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Iliad Athletics Partners with the Department of War Education Activity on Classical Physical Fitness Pilot

Veteran-owned curriculum company brings its Fitness, Nature, and Character model to schools serving the children of American servicemembers.

HILLSDALE, Mich., November 9, 2026.

Iliad Athletics, a veteran-owned K–12 physical education curriculum company, is partnering with the Department of War Education Activity (DoWEA) on a pilot of its classical physical education curriculum. The pilot introduces Iliad Athletics' distinctive physical education approach to military families on two installations starting in the second semester of the 2026-27 school year.

DoWEA announced on November 3 that the course, Classical Physical Fitness and Nutrition, will launch at Lejeune High School and Quantico Middle High School. DoWEA Chief Academic Officer Tiffany Hoben said the course gives students "practical tools for lifelong health" along with the character and leadership to succeed beyond school. Enrollment and scheduling information will reach families through regular school channels.

Iliad Athletics' K–12 physical education curriculum in the classical tradition is currently in use by schools around the country. Classical physical education aims at the formation of the whole person through three pillars: Fitness, Nature, and Character. It holds that each student has a physical nature worth developing to its full potential, favors the well-rounded generalist over the single-sport specialist, and forms character deliberately through practice. "Classical" here describes a philosophy of education rather than a type of school, and the approach serves public, private, and military-connected schools alike.

The course focuses on increasing well-rounded functional fitness rather than simply introducing students to different sports. It progresses sequentially through four training blocks that build a foundation of physical capacity through natural training stimuli: mobility routines, movement on all fours, running, jumping, climbing, carrying, and throwing, outdoors whenever possible. The structure is designed to maximize each student's potential to perform well at the physical challenges nature presents, regardless of starting point.

Rigorous benchmarking at the start and end of the year affords students objective measures of their progress and enables teachers to deliver focused coaching throughout the year. Accompanying the physical training is a character development program with a weekly virtue focus and connections to historical exemplars. The program encourages physical fitness as a form of civic engagement, building the willingness and ability to serve others. This is reflected in several distinctive elements of the program such as rescue carries, buddy drags, and rucking. Real-food nutrition lessons round out the course, teaching students how to fuel the work they do.

Teachers receive the full curriculum on Iliad's online platform, with lesson plans embedded for each week, exercise demonstration videos, and a library of character development scenarios. Iliad's benchmarking platform lets teachers collect fitness data during class and generate progress reports for students, families, and administrators.

For Iliad's team, the pilot carries personal weight. Founder and CEO Patrick Whalen is a Marine Corps veteran, and COO Brian Kluckman, also a Marine veteran, attended DoWEA schools as a child in a military family. The curriculum honors the service of military families through many Character Tie-Ins drawn from that tradition.

"The students at Lejeune and Quantico are the children of Marines," said Patrick Whalen, Founder and CEO of Iliad Athletics. "These are families that value strength, resilience, and high character. It is an honor to bring a classical physical education that shares those values to the schools that serve them."

Schools and districts interested in Iliad's curriculum can learn more at iliadathletics.com.

About Iliad Athletics

Iliad Athletics is a veteran-owned company based in Hillsdale, Michigan, that builds classical K–12 physical education curriculum and trains the teachers who deliver it. Its program is built on three pillars, Fitness, Nature, and Character, and aims at the formation of the whole person: students who are fit, capable in nature, and practiced in virtue. Learn more at iliadathletics.com.

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