



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HCS Sees Improvement Through Teen Court Program

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Halifax County Schools (HCS) are proud of the improvements that have been made within the school system through the use of its Teen Court program. The Halifax County Schools Teen Court program was initiated by Judge Brenda Branch, who serves as the Chief District Court Judge in Halifax County.

Teen Court provides an opportunity for diversion from the court process while still holding the participants accountable for their delinquent acts. It offers participants a chance to share in the judicial experience as a prosecuting attorney, defense attorney, clerk of court, bailiff, and juror and encourages ongoing participation with other prosocial peers and activities.

Judge Brenda Branch expressed that it is essential for school systems to have a program in place to help the whole student. “Teen court allows students to avoid a long-standing juvenile delinquency record. It gives everyone a fresh start no matter who they are,” said Judge Branch.

As HCS *Chart a New Course to Student Achievement*, the Teen Court program provides offenders and volunteers a positive opportunity to become active and build stronger ties throughout the community. This program is eligible for all students in the county and surrounding counties.

Judge Branch stated the Teen Court program is a positive on all ends. “Students learn creative and constructive sentencing, interpersonal skills, and conflict-resolution methods through a problem-solution model. This program provides opportunities for students to explore careers within the law enforcement and criminal justice field,” said Judge Branch.

Superintendent Dr. Cunningham states, “I am proud of the Teen Court program. It focuses on restorative practices, giving students another opportunity to *Strive For Five!*” The Teen Court program director is Dr. Tyrana Battle, Assistant Superintendent of HCS. Dr. Battle says, “All involved are learning skills that they can apply today and take with them as they mature into contributing members of their communities. Teen Court has proven to be a powerful and effective program!” Mrs. Teresa Boyd serves as the coordinator for Teen Court.

