

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Is there a specific mandate that requires District Attorneys' Offices to conduct CBJ Programs?

The District Attorney's Office is expressly required to conduct CBJ meetings by statute, according to M.G.L. c.12, §32(a). The statutory purpose of CBJ is "to coordinate efforts of the criminal justice system in addressing juvenile justice."

### What happens at a CBJ Meeting?

CBJ meetings may be held weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. There are two components to a CBJ meeting. Members discuss court-involved youth who have been identified as being most likely to pose a threat to their community as well as individual youths whose conduct has raised concern. This "conduct driven discussion" helps the schools, the police and the District Attorney's Office work together to take preventive steps and intervene in addressing problems in the community before a juvenile's conduct places him/her into the court system.

Assistant District Attorneys are assigned to help lead the CBJ meetings.

### Who can attend the CBJ meeting?

Assistant District Attorneys assigned to the program, local law enforcement agencies, schools, probation and court representatives and, where appropriate, the department of children and families, department of youth services and department of mental health." G.L. c.12, §32(c).

### What can be discussed at a CBJ Meeting?

The CBJ Act clearly contemplates that discussion in CBJ meetings should be frank and concrete, involving juvenile matters, "specific events" and "particular individuals." It is critical therefore, in order to comply with other laws concerning the confidentiality of student and court records and the privacy interests of adult and juvenile offenders, that the information not be disseminated to the public. Information which is legally recognized as private or confidential is not, and should not be discussed at CBJ meetings.

### How is the information discussed at CBJ helpful to school officials?

By law, G.L. c.71, §37H<sup>1/2</sup> the school may suspend a student upon the issuance of a criminal or delinquency felony complaint, and may expel a student upon a finding of guilty or delinquent on such a complaint.

## Other School Safety Resources

Middlesex District Attorney Gerry Leone's Office is committed to fostering a safe learning environment for all students through comprehensive diversion, prevention and intervention programs.

In addition to CBJ, other school safety resources offered through the DA's Office include:

### Middlesex Partnerships for Youth, Inc. (MPY)

MPY is a non-profit organization that specializes in providing prevention and intervention resources and training to the school districts and communities of Middlesex County. School-based trainings offered through MPY for parents, teachers, and students include: Internet safety, alcohol and other drug abuse prevention, mental health issues, and anti-violence and anti-bullying strategies. For more information or if you are interested in a MPY training to be held in your community, please visit [www.middlesexpartnershipsfor youth.org](http://www.middlesexpartnershipsfor youth.org).

### SECURE

SECURE (Safe Effective Community Understanding for Response to Emergencies) is a program created in 2000, during the aftermath of the Columbine High School shootings. SECURE aims to create clear and effective responses to emergency situations. Each year, the SECURE conference gathers law enforcement, school personnel, fire services, and other emergency responders to develop comprehensive emergency procedures. If you are interested in attending the next SECURE conference, please visit [www.middlesexpartnershipsfor youth.org](http://www.middlesexpartnershipsfor youth.org).



## COMMUNITY BASED JUSTICE



### OFFICE OF MIDDLESEX DISTRICT ATTORNEY GERRY LEONE

15 Commonwealth Avenue  
Woburn, MA 01801  
(781) 897-8300

[www.middlesexda.com](http://www.middlesexda.com)

For more information on the  
Community Based Justice programs,  
please contact Community Programs Coordinator  
Robyn Pontremoli at (781) 897-8815 or  
[robyn.pontremoli@state.ma.us](mailto:robyn.pontremoli@state.ma.us)

# About Community Based Justice



The foundation of any effective school safety program can be summed up in one word – communication. By bringing together school personnel, public safety professionals, and other social service agencies, the Community Based Justice programs are at the heart of our efforts to build that strong level of communication in communities across the county.

The purpose of the CBJ programs is to help identify students and then intervene early-on to provide positive alternatives to crime and violence. CBJ has been highly effective in our high schools for more than a decade, and we are presently expanding these programs into our middle schools.

There is no greater priority we have than protecting our children. That is why we are so committed to developing and enhancing these CBJ programs as part of our comprehensive efforts to keep students safe in our schools.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gerry Leone".

Gerry Leone  
Middlesex District Attorney

The school-based CBJ programs bring together school personnel, public safety professionals, and social service providers in each community. CBJ meetings are convened by a member of the District Attorney's Office and provide a forum for participants to share information about court-involved students. The purpose of the meetings is to devise proactive ways to intervene in the lives of those youth and help steer them away from crime and violence.

As a result, not only does CBJ help address the needs of those individual students, but the programs also foster a safer learning environment for all youth.



Since taking office, District Attorney Leone has worked to enhance the CBJ programs, personally spending mornings each month at CBJ meetings across the county.

Assistant District Attorneys in the District Courts are assigned in the schools, so that they may more intimately know the community and people that they serve and protect.

Recognizing that middle school students are now facing a number of the same safety challenges as our high school students, DA Leone is presently expanding the CBJ programs into every middle school in Middlesex County.

## History of CBJ

During a wave of gang and school-based violence in the early 1990s, then-District Attorney Tom Reilly established the Community Based Justice (CBJ) program as a way to more comprehensively intervene and prevent youth violence. Pilot CBJ programs were established in Lowell, Cambridge, Somerville, and Malden. Those programs were then expanded to every community in Middlesex County.

**CBJ became a national model for violence prevention in our schools.**

**The programs now flourish in communities throughout the entire Commonwealth, being mandated by the legislature.**