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URGENT

Gary Lighthouse wins attendance award

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Students at Lighthouse College Prep Academy jump up and shout when they hear they won an award for improved attendance. The "traveling trophy" is held by Lighthouse principal Angela West, left, and Gary Pro Tem Judge Inga Lewis-Shannon. E

Carmen McCollum, The Times

Truancy program proposed in Hobart

GARY — The students at Lighthouse Academies won the first traveling trophy for school attendance for the month of October.

Commission eyes solutions for challenges facing black Hoosier men

The students had an overall attendance rate slightly above 92 percent, and students in grades 8 through 12 had a rate of 93.65 percent.

10 arrested on truancy court

warrants, Gary police say

The new award was created by Gary City Court Pro Tem Judge Inga Lewis-Shannon and the Indiana Parenting Institute. It is an effort to increase school spirit and promote good attendance in all of the schools in Gary.

Family & Youth Services Bureau brings back middle school program

The attendance program is in cooperation with Project Rebuild, which was created by Lewis-Shannon. It is a collaborative effort between the Gary City Court and the Gary Police Department to address the growing problem of truancy among Gary students. It is open to any student who lives in Gary and attends the Gary Community School Corp., Lake Ridge Schools, private schools, charter schools or the Merrillville Community School Corp.



Truancy program hails grads

Lewis-Shannon said all three schools within Lighthouse Academies charter schools, including the location in East Chicago and the two Gary campuses, had good attendance. An attendance award will be presented monthly to schools which show improved attendance.



E.C. school officials face challenges at Block

Every state has compulsory school attendance laws with regulations describing how state education and juvenile justice agencies should respond to truancy. While the school is often the first responder to student truancy, truancy ultimately involves the possibility of action by juvenile or family courts ranging from detention of the children to a fine or jail for the parents. Compulsory school attendance in Indiana is guided by IC 20-33-2.

E.C. police charge first parent under new anti-truancy program

Authorities have said attendance is monitored and any child found outside of a school campus during school hours will be detained and returned to school. After 10 unexcused absences, the matter is referred to the Gary Truancy Court program.

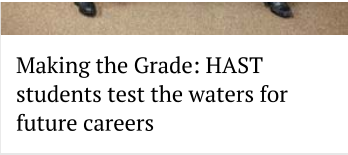


Merrillville residents graduate from citizens police academy

In mid-September, Gary police attempted to serve 52 active truancy warrants on parents whose children had not been going to school.

Authorities said the warrants were issued after parents chose to enter truancy court, were placed into the Project





Making the Grade: HAST students test the waters for future careers

Rebuild Program and failed to comply with the program. Of the listed warrants it was found that 41 individuals moved out of the city of Gary and one individual was dead. Gary police arrested 10 people on a warrant.



Gary Community Schools mired in debt

Gary authorities said then, "this step was not taken lightly and was only enacted after parents were given multiple chances to comply."

Those parents of students who have had 10 unexcused absences from school are issued a Gary City Ordinance citation under section 28-4, Parental neglect, knowingly permitting the minor to be absent without cause from regular school sessions, and have the option of paying the citation or going to truancy court.



Lighthouse peer jury provides alternatives

Parents choosing to enter truancy court are placed in the Project Rebuild Program. Once in the program a family specific case plan is developed based on each family's needs and areas of concern. The goal of the program is not to incarcerate parents but to develop family skills that lead to better educated children. In fact families that successfully complete the program face no criminal charges on the matter.

Lewis-Shannon said those parents were arrested on an ordinance violation, then bailed out of jail.

"If they have new charges, the next step will be a criminal charge and they will be required to go through the system. Hopefully, it won't come to that," Lewis-Shannon said.

Carmen McCollum

Education reporter

Carmen is an award-winning journalist who has worked at The Times newspaper for 20 years. Before that she also had stints at The Clarion-Ledger in Jackson, Miss., The Post-Tribune and The News Dispatch in Michigan City.

