

As the school's criminal justice teacher since 2006, Tom Ledger brings with him practical experience of nearly 11 years with the Indiana Department of Correction prior to teaching at Bellmont. Ledger earned his BA from Purdue and MEd from IWU.



THE TEAM OF ZACH HESS AND RILEY TOMKINSON PRESENT THE GROUP'S FINDINGS ON JUVENILE CRIME BEFORE POLICE OFFICER LENNIE CORRAL, SHERIFF SHANE RECKEWEG, AND IAN GILBERT OF COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS.



**PUBLIC SAFETY: CRIMINAL JUSTICE**  
**AVAILABLE @ BELLMONT HS**

# Searching for Real Answers

## Criminal Justice students brainstorm ways to curtail juvenile crime in town



**LEAH OETTING, SENIOR**

*"We cannot completely wipe out juvenile crime but we can reduce it by educating students at an earlier age."*

**COURSES AT BELLMONT:**  
Criminal Justice I, 2 sections

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Firefighter - \$43,906  
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**INDIANA LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY** - 600 hrs. of training in areas including criminal and traffic law, firearms, physical tactics, EMS awareness, and Human Behavior.

**P**roblem solving was the focus of class on Nov. 7, when four groups of criminal justice students brainstormed before an audience the question: "How to decrease juvenile crime in the Decatur community?"

"I wanted my students to learn how to work with their peers on a project which is authentic to the real workplace in criminal justice," teacher Tom Ledger said.

To help create a more realistic experience for his students, Ledger invited local professionals in the criminal justice field to listen to and later question the students over their findings and recommendations.

The 11 students in the morning class, as well a

another 18 in the p.m. class, created power points on their iPads, using the technology as both a "research and presentation tool," according to Ledger.

Outside guests included police and probation officers and counselors, as well as a former gang member.

Suggestions from the student groups ranged from identifying and expanding upon what the school and town currently offered, to finding ways to fund a concert venue, amphitheater, water park and movie theatre, like in nearby communities.

"We can't completely wipe out juvenile crime, senior Leah Oetting said. "But we can reduce it by starting to educate stu-

dents at a younger age." The group of Ashley Piper, Ricardo Torres and Jordan Corral cited problems at home, suggesting early interventions, training inside the homes,

teen courts and more extracurricular activities as possible deterrents to juvenile crime, earning them the top group designation from the audience members.



Criminal Justice students Dylan Call and Landon Hummer discuss possible causes of juvenile crime, citing family and home lives as key reasons. The lack of extracurricular information was another. "I can't even name five clubs at Bellmont," Call said.



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1/24/2013

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