



WISCONSIN NATIONAL GUARD
CHALLENGE ACADEMY

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challengeacademy.org

A CHOICE... A CHALLENGE... A CHANGE





May we ever choose the harder
right instead of the easier wrong.”

— Thomas S. Monson, Author



WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE ACADEMY?

The Wisconsin Challenge Academy is a free character building alternative education program helping 16-18 year olds, at risk of not graduating high school, earn their High School Equivalency Diploma through a quasi-military environment.

The Challenge Academy, located on the Fort McCoy Army Installation, offers youth the opportunity to change the direction of their lives and develop the strength of character and life skills necessary to become successful, responsible citizens. The program consists of a 5 ½ month-long Residential phase followed by a year long Post-Residential phase. The program focuses on eight core components:

1. Academic Excellence
2. Physical Fitness
3. Leadership/Followership
4. Responsible Citizenship
5. Job Skills
6. Service to Community
7. Health and Hygiene
8. Life-Coping Skills



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MISSION

To offer our Cadets the opportunity to develop the strength of character and the life-skills necessary to become successful, responsible citizens.



HISTORY

In 1993, Congress created the National Guard Youth Challenge Program (NGYCP), a civilian youth opportunities program and authorized the Secretary of Defense to use the National Guard Bureau to conduct the program for at-risk youth. (32 U.S.C. § 509). NGYCP has over 40 programs in 28 different states plus Washington D.C and Puerto Rico.

HONOR • COMMITMENT • COURAGE INTEGRITY • DISCIPLINE

In 1998, the Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy was founded at Fort McCoy, WI.

Wisconsin Challenge Academy is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs. Wis. Stat. §321.03 (1) (c).

Over 4,200 Cadets have graduated from the program.



Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Per Pupil Funding

- 2020/2021 - \$7,059.17
- 2019/2020 - \$5,352.74
- 2018/2019 - \$5,629.53

CHALLENGE ACADEMY SUCCESSES (PAST 5 YEARS):

- 982 Cadets have graduated into the Post-Residential Phase
- 702 of Graduates earned a High School Equivalency Diploma
 - ▶ 71.5% Attainment Rate (prior to COVID-19: 86.9%)
- Since the program began awarding College credits in 2018
 - ▶ 100% of Graduates awarded 3 college credits (455 students)*
- Average full-time employment: 43%
- Average continuing education: 31%
- Average military enlistment: 8%
- Graduates complete an average of 60+ hours of service to community
- Over 1,000 Mentors trained statewide

CHALLENGE ACADEMY SUCCESSES (OVERALL)

- Over 10,649 have applied
- Over 6,971 applicants have been accepted to attend
- Over 4,932 chose to attend (enrolled)
- Over 4,242 fulfilled program requirements and graduated into the Post-Residential Phase
- Over 174,455.45 Service to Community Hours

* Class 44 did not have the opportunity due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



“

“I consider myself a fairly smart person, not because of my education, but because of what I've learned through my experience as a Cadet, and from the opportunities Challenge opened up for me, like AmeriCorps for example.”

— Senior Cadet Fedie,
Class 27 Graduate





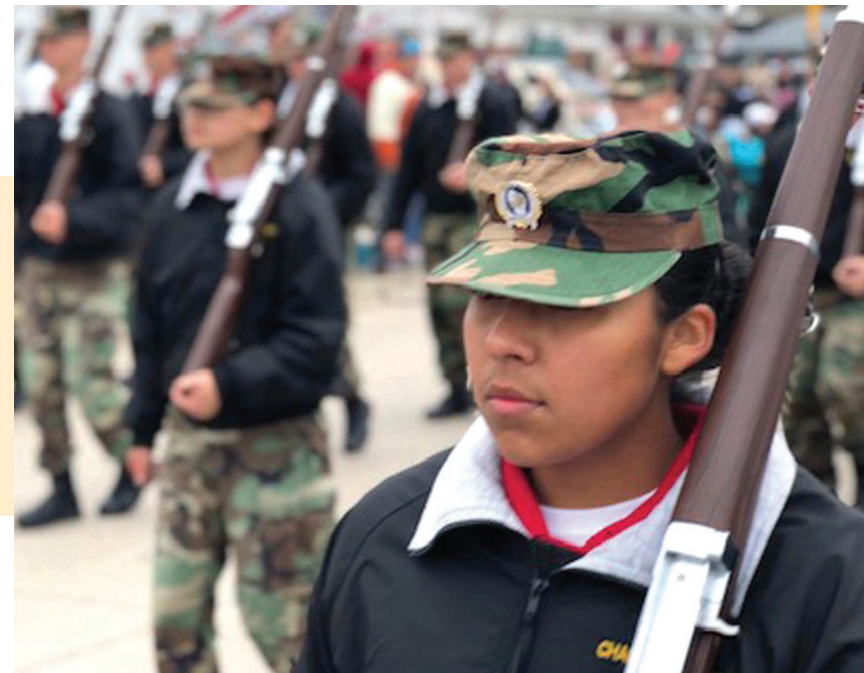
QUALIFICATIONS

- Males and Females 16 but not yet 19 years old
- Not on track to graduate High School on time
- Not currently on parole or adult probation (juvenile supervision/probation is OK)
- No felonies
- A citizen or legal resident of the United States and resident of Wisconsin
- Voluntary—no court orders or placements
- Willing to be free from illegal drugs/substances



COST

It is FREE for accepted applicants (covered by State and Federal dollars). Families are required to provide a small list of personal items for their Cadet, such as t-shirts, socks, underwear, etc.



PROGRAM PHASES

WHEN DO CLASSES BEGIN AND WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE PROGRAM?

There are two classes per year, each 5 ½ months long. One class begins mid-January and runs through mid-June. The second class begins mid-July and goes through mid-December. Both males and females are able to apply.

PHASE I

Residential Phase - 22 Weeks

A 22 week residential phase starting with Pre-Challenge, which consists of the first two weeks of the program and precedes the Challenge Phase. This two week period orients Candidates to the Challenge program environment by allowing them to adjust to the physical, mental, and social discipline required to successfully complete the program. The focus is on teamwork, close quarter drill, code of conduct, leadership and followership, and physical fitness training. Candidates relinquish personal items, receive haircuts, and exchange their street clothes for uniforms, placing them all on a level playing field. During Pre-Challenge, staff members continually assess each Candidate's potential for success in the Residential Phase. Candidates learn to replace negative behaviors, improve attitudes, and develop life-coping skills. Candidates are introduced to daily experiences of healthy routines and a structured and disciplined environment. At the end of Pre-Challenge motivated

Candidates are selected to enroll and become Cadets. Historically, the majority of the selected Cadets will go on to successfully complete the Residential Phase.

During the Residential Phase, Cadets experience a structured and disciplined schedule that focuses on developing their social, emotional, academic, and basic life skills. This is accomplished through the implementation of the Eight Core Components, the foundation of the Challenge program intervention model. Cadets complete the Residential Phase with the skills and values necessary for their successful transition and integration into adult society. Mentors are matched with Cadets midway through the Residential Phase. The mentors help support the Cadets during the remainder of the Residential Phase and help them prepare to reenter community life. Mentors continue their responsibilities during the 12-month Post-Residential Phase.





No one cares how you get knocked down, what matters is how you get back up" — Graduate Savage, Class 46



PHASE II

Post-Residential Phase – 12 Months

The 12-month Post-Residential Phase begins when graduates return to their communities to return to high school, pursue higher education, find a job, join the military, or volunteer at least 30 hours a week. The goal of this Phase is for graduates to sustain and build on the gains made during the Residential Phase. In addition, they must continue to develop and implement their life plans.

The mentors, matched with Cadets during the Residential Phase, play a critical role in ensuring their continued success. They help youth transition from the structured environment of the Residential Phase to an environment that requires self-governance. The mentors also support and guide the Cadets through implementation of their Post-Residential Action Plan (P-RAP).



I learned how to turn my life obstacles into new opportunities for improvement and growth because of the Challenge Academy."

— Graduate Marin, Class 46





HSED

EARN YOUR HSED

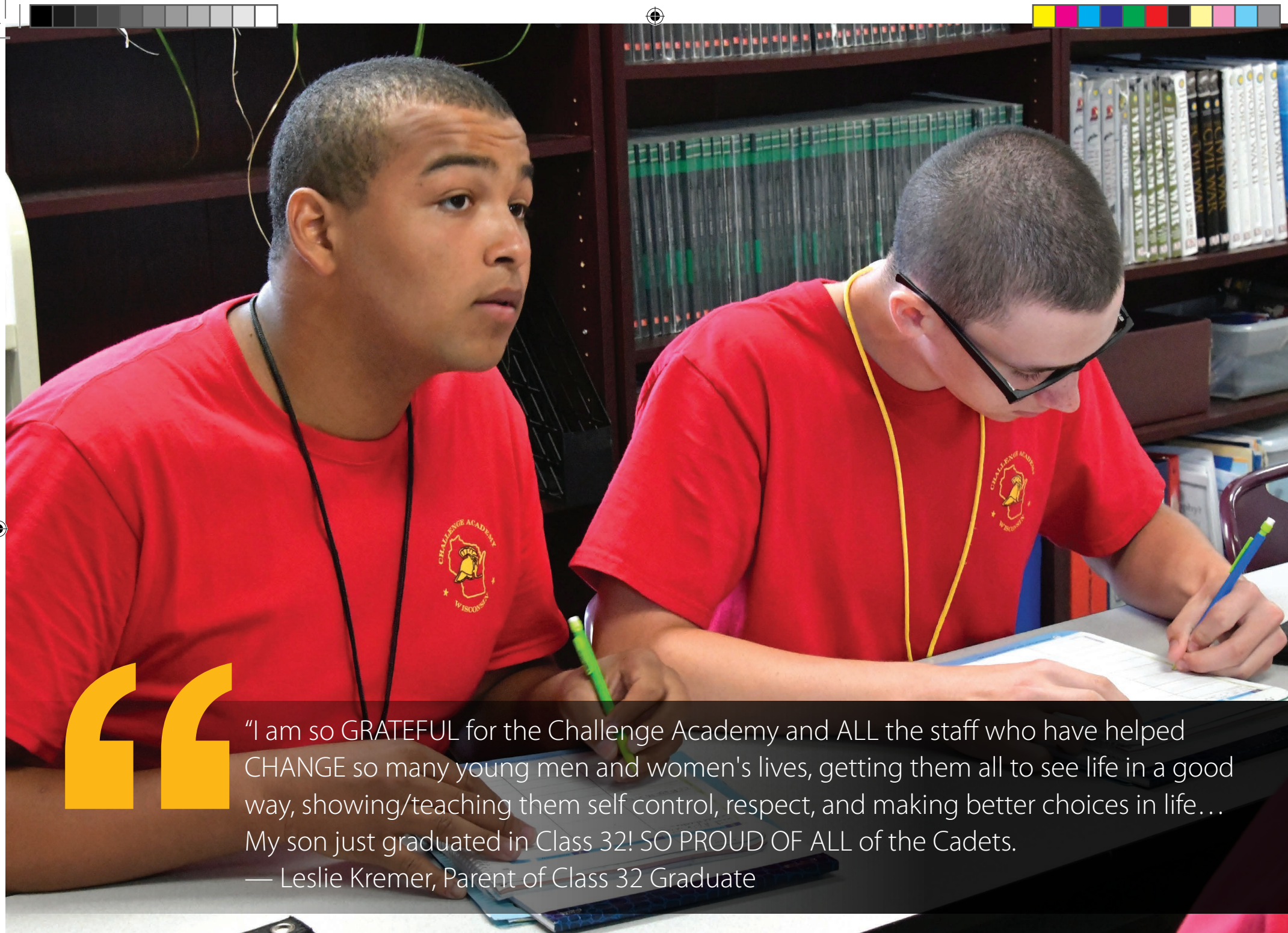
While attending the Academy, Cadets will have the opportunity to earn their HSED (High School Equivalency Diploma). Cadets learn math, science, social studies, language arts, health, civic literacy, employability skills, and career awareness. Historically, 87% of the Cadets earn a HSED. The Cadets also receive a Challenge Academy Transcript and Certificate of Completion.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The Challenge Academy works with school districts to meet the needs of the Cadets.

“I didn't shave my head for nothing.”
— Graduate Morgan, Class 46





“

“I am so GRATEFUL for the Challenge Academy and ALL the staff who have helped CHANGE so many young men and women's lives, getting them all to see life in a good way, showing/teaching them self control, respect, and making better choices in life... My son just graduated in Class 32! SO PROUD OF ALL of the Cadets.
— Leslie Kremer, Parent of Class 32 Graduate

CLASSES

Beginning after the Pre-Challenge Phase, students will take classes Math, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, and Character Development classes. Below are Challenge Academy Classes listed with their corresponding DPI Course and Code with the number of contact hours.

CHALLENGE ACADEMY CORE COMPONENT	CHALLENGE ACADEMY COURSE	DPI COURSE NAME	DPI COURSE CODE	CONTACT HOURS
Academic Excellence	English	English/Literature and Composition	01052/01103	50
	Mathematics	Informal Mathematics and General Math	02001/02002	50
	Science	Integrated Science	03201	50
	Social Studies	Social Studies	04305	50
	Study Skills	Study Skills	22003	25
Physical Fitness	Team Sports	Team Sports	08002	10
	Corps Run	Individual Sports	08003	15
	Recreation (P-RAP)	Recreation Sports	08004	8
	Physical Training	Fitness/Conditioning Activities	08005	115
	Weight Room	Weight Training	08009	15
Job Skills	Career Awareness	Career Exploration	22151	35
	Employability Skills	Employability Skills	22152	35
Service to the Community	Service to Community	Community Service	22104	44
Health & Hygiene	Health	Health Education	08051	318
	CPR and First Aid	Safety and First Aid	08055	8
Responsible Citizenship	Civics	Civics	04161	30
	Character Development and Citizenship	Community Living	22251	30

CHALLENGE ACADEMY CORE COMPONENT	CHALLENGE ACADEMY COURSE	DPI COURSE NAME	DPI COURSE CODE	CONTACT HOURS
	Character Development and Citizenship	Social Development Instruction	22252	30
Challenge Academy Core Component	Challenge Academy Course	DPI Course Name	DPI Course Code	Contact Hours
Leadership/ Followership	Basics of Military Drill and Ceremony	Introduction to Jr. ROTC	09001	40
	Military Customs and Courtesies	Military Jr. ROTC—unspecified branch	09002	40
	Drill Team (Select Cadets)	ROTC Drill	09003	60
	Leadership/Followership	Military Leadership	09004	236
	Squad Leader	Army Junior ROTC I	09051	112
	Platoon Sergeant (Select Cadets)	Army Junior ROTC II	09052	224
	1SG (Select Cadets)	Army Junior ROTC III	09053	224
	SGM (Select Cadets)	Army Junior ROTC IV	09054	224
Life Coping Skills	General Communications	Communications	01155	50
	Character Development and Post-Residential Action Planning	Personal and Career Readiness	19258	75
	Character Development and Platoon Development	Personal Development	19260	75



EQUALIZATION AID & REVENUE LIMIT

Instructions for completing the PI-1563-CA (Challenge Academy) Report

The PI-1563-CA report verifies those students who participated in the Challenge Academy (CA) program. Each district which had students in the program will receive a bill from the Department of Military Affairs in late May or early June. **To help offset this expense, the CA report** will explain how districts will receive FTE counts in either the equalized aid or the revenue limit formulas.

Districts are reminded that students who participate in the CA program and who are residents of the district, including home schooled, private, virtual, etc., are to be included in the CA report. If a student is entered into the Challenge Academy Report that student must not be included in the PI-1563 Membership Report.

The report can be found by logging into the DPI School Financial Services Reporting Portal at DPI SFS Reporting Website. Once on the "District Home" webpage in SAFR, go to "Non-Financial Data Home" to find and open the report. When the report has been opened for data entry, click the "Next" button on each page to proceed through the report. The "Back" button may be used to review the prior page.

To begin the report, open the CA report for the current year and select the district contact.

The next step requires districts to confirm whether or not each student listed in the CA report is from your district.

In the CA September reporting page, districts are to determine if the student was attending the CA program during the third Friday in September count date. If the student was in the CA program, districts are to select "No" as well as the "Other/ Not Applicable" button. Typically students who attend this program during the first semester begin their participation in the program during the month of August and would not be in the district's PI-1563 membership count in September. However, there are occasions when a student drops out of the CA program and returns to their district of choice in September. If that is the case, the district would select "Yes" and select either present or absent button.

When the September reporting page is completed, click on the next button and follow the same aforementioned procedures

to complete the January CA reporting page. Click on the next button when the January reporting page is completed, which will take the user to the "Review" page.

The review page for the CA program informs districts how it will receive credit to offset the CA cost through the equalization aid and/or the revenue limit formula. The review page will summarize the student(s) that participated in the program and how they will be added to the September and/or January counts for either or both the equalization aid and revenue limit formula. The following is an example of the summary from the review page:

You have reported that:

- Student was **not included** in the PI-1563 September pupil count report
- Student was **not included** in the PI-1563 January pupil count report

As a result:

- Student **will be added** to the September 20XX count for equalization aid paid in 20XX-20XX
- Student **will be added** to the January 20XX count for equalization aid paid in 20XX-20XX
- Student **has been added** to this year's count for revenue limits.

Impact on Aid and Revenue Limit Calculations

As a result of the above, the following adjustments will be made in DPI's calculations:

- **XX** will be added to the September 20XX pupil count to be used in the equalization aid calculation on Oct 15, 20XX
- **XX** will be added to the January 20XX pupil count to be used in the equalization aid calculation on Oct 15, 20XX
- **XX** has been added to the September 20XX pupil count used in the FY XX-XX revenue limit calculation
- **XX** will be added to the September 20XX pupil count to be used in the FY XX-XX revenue limit calculation

Final step to complete the CA report.

Once the district confirms this information, the user is to click on the next button to submit the report to the DPI SFS Team. The user must also print off the certification page for the Board Officer(s) to sign. The district must file the certification page in their local membership reports for future membership audits.

Districts are reminded to check within their local Student Information System (SIS) to confirm the student reported in the PI-1563 CA was not also reported in the PI-1563 September or January reports.

If a district has any question regarding the CA program and/or reporting procedures, send an email to dpifin@dpi.wi.gov.

If you have any questions, contact:

School Finance Consultant
DPI School Financial Services Team
Madison, WI
608-267-3752



MENTOR COMPONENT

Mentoring is the process of sharing personal knowledge, experience, and skills with a less experienced youth. They are entrusted with molding a young person into a contributing and productive member of society.

It is a 17 month long commitment that is a highly rewarding experience.

MENTOR QUALIFICATIONS

- Same gender as applicant
- At least 23 years old
- Not an immediate family member
- Must live within a reasonable distance from the applicant
- Not living in the same household
- Must pass a background check
- Someone who cares, is a good listener, and helps young people bring out their strengths

WHAT IS A MENTOR?

A mentor for the Challenge Academy is an adult who, along with parents, provides support, encouragement, counsel, friendship, reinforcement, and constructive example to the youth that they are committed to see grow.

WHO CAN BE A MENTOR?

Mentors can include teachers, counselors, factory workers, ministers, police officers, judges, social workers, coaches, people retired from careers, neighbors, and others.

HOW MUCH TIME IS INVOLVED IN BEING A MENTOR?

Mentors will visit with their Cadets approximately two times (both all day events with weekend availability) while the Cadet is in the 22 week Residential Phase at Fort McCoy. During the Post-Residential phase, the mentor will also report monthly to the Challenge Academy, providing information on the Cadet's status and progress.

MENTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Must be willing to travel to Fort McCoy for two all day events
- Complete on-line training
- Submit monthly reports during Phase II Post-Residential
- Maintain a minimum of 4 units of contact during Phase II Post-Residential



Embrace the suck!"
— Graduate Flores, Class 46



ACADEMY LIFE & ACTIVITIES



The way I see it, if you want the rainbow you gotta put up with the rain." — Graduate Watson, Class 46



Self control is the key to success here at the Academy because life is 10% what happens and 90% your reaction to those events." — Graduate Shock, Class 46



..... A CHOICE... A CHALLENGE... A CHANGE

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CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Character Development curriculum instills in Cadets positive values to use in everyday life. The values have a positive effect on belief, thought patterns, choices, behaviors, and consequences that determine future success. It begins with basic concepts of character and making positive life changes, then addresses personal issues and life coping skills.

The language includes definitions for character concepts and a continuous focus on choosing "the harder right over the easier wrong."

Character Development is an integral part of a Cadet's Challenge Academy education. In order to graduate, a Cadet must successfully complete the Character Development curriculum.

The Counseling Department is in charge of instructing Character Development. Cadets attend Character Development regularly as part of the academic school day.

Active participation and satisfactory progress are expected from every Cadet. Concepts taught in Character Development class challenge Cadets to evaluate their belief systems, habits, and lifestyle. Cadets must keep an open mind in Character Development classes and with homework assignments to have a positive learning experience.



CURRICULUM

- Thinking Traps
- Anger Day 1
- Anger Day 2
- Conflict Resolution
- Respect
- Tolerance and Acceptance
- Motivation
- Delayed Gratification
- Pay it Forward/Humility/Common Courtesy
- Healthy Relationships
- Tobacco
- Addiction
- Telephone/Email Etiquette
- Work ethics
- Employability Skills
- Parenting
- Technology and Character
- Create Crisis Plans
- Forgiveness
- Interviewing Skills
- Overcoming Obstacles
- Mock Interviews
- Ethical Dilemmas and Honesty and Ethics
- Tattoos and Body Modification
- AODA Revisited



THE 8 CORE COMPONENTS

1. ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Academic Excellence prepares Cadets to improve their attitude toward learning while raising the expectations for what they can achieve. During the Residential Phase, Cadets receive a full schedule of academic classes in preparation for General Educational Development (GED) testing, for earning a high school diploma, or for reentry to high school. Cadets strive for increases in math performance and reading comprehension as evaluated by improving Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) scores in the Residential Phase. A strong sense of academic success is important for enabling lifelong learning skills and personal growth.

2. PHYSICAL FITNESS

Mastery of the Physical Fitness core component is an outward sign of a Cadet's inward progress, and a set of tools that can ensure a lifetime of improved quality of life and healthy habits.

3. LEADERSHIP/FOLLOWERSHIP

Leadership/Followership is a key point of emphasis in the development of adolescents in the Challenge program.

Cadets immersed in a group-living environment demonstrate mastery of this component as they develop and define moral standards, apply ethical decisions, and collaborate with their peers.

4. RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP

Responsible Citizenship ensures each Cadet acquires the knowledge to fully appreciate and participate in the political and governmental systems of the United

States. This core component provides a strong understanding of individual rights and responsibilities given to each member of our society. These skills utilize experiential learning to effectively model classroom, community, and student government behaviors.

Tasks completed in the Responsible Citizenship core component are:

- Register for Selective Service, if eligible
- Register to vote, if eligible
- Communicate a basic understanding of the U.S. Constitution, government and citizenship
- Participate in the democratic process

5. JOB SKILLS

Through Job Skills, Cadets have an opportunity to explore and investigate future career paths, career assessment and interest inventories, job skills orientation and awareness, and actual training in area vocational centers (where available). Cadets also learn how to leverage their growth in other core component areas to understand what it means to be a productive, valuable employee in the marketplace.

Tasks completed in the Job Skills core component are:

- Complete the ASVAB and participate in a vocational interpretation
- Demonstrate knowledge and skills required to seek and obtain employment:
 - Acquire job search skills
 - Complete a job application
 - Complete a resume

- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of work ethics
- Complete a mock job interview
- Explore knowledge and skills required to pursue future educational opportunities, to include educational alternatives, institutions and financial aid

6. SERVICE TO COMMUNITY

Cadets must perform a minimum of forty hours of qualifying service to the community to successfully complete this core component. By working to achieve a service to the community goal, both individually and in teams, Cadets learn the value of their labor while directly experiencing the difference they can make in the lives of those around them. At the same time, Cadets learn to understand that as members of the community themselves, they are creating improvements in their own lives because they also benefit from a stronger community.

Tasks completed in the Service to the Community core component are:

- Describe the importance and value of a service to the community and/or conservation project
- Complete a minimum of forty hours of service to the community/conservation projects

7. HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Health and Hygiene serves the important purpose of blending the Cadet's mental well-being with improved physical condition and care. This core component broadens Cadets' exposure and understanding of

substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, and behaviors that can have long-term consequences for their personal physical and emotional well-being. Cadets further make the connections between physical and emotional health by understanding how nutrition, attitude, and lifestyles intersect in the complete person.

8. LIFE-COPING SKILLS

Life-Coping Skills is another critical dimension for Cadets as they strive for increased self-esteem and self-discipline. Because Cadets have the opportunity to combine classroom and residential skills within a cohesive group environment. The successful skills of the entire group are patterned on the individual. This transfer of stability and consistency enables individual Cadets to model positive and effective behaviors for handling their emotions, ordering their personal lives and finances, and managing stress and unpredictability in other unforeseen circumstances.

Tasks completed in the Life-Coping Skills core component are:

- Understand personal finance
 - Demonstrate basic banking (savings and checking account management) skills
 - Demonstrate the importance of maintaining a good credit record
 - Demonstrate how to prepare and manage a personal budget
- Recognize various emotions and stressors, and identify coping strategies
- Recognize conflict resolution strategies



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Life could be hard and painful or life could be easy and bright. The Challenge Academy prepares you for both." — Graduate Valliere, Class 46

RESILIENCE POCKET GUIDE

B-U-M-P

When feeling highly emotional with a negative slant:

- Breathe diaphragmatically (long, deep belly breaths)
- Use your thinking brain
- Motto (positive self-talk)
- Picture something positive (like a goal)

CADET LETTERS

- Remind yourself of positive advice given from the Cadets that had recently graduated.

HUNT THE GOOD STUFF

- Think of some good things happening, even if they seem small.

E-LETTERS

- Remind yourself why you are here and read e-letters when possible to keep you motivated.

GROWTH MINDSET

- Growth mindset- Believing most basic abilities can be changed by effort and hard work, brains and talent are just the starting point.
- Those who have a growth mindset are more likely to push through tough times and see them as opportunities to grow.

HOMESICKNESS

- Feeling homesick is a natural response to being away from familiar surroundings and is usually experienced by teens who have left home.
- Educate yourself-The more you know about your surroundings the easier it will be to gain an understanding of why certain things are happening which will make you feel more comfortable.

MENTAL GAMES

- Ex: Count by 3's, write a 6 word biography, think of a marching cadence, list favorite things.

REAL-TIME RESILIENCE

- "That's not completely true because ..."
- "A more optimistic way of seeing this is ..."

GOAL SETTING

- What Is your "bucket list"?
- What are your strongest values?
- What are the benefits of reaching your goals?
- What obstacles could keep you from reaching your goals?
- What do you need to develop in yourself to reach your goals?



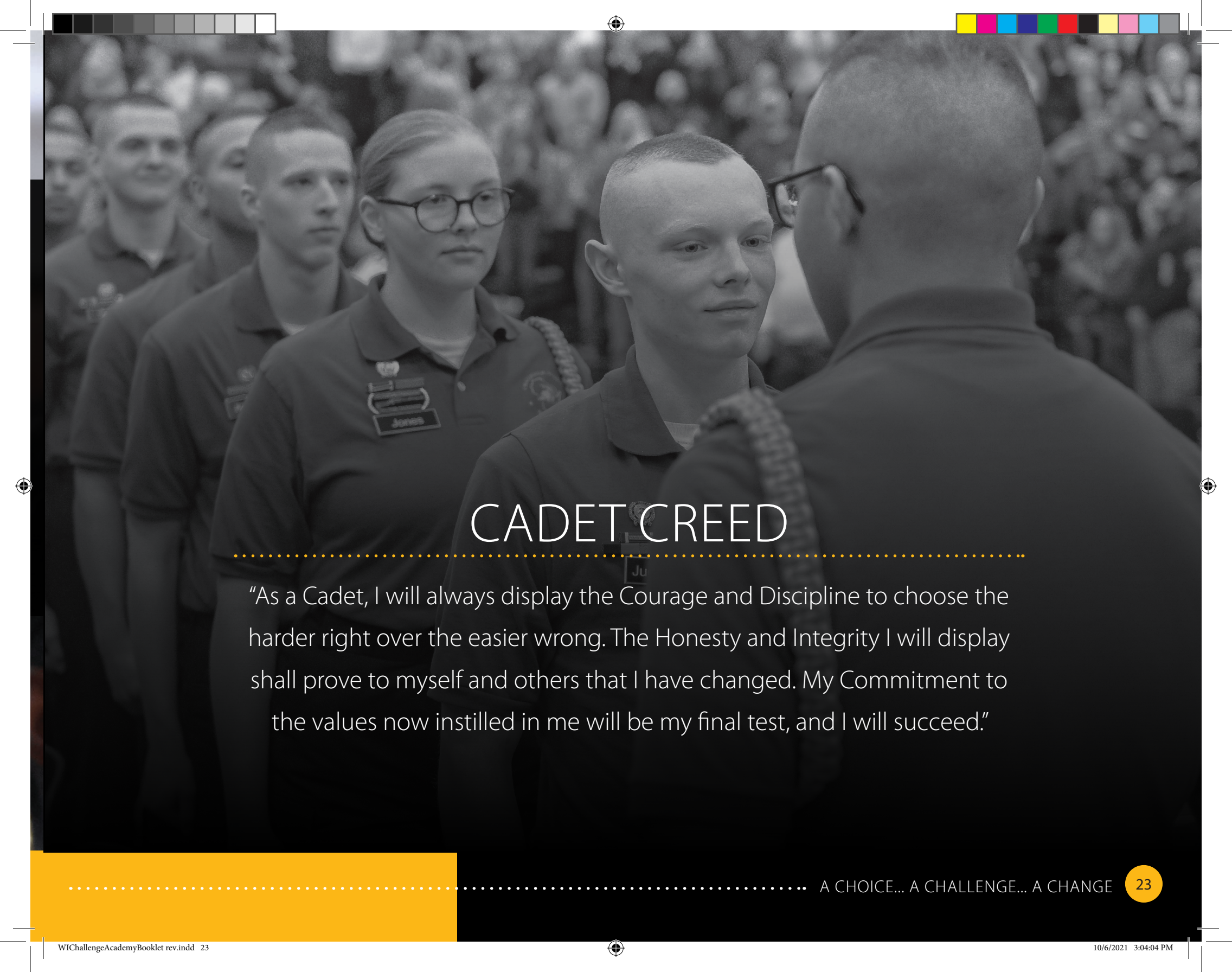


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If you have the will
power to get up
in the morning,
then you will have
the will power to
change yourself
into a better
person."

— Graduate Cahill,
Class 46





CADET CREED

.....

"As a Cadet, I will always display the Courage and Discipline to choose the harder right over the easier wrong. The Honesty and Integrity I will display shall prove to myself and others that I have changed. My Commitment to the values now instilled in me will be my final test, and I will succeed."

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"Patience is a virtue" — Graduate Miller, Class 46