



Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia

News

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Putnam Juvenile Court Programs achieve 100 Percent Graduation Rate

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WINFIELD, W.Va. – Putnam County juvenile court programs had a 100 percent graduation rate during the most recent school year, Twenty-Ninth Judicial Circuit (Putnam County) Judge Phillip Stowers announced today.

Seventy-five high school students who were under court supervision graduated with a full diploma; none obtained a high school equivalency degree. The students attended either a Putnam County high school, classes in a placement facility or classes in other counties as a part of their Putnam County court-ordered educational program. No matter where they were, the students met all the graduation requirements of Putnam County Schools.

The youths entered the court system through the county's truancy diversion program. Status offense cases were handled through the juvenile delinquency system. Other cases went through the Division of Juvenile Services system. "They were either in juvenile drug court or in a regular juvenile docket. We worked with them until they graduated," Judge Stowers said.

"These are historic numbers for Putnam County courts, and everyone who works with these programs should be proud of their efforts," Judge Stowers said. "Even if a student has been involved in the court system, making sure they graduate high school fundamentally changes the trajectory of the rest of their life."

Judge Stowers received the graduation information from the Putnam County Board of Education earlier this month. He also learned that no students who were involved in Putnam County court programs dropped out during the 2022-2023 school year.

"This has been my mission here since becoming a circuit judge 15 years ago. The best thing we can do for Putnam County youths is to make sure they are drug-free, and they graduate high school," the judge said.

“It is important to thank Magistrate Linda Hunt, Putnam County Schools Attendance Director Jennifer Campbell and everyone involved in the truancy diversion program, including the circuit court team of lawyers, Department of Health and Human Resources employees and circuit court officers,” Judge Stowers said.

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