WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18-2E-8E

§18-2E-8e. Veteran's honors funeral assistant community service program.

(a) Findings. -- The Legislature makes the following findings:

(1) Serving in the armed services in defense of the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness enjoyed in our democratic society involves a tremendous sacrifice on the behalf of those who serve, often at the cost of their own lives;

(2) It is a fitting tribute to those who have served in the Armed Forces and the families who have shared in their sacrifice to honor that service and that sacrifice in the most respectful manner;

(3) It is often difficult for the families of deceased veterans who wish to lay their loved ones finally to rest in a military honors funeral to find a bugler to sound their final Taps; and

(4) Organizations within the state and nationally, such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, Bugles Across America and many others, have recognized the difficulty of finding buglers to sound Taps at military honors funerals and may be able to assist.

(b) Purpose. -- The purpose of this section is to facilitate collaboration that will encourage capable young people to assist with the sounding of Taps at military funerals honoring our veterans and, thereby, help them to develop a better understanding of the sacrifices, a respect for the commitment and an appreciation of the privileges that the men and women of the armed services have protected through their service.

(c) State board guidelines. -- The state board shall, in collaboration with organizations and supporters of veterans, establish general guidelines for the establishment of school level programs that encourage capable students in grades six through twelve, inclusive, to sound Taps on a standard or valved bugle, trumpet, cornet or flugelhorn during military honors funerals held in this state. The general guidelines shall address the issues to be set forth in the county board policies required under this section and shall include contact information for technical assistance from the Department of Education and organizations and supporters of veterans assisting in these programs. The state board shall distribute the guidelines to every county board. The state board shall also distribute an appropriate program summary and contact information to the colleges and universities in the state so that they may establish similar programs for their students.

(d) County board policies. -- Each county board shall establish a policy for the implementation of a veteran's honors funeral assistant community service program that addresses at least the following:

(1) The distribution of information to music and band teachers for their use in notifying

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capable students and obtaining the consent of their parents or guardians for voluntary registry as a candidate able to sound Taps during military honors funerals held within a reasonable distance from their residence;

(2) The credit toward community service or work based learning requirements of the county or other recognition that will be awarded to a student for the registry and sounding of Taps during military honors funerals; and

(3) The limits on the amount of regular classroom instruction that a student may miss for the sounding of Taps during military honors funerals to fulfill a community service or work based learning requirement or, if none, on the excused absences that the student may accrue for this activity.

County boards are not responsible for any costs associated with the program, may not be required to provide or pay for student transportation to funerals and are not liable for student supervision while absent to participate in funerals. However, county boards are encouraged to collaborate with organizations of veterans and supporters of veterans to assist with the veteran's honors funeral assistant community service program.

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