

Item 11 B: School/Student Services Report: Attendance Update

AASD Board of Education

Mon, Apr 14, 2025 5:30PM

Kay Eggert (Board President) 2:10:16

Okay. Also, attendance update. Mr. Hartjes.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:10:22

Yes, attendance update. And I also have Laura Jackson, who is our Executive Director of Student Services, Stephanie Marta, who is one of our two attendance coordinators, and Stacey Nitka, who is our other attendance coordinator. So, Stephanie and Stacey are two social workers who spent all their time focusing on attendance.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:10:46

Help is not an extreme ask. The majority, if not all, districts in the state have a municipality that has a citation around attendance. Appleton is very much an outlier. We didn't look at all 422 districts in the state. We just confirmed with the largest 15 districts in the state, all have city support through a citation except for Appleton. We looked at all other local districts; all have support through a citation with the municipality. And so that's what we want to talk about today.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:11:22

We also want to be clear that we focus—we look at truancy and chronic absenteeism, but it's really chronic absenteeism that we're most worried about, and that's because that's the number of days that kids are missing of school, because that really impacts their success. You can be truant—we believe you can be truant and still be successful. You're probably not meeting your potential, reaching your potential, but you can still pass all your classes, and you can still graduate from high school, because the truancy law is such that you're truant if you miss all or part of five days in a semester. So, we do think kids can be successful. But when you get to chronic absenteeism now, that means you're missing days of school, and that starts to impact.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:12:08

So, when we first became really alarmed is in '21-'22—right? So, when we looked at the end of that year that we had 33.9% of our high school students that were chronically absent, meaning they missed more than 18 days of school, we're concerned, compared to before the pandemic, when we were at 12 to 15%. Not uncommon. Districts across the state, across the nation, are all faced with the same challenges coming out of the pandemic.

Attendance Update

Board of Education
April 14, 2025

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
12.2%	15.2%	33.9%

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:12:37

But in that summer of 2022, it was my first year superintendent. So, I was hired, and I started July 1. And I met with all district administrators one on one, went through a series of questions. One of the questions that I asked is, you know, what are the biggest challenges facing the district? And what I heard over and over again from principals and assistant principals was student attendance. It was one of the

three that remain on top of everybody's list as a significant concern, and then we also had survey data from staff, and I'll get to that in a little bit of a slide, in a future slide. But what happened is we that year brought together a work group, and so Laura and Stephanie and Sheri Garvey led a work group during that '22-'23 school year already start to look at what do we need to be doing differently? And so, I'm actually going to turn it over to them and let them

just grab a little bit about the work group, and then into this next slide where we created this support system that you've seen before, and how that work group played into that. So, I'll turn it over to you guys.

Summer of 2022- Meetings with Principals & Assistant Principals

When asked what are the three biggest challenges facing our district, attendance was a consistent answer



Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:13:44

So, the work group consisted of AASD staff. We had community members, we had parents, and we just really came together to try to come up with different ideas and approaches that we could implement in our district to address our attendance concerns. So, this was kind of our final document that we came up with, and as you can see, there's a column that says, "maintain". So those were the things that we already had in place in our district to address attendance, and there wasn't a ton. So, we had some things in place that were working well, but we didn't have a large variety of options to choose from when it came to supporting students with attendance and addressing concerns.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD)

2:14:29

So, we did have some things in place that we wanted to adapt and make look a little bit different. So that's in the middle column, and I'll talk in a minute about from the "Adapt" and the "New" columns, what we have brought forward to this year in the past couple of years. And then we had new things that our group came up with, which also some of these things were included in the recommendations that came forth from the work or—sorry, the attendance committee that we had in place last school year.

MAINTAIN

Universal

- ☐ Accurate attendance taking-improve fidelity
- ☐ Classroom community opportunities to increase sense of belonging
- ☐ Expectation clarity for students

Tier 2

- ☐ TRAC support
- ☐ Evidence based interventions

Tier 3

- ☐ County referral option but explore other options for non-attenders
- ☐ Keep previously approved staffing for attendance

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:14:58

So, some of the things under the Adapt column that we—actually many of these things we have brought forward and currently have in place in our [...] providing more student education on attendance. We've revised all of our attendance letter letters that we send out to families, and we have begun sending them out in different ways so that families reach them or receive them differently. So, two of our nudge letters that we have go out electronically now to families, so they get that pretty quickly, and they're informed more in a more timely manner when their child is out of school or not present.

ADAPT

Universal

- ☐ Student education on attendance
- ☐ Revision of attendance letters by level
- ☐ Universal messaging- importance of attendance
- ☐ Consistent Implementation of Evidence Based Interventions (Secondary)

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:15:44

Universal messaging, the importance of attendance, we have really begun to stress this through our campaign, through messaging, just through our school sites, newsletters, our district family messages. We are always putting, or trying to always put something in about attendance and the importance of attendance.

Tier 2

- ☐ Training of Evidence Based Interventions (See Recommendations)
- ☐ Adopt a TRAC type support for elementary sites
- ☐ Education plus requirement lesson for students (formerly called Civics Lesson)
- ☐ Consistent training with special education staff to address attendance

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:16:02

We are working, and have worked to consistently implement evidence-based strategies to address attendance concerns at all of our levels. That has been challenging, because there's not a ton available out there, but we've tried to do this as much as we possibly can, and that includes the training for staff. So, we have trained many staff in our check and connect program, which is evidence based through the University of Minnesota. Attendance specific, providing mentors for students who need support with attendance.

Tier 3

- ☐ Alternative plans for non-attenders
- ☐ Communication to all stakeholders on attendance plans for students
- ☐ Consider appropriate FTE allocation at High School
- ☐ Address attendance support by level (see recommendation)

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:16:38

We have adopted—so you have heard us talk about our TRAC program through the Boys and Girls Club, which is a Truancy Reduction Assessment Center. We have worked to implement TRAC a little bit at the elementary sites. So, one of our TRAC case managers is working with a small number of families that Stacey has brought forward and families who are interested and willing to work with TRAC. So, we're working to kind of expand that potentially after we see how things work this year with that.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:17:11

We talked a lot in this group about education requirement for students, which formerly was called civics lessons when truancy core was in place. this is more education for students to talk about, one, what is, what are the policies around attendance, and what are the expectations when it comes to attendance, and some of the things that we can do to support students when they're dealing with barriers. So those are things—that's something that we have put in place over the past few years for middle school students, and it's been very successful. So, I think around 80, almost 80%, of the middle school students who have participated in those lessons have shown

an increase in their attendance from the time of the lesson through the end of the school year. So that's been very positive.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:17:59

We have shifted our mindset a little bit about making sure—you know, we want students in school all day, every day, right? But when we have students who are non-attenders, who have difficulty with school avoidance or school refusal, it is hard to expect them to come to school. Like, going from no school to coming full days can be very challenging, especially if they've been out of school for a long period of time. So, our teams and our alternative education teachers have done an amazing job of coming up with alternative plans for these students. So just working to get them into the building, maybe one hour a day, maybe it's not even in a classroom setting, but in a small setting with a teacher and a couple of students and kind of building up from that. So that's been very successful, especially for a lot of our high school students who are dealing with that.

NEW

Universal

- ☐ Community campaign messaging
- ☐ Student-led PR Campaign
- ☐ Expectation clarity for parents/accountability
- ☐ Training for staff on evidence-based practices (see recommendations)
- ☐ Scheduling considerations for students (secondary)

Tier 2

- ☐ Home visit training and support (elementary)
- ☐ Parent education on school and community supports
- ☐ Prevention work-EC-6 Level
- ☐ Consider transportation bus changes
- ☐ Increase incentive strategy plans for students

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:18:52

Stacey has been working—and she can answer questions or talk about this later—but prevention work was one thing that we really talked about that we were lacking a couple of years ago was prevention at the elementary level, educating parents on the importance of attendance and how absenteeism can negatively impact academic progress for those younger students.

Tier 3

- ☐ Explore required education for parents
- ☐ Explore additional tier 3 options with a partnership approach
- ☐ Additional FTE to support early intervention for attendance

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:19:14

We have increased our incentive strategy plans for students so having Student Success plans in place, and using incentives to really build those habits for students has been very successful. So, we've worked with Outagamie County through a grant that they got, and we've been able to provide incentives in the form of gift cards for students, which really builds those positive attendance habits and motivates students, essentially. And then that last one, at the bottom of tier three under the new is additional FTE to support early intervention for attendance. This was one of the, I think, top five from our attendance committee last year that we have now in place. Stacey, who's our elementary attendance coordinator, which has been a huge support—I was at—initially, I was just for the whole district, so I wasn't able to do a lot with elementary and I know that her—the addition of Stacey in our district has been very helpful for elementary schools.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:20:15

[??] after this work group completed their work and came with these recommendations, this document was brought to you as board members in the spring of '23. So much of that—and we just want to talk about this briefly, and really Stephanie already covered a lot of this. But as you know, whether it's academics, or behavior, or attendance, we always think about our universal and hoping that 80% of our kids are successful—or students just coming out of universal, what we do for every student. And so then 20% of our students are moving to that

tier two and looking at giving all of those supports, and then the hope is that, you know, three fourths of those students are successful with tier two, that are our final 5% have to go to tier three.

Current Support System for Students

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 intervention with Student Success Advisors and Coordinators, Youth Advocates
- Mentoring
- Check in/Check out
- Student success plans
- Home visits
- SAIG
- Attendance incentives
- TRAC referral (secondary)



Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:21:06

And so, when we are talking about working with the city, we're going beyond that 5% and saying, all right, what are just the handful of kids at each school that just simply aren't engaging in anything that we're doing? And that's kind of where this would be our last resort at the end of tier three.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:21:26

And just putting that in perspective, it—like right now, if we looked at how many students we have attempted interventions, we've attempted home visits, we've attempted to engage the student and family, and we—nothing. We can't get any engagement. It's about 20 students between our three high schools. So just putting that in perspective for you, about how many we're looking at.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:21:52

So '22-'23 was when this work group met, and then we looked at the data at the end of that year, and we had improved. We had reduced down to 25.5% of our high school students were chronically absent. And so, you know, a good sign, but yet, still twice the rate of

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
12.2%	15.2%	33.9%	25.5%



2017-2018, and that 25% we know, is over 1000 high school students that are missing more than a few days of school that year.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:22:22

And so again, we did our survey in the spring of '23 and this is a survey that right now is out to all of our staff. And so, it's the employee engagement survey. We don't ask a question about attendance. We ask a series of questions, but then we leave it open for comments, and it is within the comments in 2022, 2023, and again last year, 2024 where we're hearing the same thing from teachers and social workers at the building and counselors and LMC specialists. They're saying, first of all, sadness when student attendance impacts student success. You know, that's the first thing that you know a classroom teacher knows that a student is not being successful simply because they're not in school enough. And that is really—I mean, we're generally a very nurturing population of people, and that is really, you know, makes us sad when we know that [...] is not successful simply because they're not in school enough.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:23:24

The next one was we get a lot of requests in the comments for more resources to support student attendance. Since 2019 we've added our two attendance coordinators. We've added four half time positions, one at each of our middle schools, and we've added 20% positions at each of our high schools, and we've doubled the amount of money we spend with Boys and Girls Club through TRAC. So, it's 6 to \$700,000 in resources that we're putting

into attendance that we didn't prior to 2019. We don't believe there's any more for us to put. We don't have any more resources that we can put in here.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:24:04

And then, finally, this frustration and inability as far as students who are not in school. This comes out from staff. And you know, you hear us say all the time, we never give up on a student. And so,

it's very difficult to say, as Stephanie was just saying, we've got about 20 kids who we just—we don't have anything more to do. There's nothing more we feel we can do because they don't engage with us; they don't answer the door; they don't answer our letters; they don't answer our phone calls. So, we're at a point with these kids where we feel like we're giving up on them, because there's nothing further that we can do.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:24:41

So, what we did is we said, all right, let's, let's bring a larger committee back together. And so—I should—I wanted to share this real quickly. This was in the PowerPoint that was included to the city, and also in the PowerPoint that was in the video that I sent previously. It's also posted on our website. And it's just simply some data on what are the outcomes for kids when they don't do well academically? And so, the first bullet point just simply says, "The likelihood of a high school student who is living in poverty earning a living wage by the age of 30 increases from 21% to 58% with strong academic achievement." That's new research this fall.

Survey data from staff - Spring of 2022, 2023, 2024

- Sadness when student attendance impacts student success
- Request for more resources to support student attendance
- Frustration with inability to support students who are not in school



Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:25:27

The next one "A student is chronically absent in one year out of the five years from eighth grade through 12th grade is seven times more likely to drop out of school."

And this is something we've known for a long time. The number one predictor of academic success and graduation in high school, it's attendance in the first nine weeks of freshman year of high school. It's a better predictor than poverty, it's a better predictor than ethnicity, and that came out of a large study. That goes back 10 years already we've known that, that attendance is the number one predictor.

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) 2:26:02

The next bullet point, 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 an arrest, and twice as likely to use illicit drugs. And then the next one, 70% of adults in the prison system cannot read and write above the fourth-grade level.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:26:18

And so, we often will hear in terms of opposition to this, is that we're creating a school to prison pipeline. A school to prison pipeline is created when students don't graduate from high school or they don't have the literacy and numeracy skills to be successful as an adult.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:26:33

And finally, that last bullet point is, again, like I was just saying, we cannot allow teenagers to continually make decisions that will negatively impact the future.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:26:44

So then last year, we brought together. We assembled a committee. Again, this was a board approved committee. We brought in even more staff members, more community members, and more parents to serve on this committee. We met from October through January. So, we met several times a month throughout those months. We started with sharing our data. We started sharing, as Stephanie did, and everything that we are doing for kids to support them. We shared research. We shared outcomes. And ultimately, we said, let's generate some ideas. What else could we be doing as a school district?

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:27:22

And so had all these ideas, and we put them into categories, and then we prioritize them. And each member of the committee had three votes to prioritize actions we needed to take. And so, the four that you see here are the four that were the highest voted priorities.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:27:39

And so, increase transportation options, very challenging for us to do. We have bought two vans just to see how it works. And it works really well if we have a driver. And so, we we've got a van that is used by Morgan staff to go pick kids up, to bring kids to appointments, to bring them home at the end of the school day. The one we had for North for their alt ed program, we've struggled to find somebody to drive that van. We still use it occasionally for other reasons, but we're looking at—like I was at a conference recently, and Atlanta school district does a late bus, and so they just recognize that some kids are not going to be able to get up, whatever it is, and they run a bus through an area, and it picks kids up at like 10 in the morning to brings them. Better to be in school for five hours than no hours. And so that's just another thing we're looking at. What would that cost us if we were to do a couple of those type of busses? So, transportation we're definitely considering. Comes with a cost obviously.

Assembled an Attendance Committee to develop actions that would address our attendance challenges:

- Included parents, staff, and community members
- Met from October 2023 through January 2024
- Prioritized the following actions
 - **City ordinance to include a citation as a last resort**
 - **Hire a second Attendance Coordinator**
 - **Improve relevance and engagement of curriculum**
 - **Increase transportation options**



Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:28:39

Improve relevance and engagement of curriculum. So interesting that the committee came up with this because it's something we think about all the time in terms of student success in the classroom. We know that kids are going to do better if they're engaged, and its content is relevant. But this goes beyond classroom teachers. This is not on classroom teachers. This is everything you know that I've seen across now 33 years of being at a high school. That has changed for kids. For example, I'll just share one example. I don't want to spend a lot of time on this, but prior to maybe eight or 10 years ago, you needed two math credits and two science credits to graduate. So, if you pass math and science in your freshman, sophomore year and your junior year you were into electives. Well, the state passed a law that requires three years of science and math, so now every student, you don't get to your electives sometimes—you might get one your junior year—but not until your senior year, and that's a really important time of transition for kids. So that's just one example, and I could share many more how high school has gotten maybe less interesting for kids, less choice for kids, less kids get to take. We know our electives are significantly down in enrollment because of that. So, one of many ways that high school has become more challenging, more rigorous, and less, uh, relevant to kids. But anyway, we're working on that.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:30:03

The next one is to hire a second attendance coordinator, which Stephanie talked about. We hired Stacey this year to focus at the elementary level. We now are the only school district in the state of Wisconsin that has two full time social workers who support attendance every day, all day. Think about that. Two full time social workers supporting kids every day, all day, on attendance, the only district in the state that does that.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:30:25

And then the last one, the highest priority that came out of our committee last year is a city ordinance to include a citation as a last resort.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:30:35

So where was chronic absenteeism at the end of last year? So, this was a committee that met last year. We looked at our data again this summer. We are 23.7%, so again, a little bit of improvement coming out of a lot of time and energy being put into this, but it's still a significant number of kids, right? We know that this is over a thousand high school students.

Most concerning to us is that there are 293 students last year at our high schools that missed 50 or more days. So those are students that are really going to struggle to graduate.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

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

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:31:06

We have a lot of support. We do more than ever around supporting kids with attendance, but also supporting kids who fall behind in credits. We have more alternative ed programs than we've ever had

supporting kids. So, I don't want you to think that a thousand kids here aren't going to graduate. We're still going to work with a lot of kids, and they will graduate, but they certainly have dug themselves a hole when they've missed this much school and continue. And the kids that you know Stephanie is talking about, the likelihood of them graduating without changing their behaviors and getting to school is very, very unlikely.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:31:41

Most of them have not stepped foot—the 20 I mentioned, most have not stepped foot in a school building this year.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:31:50

So, our timeline in asking the city. So, what came out of the committee last year that that finished up in spring, we reported all of that to you all last spring. Starting in June, I met with city council members, city attorneys, the mayor, Outagamie County chief justice, Outagamie county executive, meeting with as many people as possible just to talk about, okay, what would this look like? What would this mean if we would come to the city and ask for this support with our students? And so, if you hear somebody say, this snuck up on them, this didn't sneak up on anybody. We've been very, very open about asking for help across our community for the last several years.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:32:34

And so, what came out of this is it's really hard to get on the calendar of busy people, and so it took for me to have meetings with all of these individuals—didn't meet with all city council members, just, I think, eight or nine that had time to meet with me. But ultimately, that took all the way until this spring. And so, we appreciated that we were able to present March 19 at the city council meeting, because that allowed us to share with the City Council, and then obviously, anybody who's watching city council meetings to know what it is that we're asking for.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:33:08

And you know what has been a little bit frustrating, how for me, is when I talk to people, and even now that you know, individuals see that it's been on the news—right? It's in the media. They say to me "You bringing truancy court back?" And I have to say, "No, we're not asking for truancy court back." We're asking for a citation that would help get some students into school who currently are just not coming to school.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:33:30

The other thing that's frustrating is a lot of misinformation about the truancy court and the process, and thinking that it was all bad. There are very good outcomes to that process, and Stephanie talked a little bit about them, but over the 10 years of truancy court, 97% of the students who were involved in the truancy process improved their attendance and did not have to pay a ticket. Okay? So, the success rate was very, very good. The struggle was—and we recognize this—we were over overly punitive throughout that process. Our our—the way we addressed attendance was with detentions. And we had—obviously, we had some staff that supported kids, but really out of our Student Services offices, detentions in school, suspensions, ultimately suspensions and moving them into the truancy court process, which we recognize we don't want to do that again. We have all of these supports in place now. We have the attendance teams that work really hard at all of our schools, so we don't have to go back to that punitive. But this is really about how to engage with the 20—I don't know how many will be at the end of the year—that we've lost that they're just simply not coming to school.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:34:46

So, we are asking the city for a citation and ordinance, and, ultimately, what happened is, when we spoke on the 19th of March, it was moved to the Safety and Licensing Committee of the City Council which met on the 26th. Unfortunately, that was our spring break, and so I was on vacation in Florida, and I didn't feel it right to have—

ask anybody else on their spring break to attend the City Council meet or the safety licensing committee. They delayed it, which is very helpful, because it allows us to really have more discussions across the community. They delayed it until the May 14 meeting, and so that's the next time that this will be discussed at that city level. There's a meeting tomorrow of some stakeholders, just some folks within the city and the county and the school district, getting together to just talk more about some details.

Timeline - Asking the City of Appleton for help

- Spring through fall of 2024 - Discussions with the City about an ordinance
- Presented at March 19th Common Council of the City
- Resolution submitted by Council member to pass an ordinance
- Resolution moved to the Safety and Licensing Committee



Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:35:40

But again, you know, when we look at this, every other municipality in the state that we know of is doing this. So, they figured it out—right?—how to do this. And we know that there's a lot of districts and municipalities that are still doing truancy court in their schools. We have no interest in doing any longer. We feel we have the supports that we need in our schools, with Stephanie and Stacey, and so that is where we are with this.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:36:07

We are asking for an ordinance. We—you know, we believe it's about supporting student success. Attendance is just that first step, right? Once they're in school, then it's up to us as educators to make sure that they're successful, but we need help getting some kids to school. We are not saying that there needs to be any specific disposition. So, you know, things like shelter care or an ankle bracelet for monitoring purposes, or, you know, community service—we aren't suggesting any of those. We just simply want to work with the city and the county on what would be effective. What do we think would be effective without being punitive?

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:36:48

And then we'd like to try it for four semesters. And so, we'd come back together, we'd put some metrics and say, all right, these are what we're going to track. Obviously, it would be better attendance for students, but we would ask for four semesters and then revisit it at that point.

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 available to the court**
- ★ **Implemented during a 4-semester trial period, followed by a review of impact**



Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:37:04

So, do want to quickly share? I'll have Stephanie and Stacey quickly talk about, where are we this year? So, we've shared '21-'22 data, '22-'23, '23-'24. This is first semester of this year.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:37:19

So, as you can see, we're pretty excited to see that some of our numbers have improved at the elementary and middle school levels. So that is—that's great. As you can see, though, when we look at 2018 and 2019, we are still almost double what we were prior to the pandemic. So, we have all these supports and things in place, and we feel like we're getting there. We're doing better, but it's really slow progress, and we have so many people at the school sites who are working really hard to support student attendance and support these kids who are struggling to get to school. So, we just wanted to give you kind of a snapshot of what our attendance has looked like over the years, including last year's data—I'm sorry, first semester of this year, I should say.



CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM DATA

Missing 10% or more of total school days, including both excused and unexcused absences. Missing 10% of eligible school days (9+ days for Semester 1).

	2018-2019	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
4K/Elementary	8.6%	27.4%	14.0%	14.1%	13.8%
Middle	10.3%	25.1%	17.6%	19.4%	17.8%
High School	15.2%	33.9%	25.5%	23.7%	25.4%

*Because of the state-mandated school closures and rapid transition to virtual instruction during March of 2020 Chronic Attendance/ Habitual Truancy second semester attendance data is not comparable to other school year data.

**Data from the 20-21 school year is also not comparable to other school year data due to the transition across our schools from virtual, to hybrid, to in-person learning.

Kay Eggert (Board President) 2:38:13

So, this—the '24-'25 is first semester, but the other year data is end of the year?

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:38:18

Correct.

Kay Eggert (Board President) 2:38:19

Perfect. Thank you.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:38:22

And so, we will share the full year data early in June. We should be able to get that to you.

Jason Kolpack (Board Member) 2:38:31

So, the number could go down if those students missed less than nine days in the second semester?

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:38:37

Actually, it would be eight. It's for the whole school year, so it would be 18 days. So, we hope—

Jason Kolpack (Board Member) 2:38:42

But at this point, the ones that are on that list already have already missed nine.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:38:46

Nine.

Jason Kolpack (Board Member) 2:38:46

So, they have to miss less than nine of the second semester to be considered not chronically absent.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:38:51

Correct.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:38:51

We have to hope that a student that maybe missed seven doesn't miss 11 or more.

Jason Kolpack (Board Member) 2:38:57

Yeah, could go the other way too.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:38:59

Yeah, right.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:39:01

But again, strange to come from me to say, don't focus on numbers [...] success for kids. And these are numbers that are concerning for us. They certainly are. So, questions? But again, this is—there's not urgency. So, it's 8:25. We still have several items on our agenda. You want to pause and talk about this at the next meeting. We actually have two more meetings before that May 14 meeting of the safety and licensing committee. So happy to take your questions tonight. But again, if you want to think about this and come back at a future meeting, that would be fine as well.

Nick Ross (Board Member) 2:39:41

I know that we're late, but I did come prepared with a statement and questions on this topic. And so, if I could, you know, I have said this before. As an individual board member, I've said this before. I am still at this point I, as an individual, do not support the idea of a citation, but I appreciate all of the work that you all have been doing to communicate and to elevate the issue of attendance, which is really important.

Nick Ross (Board Member) 2:40:18

And you know, the thing that I—I'm thinking about our last topic, and I'm thinking about the success of our previous referendum. And I have questions about, can we do more with a referendum than just, you know, keeping the doors open or maintaining status quo? Can we explore adding funds for that transportation? Can we explore adding funds for an expanded cash incentive program for students and families? I think there would be equity issues to explore with that. But can we ask our community for more funds to increase mental health support for students in schools. These are all things that we continuously hear from the community that they want, so I believe our community would support something like that, especially because we're not one of those districts that has gone into referendum every single possible opportunity, and because up to this point, we have been such good stewards of our financial resources, and our tax rate—it hasn't gone up as drastically as other places. So, I'm wondering about that.

Nick Ross (Board Member) 2:41:34

And then, you know, I also—while I may not support what ad—the admin team is seeking at this time, you know, I've been continuously frustrated by the communication between the district and the city, and I think we are all—we all should do a better job of, like, working through those communication issues and those collaborative issues. And you know, specific things I've heard from people at the city or the district, and these are quotes "We don't blank in each other's pots," "The district is doing away with neighborhood schools," and then, you know, I challenged that. And the response is, "Oh, well, I shouldn't have—I should have realized you were on the school board," not "You're wrong about that," or "I was wrong about that, and let me correct, like, let me do more research. Oh, I shouldn't have said that in front of you."

Nick Ross (Board Member) 2:42:35

So, and I don't think the district is exempt from this either. Like, I think we all need to be better adults and, like, realize that we need to work together, and I know that the many individuals who are participating in these efforts have done a really great job and a really good faith job of having healthy communication. But when I hear things from public comment and from city officials that are questioning the integrity of the process that we're going under in pursuing this, I get frustrated by that too, because from the moment this issue has become part of what we're talking about, every single meeting you have brought up that you're meeting with city council members, that you are meeting with other folks at the city, and so when folks say that things aren't transparent, you know, like, I don't understand that. So, what I would love, and I would love to do whatever I can to help with this, is—and maybe community linkages is a great venue for this, but I would love to foster more understanding between these two entities.

Nick Ross (Board Member) 2:43:47

I think there's a lot of misunderstanding about how we operate versus how they operate, which can lead to, you know, frustrations. Like we operate under coherent governance. We—it is not appropriate under our coherent governance policies for us as board members to be creating resolutions on specific discipline procedures. We have operational expectation [tech?], and that's how we monitor discipline as a board. And so, you know, I think

if we could educate each other on how we operate, maybe we would be better able to break through these communication issues.

Nick Ross (Board Member) 2:44:35

And, you know, I think—also one other point is that through our student linkages meetings, the students are saying the same thing. They are also saying that attendance is a major issue, attendance of their peers. So, you know, I would say—and like, this is a city issue because the students are not in school. They're out in the community, and they're using city resources, including the police department. So, the city does have a responsibility to work on this with the district.

Nick Ross (Board Member) 2:45:14

Okay, so thank you for letting me say that. And my questions—kind of harsh transition. So, my first question is like, how—so it's about tickets specifically. APD—district has no influence on whether or not an SRO issues a ticket based on some sort of, like, quote, "criminal behavior" like possession or fighting or whatever the case may be that happens in a school that an SRO observes. And you know what we have heard is that, you know, that's up to the SRO, and the city—or the district doesn't have any influence on that. So, I'm trying to understand like that versus what this would look like, and what are what you know up [...] we have this trespassing procedure as well. So, I'm wondering how many trespassing tickets have been issued, and how can, like, the district influence those decisions for APD. Like, how does that happen if that makes sense? And if not, I'll try to say it another way.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:46:36

I can speak to that. So, I'll answer the first—the second question about trespassing. There's been zero tickets given this year, but it's significantly changed behaviors, because there's a possibility. I generally don't speed when I drive, because I don't want to get a ticket. I've never gotten a ticket, but it's enough for me to not speed. It worked for a lot of students, and so we've given out no ticket—I shouldn't say that. SROs have given out no tickets.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:47:04

To your point, we can't direct an SRO to give a ticket for anything, right? They have to interpret the law and the circumstances in ticketing. There is a state law around attendance, and the intent is for that to be enforced at the local level, whereby an SRO, if there is an ordinance, would give a ticket. We, as a school district, though, have to provide the evidence of this ticket being worthy. And so that's really important.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:47:35

Where Stephanie would come in is we have to provide the evidence around attendance and then the SRO—ultimately, we can't tell an SRO to write a ticket, but based on the evidence, they're going to make a decision whether it's appropriate or not. Certainly they're going to work with us closely. They get to know kids very well at our high schools. They're there. Our SROs are in our schools. Our middle and high schools are full time, so they're in their schools every day, all day long. They get to know kids. And so, when they're working with our attendance teams, they play a role in that. Right now, they have nothing beyond—right?—they have no reason for a student to engage with them because there isn't this ordinance. Does that answer your questions?

Nick Ross (Board Member) 2:48:20

Yes, it does. Thank you. And I just—I don't think the communication was ever really clear on that specifically. And then my other question is just going back to this—sorry, like, how would you respond to the idea that admins conversations with other stakeholders has been less than transparent?

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:48:43

So, unfortunately, the city doesn't have public input if the topic is not on the agenda. Without attendance for the Appleton Area school district ever making it to an agenda for the city, I had no way to speak to the full council, so I had to reach out to council members through their email or phone calls, and that's what I did. So, meeting with the city, I'd be happy to learn if there's a different way for us to communicate needs with the city, but there isn't a way like here for school district or school district, for an individual to come and speak.

Nick Ross (Board Member) 2:49:24

Thank you. That's all for me for now, and I think—I'm not one of those who is questioning the transparency. Just so you know.

Ed Ruffolo (Board Member) 2:49:34

I just want to make one very brief comment, because I did have an opportunity to go to the safety and licensing committee meeting, and many people from the public—and there was eight or nine—made public comment. And then, prior to the committee meeting, some of the alders were in attendance, and they could speak. And then, of course, the committee talked, and I came away with a very strong impression that there truly are not two sides to this issue. I think everybody is trying very hard to address what's a really difficult issue.

Ed Ruffolo (Board Member) 2:50:06

I just saw a report today Panorama put out that this year they're anticipating, or estimating, 16 million students are going to be chronically absent. So, it's certainly not an issue just for Appleton. But I was really impressed by how thoughtful people were. People had good discussion. And I think we just have to be a little patient and continue—to your point, Nick—to collaborate with the city and trust their process, because I do think we're going to come up with a solution.

Ed Ruffolo (Board Member) 2:50:37

People are engaged and people are concerned, and the only real discussion or debate to me seem to be around what's the right means and methods? And I think that's—I think we're in a good spot. We just have to continue to be—not get frustrated, not get exasperated, but really, just keep working with them and keep communicating. And it may take a little while, but I think we're going to get to a good spot.

Jason Kolpack (Board Member) 2:51:06

I have a couple questions. As staff members who work every day trying to get kids into school, do you feel like this would be a tool that would be useful to you and would have the desired effect?

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:51:19

So, I think without something else other than what we have in place, to me, it feels terrible to not do anything more, because we have these students out there who aren't coming into school. They're likely not going to graduate from high school. What is their job outlook gonna look like when they're adults? So, I feel like we need to try something else. And for me as a social worker, it's not about giving a ticket and saying, "Here, pay a fine, because then that's going to make you come to school." That's not what it's about. But how can we enforce something to encourage or motivate or engage these students to get back into school?

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:52:02

So, what that—I think there are alternatives that we would want to see, aside from somebody just paying a ticket, which back when we had truancy court, there was—it was called the Track Report Center. On Saturdays there was a community service with a mentoring component for students, which I think was really a positive thing, mentors from the Boys and Girls Club who worked with students to do their community service, however

many hours the judge ordered. And I think that was a positive that I saw come out of truancy court. At the time, I was at a school social worker at East High School, so I attended the truancy court hearings and saw some of that. So, I think that they're—just to me, there has to be some something else. And for us, when we've exhausted all of our other tier three possibilities, including a lot of the time, a county referral to juvenile intake, where we're trying to get the family in to provide services and supports and maybe other mental health supports that our school district doesn't have access to. When we can't get the family in, we need something else to get them to the table.

Jason Kolpack (Board Member) 2:53:08

Yeah, and one of the things that's—one of the things that struck me most about this conversation is that we can provide all of the supports in the world, but if we can't get the students to come and partake of those, we're not really helping. Right? Is that an accurate statement?

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 2:53:28

Yes.

Jason Kolpack (Board Member) 2:53:30

And then one other question. I'm assuming we don't have this information. I don't know if it's possible for us to get it or not. You used a number earlier, I think that 97% of students saw an increase in their attendance after having gone through the truancy court process. You also mentioned that all of the other large districts in the state and all the surrounding districts have an ordinance enforced by their municipality. I'm curious if it would be possible for us to get data on the efficacy of those ordinances? Like, I don't know if they'll share with us. I don't know if it's publicly available, but is it possible for us to find out if those are successful in those districts?

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:54:17

Just anecdotally, I've talked to several, Sheboygan Green Bay, Oshkosh, Eau Claire, and then all the local districts, and they continue to struggle with chronic absenteeism like we are. The difference is they don't have a support system like we do. They don't have two social workers working on it. They don't have the tier—the three tiers we have. So, it's different, right? They have more punitive and they're getting about the same results we are with all of our interventions and supports, but we don't have that other piece that gets us to the final, you know, 20 kids this year or however many it's going to be. So, I have, anecdotally, looked at their data and talked to them, but I wouldn't say that anybody's saying "We got this solved." Nobody's saying that.

Jason Kolpack (Board Member) 2:55:08

Yeah, I guess I'm wondering more, like, in District X they issued, you know, 20 citations, and of those 20 citations, 15 students approved attendance, and none of them paid a fine or something like that. I don't know.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 2:55:24

Yeah, absolutely we can get that. We can just pick maybe two large districts and maybe two local districts and have that for you. You know, as you can imagine, there's a good network, and Stephanie is considered an expert in that network. People come to Stephanie. She presents at state conferences. She presents locally. We get a lot of districts calling us, finding out what are we doing that's successful, but anyway, there is a good network of all ed teachers and social workers and assistant principals that are all working to really impact the success of kids [...].

Pheng Thao (Board Member) 2:56:07

I have one question that Jason had asked already. So, I was wondering about—I remembered you are coming and presenting a year ago, a year and a half ago, on like, sort of some trends and patterns, and I think that that's

very useful to understand what's actually at the root of this. Because I think of this as a tool, one tool, then the citation is one tool to get to where we want to go. I don't see it as addressing the whole issue, because it doesn't. Is it the best tool? I don't know. I would want to understand the process more in terms of like that—so that it can be laid out, so we understand what the impact would be on students, the whole citation process.

Pheng Thao (Board Member) 2:56:55

My question is around trends and patterns, and what we know to be the root causes, and are we—how are we addressing that beyond the citation? And then, I think, for my other question is around—what did I have? Oh, around like at the individual level at the schools, what is it that the schools are doing themselves that have been promising practices, and how have each individual site actually helped lower attendance? Or if any of them have done that because we're seeing like a collective picture here? So, is there any schools that are been really successful, whether it is the leadership plays a role in it, whether they're doing something that we're not seeing? And so, I think I'm thinking about that because I think that there are some things there that perhaps we're not looking at, or maybe you have looked at, but I'm not seeing it maybe on my end or vantage point. So yeah, so I wonder about those things in this conversation.

Pheng Thao (Board Member) 2:58:03

And then I wonder about—going back, what I'm saying in my mind is I think of this tool as, okay, they're here, they're getting go to school, they're getting present in the classrooms. And then what happens next, right? Are they learning? Are they not learning? So, I keep coming back to that question of, are they learning? So, is success defined by them learning, actually maintaining some knowledge, actually graduating, and not just graduating, but actually learning something, right? And I think about it when I used to run domestic violence groups for men, the tool was probation, right? And if you don't attend the DV group, you're gonna be sent to jail, right? So, you do have to attend. I would say that a lot of them were successful, but did they really learn something? Actually, only about if the number is like 10 people in the group, probably one or two of them were really successful, and the other were just there because they needed to be there. Eventually they started coming and they want to be a part of it. But does it change their behavior in the long run? Probably not.

Pheng Thao (Board Member) 2:59:17

So that's sort of where I'm coming from, and that's what I'm thinking is how can we actually help them actually succeed in the classroom once they're there? So, it's not just getting them in the door, but once they're in the doors, what do we do with them and how we're successful, and if we have a need to add on that as well. So those are my thinkings at this moment. Thank you. Oh yeah. Thank you to your team. You have done probably tremendous job, because this is—for sure two people, three people, team is not enough to address this issue. It's more than all of us.

Laura Jackson (Executive Director Of Student Services) 2:59:54

Just to address a couple of the points that you made in your questions, the—at each level and in each building, different things have happened in order to improve those attendance numbers. So, for example, one of our schools or a couple of our schools have their targeted staff members (that may be a dean of students or another, targeted staff members) that, in implementing their role, are really addressing students who are in the hallways and making—and so this year, we're seeing less students in the hallways, as reported by the school staff themselves.

Laura Jackson (Executive Director Of Student Services) 3:00:36

Another strategy that has been effective has to do with looking at what were those—what did the data show as times of day when more students were absent and then specifically targeting all staff to be on board with ensuring that students are getting where they needed to be during those identified time frames.

Laura Jackson (Executive Director Of Student Services) 3:01:02

Your point about so what happens when they get there? We're looking to get students into the building. Sometimes our attendance teams with Stephanie have worked to get a student in the door just an hour, and it—this is incrementally important. Stacey is working with a plan to have a student physically in the school area before they get into the building. And so, we are striving for those gradual improvements. And it is once they're in the door, you're right. What are we doing? How are we ensuring their academic success? Because if they're going to remain in the door, they have to feel that this is something they can do. And so, what I appreciate that you're recognizing this team is small to address this, but they have a whole cadre of people back at the site that—in every site—that are striving once that child's in the door, to help them, as you said, help them start learning some of the things that they've been missing out on.

Nick Ross (Board Member) 3:02:21

I thought I got it all out, but there is one other thing, which is—I mean, I think while you may be correct about the success of the previous citation and program, I don't—you know, I think we should move on from that and like not try to convince people who think it was a bad thing that it wasn't a bad thing, because we're—you know, if you say we're not doing that again, we should just focus on the forward moving. Because, you know, something that we have to keep reminding community members and everybody else is, we are a different board than what existed back then and throughout the pandemic, and it is a different admin team than what existed back then and through the pandemic. And I think those matter. Those details matter when we're asking folks who've been like been on City Council since way before that, you know, and responding to their concerns and their hesitations.

Kris Sauter (Board Member) 3:03:35

I really want to call out the additional support at the elementary and middle school level, because I would—I don't have any data to support this, but I would guess that at least some and maybe many of the students that you are dealing with at the high school have also had issues with truancy, absenteeism in the pass. So, I will be very curious—and the idea of the gradual improvement, like we don't have to get them here the whole day, but if we can just get them here an hour. And I will be really interested to see if these efforts will lead to—will impact high school attendance in the future.

Kris Sauter (Board Member) 3:04:24

I've said this before, and I feel like we're reacting at the high school, but if we had more resources at the elementary and middle school, we might be able to see difference in the high school attendance too. But I'm very grateful for that, and I think it's hard work at the elementary school, but if we can get families on board then, we have much more success as they move through because they'll feel connected.

Kris Sauter (Board Member) 3:04:53

I also want to call out all the wonderful alternative programs that we do have in the district. Some board members had the opportunity to speak with students from some of our alternative programs last week, and they all shared what an incredible experience it has been for them to have that opportunity in one of the program that was—that they were represented—representing. And many shared their thoughts about how challenging it was to be in a larger school. And for them, it could have been anxiety, it could have been mental health issues. It could have been lack of—their academic—lack of their own personal academic strengths. There are many reasons, but the fact that we can offer these alternative settings has—is really important to them. And so, I know I've been asked by community members, why can't we do more of those programs? Or why can't we have more students part of that program? And I know that funding is an issue, but I just want to call out the

efforts that are being made and the incredible staff that are working these programs, and how much they do beyond just academics. So just wanted to share that.

Kris Sauter (Board Member) 3:06:12

And then I do have a question that I've been asked about the purpose of the meeting tomorrow, the April 15 meeting. Is it to—is it focused on the citation, or is it focused on alternative measures, maybe, to increase attendance, or both? And do you believe that all stakeholders are involved in this discussion starting tomorrow?

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 3:06:48

So, the meeting is not a district meeting. It was brought together by the mayor, and we appreciate him doing that just to get the County Youth and Family Services, county judges, staff members from the city, and staff members from the district together at one table, because I've had individual conversations with all of these people, just to be efficient. And you know, let's come together and talk about what are reservations that people have. What—are they capacity issues? Are they philosophical? What—you know, really it's to just hear from everybody on what maybe would keep this from moving forward. So, no, it's not to the point of talking about solutions. It's really about is everybody at that table tomorrow ready to engage?

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 3:07:44

And I know it was brought up about the Boys and Girls Club. We contract with the Boys and Girls Club. That's something we choose to do as a district as one of the many supports we have. And so that's an agreement between us and the Boys and Girls Club. That doesn't necessarily involve other entities. It could go forward, but they don't play a role in the ordinance. This is more about the role of the ordinance.

Kris Sauter (Board Member) 3:08:16

That's helpful. I think there are people in the community who are—who have been a little bit confused about the purpose, so I appreciate that. Thank you.

James Bacon (Board Member) 3:08:30

First, I'll just also echo all the sentiments. Like, thanks everyone for all the work. I know it's really hard and a lot of work, so thanks for everything we've already been doing. I'll also echo some of the comments I think we've heard from some board members in you know, like, I'm not necessarily saying a citation maybe isn't a tool we should explore, but I don't know if it is the only tool we haven't explored as well. And I also recognize that this is a statewide and even national trend that's been happening over the last several years. And I can—you know, I also for sure, know we have plenty of best practices ourselves to share, and it's exciting to hear that, you know, we've been able to do some of that already. I just also can't imagine that there's not at least some districts out there, whether they're in our area of Wisconsin, whether they're even in Wisconsin, or whether there's a lot of other places that, like, haven't been able to buck the trend in ways that we should explore. And I don't know, I'm sure we've done some of that, but it sounds, at least from what we've been presented so far, like, we've done a lot more reaching out to those closest and most similar to us. And certainly, I would be saying, reach out to those people if we had not been doing so, but it seems like we've been doing a lot of that, and they're having a lot of similar results. And I would just say, if we haven't, or it would be I think good to hear what we've already done around trying to find any districts, or even, maybe even just schools, that have really been able to like buck the trend that we've been seeing as a country over the last several years since COVID in particular, and what are some of the things that they think have been most impactful and contributed to that? You know, are we able to get their plans? I'm sure that they have something comparable with some of what we've done, and I'm sure they benefit from seeing some of what we've done too, probably. But that would just be something else that I would like to throw out there. Or if we've already been doing a lot of it, I think just hear more about, whether it's tonight or elsewhere, because it feels to me a little bit like we're painting a picture, like we literally have nothing

else to do, and like we're just spending a lot of time on something that also sounds like it might impact a pretty small number of students in a lot of ways too. Hopefully, maybe, it can impact more, but it just feels like we're not where we want to be. And so, there's like, obviously, still more things to continue thinking about what we're doing. So, thought I'd throw that out there. Thank you.

Stacey Nitka (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 3:11:08

So, I'm glad you brought that up. Stephanie and I do a lot of looking at other districts, even in outside of the state. So recently, we attended a webinar through Attendance Works, where principals from other schools, were sharing what they do and sharing resources and sharing ideas, simple things from having meetings over the summer with families and how that impacts. So, we're always looking for other options and other tools. A lot of schools are doing the same thing we are. So that's what we find a lot, is when we go to these things, it's a lot of similar things that we're doing, but we are definitely open to hearing other ideas and willing to try that.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 3:11:47

And Attendance Works is like the national organization for attendance that's like the hub that everybody goes to for to figure out their stuff, and we get newsletters like every other week from them. I wish I could say there's something else out there, and I'm sure maybe there is that people haven't shared, and we'd be totally open to doing it—doing more and implementing more. We just haven't heard of anything new or innovative that is different than what we're already doing.

Stacey Nitka (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 3:12:16

Even those small things that we did, like the meetings over the summer, brought that to schools right away. So, any, even little thing that we hear that's looked different, willing to try and we're bringing it forward. So.

James Bacon (Board Member) 3:12:27

Thank you for sharing that. Like I assumed or at least some of it hints I'm like, you know, I assume some of this is happening already, too. The one thing it also makes me wonder in that conversation, if you're like, accessing that national network, I suppose, you know, is given even the conversation we're having tonight, you know, like, when you try to do everything, it's also really hard to do any of it well, you know, and where are we trying to, like, focus or like test things and make sure we're going all in, seeing if they have an impact, and not trying to do too much across the board as well, at times, which I'm sure it's like a constant tension and really hard to feel like there's always more you can do. So, like, I also respect that, but I just was—would wonder if, like, that's been part of the conversation as well, knowing just how great the current landscape and challenges that exist.

Stacey Nitka (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 3:13:23

So, I think to answer part of that question is, that's why we work with our school attendance teams, and they are really doing a lot of that work at the school building, which then allows Stephanie and I to work more closely with those tier three, those higher needs students, so then they're spending more time, you know, at the school building, and we can help in that area.

Kay Eggert (Board President) 3:13:55

If there are not any more pressing comments, I think we should move on, as we still have some more business to attend to tonight.