

# INFORMAL JUVENILE TRAFFIC COURT

## Background

When the Informal Juvenile Traffic Court first began more than two decades ago, it was an innovative approach that proved to help kids from entering the Juvenile Justice system.

Since this Informal Court's forming, the Juvenile Justice System has evolved, best practices have been identified and alternative solutions have been adopted.

Local stakeholders - including the Court, District Attorney and Public Defender Offices, Department of Probation and educational leaders - believe youth and families will benefit more through other system practices that do not impose imposing fees and fines.

Research has shown that imposing financial penalties on juvenile offenders has the opposite of its intended effect, increasing recidivism instead of deterring it.

According to the District Attorney, 70 percent of the youth who were identified as truant returned to school compliance after mediation. Out of the 1200 cases in 2015 processed through this Court, only 378 were Traffic cases. The remaining matters were Truancy related and non-traffic misdemeanors and infractions.

## New Approach

Effective January 27, 2017, all Truancy related Fines, Penalty Assessments, Driver's License Suspensions and Failure to Appear charges (dating back to 1993) imposed by the Informal Juvenile Traffic Hearing Officer are now "set aside" (eliminated).

This decision is expected to impact more than 12,000 individuals who have participated in this Court.

Traffic infractions are now routed to Adult Traffic Court and all misdemeanor offenses and non-Traffic are processed through the Prevention and Early Intervention Unit. All Truancy matters will be referred to the District Attorney's Office as part of its Truancy Amnesty Project Reform.

## Quotes

"We have taken a stand. We value our youth enough to see what is underneath the school absence and do what we can to reengage rather than to impose a financial consequence or suspend a driver's license." – Hon. Katherine Lucero, Supervising Judge

SUPERIOR COURT OF  
CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA  
JUVENILE DIVISION

The Truancy related Fines, Penalty Assessments, Drivers License Suspensions and Failure to Appear charges pursuant to Vehicle Code Section 40508A which were imposed by the Informal Juvenile Traffic Hearing Officer of the Santa Clara County Superior Court before January 3, 2017 are hereby set aside in the Interest of Justice at the request of the Santa Clara County District Attorney Jeff Rosen.

So ordered,

Hon. Katherine Lucero  
Supervising Judge

