

RE: Change to Civil Air Patrol Class

Effective: 2020-2021 School Year

Proposal: The Civil Air Patrol (CAP) program was implemented in 2010 through a mutual agreement between the New Fairfield Board of Education and the Civil Air Patrol National Program and utilizes a curriculum developed by the Civil Air Patrol National Headquarters. The CAP course is built around four tenets: Aerospace Education, Physical Education, Leadership, and Emergency Services. These tenets are taught and maintained through the use of a military protocol, various drills and ceremonies, and a rank structure that students follow throughout the program. Within our district, the CAP has been important as a New Fairfield High School elective course, a New Fairfield Middle School extra-curricular club, and a school-community partnership activity.

Unfortunately, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain program enrollment within the confines of a traditional high school schedule. As state graduation requirements become more rigorous, students are choosing more advanced and varied core courses that will fulfill these mandated requirements and address college entrance criteria. For the 2019-20 school year, there are eight students enrolled in the program. The numbers for the CAP class over the last five years are as follows: 2015-16 - 22 students; 2016-17 - 17 students, 2017-18 -15 students; 2018-19 - 17 students; 2019-20 - 8 students.

Low enrollment impacts student collaboration and leadership opportunities, just as it impacts the district's budget. If the current trend continues, the course will not be a feasible offering. In addition, it is difficult to attract senior (adult) members to participate in the course during daytime hours, and their participation is an essential element of the CAP program.

In an effort to save and revitalize this program, we propose that the 801st Civil Air Patrol Squadron continues to be an elective course offering of New Fairfield High School, but that it be moved to evening hours on the school campus, allowing more students and senior adult members to participate. The CAP class would meet one evening per week for two hours for the entire school year (80 hours) and require participation in specific weekend activities (40 hours) for a total of 120 hours to earn one credit. Upon successful completion of course requirements, high school students would be granted one credit. The course would be taught by qualified staff and the same measures of student achievement and conduct would remain in place.

In addition, we propose that the middle school CAP club, currently held after-school, be combined with the high school program to increase numbers, allowing for more collaboration and mentoring opportunities. This combination will also allow for consolidation of e-service accounts and other purchased services. Middle school students will participate in all activities and may choose to take tests to be promoted, but tests are not required. High school students, on the other hand, must take all tests as part of their grade and to earn credit.

The benefits of a combined evening program are as follows:

- provide greater flexibility to students, offering them the opportunity to earn an additional credit above and beyond the traditional school day;
- eliminate scheduling conflicts that students face when they must choose to take CAP or a singleton advanced placement or other course offered during the same time frame;
- combine MS and HS membership, increasing numbers and offering more collaboration, mentoring, and leadership opportunities
- increase the program's capacity to enlist senior adult membership (a minimum of 3 senior adult members is required per Squadron);
- allow the CAP program to be run as a traditional Squadron while still retaining HS partnership and resources;
- allow greater opportunity to partner with other area CAP squadrons;
- retain CAP as a community resource in New Fairfield.

This change may require a small change to the budget to pay a faculty member, but the budgetary impact could be offset in some ways, including eliminating the cost of a second eservice account, and eliminating the need for a second stipend for the middle school..

This proposal is made in the hopes that this program can be revitalized to benefit more students for years to come.