

"Project Lighthouse"

Staying in School is the First Step to a Good Education

The Commonwealth's Attorney's Office is proud to partner with the Suffolk School Board and the Suffolk Police Department in "Project Lighthouse", a program designed to combat truancy.

U. S. Department of Justice statistics indicate that 80% of those in prison were at one time truants, and the percentage of juvenile offenders who started as truants is even higher, approaching 95%. Most experts believe that truancy is the first step toward involvement in crime and violence. Truancy not only adversely effects the truant youth and school system, but also has a negative impact on the surrounding community. Statistics show there is a direct correlation between the truancy rate and daytime crime rates. Nationwide, rising numbers of students combined with an increase in juvenile crime underline the urgent need for initiatives such as "Project Lighthouse" to keep young people in schools so that they will become capable, employable citizens.

According to Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Charles Fox Urquhart, III, "Project Lighthouse" will help parents, schools and law enforcement get truant pupils back in school." He also stated, "We believe in this program because we believe that if we can keep students in school, learning, and off the city's streets we can reduce the crime rate in the city." Parents, as well as students will be held accountable and will end up in court if truancy persists. A hotline telephone number has been set for Project Lighthouse. Anyone observing students hanging out and not in school may call 538-LITE (5483). These combined efforts will produce better students, better schools and a better community.