

EDITORIALS FEBRUARY 21, 2016 1:00 PM

Mentor program's beauty is simplicity

HIGHLIGHTS

Madison County starts 'Give 30' to guide troubled youth

Leadership without taxpayer boondoggle welcome

Here's hoping it succeeds, others follow example



By The Editorial Board

Madison County leaders are at the beginning of exactly the type of innovative, common-sense initiative that should be the hallmark of public service instead of the exception.

The cops, the courts and the schools are joining together to help troubled kids. The good news is they are doing it without some big taxpayer boondoggle that we find out much later has cost us a lot and produced few results.

Give 30 is simple, which is also the beauty. Get adults to spend 30 minutes a week volunteering as mentors for troubled youth. They do it in the controlled environment of the school. They will help with homework or just listen to the youths.

The result is expected to be giving teens without a stable adult presence in their lives some individual attention and someone who models the right frame of mind to be a success in life. The other result is expected to be stopping some of these kids when no adult is around from making the wrong choice and landing in jail.

“I don’t believe we can out-police the issues we are facing,” said Madison County Regional Superintendent Robert Daiber, who developed the program. “You measure success one student at a time. You prevent them from making one bad choice.”

He is pushing the program forward now because state law is changing so that “zero tolerance” discipline policies are no longer tolerated. Schools need alternatives and ways to head off student discipline problems.

The costs are minimal and being covered by existing fees or absorbed by Daiber.

Now the volunteers need to step up to make this program a success. Also, other local communities need to watch, learn and emulate if it works.

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