



PRESS RELEASE

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Macomb County Prosecutor's Office partners with Macomb County Sheriff's Department to address school violence

Prevail Academy, Mount Clemens - In an effort to combat school violence and educate young minds about the real-life consequences of their actions, the Macomb County Prosecutor's Office Juvenile Unit Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney (APA) Tonya Goetz, in collaboration with Macomb County Sheriff Detective Kelly Simmons, today conducted an eye-opening presentation at Prevail Academy in Mount Clemens.

Detective Simmons engaged the sixth, seventh, and eighth graders on critical topics such as juvenile crimes, drugs, and bullying. Assistant Prosecutor Goetz then delved into the role of prosecutors, the potential charges that juveniles can face, and the serious repercussions tied to those crimes.

"Our partnership with the Macomb County Sheriff's Office is aimed at arming our students with the knowledge they need to make informed, responsible decisions. By understanding the real-world consequences of their actions, we hope to empower them to choose a path that leads to a brighter and more promising future," said Macomb County Prosecutor Peter J. Lucido.

Real-life scenarios were used to drive home the message that these issues are not akin to video games or jokes. Even something as seemingly minor as pushing or shoving another student could lead to devastating consequences, especially if the injured student falls and sustains a head injury. While the aggressor may not have intended to inflict serious harm, they can still find themselves facing criminal charges.

The students learned about various juvenile offenses, including truancy, disobedience at home or in school, gang activities, theft, and the most severe crimes like school threats and homicide. Many were startled to discover that the court can confiscate all of their phones and digital devices, including those belonging to their parents. Furthermore, they could be held in custody at the Juvenile Justice Center.

Assistant Prosecutor Goetz explained the many consequences of juvenile crimes, which include expulsion from school, difficulties in enrolling at another school, home confinement, detention,

community service, driver's license sanctions, out-of-state placement, fines and costs, phone confiscation, social media removal, and the prohibition of contact with friends.

The presentation also underscored the fact that facing juvenile charges, even without a conviction, can result in life-altering consequences such as employment challenges, difficulty joining the military, college acceptance issues, ineligibility for financial aid, legal financial obligations, limited housing options, a lack of public benefits, enhanced penalties for future crimes, revoked firearm privileges as an adult, and even deportation.

In this collaborative effort between the prosecutor and sheriff, Macomb County is taking proactive steps to educate our youth on the profound impact of their choices and the potential consequences they may face, encouraging them to make responsible decisions that will shape their futures in a positive way.

As the presentation concluded, Detective Simmons and APA Goetz encouraged a dialogue with the students. They stressed the importance of reaching out to adults when faced with bullying or challenging situations rather than attempting to handle them alone. APA Goetz also emphasized the power of making wise choices and the significance of walking away when necessary, reminding the students that every decision they make today can significantly impact and affect their future.

The Macomb County Prosecutor's Office is empowering students by educating them and starting a dialog to stop all forms of violence. Handouts on stopping school violence are available online at https://www.macombgov.org/sites/default/files/content/government/prosecutor/pjl_brch-schoolviolence-3.pdf If you are interested in hosting a free presentation at your school on preventing violence, please contact Heather Esposito at (586) 469-5642 or heather.esposito@macombgov.org.

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