

Item 25-0250: AASD Attendance Update

Common Council

Wed, Mar 19, 2025 7:00PM

Mayor Jake Woodford 14:50

With that, we'll move on to an update from the Appleton Area School District on attendance, and here to present is Superintendent Greg Hartjes. Welcome Greg.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 14:59

Thank you. Good evening. On behalf of the Appleton Area School District, I want to thank you for giving us the opportunity to talk about student success and an area that we feel is negatively impacting student success, which is student attendance. And we're here asking for your help.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 15:18

Next slide, please. So, this next slide shows our vision statement for the Appleton Area School District, which says "Working together - Students, Families, Staff, and Community." And I'll stop there, because that first phrase here means a lot to us. We truly believe that if our students are going to be successful, we need to have families, staff, community working together to support them. It goes on to say, "We will ensure that each graduate is academically, socially, and emotionally prepared for success in life. Every student every day."

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 15:50

And there's a word in there that I feel is really important, and that's the word "success." And the word success is really important

because it's what we do every day in the school district is we look for ways, actions we can take, decisions we can make, that are going to increase the success of our students. We also like the word success because we feel it's a unifying word. Certainly, know that every one of you sitting here wants our kids to be successful. Everybody who's in the audience behind me wants our kids to be successful, and so that's why that word is so important to us.

AASD Vision

Working together, students, families, staff, and community will ensure that each graduate is academically, socially, and emotionally prepared for success in life

Every Student, Every Day

- ★ **We know there is a positive relationship between school attendance and student success**
- ★ **We need the City's help in getting our teenage students to come to school so they can realize this vision**

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 16:24

Now, if you click on the next piece is we are concerned about, as I said, the lack of success for some students. We're talking only about high school. And the challenge is, we have students that just simply aren't coming to school at all or enough to do well academically, to learn, to grow, and to receive our support. And so, if you click again, you'll see that we are looking for support from the city. We're looking for help. Because I spent 25 years at Appleton West High School as a teacher and principal, and I know that there are teenagers that get to a point in their life where they're no longer interested in listening to their parents or the school district staff. And there's an element there that is no different in 2025 for teenagers than it was in 2005 or when I was in highs—1985. Just a fact of being a teenager. And so, the reality is that if they're not listening to us, and us talk about coming to school every day and being successful, and they're not listening to their parents, is where we've hit a roadblock—right? And that's where we're struggling. That's why we're here to ask for your help.



From the Wisconsin Department of Education



What is the purpose of truancy laws?

Since regularly missing school has a significant impact on student achievement and positive youth development, truancy laws aim to deter students from skipping school, encourage students to attend, and encourage caregivers to get kids to school. The hope is to ultimately increase graduation rates, improve the workforce, build community, support well-being, reduce the risk of negative outcomes, and increase protective factors and positive outcomes.



Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 17:33

Next slide, please. So, I'm going to talk about truancy and explain the difference between truancy and chronic absenteeism, because there's a very significant difference that we feel. So, from the Wisconsin Department of Education, they lay out a reason why we have the truancy laws, so I'll read it for you here. One more click. Thank you. "Since regularly missing school has a significant impact on student achievement and positive youth development, truancy laws aim to deter students from skipping school, encouraging students to attend, and encourage caregivers to get kids to school. The hope is to ultimately increase graduation rate, improve the workforce, build community, support well-being, reduce the risk of negative outcomes and increase protective factors and positive outcomes." And again, just like our missions—our vision statement, we know this is what all of you want. So, this is why there are state laws around truancy.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 18:37

However, on the next slide—and I really apologize for making and make this many clicks, because I have a lot of things that will come up here. So, what you're seeing here is habitual truancy. And habitual truancy is what the state law addresses. However, it's not our biggest concern, and you're going to find that a lot of school districts across the state and across the nation have moved away from habitual truancy, are more concerned about chronic absenteeism. Because habitual truancy is defined as missing all or part of five or more school days in a

semester without an excuse, and we feel that students can still be successful, even though they may miss all or part of five days.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 19:24

For example, a student misses the first hour of three days in the first week of school because they're just getting acclimated to a new schedule—unexcused—parent hasn't called them in. They can then come to school for every day for the next three months, and maybe something happens with the transportation. Now, they miss first hour two more days. They're now considered by the state habitually true.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 19:45

So, when we look at our data here, I've shared—we have a lot of data, but we just chose some specific points to share with you. You see that in 2017-'18, our habitual truancy rate was 34.6 across our high schools. Yes, then you go to '18-'19, and then there are two years missing. During the school years of '19, '20, and '21 we were impacted by the pandemic. We really, we don't look at that data for anything academically attendance wise. But now we came out of the pandemic, and you see that we've increased slightly in terms of our habitual truancy. Up to 40% of our high school students last year were considered habitually truant. But again, it's not our greatest concern.

HABITUAL TRUANCY

Missing all or part of 5 or more school days in a semester without an excuse.

2017-2018	2018-2019	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
34.6%	35.0%	28.7%	33.0%	40.2%

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 20:27

So, if you move on to the next chart, this is what we're concerned about, and this is where school districts have gone. We're looking at total absences, whether they're excused or unexcused. And so chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% or more of total school days, including both excused and unexcused absences. And so, when we look at where we were in 2017-'18 and '18-'19, between 12 and 15% across our high schools. Our middle schools were a little bit lower. Elementary schools are like 6, 7, 8%. We came out of the pandemic like almost every other school in our state and across our nation with kids missing school. And you can see that we have improved over the last three years, but yet that 23.7% is still—that's over a thousand high school students in Appleton that missed 18 or more school days last year—chronically absent, okay? Those are the kids that were concerned about. Now in the first semester of this year, we are over 25% again. So, we have a lot of concerns about this, but yet, students still could possibly be successful missing that many days.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

Missing 10% or more of total school days, including both excused and unexcused absences. Missing 10% of eligible school days (18 days for the full school year).

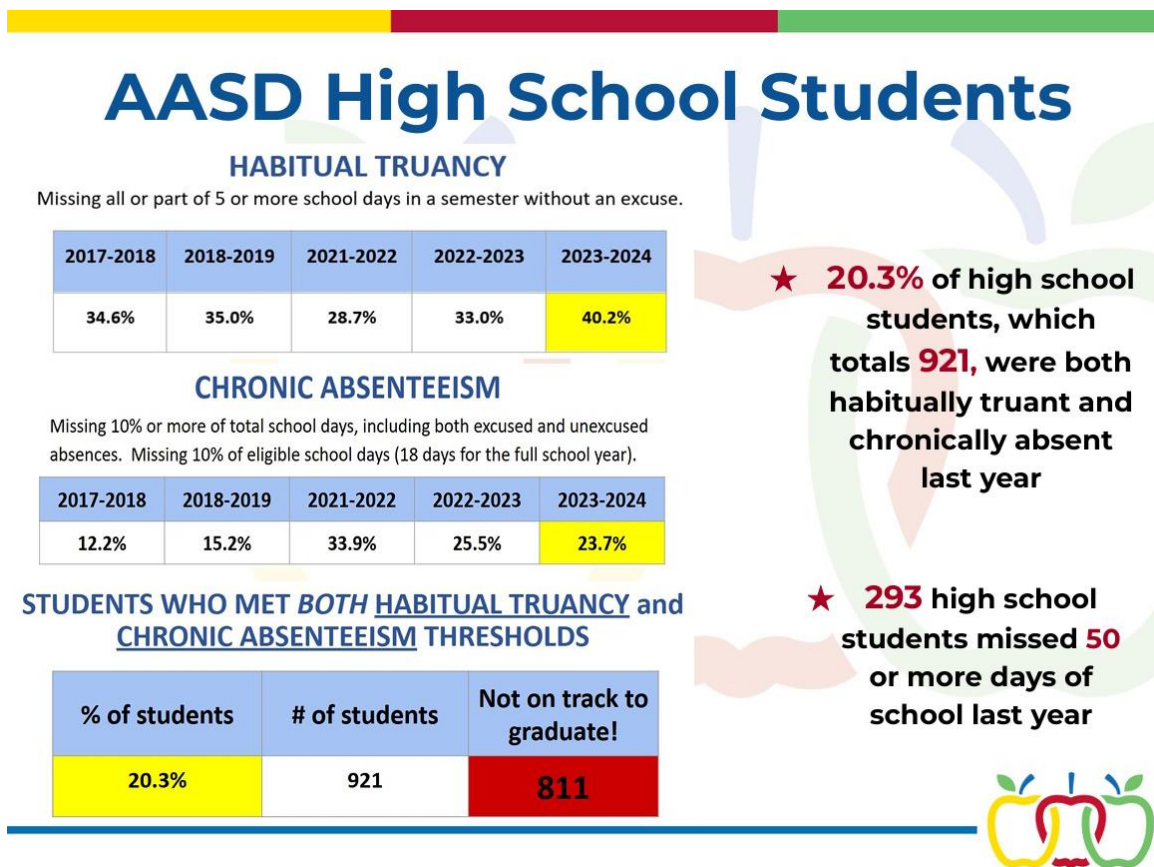
2017-2018	2018-2019	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
12.2%	15.2%	33.9%	25.5%	23.7%

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 21:40

On the next click you're going to see there's an overlap obviously. We have 20.3% of our students last year who are both habitually truant, and they were chronically absent. It's 921 kids. So, it's about twice as many as we were dealing with prior to the pandemic. But again, it's the next piece that most concerns us.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 22:01

So, if you could click one more time. Out of those 921 students, 110 still passed all their classes last year. They were still successful academically. They may not be reaching their maximum potential, but again, it's not our concern. Our concern is in red there. That's the 811 students last year in our high schools that were chronically absent; they were habitually truant; and they did not pass all their classes, meaning they've fallen behind for graduation purposes. They're not on track to graduate.



Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 22:33

Now, it doesn't mean they won't graduate. Certainly, 811 kids is a lot of kids. We have a significant number of programs that support kids when they fall behind. We have alternative programs at our high school. There is summer school for them. There are going to be several different options. If they fall really far behind it might be Central High School, which is a school for students who have fallen behind in credits. We work with Fox Valley Tech. They have several programs that we work with. We never give up on a kid, and so they come back for their fifth year if they want to come back for a fifth year. So, we have all these different ways that we're going to support those 811 students.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 23:11

But there's this one final subset, if you could click one more time on this. These are the kids we're most concerned about. We had 293 students last year in our high schools that missed 50 or more days of school and they failed classes. These are kids who are falling significantly behind and really going to be challenged to get them caught up to graduate.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 23:34

So, let's go to the next slide please. So, you know the goal for us is not about just getting kids to attend school. Like I said in our vision statement, it's about them being successful socially, emotionally, and academically, because we know what the outcomes are for students who don't find that type of success.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 23:54

So, if you could click next, there's just a handful of points that I want to share with you. So, the first one, the likelihood of a high school student who is living in poverty which is about 40 to 50% of our students in

Appleton—so the likelihood that they earn a living wage by the age of 30 increases from 21% to 58% with strong academic achievement. So, it matters. Students who do well in school find more success in life later. That's important.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 24:24

The next stat—a student who is chronically absent one year out of five years from eighth through 12th grade is seven times more likely to drop out of

school. So, across those five years, eighth grade to 12th grade, if they are chronically absent one year, they're seven times more likely to drop out.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 24:42

What does it mean for dropouts? Well, the next point says high school dropouts are nearly four times as likely to be receiving government assistance by the age of 27, more than three times as likely to have been arrested, and twice as likely to use illicit drugs. And then this fourth one, 70% of adults in the prison system cannot read and write above the fourth-grade level.



Outcomes for students who are not successful:

- **The likelihood of a high school student who is living in poverty earning a living wage by age 30 increases from 21% to 58% with strong academic achievement (Paths of Opportunity, What it Will Take for All Young People to Thrive)**
- **A student who is chronically absent in one year out of the five years from 8th through 12th grade is seven times more likely to drop out of school. (AASA School Administrator)**
- **High school dropouts are nearly four times as likely to be receiving government assistance by age 27, more than three times as likely to have been arrested, and twice as likely to use illicit drugs (National Library of Medicine)**
- **70% of adults in the prison system cannot read and write above the 4th-grade level (Correctional Education Association)**
- **As adults, we cannot allow teenagers to continually make decisions that will negatively impact their future.**



Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 25:03

So, you'll also—you'll often hear people who are concerned about the school to prison pipeline. The school to prison pipeline does not happen because a teenager gets a ticket. If that was the case, we won't give tickets for speeding or underage drinking or tobacco possession. The school to prison pipeline happens when kids don't graduate from high school or they graduate without the skills and the knowledge to be successful as an adult. And back to that speeding example, what we're asking for is a ticket, but it's no different than if a student's speeding down Wisconsin Avenue going 50 miles an hour and they get pulled over by one of our officers. Is the officer not going to give them a ticket because they're afraid they're going to go to prison? There's no connection there. There's not a connection. Ultimately, we think as adults we cannot allow teenagers to continually make decisions that will negatively impact their future.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 26:04

Another concern we hear often is the mental health of students and as a reason why kids don't come to school. And if you could go to the next slide, please, we certainly are more concerned than ever about the mental health of our students. The challenges for teenagers are greater than ever. We certainly are learning a lot about social media and what social media is, and how it's impacting our kids. Great book called "The Anxious Generation." You want to read it; it's about how cell phones and all of those social media apps are really creating mental health challenges.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 26:42

But what we believe is what is on the left-hand side here. Attending school provide students with emotional support. Associating with peers and interacting with staff members who care about their well-being is an important factor in a student social and emotional development.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 26:57

So, if you click again when we think about a student who's at home struggling with mental health and has no supports at their house, and we look at what we have for them at school, if we can get them there, it's classroom teachers. A high school student has six or seven classroom teachers

Attending school provides students with emotional support. Associating with peers and interacting with staff members who care about their well-being is an important factor in a student's social and emotional development.



- Dean of Students
- Social Worker
- School Counselor
- Math Interventionist
- Literacy Interventionist
- Coaches
- Club Advisors
- Interpreters
- Paraprofessionals
- Principal
- LMC Specialist
- School Psychologist
- Youth Advocate
- Assistant Principal



that care about them, that care about their success, and we have all the positions down the right-hand side that we've listed, Dean of Students, social workers at our high school, school counselors, literacy and math interventions, coaches, club advisors. I won't read through all of them, but when we look at the challenges kids

are facing with mental health, when they're at home, they don't have access to any of this. We can get them to school, this is where the support is for them.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 27:42

So, over the last five years, we have learned a lot as a school district, and I'm going to talk in a little bit about when the truancy ordinance went away. As a district, we had to make some changes. We had to look at how we were supporting kids, and we've come to realize that we were doing it wrong. We were. The way we were doing it was overly punitive. And so, I'm going to have Stephanie Marta come up and talk about the next two slides, and she's going to share what do we currently do to support students? So, Stephanie Marta is our—she's one of two full time attendance coordinators. These were not positions we had. One is brand new this year, and Stephanie, I believe, is in year three. We've also added part time positions at all four of our middle schools and our three high schools in the last five years. These were positions we didn't have previously because we relied on truancy, truancy court, and some punitive measures. So, I'm going to turn it over to Stephanie for the next two slides.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 28:46

Hi everyone. Thank you again for having us here tonight. My background is a school social worker for the past 22 years. So, I'm very passionate about working with students and families and supporting them as it relates to their school success. So as the attendance coordinator for middle and high schools for the past three years, we've worked very hard to put some supports in place for attendance, and I'm going to share those tonight if you can click again.

Current Support System for Students

Over the past five years, the AASD has continually added support for students who are struggling with consistent attendance. During this time, we have added two full-time Attendance Coordinator Positions and seven part-time positions. Below is our three-tier system of support.

Universal

- Implementation of best practices for belonging, connection & engagement
- Attendance is talked about & part of the school culture
- Accurate attendance taking practices
- Recognition of positive/improved attendance
- Attendance team meets at least every other week
- Family engagement, education and supports
- Attendance letters & other family communication (electronic 3 & 7 day letters are sent automatically)

Tier 3 Strategies & Supports

- Check & Connect
- School based mental health referral
- Alternative education support (high school)
- Alternative plans for non-attendance/school avoidance
- Brief Behavior Plan
- Home visits/intensive outreach
- County prevention referral (elementary)
- Community referral
- County truancy referral (ages 10-17)*

Tier 2 Strategies & Supports

- Attendance education lessons (elementary & middle)
- Walking school bus (elementary)
- Attendance letters (5 & 10 day letters as determined by the attendance team)
- Targeted support through STAR coordinators (secondary), cultural advisors, and DEI coordinators, Youth Advocates
- Mentoring
- Check in/Check out
- Student success plans
- Home visits
- SAIG
- Attendance incentives
- TRAC referral (secondary)

*During the 2023-2024 school year, a total of 116 county truancy referrals were made for middle and high school students, which is equivalent to only 4.9% of the students (2,371) who met the criteria for habitual truancy.



Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 29:22

So, I'm going to share our different levels of support. So, our attendance—we work off of a three-tiered system of support starting out with universal. So, we have about 75% of our students who respond to our universal supports in our district for attendance. So, some of these things include really getting the message out there about the importance of school attendance. So, we launched an attendance campaign a couple of years ago. We put out a lot of messaging to students and families about why school attendance is important and how it can impact students for their future. We have a lot of different ways to communicate with families about attendance, including letters, phone calls. Our teams at the school level reach out to families when there are concerns for attendance. We have attendance teams in place at all of our schools at all levels, elementary through high school, and people who are a part of those teams are on that list that Greg just shared in the previous slide. So, counselors, social workers, school nurses, advocates, administrators, just a whole slew of people who are really working hard to provide supports for students and families.

- Universal**
- Implementation of best practices for belonging, connection & engagement
 - Attendance is talked about & part of the school culture
 - Accurate attendance taking practices
 - Recognition of positive/improved attendance
 - Attendance team meets at least every other week
 - Family engagement, education and supports
 - Attendance letters & other family communication (electronic 3 & 7 day letters are sent automatically)

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 30:38

Moving on to the next click is our supports we have for at the tier two level. So, when students are starting to show signs of having difficulty with attendance, which is about 20% of our students—20 to 25% of our students. At this level, we put targeted supports in place, again, using our support staff members, such as counselors, social workers, psychologists, our Student Success specialists and coordinators, anybody in the school who is there to support students. So, they're working one on one with students, reaching out to families, looking at different interventions that they can put in place, such as student success plans—so students putting goals in place, and staff members are tying those to incentives to try to really build positive habits for students around attendance. We're doing intensive outreach to families with the goal of creating partnerships with families. We want it to be a both the school and the families working together to improve student attendance. We also have our track program, which is the Truancy Reduction and Assessment Center through the Boys and Girls Club. So, we have track case managers who work at every middle and high school and have a caseload of students who they're providing one on one mentoring support to related to attendance.

- Tier 2 Strategies & Supports**
- Attendance education lessons (elementary & middle)
 - Walking school bus (elementary)
 - Attendance letters (5 & 10 day letters as determined by the attendance team)
 - Targeted support through STAR coordinators (secondary), cultural advisors, and DEI coordinators, Youth Advocates
 - Mentoring
 - Check in/Check out
 - Student success plans
 - Home visits
 - SAIG
 - Attendance incentives
 - TRAC referral (secondary)

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 32:02

And the next click at our tier three level. So, this is where we're really putting more intensive supports in place for students who are struggling a lot with attendance. So, this ends up being about 5% of our students in our district. We use Check and Connect which is an evidence-based intervention that connects a student with a mentor at the school who's checking in with them and supporting the student with attendance, grades, and behaviors, and again, setting goals and putting things in place to support more positive attendance habits. We make school-based mental health referrals for students as well as referrals to community providers because we know that a lot of students who are experienced experiencing attendance concerns are also having mental health difficulties. We have alternative education supports for students at our high school level. For those students who are missing a lot of

- Tier 3 Strategies & Supports**
- Check & Connect
 - School based mental health referral
 - Alternative education support (high school)
 - Alternative plans for non-attendance/school avoidance
 - Brief Behavior Plan
 - Home visits/intensive outreach
 - County prevention referral (elementary)
 - Community referral
 - County truancy referral (ages 10-17)*

school and our credit deficient, they are putting a ton of supports in place for students. We are getting more creative about putting alternative plans in place for students. So, what an individual student needs is what we're going to try to provide. So, if coming a full day to school is difficult, we would look at starting to just get them in the building and building up from there. And as a last resort, we're using county truancy referrals for students who are not being successful with our supports at school.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 33:32

So last year, during the '23-'24 school year, we had 200—or 2,371 students at the middle and high school level who met the criteria for habitual truancy. Of those students, we referred 116 to the county for some additional supports, which is about 4—4.9% of the students who met the criteria for habitual truancy. So, it's a it's a small number that we're referring. It's a last resort. But we're looking at what can the county provide for additional supports that the school district does not have available?

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 34:08

On to the next slide. This slide—you can click again—shows the an outline of the supports that we previously had in place prior to the pandemic. So, as you can see, compared to—and you can click two more times—compared to the different strategies we have in place currently with our tiered level of support, our supports that were in place were very minimal. And I won't read through all of these, but a lot of these are more punitive in nature. We didn't have a lot of the partnership collaboration things that we have with families or with the community. We did have the track program in place at that time, but as you can see, it's just very minimal what we had in place, especially at the tier three level.

The slide titled "Former Support System for Students" features a background with a large, faint apple graphic. At the top, there is a horizontal bar divided into yellow, red, and green segments. The slide content is organized into three colored boxes: a yellow box for Level 1 Strategies, a green box for Level 3 strategies, and a blue box for Level 2 Strategies. A blue horizontal line is positioned below the boxes, and a small graphic of three apples (yellow, red, and green) is located in the bottom right corner of the slide area.

Former Support System for Students

- Level 1 Strategies**
 - Conference with Dean of Students or Assistant Principal (no attendance team)
 - School counselor intervention
 - At-risk teacher intervention (high school only)
 - Initial communication with family
- Level 2 Strategies**
 - Detentions
 - In-school suspensions
 - Additional communication with family
 - Civics lesson with AASD, APD, and County Judge
 - Sent to or visited by the TRAC/ Mobile TRAC Center for truancy counseling (Provided by the Boys and Girls Club of the Fox Valley).
- Level 3 strategies**
 - In-school or out-of-school suspensions
 - A citation for truancy and mandatory court appearance

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 34:55

So I will turn it back over to Greg for some more information.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 35:01

So Stephanie went through that information just to show you how different we are today in terms of how we treat attendance than we did five years ago. And with truancy citation—the ordinance going away, and as a district we recognize the need to change. We've done that, and we've taken away the punitive measures, and we really are very much supporting kids in a positive manner. Unfortunately, there's some kids that isn't reaching, and that's what we're asking for your help with are those kids.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 35:33

We have 20 students in the first semester who didn't come to school one day. High school students. They were enrolled. They didn't make it to school one day. Another 18 students that stopped attending at some point in the fall. And so those are the students that were really struggling. Doesn't matter how many times we call there, doesn't matter how many times ago knock on the door. They aren't responding. Those are the kids we're worried about. They're not engaging with us.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 35:55

So wanted to share through this slide just a little bit of a history of truancy. And again, truancy different than a chronic absenteeism. Truancy is that state law. And so, there's a state law requires students to go to school until the age of 18, but that law has to be enforced at the local level. There has to be municipal ordinance for that. I have not spoken to one district in the state of Wisconsin that doesn't have an ordinance. I didn't talk to every district. But I talk about attendance a lot. I was in a conference two weeks ago—a national conference. I talked to a lot of large urban districts. They all said, "Of course, we have an ordinance with our city. Work closely with our city to get kids to come to school."

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 36:36

Where we have been in Appleton is we had an ordinance prior to 2019. I know some of you were on the Common Council at that time. And between—well, let me go back to 2008. Prior to 2008 when a student got a truancy ticket, they may have to go to court. And if they went to court, they had to go to the courthouse. And that meant that the student had to leave school to go to the courthouse. That meant a staff member from the school had to leave school and go to the courthouse, and the SRO had to go there, and the parent had to go there. So, the idea—and it was more than an idea—took a lot of work from the city, from the county, and from the school district, to put together what was called truancy court. And essentially it was simply a judge coming to the school, rather than everybody going to the judge. And so, the judge would come to East High School and then West High School and North High School. And eventually it was the four middle schools all in one day. Just rotate through and get through several court cases. It was efficient.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 37:34

But what happened in 2018 and '19 is it really came to light that a lot of what we were doing, what Stephanie just went through, was it was punitive. It wasn't working—right? And then there were other punitive measures that really were negatively impacting kids. And so, as a district in 2018-'19, we said we didn't want to have truancy court in our schools any longer. And then the city followed with removing the ordinance in August of 2019.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 38:02

Now up there under that second bullet point is the many different ways that you can dispose of a truancy ticket—right?—the dispositions, and it is up to the city, according to the state law, to decide what those are. As a school district, if we were to work with you as a city, we have no interest in truancy court coming back. We have no interest in punitive measures other than whatever will get a student to engage. We need something to reach students who currently just simply aren't coming to school and we can't engage with them. But there are all of these different options. There's more than that. You can find them in the state statute, and so we would love to work with the city and the county around what might this look like if we have to work with a ticket. Again, we don't see it as anything different than a speeding ticket, tobacco possession ticket, whatever it might be.

Truancy Ordinance

- ❖ The statutory citation for truancy can be found within Compulsory School Attendance, Wis. Stat. sec. 118.15, and School Attendance Enforcement, Wis. Stat. sec. 118.16.
- ❖ **Prior to 2019**, the City of Appleton enforced the State statute with an ordinance that was supported by Appleton Area School District staff and City of Appleton School Resource Officers. This support often included a student attending “Truancy Court”. The following dispositions were available to the court.
 - **An order for the student to attend school.**
 - **Suspension of a student’s vehicle operating privileges.**
 - **An order for the student to participate in counseling or a supervised work program.**
 - An order for the student to remain at home except during hours in which the student is attending religious worship or a school program.
 - **An order for the students to attend an educational program.**
 - **An order for the student to be placed in a teen court program.**
 - **A forfeiture of not more than \$500 plus costs.**
 - **An order placing the student under formal or informal supervision.**
 - An order for a student to report to a youth report center.
- ❖ During the 2018-2019 school year, concerns were raised by community members regarding outcomes of the use of truancy dispositions, specifically “Truancy Court”. Due to these concerns, the AASD ceased allowing “Truancy Court” to take place in our middle and high schools.
- ❖ On August 21, 2019, the Appleton Common Council repealed the truancy ordinance ending the City’s involvement with school attendance.
- ❖ Over the past five years, chronic absenteeism for many high school students has resulted in poor academic, social, and emotional outcomes. We believe a support system for students must have a consequence option for those students who are unwilling to engage with us.



Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 38:55

So, in the last five years, as Stephanie shared, we've put a lot in place that is very positive, and we recognize the fact that the way we were doing it prior to 2019 it was wrong. It was overly punitive. It just wasn't working. We made a lot of changes, but we feel we need that last piece, which is the city's help.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 39:12

So just one final slide. So, what are we asking for from the city? An ordinance that would support student success. Again, we're not just talking about getting kids to school. We want them to be successful. That can't happen unless they're at school. The ordinance would be used when our three-tiered system of support does not help the student consistently attend school. It would be a last resort. We think about it—it might only be 10 kids at each of our high schools. Maybe it's 20 kids. You know, it's that top 5% that Stephanie talked about.

What are we asking for from the City of Appleton?

- ★ **An ordinance that would support student success**
- ★ **The ordinance would be used when our three-tiered system of support has not helped a student consistently attend school**
- ★ **The Common Council determines the dispositions that would be which available to the court**
- ★ **Implemented during a 4-semester trial period, followed by a review of impact**



Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 39:44

Everything we do, we look at trying to be successful for 80% of our students out at universal, meaning without any support we want 80%, and then that next 20% we add more supports in everything, academics and behavior, and attendance, and then we move on to that 5% that tier two isn't working for. We look at this as a very last resort.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 40:05

We want the Common Council to determine the dispositions that would be available to the court. Like I said, that's not up to the district. We went and visited some districts. Oshkosh has a great teen court, but it takes a lot of resources, and obviously that's not something that we can decide. It's up to the city and the county to look at that. But certainly want all of you to play a role in that. And then we hope that we could implement it over a four-semester trial period, followed by a review of impact. Everything we do, all decisions we make, we want to gauge their success. Do we need to change it? Do we need to replicate it elsewhere? What do we need to do to make sure that we're improving?

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 40:38

That is everything we have tonight. Really appreciate your time. Really appreciate your consideration of the help we're asking for to help our students become more successful. If you have any questions, please reach out to our office. I'd love to be able to sit down with you and answer those questions. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 40:53

Thank you. And as the superintendent noted, we're not going to carry on a Q and A here in council chambers, but I'd encourage members of the council and members of the public to be in touch with the Appleton Area School District if you have questions or comments following the presentation. Again, I thank the school district for coming and making a presentation. Thank you.