

## NEWS RELEASE

**Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**ILENE SHAPIRO**  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE



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**Contact:** Sharon Reaves  
Director of Human Resources  
Office of Executive Shapiro  
[sreaves@summitoh.net](mailto:sreaves@summitoh.net)  
330-926-2500

Nicole Hagy  
Community Outreach & Grants Coordinator  
Akron Municipal Court  
[court@akronohio.gov](mailto:court@akronohio.gov)  
330-375-2186

### **County, Akron Municipal Court, APS celebrate 'Raising the Bar' program**

**SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO**—County Executive Ilene Shapiro, Akron Municipal Court Judge David Hamilton, and Akron Public Schools (APS) Principal LaCresia Beecher and Superintendent Christine Fowler-Mack are celebrating the completion of the first ever Raising the Bar program. Raising the Bar is a pilot program that seeks to engage students early on in their education with the legal profession, exposing those students to the opportunities that a legal education and career can provide. The pilot consisted of one session per month, over the last three months at APS's Buchtel Community Learning Center (CLC).

Through the work of Heart to Heart Leadership and several other organizations, students had the opportunity to hear from local prosecutors and other attorneys, as well as judges. The program's curriculum included interactive materials containing team building activities, critical thinking and deductive reasoning lessons and other valuable tools to identify each student's strengths and how those values can be shared in a professional environment.

"Congratulations to all the students who completed Raising the Bar this year," said County Executive Shapiro, "The County is proud to have provided funding through My Brother's Keeper and remains committed to building career pathways that are accessible to all residents. To all our partners who made this program happen, thank you!"

Raising the Bar is ultimately aimed at addressing racial and ethnic disparities at law schools and in the legal and judicial fields. The American Bar Association reports that only 5% of practicing attorneys are Black and only 38% are women. Additionally, only 7.9% of law school enrollees are Black. This represents a racial disparity that not only discourages Black and minority students from attending law school and practicing law, but impacts the diversity of identity and experience among lawyers serving the public. By confronting these disparities, this program can move the needle in the right direction.

"Creating programming like 'Raising the Bar' is my life's work and also my duty as a Judge," said Judge David Hamilton. "I am an avid supporter of ensuring that the next generation has the necessary resources to move forward in a purposeful fashion following their high school graduation."

The pilot program included juniors and seniors at Buchtel and was funded by County Executive Shapiro's My Brother's Keeper initiative with the intention of expanding in the future. By completing the program, students earned community service hours that count toward their requirements for their college or career pathway. Students were also provided with valuable networking and professional development opportunities.

The Akron Municipal Court serves the cities of Akron and Fairlawn; the townships of Bath, Richfield and Springfield; the Villages of Lakemore and Richfield; and that part of Mogadore in Summit County, Ohio. For

more information about Akron Municipal Court services and programs, please visit:  
<https://link.edgepilot.com/s/34af1f96/JvQoJlal1U6kVzv1zhD1Gw?u=https://www.akronmunicipalcourt.org/>

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