



## Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

# News

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### **Chief Justice to attend opening of McDowell County Juvenile Drug Court**

For immediate release Thursday, May 16, 2013

WELCH, W.Va. – Supreme Court Chief Justice Brent D. Benjamin will attend the opening of the McDowell County Juvenile Drug Court at 1 p.m. Monday, May 20, in the courtroom of Eighth Judicial Circuit Judge Rudolph J. Murensky, II, in the McDowell County Courthouse, Court and Wyoming Streets, in Welch.

The McDowell County Juvenile Drug Court was announced in April 2012 as part of the “Reconnecting McDowell Project.”

The West Virginia Juvenile Drug Court Program is a cooperative effort of the juvenile justice, social service, law enforcement, and education systems. This program seeks to divert non-violent juvenile offenders exhibiting alcohol or substance abuse behavior from the traditional juvenile court process to an intensive, individualized treatment process. The goal of the program is to reduce future court involvement for the teens. Referrals to Juvenile Drug Courts can be made by judicial officials, law enforcement, school personnel, probation officers, prosecutors, child protective services/youth services workers, and parents.

On any given day in West Virginia, approximately 6,400 youths are under some form of court-ordered diversion program or supervision by probation officers. Annual West Virginia juvenile probation reports demonstrate that controlled-substance violations are the third-largest category of offenses charged. The continued development of Juvenile Drug Courts is part of the Supreme Court’s strategy to address the challenge presented by juvenile controlled-substance violations.

With the opening of the McDowell County Juvenile Drug Court, there are sixteen operational juvenile drug courts, as well as twenty operational adult drug courts in West Virginia.

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