



INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES

**JROTC: Perspectives from the
Literature: Research Roundtable on
Recruiting (Conference Presentation)**

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Executive Summary

JROTC is a program to help high school students be better prepared for careers. It is meant to help students see connections between school and careers through classroom instruction, one-on-one counseling, and team building experiences. This paper reviews the literature on the effectiveness of JROTC. The assessments find that JROTC helps high school performance in several ways: increasing self-esteem, reducing discipline problems, and increasing graduation rates. It also increases military enlistments and increases retention in the military. It is not associated with increased college attendance.

JROTC: Perspectives from the Literature

Research Roundtable on Recruiting

Stanley Horowitz

22 March 2018

JROTC is meant to help high school students be better prepared for future success

Mission is to instill

Value of citizenship and service to country

Personal responsibility

Sense of accomplishment

Three-quarters of units are in disadvantaged schools

Enhancing recruiting is not a goal – that's why oversight was moved out of the Office of Accession Policy

Now overseen by Youth Programs/Civil Military Programs in OASD (M&RA) (Reserve Integration)

JROTC is a widespread program

Non-college-bound students are often not well served by high schools

Recent Florida interviews and essays indicated value of JROTC for students not on track to do well in college

JROTC participants are mostly disadvantaged

Characteristics of JROTC Cadets and Other Students, HS Class of 1992		
	JROTC	Non-JROTC
Single mother family	29%	15%
Bottom income group	18%	7%
Top income group	10%	22%
Parents college	13%	27%
Urban	49%	28%
% minority	53%	27%
10th grade disciplinary problems	22%	17%
Female	43%	53%
Parent in military	11%	2%
South	65%	34%

JROTC seeks to develop soft skills needed for success

A survey of Denver cadets was very positive

Responses from 411 Denver Public School ROTC Cadets, 1996				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The JROTC program has made me:				
A stronger leader	56%	37%	5%	2%
More disciplined	52%	37%	8%	3%
A better communicator	48%	40%	9%	4%
More goal oriented	46%	42%	9%	3%
Stronger academically	34%	46%	15%	5%
JROTC helped me develop a plan for my future after graduation	50%	35%	13%	2%

What have statistically controlled follow-up studies found?

I'll draw on a modest evaluative literature that largely addresses JROTC participants over 20 years ago

JROTC helps a bit in high school; helps DoD a good deal

Study	Self-Esteem	Discipline/ Attendance Problems	Grades	Graduation	College	Enlist in Military	Attrition/ Retention in Military
Pema-Mehay (2009)	for girls	for blacks		for blacks			
Pema-Mehay (2010)							
Elliott-Hanser-Gilroy (2002) regular JROTC							
JROTC career academies							
Walls (2003)						especially blacks	attrition
Pema-Mehay (2017)	for girls						both

Participants did better
 Participants did worse

 Weak positive evidence

There were some particularly striking results

We could know more about the impact of JROTC

JROTC appears to be a success from three perspectives

Serious consideration should be given to expanding JROTC, including JROTC career academies

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