



August 19, 2013

Parents and Students,

The purpose of this letter is to introduce and explain **The Western Virginia Military Academy**. Let me begin by giving you a little background on the organization and its purpose.

What is **The Western Virginia Military Academy**? It is a history exploratory club for students, ages 10 through 15 years of age. The organization has been in existence since the spring of 2007. Our primary activity will be learning Civil War era military drill and history, and soldier life during that time period. We will be portraying the students in a fictitious young men's military academy from Western Virginia in 1860. Thus we will not have to portray either Union or Confederate soldiers. We will simply be portraying students during the pre-war years before Americans were asked to choose sides. It is my hope that these young men will learn, while having fun, to respect each other, how to accept constructive criticism, how to work with a group toward a common goal, leadership skills, and – perhaps – to carry these attitudes over into their academic classes resulting in improvement for those who may need it.

What the **Western Virginia Military Academy** is not:

- It is not a real military organization.
- We will not be drilling with real weapons.
- It is not affiliated with any other local or national organization nor limited to students of any particular school.
- It is not intended to prepare students for the real military.
- Its purpose is not to glorify war in any way.

What will be expected of your child if he participates in **The Western Virginia Military Academy**? To begin with, parental permission is required for participation. Participation is voluntary but does come with some responsibility. Participants will be required to follow the group rules when they do participate or be asked to cease participation for either a term of meetings or permanently. NOTE: School disciplinary measures apply to academy functions, as well. However, I reserve the right to discipline cadets by exclusion from activities even if there is no suspension from the school office, or if the school suspension does not cover the time of the academy activity. Cadets that choose

to ignore our rules and guidelines repeatedly can have their membership in the academy terminated for a period of time or permanently.

Another major responsibility is the care of clothing and equipment issued to cadets for any specific event. While most of our property remains at school, whenever we have a weekend event, a uniform and accessories may be issued to each student at school before the activity. If so, they are expected to take care of what they are issued and return it in a timely fashion and in good condition after the event.

The academy has a demerit/merit system in effect the which cadets receive demerits for infractions in behavior both at school and at academy activities and for improper care of equipment. Cadets will receive merits for exemplary behavior and grades. These merits will be used in determining promotions in rank as well as having an impact on disciplinary measures.

Most regular meetings of the WVMA will occur on Thursdays immediately after school in the HMS media center, room 107, on the first floor. These meetings will last until 5:00, thus each cadet will need a ride home at that time.

This group has received over \$10,000.00 in funding from Cabell County Schools, the Cabell County Schools foundation, the West Virginia legislature, private donations, and the HMS faculty senate. This funding has been used for uniforms, equipment, etc., for the academy, thus at this time I will not be charging membership fees, nor will I require any financial obligation for clothing or equipment unless a cadet loses or damages materials issued to him.

Parents are welcome to observe any of our activities, in fact this is encouraged. If you have any questions regarding this organization, its purpose, rules and guidelines, or its activities, please feel free to contact me.

You may contact me at either my email, **msheets@access.k12.wv.us** by calling **304-525-5065** (home phone) or **304-942-1863** (cell phone).

Thank you,

Mr. Michael Sheets
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Huntington Middle School