



Statement from the Woodland Park RE-2 Board of Education on the Approval of an Air Force Junior ROTC Program

May 29, 2026

The Board of Education voted to approve bringing an Air Force Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (AFJROTC) program to our district. We want to share with our community what this decision means and address some questions that have been raised about the program.

The Air Force JROTC program was presented to the Board of Education in its May 13th Regular Meeting during discussion on Curriculum Review & Course Reconfiguration, then again at the Special Board Meeting on May 28th by the Director of Academics and it was unanimously approved by the board at that meeting. To watch the full presentation from staff and the following board discussion, you can access the recorded meeting here:

[Woodland Park School District RE-2 May 28th Special Board Meeting](#)

[JROTC Frequently Asked Questions "Mythbusters"](#)

This decision followed a multi-year process. The district applied for a unit three years ago and has since completed a headquarters site survey and program review. Air Force Junior ROTC is a Title 10, Congressionally mandated leadership-education program that has operated since 1967 and today serves roughly 96,000 cadets in more than 800 units nationwide. Its curriculum is independently accredited by Cognia under the same standards applied to America's school systems and is aligned to national academic standards in science, mathematics, social studies, and more. In short, this is a rigorous, accredited academic program with a long track record.

JROTC is a Credit-Bearing Academic Program

Air Force Junior ROTC is often misunderstood as an extracurricular activity, so we want to clarify what it actually is: a sequence of accredited, credit-bearing academic courses that meet during the regular school day, taught by certified instructors, and counted toward graduation requirements. JROTC is delivered as part of the master schedule, like English, science, or any other course.

The curriculum develops leadership and life skills, financial literacy, and college and career readiness; it includes a structured introduction to civics and national government, coursework in effective communication and interpersonal skills, and units on health, wellness, and fitness. Upper-level elective modules let cadets concentrate in areas such as financial literacy and college-entrance-exam preparation. Consistent with the Air Force's identity as the service of technology, the program also opens STEM pathways in fields like aerospace, rocketry, and flight.

It is also worth underscoring how the program is structured day to day. JROTC is a student-led program in which the instructors serve as mentors rather than as the center of activity, giving cadets real responsibility and leadership experience that a typical class does not. That combination, including genuine academic credit and accreditation on one hand, student-led leadership development on the other, is what makes JROTC distinct from both a standard elective and an after-school club.

What is the overall expected budget impact of approving the JROTC program?

Instructional costs. JROTC requires two Air Force–certified instructors. Their pay operates on a federal cost-share model: the district pays the instructors, and the Air Force reimburses the district for half of each instructor’s salary at the rate set by federal law. After reimbursement, the district’s annual cost is roughly equivalent to one experienced teacher’s salary and these funds were already allocated to fill a vacant teaching position. JROTC fills that existing need, providing two staff members at the cost of one, without creating an additional expense. In addition, Colorado is considering recognizing JROTC as a Career and Technical Education pathway, which could open additional funding.

What category it comes from. This is an instructional expense in the same budget category that funds any teacher delivering an accredited, credit-bearing course. It is not drawn from, and does not reduce, the athletics or activities budgets. Introducing JROTC does not cut funding for any sport, club, or existing program.

One-time and minor costs. Standing up the program involves modest start-up items — classroom setup, uniform storage shelving, and similar facility needs; typical of launching any new course. The Air Force provides an estimated \$20,000 worth of uniforms, replica weapons and all instructional materials.

Components of the program such as field trips, afterschool events, and summer camps will require fundraising consistent with other academic programs.

Who can participate in JROTC?

Any full time or part-time (2 classes) student enrolled at Woodland Park Jr./Sr. High in grades 8-12 who wants the experience and is willing to meet the program's expectations will have the opportunity to participate.

Are students obligated to join the military upon graduation / program completion?

Participation carries **no obligation whatsoever to join the military.** It does however offer advantages for students considering a career in the military or pursuing the opportunity to attend a military academy or university-sponsored AFROTC program. Students that do choose to pursue military services will have the opportunity to receive an accelerated promotion, which means an immediate pay raise.

What happens next?

The Board has approved the program and the Memorandum of Agreement with the Air Force's Holm Center has been submitted which formally activates the unit. Instructors will be hired and trained and the program will move toward welcoming its first cadets.

The program will be available beginning in the fall semester of 2026 and class registration is now open. If you are interested in participating in the JROTC program, please reach out to your counselor.

A Decision Rooted in Our Mission & Community

This decision reflects our district's mission to welcome every student into an environment that inspires learning, cultivates critical thinkers, and prepares responsible, capable citizens. JROTC, an accredited program built on character, leadership, and citizenship, advances that mission directly. It serves our vision of a strong foundation and a strong future, where every student can explore interests, discover a pathway, and graduate ready to thrive.

It also moves our strategic priorities forward — strengthening academic excellence and student engagement, expanding career and college pathways, and deepening family and community engagement. Adding JROTC does not come at the expense of any existing program; it broadens what Woodland Park can offer.

The introduction of this program speaks to who we are as a community. There are many active duty military and veterans living in Teller County. Woodland Park sits at the heart of a region defined by its service members, veterans, and military families — neighbors who have given much in service to our nation. A program grounded in citizenship, discipline, and service to our country honors that heritage and gives our students a meaningful way to understand and carry it forward.

We welcome questions and encourage anyone seeking more information to contact the district office or the Board of Education directly. With gratitude to those who have served and pride in what our students will become, we are proud to take this step together.

Woodland Park RE-2 Board of Education