

Teens off to rehab

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Author: Michael D Clark

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Bus rape incident

WEST CHESTER TWP. - Two Lakota students were sentenced Friday to a juvenile rehabilitation program for raping a male classmate on a school bus.

The boys will serve a year in juvenile detention and could be labeled as sexual offenders into their adult years if they do not successfully complete the program, the judge warned.

After the boys were convicted last month in the rape of a 15-year-old boy with a pencil aboard a Freshman School bus last spring, Butler County Juvenile Court Judge David Niehaus gave each boy a one-year sentence; one boy for rape and the other for complicity to rape. Niehaus then suspended the sentences and ordered the boys into a full-time program at the Butler County Rehabilitation Center in Hamilton.

They are permanent convictions that, unlike most juvenile offenses, cannot be expunged.

If the two 15-year-olds successfully finish the program, which usually takes six to eight months, Niehaus will then rule on whether the teens will be labeled as sexual offenders - a label they would carry into adulthood.

"Right now, both of these young men are considered low-risk sexual offenders, but that is not 'no risk,' " Niehaus said.

If they fail the rehabilitation program, the teens would have to serve their full sentences.

All three boys were students at Lakota Freshman School at the time the attack was reported. None attends the school now.

The boy charged with rape admitted during the sentencing hearing that he had lied in his previous testimony about not having anything to do with the attack.

"I was scared and didn't want to go to jail. Now, I will admit to it," he said.

Niehaus warned the two, "You can't make it rehabilitation unless you take ownership of what you did."

Attorney Ken Lawson represented the boy convicted of rape and said the sentence was fair.

"Rape is a serious charge. But we said all along that the activity that took place between these teenagers also demonstrated the need for counseling," Lawson said.

E-mail mclark@enquirer.com

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Abstract (Document Summary)

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