

Item 25-0681: AASD Truancy Initiatives Update

Safety and Licensing Committee

Wed, Jun 11, 2025 5:30PM

Alderperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 04:28

Okay. We'll move now to the information item list, and we will go to 25-0681, which is the Appleton Area School District truancy initiatives update. Superintendent Hartjes did provide us with a handout, and, clerk, you should have a couple copies of it there as well. Superintendent Hartjes do you want to start? Thanks. Let's get the name and address for anyone speaking, just for the record, and I'll turn on the microphone because I sometimes forget

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 05:02

I'm Greg Hartjes, Superintendent for the Appleton Area School District. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak tonight. And when we spoke last at the March 19 meeting of the Common Council, our team had put together a PowerPoint, and we packed it with a lot of information, and so we appreciate the opportunity to come tonight, maybe at a future meeting as well, just to clarify some of the information that we shared that evening around how we support students who are struggling with attendance.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 05:33

And so, there's two items that we want to speak to tonight. The first one is to give you a little bit of a background of how did we get to this point where we felt like we needed to ask the city for help to work with us in terms of how we are supporting students, to give us one more tool in how we support students to come to school more consistently. So that's one thing we want to talk about. The other item is we want to talk about our three-tier support system, and we used a lot of educational jargon, and so we want to simplify that tonight, and that's what we'll speak to.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 06:04

So let me start with how did we get here to this point. When I became the superintendent of the school district in the summer of 2022, I met with all the district administrators. So, I had individual meetings with all of our minut—administrators, and I asked a question, what are the challenges, the biggest challenges facing our school district and the success of our students? And what I heard were three things, primarily finances, a clear direction for our students, and student attendance. And so that was not something that didn't have a basis. The basis of that concern was clearly the '21-'22 school year when we had 33% of our high school students that were chronically absent, meaning they missed more than 18 school days. And so, it was based on that information, the concern from our administrators, what our data was telling us. And then also in the spring of each year, in April of every year, we do a survey of our staff. So, we surveyed our roughly 1,950 staff members, and we asked 12 questions, and then we give a open comments section.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 07:13

Ultimately, what we heard in comments was a lot of concern from teachers and paras and deans of students and school counselors social workers about the number of absences that school—that students had. And so, when we looked at okay, we're hearing it from principals, we're hearing concern from all of our staff, and our data is telling us to be concerned. We put together a work group during the '22-'23 school year to start to address this. So, the work group was led by Laura Jackson, our Executive Director of Student Services, who is with us tonight, and Stephanie Marta, who at that time was our attendance coordinator. So that work group was small. It had some staff members, some community members, and some parents, and they came up with some solutions that were then integrated into our support system.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 08:02

But in the spring of that year, that '22-'23 school year, our data told us that we still had over 1000 high school students that missed significant number of days, 18 days or more. So that number still concerned us. When we did our survey again, we continue to hear concerns from all our staff members about attendance. So, what we did then is we brought a bigger group together and formed a board-directed committee during the '23-'24 school year, and so that had more staff members, it had more parents than more community members. And that committee met over the fall and into the winter of '23-'24, and we looked at data. We looked at best practice from other districts. We looked at research. We considered all the things that we were doing and the success or lack of success that we were having, and then ultimately, we decided to put all our solutions on the table and prioritize those solutions.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 09:04

So, what we did is we came together and developed all these different ideas for solutions, and then we prioritize them. And the top four priorities is what we set out to work on. So, our fourth highest priority was we needed to do something about transportation. There were simply students that had some limitations in how they could get to school. And so, we looked at some programs that were really struggling. We bought vans. And so now in those programs, we have staff members that drive a van, pick up students, bring them to school; they might bring them to appointments; they'll bring them home at the end of the school day. And that's been really successful, but that's a small piece, right? We only have two vans, and right now we need staff members to drive them, but it's been successful.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 09:52

What we are looking to do this year as just have a new initiative is we're looking to do a late bus, and so I went to a conference in Atlanta and heard from the Atlanta school district about how they simply don't ask questions. If kids aren't on that first bus, they'll swing a second bus through around 10 o'clock. Better to have a student in school for five and a half hours then not at all. So those are some of the ideas that we're working on. But transportation obviously comes with a lot of cost to it.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 10:19

So, the third highest priority was to be more engaging and really, quite frankly, interesting. And so, we've always looked at how important engagement is, how important it is to make our content relevant to students if they're going to learn it. But we never really thought about maybe some kids aren't even coming to school at all because they aren't finding it engaging, relevant, interesting. So that's something that we are working on internally, and really that doesn't cost us any money. That's really just about our teaching practices, some of our different policies and practices within our schools.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 10:56

The second highest priority was to add a second attendance coordinator, which we have done, and so now we have Stacey Nitka who's here with us tonight. She focuses at the elementary level, so Stephanie Marta can focus at the secondary level. We're the only school district in the state of Wisconsin that has two full time social workers that focus 100% of their time on attendance.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 11:21

And the number one priority that came out of that large committee in '23-'24 was to come back to the city and say, we need your help. We need an ordinance back in. We need this final tool to fit into our system of support for students.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 11:37

So, what happened then is, in late spring of '24, so little over a year ago, I started to meet with Common Council members. I started to meet with city staff, and I started to meet with Outagamie County staff, just to talk about what could this look like. And a lot of busy people there, so it took all of the summer of '24, the fall of '24, into this past spring before we were finally able to get everybody together at the table who needed to talk about this. And that's what brought us to speaking with the Common Council on March 19. And so, what we're really looking at is look—looking for an additional tool within our system of support for students. We think that's what the city can provide us.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 12:25

And so, you know, I've been asked recently, over the last three months, why, as the superintendent, am I the one speaking about this? Why am I the one that's leading this? And to me, it's really simple: the important work in our school district happens in classrooms. The important work is done by teachers. It happens in guidance offices, school counseling offices. It happens in principals offices. What I do is I make sure that the resources are there and that there is an environment for our students to be successful. I make sure that the conditions are right for students to be successful, so the important work can happen. And that's what I feel I'm doing is I'm coming to you and saying students coming to school consistently we know is going to improve their success. And so that's why I've been asking for this.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 13:15

So, the that's the first item. Wanted to give you that background, because I neglected to do that back in March when I spoke.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 13:22

And then the second item that we want to talk about tonight is we shared a three-tier system, and again, it was heavy on educational jargon. So, we look at three tier systems in education in a lot of different ways. We look at them academically. We look at them for behavior, attendance, and basically what it is we look at that first tier as being what we do for all students and how we support all students, whether it's teaching reading or it's getting kids to come to school, whatever it might be. And we always want 80% of our students to be successful in tier one, in that universal approach.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 14:00

And then from there, we look and say, "All right, if 80% of our students are not successful, what do we need to do different in that universal level? What do we need to do structurally that is better going to support kids? You know, what could we improve on?" And then it's 20% of our students that need tier two. From there, we're hoping that 15 out of that 20% are successful with those additional support that we put in place, and then it's 5% that go on to our tier three.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 14:29

Now that's the way we visualize it. We put it in our slideshow that we had that night, but it was kind of confusing. A lot of words. Usually, you're going to see it in like a pyramid or a triangle is the graphic that you use, but the reality is it's very fluid. It's not that a student, all of a sudden goes from tier three to tier two, and then they stay there. Really, this flow chart was a great idea, and actually it was a suggestion. When we're meeting with the stakeholders, they said, "You know, you really need to put that into a flow chart so we can better understand how a student flows through the supports you have in the school district, and where would the city come into play." And so, when you look at this, and in a little bit, Stephanie Marta and Debbie Strick who was a social worker, just retired from North High School, and then Krista Olearnick, who's an alternative ed teacher at

East, they're going to talk about the role they play in supporting students and how that kind of fits into this flow chart.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 15:31

So ultimately, the flow chart, way over on the very right-hand side, is where the city would start to be involved. It's after we've worked through all of these different solutions essentially, and nothing has worked for a student. We can't get a student to come to school at all, is where we would want to engage with the city. So, I'm going to stop talking now. I think Stephanie is going to go next, and she's going to talk a little bit about the work she does as an attendance coordinator, and then I'll come back up if you have any questions after everyone's done speaking. Thank you.

Alderperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 16:05

Okay, thank you. Welcome Stephanie.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 16:09

Good evening. My name is Stephanie Marta as Superintendent Hartjes mentioned. I am a school social worker and currently the secondary attendance coordinator for the school district. I'm here to provide you all with some background information regarding changes that have been made related to attendance procedures and practices over the past three years, since I've been in my role.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 16:31

So, at the beginning of the 2022-'23 school year, my role as full time at school social worker as an attendance coordinator was added, and I was providing attendance support for the entire district as best I could, primarily focusing on middle and high school students, because that is where, obviously, our significant needs were when it came to attendance. The district recognizes—Superintendent Hartjes mentioned, recognized the need for this work to begin earlier with a focus on prevention and earlier intervention. So, starting this school year, they hired a second full time school social worker, Stacey Nitka, who's right behind me. So, Stacy supports the 4k program and 20 elementary schools and charters. I support four middle schools, three high schools, and all of the other secondary charters and alternative programs.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 17:19

So, every school in the Appleton Area School District has an attendance team. Stacy and I support each of these teams by attending their attendance meetings and providing guidance and additional support for those students and their families who are experiencing challenges related to attendance. And this could include individualized support for students or meeting with families. And so just putting that in perspective, Stacy and I are going to every single meeting, either weekly or bi weekly for all of the schools in our district. So, we're pretty highly involved with our teams.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 17:48

During these meetings. We work with teams to analyze our attendance data. We problem solve. We develop plans for increased engagement. And as we presented at the last city council meeting, attendance teams and Superintendent Hartjes mentioned, we follow the three-tier system of support to address concerns. The flow chart that you have in front of you outlines our process related to attendance, interventions and supports. And as you can see, the supports are very fluid. Students may go in and out of the tiers throughout the school year.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 18:16

So, for students who are not responding to our tier two supports and plans that have been that have been developed by school staff and attendance teams, we support teams in developing more intensive plans or

interventions. And by I mean me and Stacy. So, these are listed on the flow chart on the left under attendance plan examples. And you'll notice that when the supports or interventions are put in place—I think it's in yellow—we're monitoring these supports or interventions for four to six weeks before we're making any decision on what to do next, whether it's changing up an intervention or moving forward on to the next step.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 18:54

So, I am going to share a scenario or situation with you that I worked with from a couple of years ago that really highlights the supports that can be provided for a struggling student. So, following the pandemic, we had a student, a high school student, she was a junior at the time, who had not attended/stepped foot in the school building for over two years, which is obviously [...] So the student was dealing with significant anxiety and mental health concerns. We ended up making a truancy referral to Outagamie County to provide some additional supports for the student and family, not as a punishment but because we knew we didn't have what she needed within our school district and she needed additional support. So, the county was able to set up a therapist for the student who the family felt comfortable with it—with because based on their culture. So that worked out really well, and she started opening up to the therapist and getting more support.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 19:51

The student began this in fall of her junior year, but still wasn't attending school at all. So, as we worked as a team with the county and the school, we determined that we wanted to come up with an alternative plan for her just to get her into the school doors for a period of time. So, while we would have loved for the student to begin to begin attending classes all day every day, this just wasn't realistic for her at that time. Based on having missed two years of school, just popping her into school and expecting her to go to seven classes during the day wasn't going to be realistic. So, a plan was developed with high school staff, and this involved school social worker, school counselor, alternative education teacher, associate principal, Dean of Students, myself. We had so many people involved in the school to support this student, in addition to her county social worker that she was involved with.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 20:40

So, at the end of first semester of her junior year, we decided that this where—we worked with a student to come up with a plan, and she agreed that she would come for one class period a day, starting in January—so just before second semester started. And she was going into one of the alternative education classrooms in the school, which for her, was great because it was a really small group of students. I think the maximum number of students in that classroom on any given day were like 10. So, she felt comfortable with that. She developed a relationship with that alternative education teacher, and we were monitoring her plan every other week. So, every two weeks, we were looking at this and determining if we could add more time. And she was agreeable, because she had become more comfortable.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 21:20

So, I think by February of that semester, she was attending three class periods in the alternative education classroom which was amazing for her after not attending school for over two years. She ended up also adding an art class, which was huge. She was very interested in art. And so, she was attending a half a day of school. She established a positive attendance pattern and became eligible for alternative programming through Central program, and once she got into Central, she worked through their GED Option 2 program and ended up graduating on time with her class.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 21:57

So, this is a major success story, and one that that we don't see often for students who haven't attended school in over two years, but she really was engaged with us, and that was—that was the part that worked, is that she

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and her family were engaged with the school, and unfortunately, we're not always seeing that. So, this is just one example out of so many students that we're providing extensive support for in our school, and we're really tailoring those supports to a student's individual needs.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 22:26

I want to mention that as the secondary attendance coordinator, I serve as a liaison between the county and the schools for students who have been referred to the county for habitual truancy. So that means whenever the school talks about a truancy referral, I kind of screen those, make sure that all of the interventions have been put in place first before we've determined that things are working and we need to take another step. So, I attend all of the truancy intake meetings with county workers to help schools and the county develop a plan of support for those students.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 22:59

If the city were to reinstate a citation for truancy, those—the determination to move forward with it, with a citation, would also be screened through me, as well as through our elementary attendance coordinator Stacy and our Executive Director of Student Services Laura. So, it would be three of us kind of having a checks and balances system of making sure we're looking at the data, making sure that these students have—we've attempted interventions that and have attempted to get them into the school before we would consider that.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 23:27

Tonight, we also have—as Superintendent Hartjes mentioned, we have a couple of secondary attendance team members to speak to about their roles. It's different from what I do. So first, I'll have Debbie Strick come up. She's a school social worker who just retired. So, she'll talk about her role in this.

Debbie Strick (Retired Social Worker - AASD) 23:45

Good evening. I'm Debbie Strick. I've been in the Appleton school district for over 30 years, and 25 of those years at Appleton North High School. In my role as a school social worker, I've helped to support students who are struggling emotionally for a variety of reasons. There's many times when a student's emotional pain has become so great that it's interfered with their ability to attend school regularly. In my role, I help to find the reasons why and then work with students, parents, teachers, and school staff to come up with a solution so that students can get back to attending school regularly. I'd just like to take a few minutes and share with you five examples of how school social workers help support in the high school setting.

Debbie Strick (Retired Social Worker - AASD) 24:26

The first one is hospitalizations. For our students who have been hospitalized in an adolescent unit (that's often because they've had thoughts of suicide or attempted suicide) or for our students who are participating in a partial hospitalization program (that's because of significant mental illness), there's times when they're discharged but they do not want to return to school. So, it's during these times that I'm collaborating with high school staff—or, I'm sorry, hospital staff—to find out the student's worries and stressors and then try to alleviate them. Our counseling team that includes school psychologists and school counselors, we all work together to meet with the students to eliminate any barriers to returning to school. Sometimes this means advocating for a student with their teachers, or writing a pass so that they can come to the counseling office when they're feeling too stressed to be in their classes. Other times, it means starting them off with classes in the morning one day and in the afternoon the next day, in an effort to slowly reacclimate them to coming back to school on a full-time basis. Our office is always a soft landing for these students, so that they don't want to flee to their homes or avoid school altogether.

Debbie Strick (Retired Social Worker - AASD) 25:39

A second example Superintendent Hartjes mentioned was our transportation issue. Well before we hired these two vehicles—and I didn't even know about the Atlanta and secondary bus; that would be amazing. We know we have a hard time with students who are trying to get to school, but they miss their transportation either because they don't have reliable transportation at home, but they frequently miss the school bus or the ride doesn't show up. So, we know just getting them to school late, as Superintendent Hartjes mentioned, is better than not getting them there at all. So, we've worked with our at-risk program and Valley Transit to get a bus out to Appleton North High School on a regular basis. And so, then I, along with others, are teaching these students, how do you access this bus? Showing them the website. Sometimes we're calling Fox Valley Transit together to find out what their pickup spot is and what time so that they can get to the bus. Because, yes, getting there late is better than not getting there at all.

Debbie Strick (Retired Social Worker - AASD) 26:43

I've also been a part of the attendance team for years, and my role as a high school social workers to provide extensive outreach. And these are students that are not coming to school. So sometimes that means I'm going in and doing home visits. Sometimes it means I'm talking to the teen on the phone to find out what is going on? How can we get you to school? Other times it's meeting with the parent and the teen in my office. And sometimes it means coming up with an attendance goal with these teenagers and an incentive program that's tied to their attendance to help prove, and a lot of times, teens really like that. That that helps get their attendance up.

Debbie Strick (Retired Social Worker - AASD) 27:23

A fourth area is parents. Sometimes their parents that are calling because they simply cannot get their teen to school. They've tried everything that they know. Sometimes it's because we they have autism. Sometimes it's because they have mental illness. And then, in my role, I'm explaining to them about community resources and helping them to get connected to school—community resources like therapy or psychological evaluations.

Debbie Strick (Retired Social Worker - AASD) 27:50

And then the last area that I just want to briefly mention is offering one on one support to teens. So sometimes teens are avoiding class because they have anxiety. Sometimes they're worried they're going to have a panic attack. Other times, we have teens that feel like they have no connection to school whatsoever. They don't feel like they belong. They feel like they have no friends. School is uncomfortable for them. So then, in my role, I'm teaching them coping skills, connecting them to resources, offering support groups, encouraging them to get involved with school activities, and then following up.

Debbie Strick (Retired Social Worker - AASD) 28:25

So, I just want to summarize, after having been in this district for so long, that I do feel like we're doing everything we can to get our teens to school, or not just our teens, all our kids. I'm partial to teens because that's where I've spent most of my career. But we're adjusting schedules. We're advocating. We're connecting to community resources, teaching coping skills, offering a soft landing, and really just offering our unwavering support. So, thank you. So, with that Krista Olearnick.

Krista Olearnick (Alternative Education Teacher - AASD) 28:57

Hello. Thank you for your time this evening. As Debbie mentioned, my name is Krista Olearnick, and I'm an alternative education teacher, which you may have heard mentioned a little bit when they were talking. I currently work at Appleton East High School. However, I've worked in this role for over 20 years at North, West, East, and at Central. I often describe my role as a student success coordinator, just because our mission goes far beyond academics.

Krista Olearnick (Alternative Education Teacher - AASD) 29:26

To try to describe alternative education in a nutshell, it supports students who are at risk of not graduating. Those who fall two or more credits behind, as defined by the Department of Public Instruction—we serve them, but we also serve students who are facing complex challenges, many of which have already been alluded to—mental health issues, homelessness, trauma, grief, or just basic needs and security. Nobody comes to school wanting to fail. I think every student has a story, and our work is about building trust, uncovering barriers, and connecting students to resources that are academic, emotional, as well as just practical. So, this can include some of which you've already heard—mental health services through our PATH program, which you see on that tiered map that you were given, as well as basic needs like hygiene, food, transportation, and shelter, just those basic needs being met, as well as support from school psychologists, from social workers, counselors. Our school nurses are heavily involved, as well, mentorship with community partnerships, which you see TRAC on there. You see STAR. You see cultural advisors. So, some of those are in the school, as well as outside in the community, as well as courses that myself and all the other alternative education teachers teach like investigating success, who specifically—those are specifically target targeted at serving students who struggle with attendance, mental health, or just school connectedness in general. And the whole goal of that class is to really try to help build resilience, belonging, and just those life skills.

Krista Olearnick (Alternative Education Teacher - AASD) 29:40

We also guide students to programs like Central, Higher Ground, GPS educational partners, GPS Options 2, which you heard alluded to with the story from Stephanie about the student that graduated through that as well as the Quest program, which is at Fox Valley Tech. All of those programs are alternative pathways to help students graduate.

Krista Olearnick (Alternative Education Teacher - AASD) 31:32

So obviously I'm passionate about this, but this work matters, and so I just wanted to give one example of a student who recently had faced homelessness as well as mental health struggles, and she wrote me this note before graduating early. She says, "You're the first teacher I really opened up to. You kept encouraging me. I'm now working, planning to go to Fox Valley Tech, and trying to be a better person. Without you, I wouldn't be where I am now." And this is just one story, a mix—amidst countless other student stories, but I think it really represents the power of human connection and the critical role that schools play in shaping students' futures.

Krista Olearnick (Alternative Education Teacher - AASD) 32:13

We also continue to support students even after they've left. One student example of that is I just recently had—and not just one. We've had various students who return after like they're in their 20s. They finish their—with their diploma through a pathway that allows them to test out. They show up proud, oftentimes, a few of them with their child in tow. Because we truly never give up on students.

Krista Olearnick (Alternative Education Teacher - AASD) 32:39

And attendance we know through all the research, is a leading indicator of graduation. At East—I can only speak to this specifically because I'm a part of the attendance team as well—one in four students—yes, one in four students—is chronically absent or habitually truant. This impacts graduation rates and lifelong outcomes.

Krista Olearnick (Alternative Education Teacher - AASD) 33:03

So therefore, that's why I'm here to say we need a city ordinance to help shift this trend. An ordinance could help deter the 80% that Superintendent Hartjes was talking about by giving students and encouraging that positive behavior of school attendance. It's not about punishment. It's about empowering students to take ownership of their education, and, honestly, if their behavior improves, we can tear up the citation, because

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then I think that will truly free up the resources of our attendance teams and all these staff that you hear working to really be able to focus on that 10 to 15% of students that most need our support.

Krista Olearnick (Alternative Education Teacher - AASD) 33:45

As I alluded to before, graduation impacts everything. It impacts—and we know this through the research, and I'm sure you guys know this in your roles as well. It impacts employment; it impacts health; it impacts safety; and our economy. So, if we know that—and we do know from educational research that 75% of students who don't graduate stay in our communities, and that's true across the nation. So, if we look at this only through an economic lens, we can invest in them now, or we can pay for it later. We can pay for it in health care. We can pay for it in prison. We can pay for it in government programs, and honestly, most importantly, lost potential. However, I believe it's our moral responsibility to raise our children and our youth. I truly think that it takes a village, so that's why we're asking for your partnership, because all kids deserve a chance to succeed, and we cannot do it alone. That's all I got.

Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 34:41

Great. Thanks, Crystal.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 34:42

So, we had just a handful of folks here tonight to talk about what they do to support students in our flow chart system here. But keep in mind, we have 4,400 high school students in our district, and we care about every one of them. We want every one of them to be successful, but the same intervention does not work for every one of those 4,400 kids. And so, we need multiple tools. And so, you talked about the county and what they do to support us and what we do in the district, and that's what we're asking the city for is one more tool that we can use. And it might only be 20 kids that need that tool, but we do believe that there are 20 kids that will be successful and graduate from high school next year if we can put this in place. So, do you have any questions for us this evening that we can answer for you? Otherwise, we'd certainly be happy to come back another time and clarify more for you.

Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 35:37

Okay, thanks. Thanks everyone for what you do every day and what you presented. We'll open it up for some questions here. Or if someone wants a topic, a follow up to something that was—and we can bring that to a future meeting. The plan, or the idea, is to continue this dialog with the intent of bringing back the action item. My intent would be to bring back the action item in August, so we'll see how that goes with these meetings, the ongoing communication with the community, and also a potential stakeholders meeting second one. So, let's open it up to committee members here for questions, and if you're going to respond to the questions, please use the microphone. Alder Hartzheim, were you first?

Aldersonperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 36:20

Sure. I'm grateful for this, because we heard from a lot of people in the general public that the school district automatically just wants to give everybody a ticket. And I knew that wasn't true, but this is a plot map that shows us that that's not true, and this, I think, will help garner some more community support for adding back a truancy ordinance in the city, because that's—you—we go through a long map before that little piece is a potential, and that is what we can help the community to understand. And I appreciate that. Thank you.

Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 37:01

Thank you. Who's next? Alder Van Zeeland.

Aldersonperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 37:05

Thank you, Chair. I just wanted to clarify, so do we believe that the "unable to reach" in the far right corner—do we believe that the out of the 293 students who've missed 50 days or more that they fall into the "unable to reach", and we need to consider the truancy. Or are we saying we catch them earlier?

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 37:31

So, I can't say that all of the 293 students we're unable to reach at all, but there are a fair number of students who we'd be focusing on because they're not engaged. Their families won't respond. The students won't respond. They won't answer their door when we go to the house. We've made county truancy referrals. The county workers can't get them involved. So, we wouldn't be looking at a truancy citation for 293 students (we don't have any numbers on this flow chart), but of those 293 students, there's a chunk of them who are not engaged at all whatsoever and literally have not stepped foot in a school building for the entire school year. And that's what we're really concerned about, are these students who are not getting an education, are at risk of not graduating from high school, and then the statistics that Krista shared with you are to follow from that.

Aldersonperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 38:24

Can you give me a rough estimate, like a quarter of the 293? I just—I'm trying to see this in my head.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 38:31

Yep. So, I believe our number was thir—30? We had about 30 students that I had on my list that—

Aldersonperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 38:39

Were unable to be reached in any way? Okay.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 38:42

Yeah. So like, if we had a citation in place in May of this year, those would be the 30 students we'd be focusing on, not 293.

Aldersonperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 38:50

Okay. Okay, great. Thank you.

Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 38:52

Thank you. Important clarification. Alder Fenton.

Aldersonperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 38:55

Thank you, Chair. And may I direct to the—

Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 38:58

You may

Aldersonperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 38:59

—team. So, I've got a couple of very simple questions. Can you help me out with some acronyms, just for someone who has not had a child in school system in a while. STAR, TRAC, PATH, can somebody just help me out with those acronyms? And I have another question too.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 39:20

Okay, sure, so STAR is through the Boys and Girls Club. It is—oh, geez—Scholars Targeting Academic...

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[Someone off microphone is walking her through the acronym, but nobody seems to remember what the R in STAR stands for.]

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 39:37

So essentially, we have programming for students, our African American students, who need extra support in school. TRAC is our Truancy Reduction and Assessment Center, again, through the Boys and Girls Club. It's a partnership, and we have TRAC case managers at all of our middle and high schools, and they provide intervention for students as they're referred through the site attendance teams. So those interventions entail that the TRAC case manager is providing mentoring, essentially, and working with students who are referred to set goals around attendance, develop incentives, contact families, things like that. What was the next one you said?

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 40:20

PATH

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 40:20

PATH. PATH is

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 40:23

—probably not the train system in New York City.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 40:25

Providing Access To Healing. So, PATH is our school based mental health program. So, we have therapists within some of our schools. All of our middle and high schools and then some of our elementary schools have a community mental health therapist from an agency. So, it might be could Catalpa Health or—

[Someone off microphone says that PATH exclusively utilized Catalpa.]

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 40:51

Okay, sorry, PATH is specifically Catalpa, but it's school based mental health.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 40:56

Thank you. I appreciate that. I thought—I was afraid I was sitting here—but I do have one more question.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 41:01

I know you have another question, but in regards to that, would it be possible to put together a brief supplemental document?

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 41:07

With acronyms?

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 41:08

Yes, just for every—as we, as we try to gather all of the information and make an informed decision, that will help anybody that was kind of wondering that maybe isn't here tonight what those mean. So, it can just be a simple one pager with the acronym and the description or what you just stated. So go ahead, Alder Fenton.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 41:26

Thank you, Chair, again. So, I understand that there are more stakeholder meetings to come, and I appreciate the chart. It was very helpful to see kind of—I'm an old IT person. I like flow charts. So, if the city were to reenact some kind of a truancy ordinance, where do you see it falling in this chart?

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 41:57

So, all the way to the right, there's a little green box that says, "Consider truancy citation." And we actually have a second map as an addendum to this page, which would show how that kind of flows. And that's not included with this because we don't have enough information yet in terms of what the outcome would—like, how that would all flow after we make a referral to the SRO or our School Resource Officer if a student were referred for a citation, but—so the citation would be all the way to the right last on the list of things to be considered.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 42:34

Can I ask one more?

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 42:35

Sure. Go ahead.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 42:35

Just—and I did see the box, so I did not miss that. But so is this something—it looks like it's flowing back to the county. So, are you saying that somewhere in here, like, okay, so we'd issue a city truancy ticket and then we would still flow into the county referral maybe?

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 42:58

No, it wouldn't be both. And I apologize if the flow chart is confusing. We typically wouldn't do both. If we if we did, we would probably try a county truancy referral first to see if there—if the student and the family would be responsive to county services. So that would come first before a citation.

Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 43:17

Okay, thank you.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 43:17

I think where the confusion comes in is the arrow from "unable to reach" goes kind of behind the box for—

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 43:24

Yeah.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 43:24

—citation.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 43:25

I know it's really hard to—

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 43:27

I realize that. I was looking at this, and I'm like, you know, if you could lay this all out in a line—

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 43:32

I know.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 43:33

—you would see that the citation is the last step.

Stephanie Marta (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 43:37

[...] adjust that. If it's confusing for you guys to look at, it would probably be confusing for others, so we'll try to adjust that to make it more clear.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 43:43

It did confuse me until I realized it was basically a continuous dashed line—arrow/line. Yeah, okay.

Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 43:51

Okay. I'm—thank you. Appreciate the information.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 43:55

Okay. Anyone else in the audience like to say anything? No? Okay. Anything else from committee members? Not seeing anything, so thank you very much for the presentation, the information, and the work that you do every day. We'll continue this dialog. Like I said, the timeline of events, Superintendent Hartjes will be working with the stakeholders on scheduling something, I would imagine, for late July, early August, something like that, and then we'll just continue to have this community conversation about this important topic. Okay. Thank you. Have a good evening.