



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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Judge Stowers to talk about truancy program's first five years at Putnam School Board meeting For immediate release

WINFIELD, W.Va. – Twenty-Ninth Judicial Circuit (Putnam County) Judge Phillip Stowers is scheduled to talk about the county's judicial truancy program at a Putnam County School Board meeting at 7 p.m. Tuesday, November 2, at the board office, 77 Courthouse Drive, Winfield.

Since the program began in the 2009-2010 school year, truancy has decreased more than 60 percent. The dropout rate in Putnam County decreased about 50 percent between 2010 and 2014, according to data from the West Virginia Department of Education's ZoomWV website.

The county's four-year graduation rate increased from 78.2 percent to 90.2 percent in that same five-year period, and the five-year graduation rate increased from 83.5 percent to 87.2 percent. So not only are more students graduating from high school, more are graduating on time, Department of Education data indicate.

"Clearly this data shows that the truancy diversion program is having incredible results in our county," Judge Stowers said. "These numbers represent a systemic change to the truancy problem."

Judge Stowers will announce the receipt of a \$39,094 grant from the state Department of Education to help pay the cost of the county's school-based probation officer, who focuses on truancy cases. The county school board has paid the total cost of the officer since 2010.

"Because of the Putnam County School Board's leadership, the effectiveness of a school-based probation officer has been shown," Judge Stowers said.

The Putnam County truancy diversion program is supported by the Board of Education, Magistrate Linda Hunt, the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Putnam County prosecuting attorneys, and the Circuit Court.

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