



March 3, 2020

SUBJECT: West Virginia Future Leaders Program (FLP) Information Paper

1. **Summary:** FLP is a high school program emphasizing leadership, citizenship, and life skills (personal growth). The program is a low cost alternative to the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) and created by the West Virginia Military Authority (WVMA), commonly referred to as the West Virginia National Guard (WVNG), a community-based organization. The program curriculum consists of four broad areas: leadership, citizenship, life skills (personal growth), and military science. FLP is not a recruiting program, although some recruiting benefits may result.
2. **Facts:**
 - a. Army JROTC is a congressionally funded civics class offered at high schools. Schools deliver the program in a military setting taught by retired service members. Army JROTC program cost schools approximately \$188K per year per school and requires the hiring of retired active duty service members as instructors. Given the program cost and the long waiting list, many schools are unable to receive a program.
 - b. West Virginia currently has 29 JROTC programs and one National Defense Corps of Cadets (NDCC) program located throughout the state. The programs include 19 Army, 2 Marine, 2 Navy, 6 Air Force, and 1 Army-based NDCC.
 - c. Many WV school districts would like a low cost alternative program with more flexibility in terms of topics taught and frequency of classes.
 - d. FLP in August 2019 with the introduction of FLP 1 (course code 7795), with a planned roll-out of FLP 2-4 (course codes 7796-7798, respectively) over the next two-three years.
 - e. FLP instructors are military veterans trained by the WVMA and have completed the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) substitute teacher training course. The WVDE designed a training

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program for FLP instructors that includes six hours of college coursework (currently offered by Marshall University), and twelve hours of WVDE eLearning modules. FLP instructors are subject matter experts in leadership, personal development, and military science.

- f. Five WV school districts use the approved FLP course as a local elective credit for students successfully completing the class.
- g. According to the West Virginia University (WVU) Bureau of Business and Economic Research, WV's population was projected to fall to approximately 1,806,000 by 2030; in 2018 WV's population was approximately 1,805,000.
- h. The WV Department of Education (WVDE) reported 10,000+ school children as "homeless" for the 2018-2019 school year¹.
- i. Younger adults are leaving WV in large numbers, becoming incarcerated, or remain "homeless" due to the opioid epidemic, natural disasters (most notably the 2016 floods), and lack of good employment opportunities. In July 2019, WVU reported the state's labor forced participation rate at 54.8 percent, meaning almost half of West Virginians are unable to work or have stopped looking for work.

3. Important Program Concepts:

- a. FLP's mission is to provide West Virginia students with a quality educational program emphasizing skills needed to succeed in life, and to connect them with communities by providing service and mentorship opportunities.
- b. Of secondary importance is informing students of the economic opportunities existing in West Virginia, to help them create a plan for the future, and to entice them to remain in the Mountain State.
- c. FLP requires school or community service hours. Although students may complete those hours with other organizations, the program strongly encourages activities that require social interaction and that has an impact on someone's life.

¹ This number reflects the federal "McKinney-Vento" definition: students living in shelters, hotels/motels, cars, RVs, or with family members away from their primary residence. Foster care students are not counted as "homeless." included in these numbers.

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- d. FLP students may serve the school in ways such as creating Color Guard teams, raising and retiring school flags daily, and assisting in clean-up or beautification projects.
- e. Instructors have completed the WVDE substitute teacher training, and are enrolled in an alternative teacher program to provide an FLP authorization. FLP instructors as subject matter experts in leadership, personal development, and military science.
- f. The curriculum uses teacher-style lesson plans and incorporates many hand-on activities. The curriculum topics fall into our broad categories: leadership, citizenship, life skills (personal development), and military science.
- g. Examples of leadership topics include Introduction to Leadership Principles, Leadership Case Studies, Medal of Honor Recipients, Public Speaking, Public Presentation, and Leadership Roles.
- h. Examples of citizenship topics include Flag Etiquette, Types of Government, Types of Economies, examination of America's founding documents (Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and all amendments), and a review of American Symbols and Values.
- i. Examples of life skills (personal growth) topics include Anti-Bullying, Resiliency, Substance Abuse, Suicide Prevention, Financial Literacy, Time Management, Study Habits, and Career Direction.
- j. Examples of military science topics includes Customs and Courtesies, Drill and Ceremony, Physical Fitness, Military Hierarchy, and skillsets students may learn in Scouting or other outdoor programs like First Aid, Map Reading, and Land Navigation.
- k. The FLP uniform consists of a FLP logo embroidered polo shirt, khaki cargo pants, black belt, "coyote" brown boots, and a FLP logo baseball style hat for outdoor use. The uniform is intended for once a week wear, along with a FLP athletic shirt, also for once a week wear. The uniform improves esprit de corps and easily identifies students as members of the program.
- l. The FLP curriculum is modular based and allows counties the flexibility to tailor the program to meet individual school needs and preferences.
- m. In keeping with the spirit of flexibility and responsiveness, counties may split an instructor between two schools provided the schools are

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close together, that the instructor is provide an instructional period, and is allotted sufficient commute time.

- n. The program cost is \$80,000 per year per instructor with reimbursement up to \$5,000 per year for travel expenses. School districts transfer funds to the WVMA on a monthly basis. The WMA is responsible for all instructor pay, benefits, and program equipment (i.e. uniforms, guidons, color guard equipment, and instructional-specific equipment). Instructors are WVMD employees.
- o. Grants may be available for economically challenged counties.

4. Establishing a Program and Timeline:

- a. The first step in creating a FLP is gauging interest (faculty, students, parents, and school board). Schools have started the program with as few as one class, or as many as six.
- b. Given sufficient interest, the County Board of Education must approve the FLP classes as a local concentration (elective) and sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the WVMA. The FLP staff is happy to brief faculty, school boards, parents, students, or other interested parties.
- c. Establishing a program may be done in as little as two months if needed, although five-six months is preferred.

5. Program information: For more information, contact Program Manager David P. Eldridge, at [eldridge.david.p@gmail](mailto:eldridge.david.p@gmail.com) or david.p.eldridge.nfg@mail.mil.