

Courant.com

Trial Program To Allow Public Access To Certain Juvenile Court Proceedings

By ALAINE GRIFFIN

February 9, 2010

MIDDLETOWN —

Beginning next week, a trial program will allow public access to certain juvenile court proceedings.

Chief Court Administrator Barbara M. Quinn established the pilot program in Middletown with the assistance of the Juvenile Access Pilot Program Advisory Board and the Rules Committee of the Superior Court. Judge Quinn co-chairs the board with Sarah Eagan, an attorney and director of the Center for Children's Advocacy's Child Abuse Project.

The first public case will be heard Feb. 17.

Juvenile court hearings have been closed to the public, although recently passed legislation enabled the court to open its doors to the public. The court hears cases where a child is said to be neglected or abused, or the focus of a petition for termination of parental rights.

According to a press release from the Center for Children's Advocacy, more than 20 states are moving toward opening their juvenile court proceedings.

Judges will decide, case-by-case, which cases or portions of cases the public will have access to. They will consider court filings from any parties seeking to limit or deny public access.

Delinquency proceedings will not be open, and all juvenile court records will remain sealed from public view, including those referenced in a court proceeding open to the public.

Copyright © 2010, The Hartford Courant