

RITE NOW @ ROP



Meadowlark Academy in Cheyenne, Wyoming has a new character-focused assembly called CIA, which stands for Character, Inspiration and Awards. Each month, inspirational leaders and community members are invited to inspire students by sharing an experience wherein a character trait helped them improve their lives in some way. For Meadowlark's inaugural CIA assembly, the character focus was accountability.

To demonstrate the importance of taking accountability, five officers of the 90th Operations Group at FE Warren AFB, led by Colonel Jared Nelson, met with student athletes to discuss how personal accountability has impacted their lives, career, commands, and the safety of the United States. Three of the five officers present were graduated weapons officers, having undergone intense training to become experts in their field; in this case, ICBM nuclear operations.

Part of military missions training is the "debrief," in which officers must analyze a mistake they made during a practice scenario to get to the root cause. This form of accountability helps officers recognize that errors in judgement could compromise safety and security and determine what to do differently in future scenarios. Officers shared this as an analogy of the importance of taking accountability in one's personal life.

The officers further shared their own hardships and how taking accountability impacted their future. One officer shared his story as a homeless teen struggling with legal charges and his childhood trauma. Having nowhere else to turn, he chose to enlist in the Air Force at 17 years old. He made some mistakes that landed him in "hot water" on a few occasions, but after having a child of his own, he enrolled in full time college classes while also working full time for the military. This allowed him to later go through Officer Training School and continue working in the military as a leader.

Another officer spoke of becoming a single mother at twenty years old as a new Second Lieutenant. She took accountability and determined to use all the resources available to her to allow her to continue to do well in her job, and today she is an accomplished weapons officer and a Major.

Students at the assembly were captivated by these officers' stories and career successes and had several questions. After this portion of the assembly, students were given awards for cleanest room, most improved student, student of the month, and student most consistently demonstrating accountability. Students shared lunch with the officers and asked follow up questions. Several students said they felt inspired by the officers' stories and some even expressed interest in going into the military themselves one day.