



Martensdale-St. Marys School District
P.O. Box 350, Martensdale, IA 50160
Fax – (641) 764-2100

School District – (641) 764-2466
Elementary – (641) 764-2621
Secondary – (641) 764-2486



Josh Moser, Secondary Principal

Tom Wood, Superintendent

Beth Happe, Elementary Principal

Dear MStM Community,

For the past several years, Martensdale-St. Marys has dedicated time and talent to honoring the many veterans in our community. A typical year would see us hosting a community event on November 11th with musical performances, guest speakers, and an opportunity to recognize the veterans on our staff and in our families. As you might have expected, the current conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic limit the kinds of gatherings that we should have. Additionally, because many of the veterans in our community would fall into the “high-risk” category, we felt it would be prudent to be extra cautious about our interactions with our vulnerable populations.

In spite of our inability to safely gather to honor veterans, we are still committed to paying tribute to those in our community who have served our country. One would be hard pressed to find someone in the MStM community who does not have someone in their lives who have served in the Armed Forces. For instance, there are four teachers on staff at MStM who have served at some point in their lives: Mr. Kyle Flynn, 7-12 social studies teacher; Mr. John Gerlitz, 7-12 social studies teacher (who was a speaker for last year’s Veterans Day assembly); Mr. Martin Gonzales, elementary special education teacher; and Mr. Danny Webster, 9-12 physical education teacher. With the exception of Mr. Gerlitz, these teachers are all new to the District within the last year. We are grateful to not only have them on staff in selfless service to our students, but also to their fellow Americans in service to their country.

Every year we learn more and more about the veterans in our midst. We take the opportunity to listen to their stories and experiences. In this process, we learn about the importance of not only recognizing them but also returning in service to them. Now more than ever before, we are learning about the needs our veterans have - specifically with regard to material goods and access to care. According to the [National Coalition for Homeless Veterans](#), about 11% of the nation’s homeless population is veterans, and the numbers are growing. Furthermore, our veteran population is facing a growing mental health crisis. While Veterans Day is time set aside for America to honor its veterans, we can and should do more to support them throughout the year. If you are interested in volunteering your time and talent or donating to support efforts to care for our nation’s veterans, consider these organizations:

Disabled American Veterans: <https://www.dav.org/>

Iowa Paralyzed Veterans of America: <https://www.iowapva.org/>

Department of Defense Veteran Support Organizations: <https://www.defense.gov/Resources/Veteran-Support-Organizations/>

In an era where self-promotion and ego seem to be revered above humility and service, paying homage to those among us who have humbly served their community and country is more important than ever. While this message may not fully convey the collective gratitude of the students and staff, we do want our military veterans to know that you are appreciated, you are seen, you are important to us, and you matter.

With deepest sincerity, to all of the veterans in the MStM community, thank you for your service.

Home of the Blue Devils