

JLAB 2012

JROTC UNIT BEST PRACTICE

ACADEMIC TEAM

Calumet High School JROTC - Calumet, MI

Introduction - While many of the goals of our JLAB program at Calumet High School are common, our approach to achieving those goals is unique. This paper will describe key aspects of our JLAB program that could be incorporated into other JROTC battalions.

JLAB Goals - In addition to the stated goals of improving SAT/ACT scores, increasing interest in college admissions, demonstrating the academic strength of the JROTC program and boosting team and unit spirit, our JLAB team has adopted the following goals:

- Improve proficiency in all academic classes.
- Earn High School credit for participation in JLAB.
- Earn College credit for participation in JLAB.
- Develop and refine study skills and test taking strategy.
- Develop teamwork and leadership skills.
- Improve proficiency in the seven citizenship skills.

Overview. JLAB is a co-curricular program similar to other programs such as drill, marksmanship and raiders. Like its more traditional counterparts, JLAB enhances the JROTC core curriculum while instilling a sense of pride, teamwork, and leadership. Here are some ways in which our JLAB program differs from these other programs:

- JLAB is an accredited high school class that meets after school or on Saturday 4-5 days each week. The class was approved by the High School Principal, Curriculum Committee and School Board. The Battalion S3 enters JLAB on the weekly training schedule as with all other classes and training. A typical JLAB weekly training schedule looks like this:

- o Monday/Wednesday: 3:30 – 5:00 PM (or 5:00 – 6:30 PM during drill season)

Focus: Academic Study Group

- o Tuesday/Thursday: 3:30 – 6:30 PM

Focus: Leadership Team: Advanced JROTC Curriculum, General Marshall, General MacArthur; Academic Team: Advanced Math, English, Science, and Current Events.

- Course accreditation requirements differ from school to school. Generally, administrators and curriculum committees will require some detail concerning what will be taught and how it applies to state and national standards. They will also be interested in assessments and the amount of contact time you will have with JLAB cadets. The majority of what you need is available in the JROTC Curriculum Manager Program. Please feel free to contact our SAI, Major Michael Farley at mfarley@clkschools.org for an example accreditation packet.

- JLAB includes a combination of classroom instruction, independent study, online assignments, and distance learning.

- Since JLAB is a class, it is open to all interested JROTC cadets. At our school a typical class size is 25 to 30 cadets. Cadets are broken down into two teams, a leadership team focusing primarily on the JROTC curriculum and an academic team focusing on the high school core curriculum.

- JLAB Lock-In. In addition to the weekly training schedule, JLAB teams have Saturday sessions several times throughout the school year. The two Saturdays prior to online testing are extended training days. We use these days for unit review and testing for the Leadership Team and Zero Hour Threat practice tests for the Academic Team. During testing, cadets keep track of incorrect answers and continue to re-train and re-test until they achieve 100% accuracy. This is a typical JLAB Lock-In schedule:

- o 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM: Review and Testing
- o 12:00 – 1:00 PM: Lunch/Break
- o 1:00 – 5:00 PM: Review and Testing
- o 5:00 – 6:00 PM: Pizza Party
- o 6:00 PM – 6:00 AM: Movies, Music, Team Building, Games, Food, and Fun.

Philosophy. In order to understand why we have taken this approach and how JLAB fits into the overall JROTC program, it's important to briefly outline our educational philosophy. Our SAI has quantified the JROTC mission "To Motivate Young People to Become Better Citizens" into several key, measurable areas, most notably academic proficiency. Our JROTC battalion strives for academic excellence in the JROTC curriculum and virtually all academic disciplines offered at our high school. Promotions, positions and rewards are tied to academic achievement. Our JLAB program is designed to enhance JROTC classroom instruction as well as reinforce academic instruction throughout the school.

Composition. Once enrolled in JLAB, cadets choose to participate in either the Leadership or Academic Team. The SAI encourages Freshmen/LET 1 to participate in the Leadership Team for one or two years before advancing to the Academic Team. This allows junior cadets time to master the JROTC curriculum and learn

essential study skills and habits necessary for academic achievement. After one or two years on the Leadership Team, cadets may advance to the Academic Team. Here is the typical progression of a cadet in JLAB:

- Freshman/LET 1: Leadership Team. Milestone: EXPLORE Test
- Sophomore/LET 2: Leadership or Academic Team. Milestone: PLAN Test
- Junior/LET 3: Academic Team. Milestones: ACT Test/ASVAB
- Senior/LET 4: JLAB Academic Advisor/Mentor. Milestone: College Application/Acceptance

At Calumet High School we use standardized testing to assess student and school performance in the high school core curriculum. In JLAB we use these assessments to help focus cadets on areas of strength and weakness. Cadets use their strengths to help others learn and grow.

Competition. Since only six cadets can enter the JLAB online competition, selection for participation at this level is a competitive process. The primary factors used to determine the top six cadets in each team are effort, teamwork and test scores. Ultimately the team will select the top six members including the team captain. The top six cadets on each team will take the academic or leadership online exams. Once selected, the top six cadets must take both online exams. There can be no substitutions.

Resources. There are numerous ACT/SAT resources and test preparation sites available online. In addition to those published in the official JROTC announcement, our JLAB team uses the following resources:

- Teachers: Don't underestimate this resource! Cultivate relationships with teachers willing to instruct and mentor your JLAB cadets. During JLAB classes, cadets compile a listing of questions or topics and schedule teachers to come in and assist. Be sure to give the teacher plenty of advance notice. In addition to improving academically, this has the added advantages of building partnerships and high-lighting the academic side of the JROTC program.

- Technology: Every student in our school has been issued an iPad. Our cadets have downloaded the entire JROTC curriculum as well as "Soldier, Statesman, Peacemaker" by Jack Uldrich and several ACT/SAT preparation guides. This can also be done with laptops or home computers. Additionally, there are many free programs that can extend the classroom from its traditional boundaries. We use the following free sites:

- o "Google Apps for Education" (<http://www.google.com/apps/intl/en/edu/>) This site allows you to publish assignments, documents, presentations, and schedules for all of your JROTC activities, including JLAB.

- o "Dropbox" (www.dropbox.com/) This site enables you to save photos, documents, and presentations and retrieve them from any computer with internet access. Instructors and cadets can email links to their "Dropbox" documents to one another.

- o "My Big Campus" (www.mybigcampus.com/). Our school purchased a site license to My Big Campus but there is a also free version online. My Big Campus is a fully functional virtual classroom. This is by far the most robust site we use. Instructors are able to post assignments, documents and presentations as well as generate discussions. Cadets can turn in assignments and post documents for review as well as respond to and generate discussions. Instructors and cadets can also post announcements

- o “Facebook.” In addition to internal battalion sites, cadets and instructors can tap into the collective knowledge and resources available to all of JROTC through “JROTC World” an exciting new site created by College Options Foundation specially for JROTC. Just go to “Facebook” (www.facebook.com/), search for and “like” JROTC World.
- o Cadet Distance Learning Site. Enhance classroom instruction by requiring cadets to go to <http://www.jrotcdl.com/JROTC/bin/JROTC.html#> and register for the distance learning classes offered by US Army Cadet Command.

College Credit. In addition to high school credit, our JLAB program offers college credit through RT&G Associates and Adams State College (http://www.leadershipcredit.net/hs_programs.php). There are a number of course options but we have decided to focus on HIST179, “American History and Its Veterans” on the Leadership Team and ID179, “College Options” on the Academic Team. Tuition is very affordable at \$60 per credit hour. For course descriptions and syllabus please go to http://www.leadershipcredit.net/hs_programs_asc_course_list.php?cid=187.

Costs. Our main expenses are food and college tuition.

- Food. Since we stay at school late, we provide snacks for our JLAB class. We are able to get some snacks from the school cafeteria but spend an average of \$20 per week. JLAB Lock In days are more expensive, costing about \$100. We normally go to out to eat after each JLAB online competition costing another \$100. Our total estimated food expense is:
 - o 38 Weeks x \$20 = \$760
 - o 4 JLAB Lock In’s x \$100 = \$400
 - o 4 After Competition Dinners x \$100 = \$400

o Total Food Expense: \$1560

- College Tuition. This will vary depending on the number of cadets enrolled in JLAB and the number of credit hours selected. Both HIST179 and ID179 are one to three hour classes depending on the amount of time and work instructors and cadets are willing to put in. If 12 cadets take the one credit course, tuition will cost \$720.

- JLAB Nationals are fully funded by US Army Cadet Command and College Options Foundation. Schools advancing to the National Competition are given a generous stipend of up to \$3500 for travel to and from Washington D.C. Once in Washington, D.C., food, lodging and transportation are covered. However, since this is often a once in a lifetime opportunity for cadets, instructors may consider extending the trip at the school's expense. Some schools come early or remain in Washington D.C. after the competition. Additional expenses vary based on length of stay, etc.

- Source of Funds. Every school has a preferred method of fundraising. Some schools even have JROTC Booster Clubs or Support Groups. Here are some examples of how we raise funds to support JLAB.

o Publicize. Let people know what you're doing and they will support you. We briefed our JLAB program at a recent VFW meeting and one member gave us a check for \$100. We didn't even ask for money. He just wrote a check and handed it to our SAI. One cadet's mother stopped by school during JLAB class. She asked where we got the pizzas and donated \$100 on the spot.

- o Local Educational Foundation. Our school district has a support organization called the CLK Foundation. We requested and received scholarships to cover college tuition for our cadets.
- o Local Military and Civic Organizations. Our local Elks Lodge has teamed up with the VFW, VFW Ladies Auxiliary and American Legion to host a Spaghetti Dinner to support JLAB. While the Elks are running the show, JROTC cadets will be setting up, serving and cleaning up as well as interacting with the public. We expect to raise over \$2,000. In addition to assisting with fundraising, these organizations will often make direct contributions to youth programs like JROTC.
- o College Options Foundation Fundraisers. We are selling the “Soldier Fuel” energy bars. They cost \$90 per case for 90 energy bars and sell for \$2.00 each. So far they have been very popular among cadets and students. College Options also offers paracord survival bracelets and ACT/SAT score builder DVDs. There is one huge difference between the College Options fundraisers and all others – the funds raised by College Options Foundation are used to support JROTC cadets in activities like JLAB. Please check out these fundraising options at http://www.collegeoptionsfoundation.net/fundraising_info.php.

Results: This is the second year of our expanded JLAB program and the first year JLAB has been offered as an accredited class. In this short time, we have achieved some significant results and we have great hope for the future of this program. Here are some JLAB results and statistics:

- The Calumet High School JROTC Leadership Team has been among the top 40 teams in U.S. Army Cadet Command for the past two years, advancing to Nationals in Washington, D.C.
- Our JLAB Academic Team earned a third place finish this year – the first time we have placed in the Academic competition.

- JLAB Cadets in their Junior year of school averaged 7.6 points above the school average on the ACT. One amazing cadet scored a 35 on the ACT.
- 18 JROTC Cadets enrolled in the JLAB class will earn high school credit this year.
- 6 JROTC Cadets on the JLAB Leadership Team will earn college credit this year.
- Our battalion is better prepared for our Triennial Formal Inspection.
- Grades, attendance and motivation are significantly better among JLAB cadets.

Quotes: The following is a list of quotes by our JLAB team members:

- “JLAB has helped me tremendously in school; this marking period I’ve received my best grades since kindergarten – seven A’s!” Joshua O’Dell, Sophomore, JLAB Academic Team
- “I’ve discovered that the best way to prepare for standardized testing is to commit to studying on a regular basis. Through JLAB, studying multiple times a week, I scored in the 96th percentile on the PSAT/NMSQT and improved from a composite score of 32 to 35 on the ACT.” Kari Oja, Junior, 2011 JLAB Leadership Team Captain, 2012 JLAB Academic Team Captain
- “I am proud to be in JLAB. I achieved my first 4.0 GPA as well as great improvement in my leadership and social skills. The friendship and love within JLAB is so strong that it can’t be called friendship, it’s family. The way we work together and achieve the unachievable is outstanding. I don’t know where I’d be without it.” Abbey Kesti, Freshman, JROTC Leadership Team
- “JLAB has had a tremendous impact on my life; not so much grades but with love and support. The people I have bonded and worked with have truly

become my extended family. We work to help one another in any sort of situation. Each and every one of us has strengths and weaknesses; we work not only to improve weaknesses, but to make the strengths stronger at the same time. We learn to love and trust each other.” Olivia Torola, Freshman, JLAB Leadership Team