

# Teen Court

## Program Overview



### Why are students referred to Teen Court?

Students are referred to Teen Court by school administrators for School Code of Conduct violations. Students who are facing expulsion or a long term suspension of 10 days or more may be referred to Teen Court as an alternative to formal disciplinary action. Students who are willing to take accountability for their actions and participate in Teen Court's restorative justice process. School Code violations that may be referred to Teen Court include: **Weapons Possession; Fighting/Assault; Malicious Destruction or Misuse of School Property; Theft; Threatening Behavior; MIP of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs; Truancy; or escalating Disruptive Behavior** that will result in 10+ days out of school.



### How does the Teen Court program work?

Teen Court participants are first required to take accountability for their actions. Students who deny the School Code violation or refuse to admit wrongdoing cannot participate in Teen Court. Student participants and their parents schedule an intake interview to discuss the program and complete paperwork. All students are required to: write an **apology letter to victim(s)** to repair harm and admit responsibility; make **weekly progress calls** to the Teen Court advocate; complete **at least 8 hours of community service**; complete a **Service Screening with Child and Family Charities** to determine if additional services are needed; attend Street Law educational workshops; and participate in an **Virtual Accountability Hearing** before a jury of Ingham County teens to determine further consequences. A **\$60 Program Fee** is required for all participants. Parents/guardians are encouraged to attend an 11 week family workshops (virtually-dinner provided) to receive a certificate of completion and gift card. Some participants may be required to submit to drug screenings, based on the nature of their violation or their history of substance use. The Peer Jury may require up an additional 12 hours of community service, school progress reports, additional apology letters, a tour of the Ingham County Jail, Peer Jury Duty, a repayment plan for program and restitution costs, and/or School Success Plan and Code of Ethics assignments.

**Nearly 90% of criminal first-offense youths who successfully complete Teen Court do not commit a second criminal offense.** Teen Court helps to disrupt the "school-to-prison pipeline" by addressing the roots of negative behavior, such as trauma, and applying consequences that help teach better choices, prevent future violations, and disrupt the negative patterns associated with Adverse Childhood Experiences by linking at-risk youth to support services. **PREVENTING SUSPENSIONS PROMOTES SCHOOL SUCCESS and graduation, as well as promoting a sense of belonging, acceptance, and community in students.** Teen Court teaches youth about the legal system as well as Restorative Justice concepts, promoting a safer, more supportive school community. **Teen Court allows students to address negative behavior without the consequence of a record that will potentially follow them into adulthood and negatively influence their educational, professional and social outlook long after the violation occurred.**

Child and Family Charities/Juvenile Justice

