



# Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

## News

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### **Mercer judge asks Board of Education to expand mentoring program**

For immediate release Thursday, October 22, 2009

**PRINCETON, W.Va. – Mercer County Circuit Judge Omar Aboulhosn will ask the Mercer County Board of Education next week to endorse the expansion of a mentoring program that links schools and individual classes with professionals in their communities.**

**The judge will make his presentation to the Board at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, October 27, at Montcalm High School.**

**Judge Aboulhosn has been working with sixth-grade classes at Montcalm Elementary school for more than ten years. He reads to the students once a week and participates in numerous activities and field trips each year, including leading the students on a tour of the regional jail in Beaver each spring.**

**“I tell them that the overwhelming majority of the men and women in our regional jails and prisons never received a high school diploma or GED,” the judge said. “I also show them that the average income increases as education increases.**

**“I always look forward to beginning my relationship with Montcalm School each school year. I hope to encourage the kids in the class to stay in school, go to college, and to stay away from drugs and alcohol. I want to encourage them to believe in themselves and to know that if they work hard, they can become a successful person right here at home in Mercer County,” the judge said.**

**He recently began working with Generation GAP (Gathering Area Professionals), a young professionals group for ages 21 to 45, and the Dropout Prevention Committee of the COFY (Creating Opportunities for Youth) Coalition to expand his mentoring idea throughout Mercer County. The COFY Coalition is the substance abuse prevention program in Mercer County.**

**“Generation GAP members will be going into the other schools. Our goal is to replicate and expand what I do at Montcalm to other schools using other young professionals. We will be assisting in training the other professionals,” he said.**

**Initially, Judge Aboulhosn hopes to match professionals with fifth or sixth grade classes at up to six schools. The adults would agree to visit classes once a week to talk about the importance of staying in school, the benefits of going to college, and the importance of avoiding drugs and alcohol. The adults would tailor their presentations and field trips to their areas of professional expertise. And they would encourage the students by showing through personal example that it is possible to be successful in Mercer County.**

