



May 16, 2016

The Honorable Lisa M. Boscola
Senate of Pennsylvania
Senate Box 203018
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3018

RE: PBA Support of Youth Court

Dear Senator Boscola:

The Pennsylvania Bar Association has supported the work of Gregg Volz and others in promoting and establishing youth courts in our schools and communities since 2007 and formally endorsed these programs in 2011. PBA lawyers across the Commonwealth have donated their time and resources to help establish youth court programs. Earlier this month, the PBA's Law-Related Education Committee and its chair, Philip Yoon, joined with the PBA's Pro Bono Office to honor the youth court students of Manchester Academic Charter School and their partners at Schnader Harrison Segal & Lewis LLP in an inspiring program at the Supreme Court courtroom in Pittsburgh. Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice David Wecht and Duquesne Law Professor Tracey McCants Lewis observed a youth court demonstration and spoke passionately to the students and adults gathered in the Supreme Court court room about service and the pursuit of justice.

Lawyers in Franklin County have worked for years to bring the positive and meaningful impact that youth court programs have on student learning and success, as well as the improvement of the school environment, to schools in their county. The Public Defender of Montgomery County is supporting a successful youth court at Norristown High School. A survey of Pennsylvania youth courts recently updated by the PBA's Pro Bono Office showed operating school and juvenile justice based courts from Erie to Philadelphia. The PBA believes that youth courts should be in every school and community and encourages efforts that will broaden the distribution of these programs across the state.

Youth courts are an invaluable resource for schools and, more importantly, they make a real difference in re-directing in a positive way the life path of the students who are engaged in the process.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sara A. Austin".

Sara A. Austin, Esquire
President
Pennsylvania Bar Association