



Town Hall to discuss York County's truancy problem

ANDREW SHAW *The York Dispatch*

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William Penn Senior High School in York will host a dropout and truancy prevention town hall meeting on Tuesday.

The nonprofit YorkCounts group is holding its second meeting to raise awareness of the issue and discuss "Stay in School," its joint report with the United Way that details the pervasiveness of the problem.

William Penn has had the highest dropout rate in the county.

"The truancy issue is a countywide concern. It's not exclusively limited to the city of York," said York County Common Pleas Judge John Uhler. Truancy is an unlawful absence.

Uhler previously created the York County Truancy Task Force to address the problem, working with every county district. But only in the past year has his issue come under the spotlight.

"I was sounding this alarm 10 years ago," Uhler said.

Suggestions: The report includes recommendations to expand the task force, as well as to get businesses more involved in encouraging

employees to get a high school diploma.

The "Kids, Truancy and a County at Risk" program will be at 6:30 p.m. in the high school auditorium. The public is invited to attend and ask questions.

They'll also hear data from the report, with startling statistics: for the past 11 years, an average of four students every day dropped out of a York County school.

In financial terms, the 720 York County students projected to drop out this school year represent a long-term loss of about \$91 million to the county, because of lost tax revenue and increased spending on programs to assist those students.

-- Reach Andrew Shaw at 505-5431, ashaw@yorkdispatch.com or twitter.com/ydblogwork.

If you go

A YorkCounts town hall: "Kids, Truancy and a County at Risk"

When : 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 19

Where : William Penn Senior High School Auditorium

What : A conversation about the recent work of YorkCounts and the United Way's Stay in School Report

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