



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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Cabell County Judge tackling truancy one school at a time For immediate release Thursday, April 12, 2012

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. – Cabell County Circuit Judge Paul T. Farrell will hold a special truancy meeting in his courtroom on Tuesday, April 17, for high school students with truancy issues and their parents.

Media are welcome to cover the 3:30 p.m. meeting as long as none of the students' names are used or faces shown in photographs or video.

Judge Farrell gave notice to 33 Cabell Midland High School ninth- and tenth-grade students and their parents to attend the informal hearing, based on the students' number of unexcused absences.

This is the second truancy hearing Judge Farrell has held in Cabell County. The first was in February, which 50 Huntington High School students and their families attended. In March, Judge Farrell learned that 29 of those 50 students have been attending class regularly.

At the meeting next week, Judge Farrell and representatives from the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, the Cabell County School Board, the Cabell County Prosecutor's Office, and the Cabell County Public Defender's Office will explain to the parents and students the consequences of missing school. If students do not begin attending school, formal charges will be filed.

For a first offense, parents can be fined up to \$50 plus court costs. For a second offense, parents can be jailed five to 20 days for every day the child misses school.

In Cabell County there are truancy officers at each high school and they report to the prosecutor's office regularly about students' progress, or lack thereof. The truancy officers also inform the students' families of the available services to help keep students from being truant, including night school, summer school, and GED programs.

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