

Abigail Logue
A.M.Y @ James Martin

YOUTH COURT

Youth Court has benefited our school. Youth Court has benefited our school by showing us leadership skills we never knew we had before. I feel as only being in this program for a couple of months this has shown me a lot of better outcomes. Our suspension rate has gone down by 46% from last year and we had 99 referrals come to our youth court. Our first youth court hearing was in October 31, 2016.

Another way Youth Court benefited our school was it showed me personally not to judge someone by what people have or do say about them. Some people might seem like they have done something wrong but in the end they know the mistake they have made and they come to youth court to show our judge and jury that they can better themselves. This program generally has impacted our school greatly. Most kids who have gotten these referrals have not come back to youth court, but a couple kids just don't understand that they are doing something wrong.

The consequences or disposition that the respondent gets is custom to their referral, most consequences aren't major. Some get lunch detentions and most have to write an apology to the person or the teacher they have offended. Only a couple kids have not completed their disposition. Some referrals actually don't come to Youth Court they become a plea bargain. A plea bargain is an agreement without them actually having a Youth Court hearing. We have only had about 15 Plea Bargains in this year.

Youth Court has also helped our school by giving the respondent a second chance to better themselves and show us that he or she knows they have done something wrong and want

to fix their problem. This system has also helped our principal. It has helped her because it doesn't put all the pressure and referrals on her.

Denise Vasquez

AMY at James Martin

Youth Court

I am a member of Youth Court and I am an experienced Youth Court advocate. Youth Court is a method that we use to help fix our school problems and prevent future incidents to occur again. Youth Court benefits the respondents in many ways. In my past experiences as a Youth Court advocate, I observed how the respondent is comfortable being a room with their own peers compared to a meeting with the principal. Normally, when a respondent goes to someone with superior power, such as a principal, they do not tell the truth for the fearing of getting in more trouble, but in Youth Court the respondents admit to what they have done. When I am advocating for the respondent I point out some things that are not normally seen and it makes the jury and respondent think more deeply.

In Youth Court we give the respondent a chance to give their side of the story and help fix the problem. We do not punish the respondent, but we provide a consequence, or disposition. As Youth Advocate I hear the side of the story from my client before the jury does. I witness that the story my client had delivered to me does not change from the story that was delivered to the jury. The respondent cooperates with me and the jury, which shows he or she favors going to Youth Court compared with going to the principal. During the period that I am advocating I see that the respondent appreciates someone who is defend him/her.

When the time arrives for the disposition the respondent does not like receiving consequences, as I had been told many times, but does believe that it is deserved for the mistake they performed. The respondents are willing to make an effort to accomplish their disposition and to avoid coming back to Youth Court. For example, in a previous case, a respondent wrote an

extraordinary apology letter and was truly sincere. The respondent has not only been able to tell their story but has made them responsible and mature.

Jayla Henderson

5/4/16

Amy At James Martin

Youth Court

Youth court has impacted me, the school, and the respondents. Youth court is designed to help solve the problem but not punish the respondent. As a youth court we try and find a way to resolve the issue and give the respondent a chance to tell his or her side of the story. We give the respondent a second chance. Youth court figures out ways that can help the respondent see what was done, how that can be fixed, and not to end back up here or in the same position. Youth court is not 100% accurate but it does help. Suspension rates has dropped 46% at my school. Not only has youth court helped the respondent but it has also helped our school and me as an individual . Youth court not only helps the respondent but we also help our principal. We take time off her hands. Now she has more time to focus on what is better for our school or what is needed and what could be done. Youth court has impacted me in many ways. When we help the respondents we help ourselves and learn from their actions. Youth court has had a positive impact.

Santiago Sulaj

Amy@James Martin

As a member of the A.M.Y. at James Martin Youth Court I believe that Youth Court that helped my school in several different ways. Some of these ways are reducing the suspension ratings by 46% from last year, handling exactly 99 referrals, and taking most disciplinary problems into our control so that our school principal doesn't have to worry about them and let our principal do other thing that will help our school. Youth Court has been a very beneficial tool in helping A.M.Y. at James Martin.

Suspensions are down 46% from last year which is almost half thanks to Youth Court. This is very helpful to our school because more students are behaving better and staying in school instead of being suspended Youth Court has been a very large part of this. Youth Court in just one year has reduced A.M.Y.'s suspension ratings by almost half helping A.M.Y. in a very large way.

Since October 31, 2015 A.M.Y. has dealt with exactly 99 referrals showing that Youth Court at A.M.Y. can handle and overcome large numbers of problems which is helpful to A.M.Y. Referrals at A.M.Y. are most of the time put into a trial other times in small cases they are put into plea plea bargains both of them help A.M.Y.

Youth Court has helped A.M.Y. by allowing our principal to not have to deal with many disciplinary problems. This is helpful because if our principal doesn't have to worry about discipline then the principal can be able to worry about other things that can help A.M.Y.

Youth Court Helps

I am a six grader at Amy 5 at James Martin. This year is the first year for a youth court at our school. Youth court helps this school in many ways. One way youth court helps the school is the principal does not need to address behavior problems from little arguments to big fights. This helps the school because with the saved time the principal has she can plan events, trips, and even ways to get books or supplies. That was one way youth court has helped the school.

A second way youth court helps the school is it gives students a second chance and the person usually is not sent back to youth court again and improves (This has been shown in data). There was even a person who was sent to youth court repeatedly but he then joined youth court and has not been sent back to youth court since then. That is the second way youth court helps and improves our school every day.

My third and final way youth court helps is the people who are actually in the class get extra academic learning time and 6, 7, and 8th graders all in the same class and they get to talk to each other. Also, you get to be involved in all the schools problems and fix them. Those are all ways youth court helps my school Amy 5 at James Martin.

Gabriella Feliciano

May 2,2016

Grade:7

Amy @ James Martin

Youth Courts

As a person in the jury of youth court I can say that youth court has helped others and myself.

Youth court has effects on many people who came to youth court and has definitely had an effect on me. Youth court has put me in a position to know what I shouldn't or should do. It has also showed me how to take care of my actions in a better way and how to be a bigger person. Youth court helped me with this because with all the fighting cases and arguing cases showed me there are other ways I can use my actions and take care of them. I know that youth court has had effects on others and helped them because since october 31,2015 there have been less issues and problems we have had less suspension and I think that made others take an effect on them so far. It didn't only take an effect on others and myself but my school. Youth court has reduced suspensions by 46%. It has been a big effect on everyone.

Youth Court Testimony

As a member of the AMY At James Martin youth court I think that youth court has helped our respondents in many different ways. Our youth court has helped lower the suspension rate reduce by 46% from last year and we have had a total of 99 referrals to our youth court. We once had a respondent who was in youth court a few times for different cases and he is now a member of the jury at our youth court. He has now turned a new leaf and is helping other respondents instead of being one.

Youth court has helped our school because now if a case is brought to youth court it puts less pressure on our principal and now she gets the time for other activities that will benefit the school. Also, youth court has helped the school by releasing stress on our class by doing a plea bargain. A plea bargain is when a referral is very minor so the respondent gets a small disposition or consequence for their referral. A plea bargain saves our class time because we can focus our time more on making our youth court better and stronger.

Aaron Lynch

Amy@James Martin

Youth Court

Hello, my name is Aaron Lynch and I've been a part of Amy@James Martin youth court since September 2015 and I really think it helps everyone that is involved! This includes the respondent, everyone in the jury, and the entire school. Even though this is AMY's first year doing a youth court, it is very effective and we have had over 99 referrals and we have helped suspensions drop by 46%!

How does youth court effect Amy@James Martin? I've always thought of this as if you go to youth court it's saving you and your permanent record from a suspension. Being suspended could ruin your chances of getting into a good high school or any school at all.

While going to youth court saves the respondent a suspension that could have ruined their record, they get a few consequences that could be very restorative, so it's way easier and better to just come to youth court if possible. These respondents are treated with respect and are forgiven for the mistakes they have made.

Now in my opinion most of our respondents walk out of youth court more understanding and more truthful than they were when they walked in. I find youth court very effective for the respondents. Some of the effects I see on these respondents are that they are being better people and more kind and helpful than before their youth court case!

Aaron Rosario
Amy @ James Martin
5/2/16
Mod:2

Youth Court

Youth Court helps the respondent in positive way. Youth Court gives the respondent a chance to tell their side of the story and explain how it happened in their point of view. Since Youth Court has a jury filled with students the respondent may feel more comfortable telling the truth about the situation rather than adult staff. When a respondent is sent to Youth Court with a referral, the referral does not go on their record so they have a second chance at a fresh start. It is mandatory that every respondent receives a disposition. This disposition is created to be relevant with the case, if the respondent follows through with his or her consequence it will make the respondent more responsible person.

One Youth Court case was on a boy who was playing around too much with a teacher. He made fun of this teacher also another student at school. As the case was taking place the respondent told the truth of every question he was asked, also owned up to everything he was accused of. He felt comfortable under the respect of his peers in the jury. At the end of every case the respondent receives their disposition. The respondent had to write a written apology to the teacher and the student. He was sent to our class teacher to do so, our teacher stated it was one of the best apologies he has ever read. He says it was sincere, in depth, well thought, and well written. After this case my peer has increased his behavior in a positive way, the referral was gone, and he has not been written up since. He has changed the way he acts in school thanks to our process of Youth Court.

Jermelle Henderson

AMY AT JAMES MARTIN

May 2,2016 INTRODUCTION TO YOUTH COURT

Youth court is new to the school of A.M.Y. at James Martin. Youth court has done a lot of positive things for the school and the students. For example, youth court has lowered suspension rates by 46 percent, this means the pressure is taken off the principal to deal with less things drama wise and more things school related. This also makes our school safer and friendlier environment. Students in youth court and respondents who came to youth court both learn from youth court. Respondents are able to get a second chance and learn from their mistakes and usually they don't come back to youth court because of this. Students who participate in youth court learn a little bit of maturity as well as respect while handling respondents.

Ahmad Motan

AMY At James Martin

YOUTH COURT

As a member of the AMY at James Martin Youth Court, I have seen many students get into trouble and fix the situation. Youth court really helped me increase my participation and leadership skills. This is the first year of youth court and it has reduced suspension rates by 46% compared to last year. We have been given 99 pink slips and 90% of the dispositions have been completed.

Youth court has helped respondents think about the mistake they made by giving them a second chance instead of suspending them. A lot of people who were referred to youth court have given their side of the story to give the jury an explanation of why that incident happened and how they can fix the situation. Students who were referred have been given a disposition and if it is not completed the referral would be referred back to the principal. Many of the students who were referred the first time have not been sent back which shows that the students are staying out of trouble.

Why Youth Court Helps Me, the Respondent, and the School

Chris Cabrera

May 2, 2016

AMY at James Martin

As an experienced member of the jury, youth court has helped me in some ways. For example, Youth court has taught me what I will go through if I have bad behavior. It helps me understand the way it goes, and what kind of dispositions or consequences I will be put through.

Youth Court has helped the school as well. It has helped the school by decreasing the suspension rate. We, the jury members, play a big role in decreasing the suspension rate. We have helped decrease the suspension rate by 46%. I think we can help decrease the suspension rate to zero.

Finally, youth court has helped the respondent. Youth court has helped the respondent by giving them a second chance to tell their side of the story. Also, it helps the respondent think before they take action into what they are about to do, because they do not want to come back to youth court and get more dispositions to complete. Therefore, that will help decrease the suspension rate, because of students coming to Youth Court, then they get punished for the thing(s) that they have done, which will result to the students not wanting to take part in bullying other kids.

Antonio J. Cruz

A.M.Y. at James Martin Youth Court

May, 2nd, 2016

What Youth Court has Done for Us at A.M.Y.

Hello State Senators, my name is Antonio Cruz and today I am going to explain how Youth Court has helped our school, A.M.Y. at James Martin Middle School.

In this 2015-2016 school year our principal, Mrs. Lisa Mesi, with the assistance of Mr. John Papiano and Mr. Gregory Volz formed Youth Court at our school. As of last Friday, the 28th, we have handled 99 cases and reduced the overall suspension rate by 46 percent.

Ever since Youth Court was implemented at our school, the environment has become safer. Not just in our teacher's eyes but in ours too. Ever since 2013, the amount of assault incidents has been dropped from an estimated 13 incidents in 2013 to an estimated 3 in 2016. I myself have noticed the decreased amount of problems that turn South now.

Students can always learn right? Not if their mind is preoccupied with worrying about their safety. With the majority of students not being bullied or having external conflicts in school they can focus on learning. Another way it helps the school is now that the principal doesn't have to suspend or expel somebody every time something that is an infraction happens, she can focus on improving our school in other ways and she is not so preoccupied all the time as well. Giving Mrs. Mesi the opportunity to hear the students, maintain our school building, enact new activities and generally make school ~~it~~ better.

These are some ways Youth Court helps our school. I hope you all can sign legislation to expand the program to more public schools especially elementary, because they are the ones that fool around a lot.

Kassidy Vasquez

YOUTH COURT

Youth Court is such an amazing support system for the school and the students in it. The progress that youth court has made on our school is incredible. Youth Court has helped me by showing me how to act like a mature role model for others the way I act reflects off me and starts to change the way my peers act. Youth Court has helped me deal with certain issues that I think will help me in the long run.

Youth court has helped me by giving me responsibility to help other people's issues and to learn how to deal with different situations and to keep my emotions aside from the respondent of the actual case. My thinking has expanded highly from youth court. It makes me think outside the box all the time to try and solve problems.

Last but not least, youth court has helped me improve in public speaking. I am a very shy towards other people. I still am, but it taught to be more outgoing and try and speak up when I need to.

Youth Court Benefits

Youth Court has made a great impression here at Amy At James Martin. Youth Court gives respondents a second chance to tell their side of the story. Maybe they were just having a bad day; Youth Court gives them a second chance. Their referral won't show up on their records and they realize what they've done wrong. Not only that, but the long term effects are endless. Youth Court is spreading throughout Philadelphia, students are stopping their bad behavior and not ending up going to actual crimes, friends are expressing good behavior to their friends.

Also, youth court has benefited our school because it reduces the amount of suspensions. This year alone we have dealt with over 100 referrals. We reduced the suspension rate almost 50%. Not only that but it takes a lot off our principal's shoulders giving her more time to worry about how to make our school better than dealing with discipline. I think our youth court is the most prolific youth court in the city of Philadelphia.

Our first ever case was October 31st and we have improved a lot since then. Our dispositions have gotten a lot better since the first case. We even came up with plea bargains. What this system is, is when something that is not so big occurs we do not give the respondent a hearing but we do give them a disposition. Most respondents complete their dispositions.

Heather Kodhelaj

May 5, 2016

"Youth Courts"

Youth Court has been a success here at A.M.Y at James Martin. It's our first year and we are still ironing out the kinks. We've helped our principal achieve greater things like, raising money for our school instead of handling petty cases that take up her time. Also, we help kids who deserve a second chance.

Our Youth Court has helped reduce the suspension rate by 46%. Most of our cases involve hitting one another or having problems with teachers. As a result we came up with plea bargain to save time and resolve issues more efficiently. Otherwise, we hold cases to find the facts, identify the harm, and fix the problem. Dispositions are held at the end of the cases and include what the respondent, as known as defendant, is given to complete.

Youth Court has let me help my peers achieve better and learn from their mistakes. As the Jury Foreperson in many cases, I find that kids, almost always, love to tell their side of their stories. Some kids waste their second chances. Although, most our cases are a success and I think it will help throughout the country if we add more Youth Courts. Thank you for your your time and effort .

Sincerely, Heather Kodhelaj

Michael Dadak

Youth Court

Youth Court is designed to help the respondents. Usual school policy is to suspend a student for any offense, no matter how minor. Youth Court finds the problem that students coming through have and aims to help them restore and fix their offense.

How does Youth Court benefit students that come through it? Youth Court gives students a chance to tell their view of their offense and the very peers that that are in their classes everyday listen to what they have to say. This proves to help respondents understand the problems of their offense and so are less likely to repeat it. In one case, a student was told by their teacher to write an honest letter, to their parent, about why they did not have their homework. The student wrote a letter, but it contained offensive language. They did not realize that this language would offend their teacher, they only thought it was the truth. Now if this were to go through normal school policy, the student would have more than likely been suspended, but since it went through Youth Court, the student could explain that they did not intentionally mean to offend the teacher and only thought they were telling the truth. With this knowledge, Youth Court was able to think of a disposition that would help the student restore the harm caused by their actions, instead of just being punished.

Is this the only way that Youth Court helps respondents? Youth Court also indirectly helps those who come through it. As soon as a student gets suspended, there is a spot made for them in jail. Study shows that students that get suspended are more likely to get arrested and end up in jail. Studies show that students who get suspended are more likely to drop out of school as well. When a student makes an offense, and goes to Youth Court, the offense doesn't go on their records, and so a spot isn't made for them in jail. Youth Court helps to keep students out of jail by these means.

As you can see, Youth Court benefits the students that go through it. It helps them to not only to take responsibility for their actions, but to also fix them. It helps students that go through it in the future, by not only teaching them to own up to their problems, but by reducing their chances of going to jail. It helps them with their education by reducing their chance that they decide to drop out of school. Youth Court is designed to help students fix their problems, instead of just being punished for them.