

Greetings Parents,

OXFORD HIGH SCHOOL

Thank you for supporting your child in their choice of joining the Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) from among many high school options. We want to share with you some information about our Program and the tremendous opportunities that it provides for your child. This Program is for young people willing to rise to the challenge of living by a set of core values while learning the value of leadership, self-reliance and a sense of service that will reap significant benefits and help them to become better citizens.

**We are not military recruiters; we do not advocate for any military branch; there is no requirement for JROTC cadets to join the military after high school.** Historically less than one tenth of our graduates choose military service through an academy, college ROTC, or enlistment. Our program is fundamentally about **citizenship, leadership, service, teamwork, and above all, developing character.** Cadets receive lessons in followership, leadership theory, and hands-on leadership experience. We do **not** teach (or tolerate) the stereotypical military leadership model of yelling, physical discipline/punishment, or any other form of physical or verbal abuse. We employ a positive leadership model with emphasis on the power of courtesy and manners, building relationships, and leading by example.

Students drawn to JROTC typically enjoy the relationships, shared values, and variety of activities. It is a place where **good kids find the support to be great kids.** We emphasize academic performance, professional appearance, personal responsibility, and moral conduct. The bedrock of our curriculum is focused on character building, college and adult life skills, leadership development, self-discipline, and physical fitness.

As part of relationship building, many fun and enriching activities go along with marching, uniform wear, academic work, and fitness training. We have Teams for Color Guard, Precision Marksmanship Team (air rifles), and Physical Training Team. Cadets can **letter in JROTC.** Cadets also look forward to activities such as Cadet Leadership Summer Camps, team building exercises, games, field trips, college visits, field days, picnics, and the end of year formal Cadet Ball. Community service is an important part of our program. Our Color Guard Teams march- on the National Flag at events all over the city, including Ole Miss sports games. We collectively contribute many hours of local community service annually.

The JROTC program provides Cadets with their Leadership, PE, Government, and Health credits. Cadets must get a school physical before participating. They must also adhere to Marine Corps grooming standards and maintain the Marine Corps uniforms, which are be provided free of charge. We understand the desire for kids to want to be “cool” and work carefully with Cadets regarding grooming standards and uniform wear; it is a patient process. ROTC is **not just for young men**—half of our Cadets are female.

Cadets reap a host of tangible benefits from obtaining their JROTC Certificate of Completion including scholarships and promotions. Please read the accompanying letter from Senator Wicker for real-world examples of the benefits of our program. This is a first-class program in a first-class school—thank you in advance for adding JROTC to your list of possible great opportunities!

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**Wicker’s JROTC Act Provides New Opportunities High School Cadets More Likely to Graduate, Attend College**

The experience of serving in Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (JROTC) programs can have real benefits. A Rand Corporation study found that students who participate in JROTC have higher grades, better attendance rates, and are more likely to graduate from high school than other students.

I introduced legislation in 2018 to expand the availability of JROTC programs to more high schools across the country. The JROTC Opportunities for Transformational Change Act of 2018 authorized funding and reforms to add 100 new units at schools in rural and underserved areas. The bill was included in the defense authorization act and became law with President Trump’s signature. Two years later, this law is continuing to expand opportunities for communities and young people.

I am pleased to report that last year’s defense bill built on my 2018 proposal by setting a minimum requirement of 3,700 units nationwide in 10 years. Achieving this baseline will add 188 more units than exist today. Each of these new programs will provide young leaders lessons about service, character, and citizenship while encouraging better health and wellness.

# Success of Mississippi Cadets Inspires Positive Change

Mississippi is a prime example of the impact a JROTC unit can have

on a community. In fact, it was the success of students enrolled in JROTC programs in our state capital that originally inspired me to introduce legislation to expand these programs to other schools. The Jackson Public School system, a district facing significant challenges, includes seven schools that host JROTC units. Across these schools in 2018, 90 percent of graduating seniors who participated in JROTC were accepted to an institution of higher learning and received more than $7.5 million in scholarship offers.

Outcomes clearly are better for students who participate in these programs, but more programs are needed. Before my legislation, funding was flat or declining for JROTC, and hundreds of high schools were on the waitlist for a unit. We are now closing the gap.

# Support for Rural and Underserved Communities

The JROTC Act is also working to improve the availability of enhanced opportunities where they are needed most – in rural and other low-income communities. Five times as many urban schools have a unit compared to rural schools. Only three percent of high schools with fewer than 500 students have a JROTC unit. This divide puts students from rural states like Mississippi at a distinct disadvantage.

To address this problem, the JROTC Act prioritizes new programs for schools in underserved areas. It also gives high schools greater flexibility in hiring instructors, which can often be a challenge in small communities.

As an ROTC cadet in college, I know firsthand the benefits of a military education experience while in school. Numerous other military, business, and government leaders can trace their success to a JROTC or ROTC program, including Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, Housing Secretary Ben Carson, former Secretary of State Colin Powell, entrepreneur Sam Walton, and football legend Lou Holtz.

Expanding the availability of these programs will give more members

of this new generation of leaders the opportunity to learn, mature, and succeed.