

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF FLORIDA, IN AND FOR HERNANDO COUNTY**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER H-2026-03

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER ESTABLISHING
THE HERNANDO COUNTY TRUANCY COURT PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, habitual truancy of the children of Hernando County may be a gateway activity to the detriment of such children, and to the safety of the people and property of Hernando County; and

WHEREAS, Section 984.151, Florida Statutes, provides for the filing of truancy petitions seeking early truancy intervention in the circuit court;

WHEREAS, Section 984.151, Florida Statutes, and Florida Rule of Juvenile Procedure 8.855 provide authority for the appointment of general or special magistrates to hear and make recommendations on truancy issues; and

WHEREAS, Section 43.26, Florida Statutes, and 2.215, Florida Rules of General Practice and Judicial Administration, authorizes the Chief Judge to enter and sign administrative orders and “to do everything necessary to promote the prompt and efficient administration of justice in the courts over which he or she is chief judge”; and

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of the citizens of Hernando County and for reasons of judicial efficiency that a Truancy Court be established in Hernando County to hear truancy intervention

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petitions; it is therefore

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that:

1. A court program is hereby established in Hernando County, which shall be known as the "Hernando County Truancy Court."

2. This Order shall be effective immediately and shall apply to all pending and future cases initiated by the filing of Truancy Petition in the Circuit Court in and for Hernando County.

3. The Clerk of Court shall designate the truancy petitions as dependency proceedings.

4. The Clerk of Court shall schedule the initial hearing within thirty (30) days of the filing of the truancy petition, and issue a summons to the parent, guardian, or legal custodian of the student directing the person to appear for the hearing at the time and place specified.

5. The Honorable Thomas R. Eineman, Circuit Judge, is hereby assigned and designated to act as the Judge of Hernando County Truancy Court, to hear, conduct, try and determine the cause or causes which shall be presented to him as judge of said court, and thereafter to dispose of all matters considered by him.

6. Each calendar year subsequent to this order, beginning for calendar year 2027, the assignment of the

Truancy Court Docket will be included in the administrative order issued regarding judicial assignments. At such time another Fifth Judicial Circuit judge may be assigned in Judge Eineman's stead, or a general or special magistrate may be assigned to conduct Truancy Court.

7. This Order is in full force and effect until rescinded, superseded, or replaced.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers, in Brooksville,
Hernando County, Florida this ^{22nd} day of January, 2026.



Daniel B. Merritt, Jr.

Chief Judge

Fifth Judicial Circuit