



Newport News Sheriff's Office

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MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE: **IMMEDIATE**
2006

DATE: **Wednesday, December 06,**

"Class Action" Enters Elementary Schools
Attorney General Robert McDonnell to Co-Teach

WHAT: "Class Action" Anti-Gang Education
WHEN: Thursday, December 7 @ 2:30 P.M.
WHERE: Palmer Elementary School; 100 Palmer Lane; Newport News (off Oyster Point between Yoder Barn Theater and Fire Station)
WHO: Attorney General teaming with Law Enforcement Community

Attorney General Bob McDonnell is bringing his anti-gang message into the elementary schools of Newport News and he has called upon the Sheriff's Office for help.

"Class Action" is a program that teaches kids to resist gangs and how to make good decisions. McDonnell understands that the success of the message is greatest if he throws a wide net. That is why he has turned to the Newport News Sheriff's Office (NNSO), the Police Department and the Commonwealth's Attorney.

Sheriff's deputies will be teaching the material to elementary aged school children. Police officers will have their own lesson plan aimed at older students in middle and high school.

Menchville High School in Newport News served as the pilot in 1996. It launched statewide a year later. It continued to expand into high schools and middle schools. It has been rated by educators and law enforcement to be productive.

Now, something new. A workbook has been developed for younger children. The announcement of "Class Action" for elementary schools is timed to coincide with the 10th Anniversary of "Class Action."

“Class Action: Gang Prevention and Education Program” is a separate and voluntary component of the current Class Action model. The current phase of the program includes a K-2 model which serves as a "get acquainted" lesson for the young students and introduces them to the law and law enforcement. The upper elementary (grades 4-5) and the middle school programs focus on gang recognition and prevention tips, new gang legislation and decision making skills.

By educating our students about citizenship and the short and long term consequences of unlawful behaviors, we reduce crime, violence and substance abuse in Virginia.

Attorney General McDonnell created the new workbook with the help of his “Class Action” staff, the Virginia Department of Education, Virginia State Police, the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, other law enforcement officers, education officials, commonwealth’s attorneys, court service personnel, and the U.S. Department of Justice Office of C.O.P.S.

School children will be instructed exclusively by deputies and other law enforcement officers. Those instructors are trained and certified to teach “Class Action” for grades K-12. The new Gang Reduction Program also requires certification. The office of the Attorney General will oversee that teaching standards are followed. Once deputies/officers are certified, they are provided updates and additional training on new “Class Action” initiatives.

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