

Guidance for West Virginia Common Ground Partnership Speaker Series Participants

As part of the Common Ground Guest Speaker Series, you will become an ambassador of your organization, working to foster positive relationships with administrators, school staff and students. This activity is designed to allow military service members a unique opportunity to meet the needs of schools for additional resources and expertise. By answering school requests, you will play an important role in ensuring that West Virginia school systems have the capacity and supports needed to produce a productive, civically active, and well-educated workforce for years to come.

It is our hope that through a collaborative effort designed to address topics such as career exploration, staying in school, avoiding drug use, preventing bullying, the American Flag, the importance of literacy and historic/patriotic events, that military service members will positively impact the success of students statewide.



Prior to Entering the Classroom

Military service members participating in the Common Ground Speaker Series as guest speakers are supervised by school staff at all times. Presenters are selected by partnering organizations to meet school requests in accordance with their familiarity of assigned topics.

If you are employed by a Common Ground Partner, inquire with your organization's leadership for initial guidance. Andrew Higginbotham is the director of events for Providing Military Support to Civil Authorities at the West Virginia National Guard (WVNG). If you are in the WVNG and have questions about a speaker series request that you received, require information about available training for topics or are uncomfortable addressing assigned topic(s), please contact Andrew Higginbotham at 304.561.6633 or Andrew.D.Higginbotham.ctr@mail.mil. Robert Mellace may also answer questions you have about school visits.

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Available Trainings & Resources for Topics

One may review trainings and resources recommended by Common Ground Partners for Speaker Series participants at <https://wvde.us/commonground/>. Select the “Common Ground Homepage” option. Then, access the “Speaker Series” section for details.

While Common Ground visits are not recruiting activities, as students receive information from Common Ground speakers and participate in career exploration or other activities, their interest in military careers may grow. The West Virginia Department of Education recognizes military careers as one of many valuable opportunities for students to experience success in life. West Virginia school districts are aware that the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001, Federal Law 106-398, and the Speaker Series section of our website provide guidance for military recruitment in schools.



If you are participating in the Common Ground Speaker Series and would like to conduct recruiting activities or events, you must first communicate with school administrators and appropriate school staff to confirm that those activities are approved by the school district.

School Contacts & Resources

West Virginia School Directory — Use this resource to contact local schools and administrators:
http://wvde.state.wv.us/ed_directory/

WVDE Staff Directory and Staff According to Topics — Use this resource to contact state experts on a variety of topics:
<https://wvde.us/wvde-directories/>



Questions? Contact Robert Mellace at 304.558.7010 or rmellace@k12.wv.us or Stephanie Hayes at 304.558.3199 or stephanie.hayes@k12.wv.us.

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