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Justice Max Baer and Members of the State Children’s Roundtable will Honor Students Placing in a Truancy Art Logo Contest

HARRISBURG, May 26, 2011— On Friday, May 27, Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Max Baer and members of the state’s Children’s Roundtable will honor the top three fifth and sixth grade students who placed in the statewide truancy art logo contest *Awake. Attend. Achieve.*, sponsored by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania to raise truancy awareness and to promote school attendance.

The children, their families, friends and teachers will be attending the awards ceremony to be held at 12:15 p.m. in the Sheraton Harrisburg/Hershey Hotel in Salon A, 4650 Lindle Road, Harrisburg, PA. **Your coverage is invited.**

More than 200 fifth and sixth graders throughout the state competed in the contest over the last several months. The three finalists are students from **Carbondale Elementary** and the **Fell Charter School in Lackawanna County** and the **Pleasant Valley Elementary in Blair County**. The first place student will receive an iPad2, second place a colored Nook Reader and third place a \$100 gift certificate to Barnes and Noble. Prizes were donated by the Special Court Judges Association of Pennsylvania. The new logo will become the symbol for efforts to reduce truancy.

“During school year 2009-2010 in Pennsylvania roughly 125,000 of our children regularly missed school,” Justice Baer said. “These numbers are important, but they are meaningless unless we take a look at these children and their stories. When we dig deeper, we see an eight year old boy, not going to school because he is caring for his sixth month old brother and two year old sister due to his mother's addiction. If we look further, we see the second grader who is regularly exposed to violence in their home, afraid to leave home or worse, the kindergartner who is himself a victim of physical or sexual abuse. When we ignore a child's regular absence from school, we miss the opportunity to intervene to protect children—we fail them.”

The State Roundtable truancy initiative hopes to improve school attendance by raising community awareness of truancy and urging stake holders to dig a little deeper past the unexcused absence to the reason why students are missing school. There may perhaps be a more serious problem happening with a child or their family.

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