Achievement 25%
  11. What is the amount awarded?
    - \$2,000 – one per division – for a total of \$10,000 annually.
  12. How long does the student have to use the scholarship?
    - ALA NHQ must receive the Scholarship Certification Form within 12 months of notification (date on the winner's letter). The scholarship money must be used within 24 months of the winner receiving notification.
  13. How does a winner claim their scholarship money?
    - A Scholarship Certification Form will be enclosed with the winner's notification form, which must be completed by the student and their school's registrar (or an equivalent position if no registrar is available).

- Once completed, the Scholarship Certification Form should be returned to the Education Program Coordinator at NHQ.
  - Funds will then be released in the form of a check to the school.
- 14. Does the scholarship winner get the money or does the school?**
- The check is paid to the school for tuition and/or room and board.
  - *In some circumstances, a special exception may be made. For example, for a student in the Air Force Academy, which has no tuition or room and board, the check was sent to the US Treasury on the student's behalf to offset expenses (books, uniforms, etc.)*
- 15. Is the money paid out in one lump sum or installments?**
- The Non-Traditional Student Scholarship is paid in one lump sum, payable after NHQ receives the completed Scholarship Certification Form.
- 16. Is the Non-Traditional Student Scholarship renewable? Can a winner apply for it again?**
- No, since one of the requirements is the applicant be returning to or starting school after a period of time. A previous winner would no longer be returning to school.

## **Spirit of Youth Scholarship**

The Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund is an umbrella that supports three separate scholarship opportunities for participants in American Legion Auxiliary programs. The Spirit of Youth Scholarship is one of the ways the American Legion Auxiliary gives back to its members. This scholarship is for current Junior Members who are seniors in high school pursuing an undergraduate degree or technical program at an accredited school.

## **Member Loyalty Scholarship**

American Legion Auxiliary Junior members are the future of our organization. To reward those who retain their membership into adulthood, the American Legion Auxiliary offers the Member Loyalty Scholarship to current college students. Ten scholarships, in the amount of \$2,500 each, will be awarded to a current college students. Two scholarships will be awarded in each division of the American Legion Auxiliary.

## **James H Parke Scholarship**

- 1. What is the James H Parke Scholarship?**
  - Each Veterans Affairs medical center may nominate one Veteran Affairs Volunteer Services (VAVS) Student Volunteer to be considered for this scholarship. The nominee must have completed 100 hours of regularly scheduled VAVS during a calendar year prior to September 1. The nominee must also be in the 10th grade or above and have not reached their 19th birthday to be considered.

2. Where do I find more information on this scholarship?
  - Visit [www.volunteer.va.gov/ParkeScholarship.asp](http://www.volunteer.va.gov/ParkeScholarship.asp) to find more information about this scholarship.

### **Samsung American Legion Scholarship**

(ALA Girls/Legion Boys State)

1. Who can apply for the Samsung American Legion Scholarship?
  - Scholarship applications are restricted to high school juniors who attend the current session of either the Legion Boys State or ALA Girls State program and are a direct descendant -i.e. child, grandchild, great grandchild, etc. -or a legally adopted child of a wartime veteran who served on active duty during at least one of the periods of war officially designated as [eligibility dates](#) for membership in [The American Legion](#).
2. What is the deadline for the application of the Samsung American Legion Scholarship?
  - Applications for the Samsung American Legion Scholarship are due no later than the first day of the Legion Boys State or ALA Girls State program, using the online application.
3. Where can I find the online application and/or more information?
  - [www.legion.org/get-involved/scholarships/samsung-american-legion-scholarship](http://www.legion.org/get-involved/scholarships/samsung-american-legion-scholarship)

## **Certification of Scholarship by University or College**

1. Where do I find the form to complete the certification?
  - A Scholarship Certification Form will be enclosed with the winner's notification form. If an additional copy is needed, please send a request to [Education@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:Education@ALAforVeterans.org)
2. Where do I send the certification once it is complete?
  - Send the form to the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters once it is complete. The address is on the bottom of the certification form.
3. By what date do I need to send the certification to the American Legion Auxiliary?
  - Certification needs to be received by the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters 30 days prior to needing money. Once it is received, the turnover period for the money to be sent to the school is two weeks. National Headquarters asks for 30 days so that if there is a discrepancy, it can be figured out before the money is needed.

# ALA ideas for connecting to homeschool groups in your area

*Posted On: Friday, 27 February 2026*

*Guest blog post by Department of Washington Education Committee Chair Chelse Callahan and National Education Committee Chair Barb Washburn*

A sometimes forgotten sector of the education world revolves around homeschooling, and how to reach homeschooled students to inform them about ALA scholarships and other programs in which they could participate. Chelse Callahan, Department of Washington Education Committee chair, provided some helpful strategies for connecting with local homeschool groups. This is especially important as we seek to engage more families in our American Legion Auxiliary programs and scholarship opportunities.

Online tools are a great place to start:

- **Search engines:** Try phrases like "homeschool co-op [your city]" or "homeschool support group near me."
- **Social media:** Facebook and Instagram often host active local homeschool communities. You can search by region and even post in groups asking for contacts or recommendations.
- **State and local associations:** Many states have homeschool associations with directories of local groups.
- **Dedicated websites:** [TheHomeSchoolMom.com](http://TheHomeSchoolMom.com) and [homeschool-life.com](http://homeschool-life.com) both offer searchable databases of homeschool groups and co-ops.
- **Home School Legal Defense Association's** ([hslda.org](http://hslda.org)) website contains a wealth of content focused on homeschooling, as well as a group finder to help locate homeschool groups. Go [here](#) and enter a ZIP code to start a search.

In-person networking is just as valuable:

- **Ask around** – many families know of local homeschoolers through church, 4-H, or youth sports.
- **Visit community hubs** like libraries, churches, and parks where homeschoolers often gather.
- **Attend local homeschool events or curriculum fairs** – these are great places to meet group leaders and share Auxiliary resources.



# Contacting school leaders in summer months

*Posted On: Tuesday, 11 June 2019*

*Guest blog by Kristin Hinshaw, ALA National Headquarters Education Committee Program Coordinator*

Even though classes are not in session during the summer months, there are still plenty of things the American Legion Auxiliary can do for our Education program during that time. Administrators and many teachers keep summer hours. Call the school office to set a date and time for a meeting. If you have to leave a message, don't be concerned. They may only be in the office a couple days a week during the summer. Be sure to explain who you are, why you're calling, and that you want to help.

Some ways the ALA can help our schools include:

- Ask if there are any first-year teachers. They would appreciate your help in setting up and decorating their new classroom. This could be a fun activity for your older Juniors, especially if any are interested in becoming a teacher.
- Get copies of the teachers' supply lists and start collecting for Give 10 to Education. If there's a Back To School Night, ask if you and your unit could present the items in person.
- Make connections with the teachers who would be interested in a Veterans in Community Schools presentation. You'll want to get on their schedule early so both you and the teacher can prepare. You can download *How to Organize a Veterans in Community Schools Activity* from the Education page in the Members Only section at [www.ALForVeterans.org](http://www.ALForVeterans.org).
- If a school has a student uniform or dress code, collect donations for students in need. Some schools who require students to wear a uniform have a uniform exchange at various times during the year. They could use your assistance organizing the styles and sizes before the families come to look through what they have.
- Bring treats in for the staff. Janitors, custodians, and school secretaries work during the summer and are often overlooked during the school year.
- Summer is a good time to donate books to the library while they are getting organized for the new school year. Why not donate *Indivisible - The Story of our Flag* (available at American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales) or *The Poppy Lady: Moina Belle Michael and Her Tribute to Veterans*? Take your Junior members with you to make the presentation. Wear branded shirts and take lots of pictures!

- Ask if you can help beautify and clean up the school. You might plant flowers and pull weeds, help paint the halls and classrooms, or provide maintenance on the playground equipment.
- Contact new PTO/PTA officers and offer assistance. They'll be in the early planning stages for the coming school year. If they sell products for a fundraiser, offer to let them come speak to your unit. Your members may not only be interested in supporting the PTO/PTA, but in the products they are selling as well.

Keep track of what you do so you can include it in your mid-year and annual reports. And, as always, be branded and take lots of pictures!

How the ALA Education program has helped:

Our American Legion Auxiliary Education program knows the importance in acknowledging the sacrifices of our servicemembers' children. To that end, the Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship was created to support the children of our warriors.

This month, we share a letter of gratitude from Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship recipient Amy E. Glover, submitted by the Department of Massachusetts Eugene M. Connor Unit 193:

*"I just wanted to say thank you from my family and I for awarding me this prestigious scholarship! I know it would have been an honor for my grandfather to know that I, his granddaughter, was awarded this scholarship. It means so much to my family and I that you have decided to support me in my education at Wheaton College in Norton, MA. With this scholarship, I will be able to become a high school history teacher and be able to teach the youth about all the amazing things veterans have done for our country. Thank you very much!"*

ALA scholarship information and applications can be found at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/scholarships](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/scholarships), on the ALA Education program Facebook group at [www.Facebook.com](http://www.Facebook.com), or you can contact National Headquarters at (317) 569-4500 or [education@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:education@ALAforVeterans.org).

# Military Child Education Coalition: What is it and how can we engage?

*Posted On: Wednesday, 20 May 2026*

***Guest blog post by Carol Westergren, national Education Committee Southern Division chair***

**When you navigate to the ALA Education Committee page on the national website, you may have noticed a link for the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC). If you have not clicked on the link, you should look at this website. The mission of the Military Child Education Coalition is to ensure quality education experiences for military children. The MCEC is an organization that the American Legion Auxiliary promotes, and we share the same mission – to take care of military children.**

**Let me illuminate what the MCEC is and how we can share resources. MCEC is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting children of our military servicemembers as they navigate the challenges of military lifestyle, especially the military move. The MCEC helps children with social, emotional, and academic challenges with the goal of connecting schools, organizations, and other resources to make sure these students are college-, work-, and life-ready.**

**The three principal areas of the MCEC are education, advocacy, and collaboration. You can find MCEC collaborating with teachers, school staff, and parents to understand the unique needs of military children. They offer educational programs and resources designed to empower parents and give their children the tools they need to succeed, along with training and resources to give insight into educators' need to serve the children of those who serve.**

**Their advocacy includes help to ensure the child can enroll in the desired school and their credits transfer. They collaborate with education agencies to ensure state-to-state learning paces and curriculum tracks are standardized and that students can transfer and be accepted into special programs. They advocate with schools and military installations and policy makers to improve the enrollment process. They also collaborate and build partnerships with other nonprofit, military commands, and organizations like the ALA to create dedicated support for our military families.**

**What can you and the ALA do to help the MCEC and our military families? The MCEC aligns with several of our programs, and we can support them through our participation in our education-focused activities. Their resources are available for our use when we Purple Up! for military children in April and when we advocate for our military families during the Washington Conference – their website contains ample information to support our cause.**

**I recommend you share information about this organization at your ALA meetings, during our community events, and when collaborating with our teachers during National Education Week, and make sure they have the information.**

**You may ask why this matters – because two organizations working together to make education stronger and safer for military children will make our military families stronger and safer and feel like they are loved and taken care of.**

# **Purple Star Schools program is a great ALA resource**

*Posted On: Friday, 20 March 2026*

*Guest blog post by National Education Committee Member Nancy Babis*

**Have you heard of the Purple Star Schools program? It's a vital education connection for our military children, but many people are not aware it exists.**

**A Purple Star School is a public or charter school whose mission is to help military families maintain continuity of their child's education through changes in duty stations. Forty-four states currently have Purple Star Schools, with five more states pending legislation.**

**Purple Star Schools are a key piece in the readiness puzzle for military families who traditionally move every two to four years. These schools give parents peace of mind and help smooth the transition for students, keeping them on track for academic success.**

**Educators at these schools receive training on military culture, identifying the challenges students face when "being the new kid" again, and tools to help identify the social-emotional effects of relocation. These schools are typically located near military installations.**

**The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) is a nonprofit organization formed 26 years ago and serves as an advocate for Purple Star Schools. To learn more about MCEC and this important education program, visit <https://militarychild.org/programs-and-initiatives/purple-star-schools/>.**