

## Item 25-0755: AASD Truancy Initiatives Update

### Safety and Licensing Committee

Wed, Jul 09, 2025 5:30PM

#### **Alderperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 06:41**

Okay, that takes care of all the action items, which brings us all the way to the Appleton Area School District truancy initiatives update, and I will turn it over to Superintendent Hartjes for the update. And any guests that're present, people present that you would like to speak.

#### **Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 06:58**

Yeah. Thank you. Thank you once again for allowing us to speak on this topic. If you recall back on June 11, the last time we spoke to your committee, we shared a graphic that was a flow chart of the support that we provide students who struggle with consistent student attendance. And at that meeting, we also had three individuals speak. We had one of our attendance coordinators, Stephanie Marta, spoke. We had high school social worker, and then we had an alternative education teacher from East High School. So those three individuals shared the different ways that they support students who are struggling with attendance.

#### **Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 07:38**

And we have made a couple of updates after that meeting to our flow chart. So first of all, what we did is, on the backside, is we provided some information. We included just a description of many of the acronyms that we use, and then also we explain many of the alternative programs we have for students who fall behind in terms of credit. And so those are referenced on the front side, but we wanted to include that information for you at this time.

#### **Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 08:08**

A couple other items—we cleaned up just a little bit on the very far right-hand side, there was some confusion about where the arrows were going, so we just made that a little bit easier to understand. And obviously that's a really important part of this flow chart, because that is the final tool that we're asking the city for, is the ordinance. And so, when you look at this flow chart, if you go all the way to the top left where there's yellow arrow, we thought about putting in the number, but that number changes every year, but it's approximately 700 to 800 students that enter into support because of their attendance. And so, when you think about seven to 800 students who're going to be supported throughout the year as they go through this flow chart, when we get to the top right-hand corner, again, we're looking at approximately 30 students. So, you know, not every student in that 700 to 800 makes the progress we would like them to make around attendance, but it's really about 30 students this past year who didn't engage with us in any way. And so those are the students that we're looking for this final tool to support.

#### **Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 09:19**

And so tonight we have three individuals with you again just to talk about, again, what they do in their job, what their role is to support students. And so, we're going to start with Will Xiong, he's the Dean of Students at West High School, and Dean of Students plays a very active role in student attendance. And then we will go with Wendy Falk, and Wendy is a school counselor. So many years ago, we used to call them guidance counselors. Now they're called school counselors. And again, Wendy is going to talk about what she does in her role as a school counselor to support students in all different areas, but also attendance. And then finally, we're going to have Ryan Marx. And Ryan is a science teacher at East High School, and we think it's important to understand that classroom teachers also play a role in not only assisting students who are struggling with attendance but also assisting students who fall behind in terms of how do they get them caught up when they come back to

school, hopefully when they do come to school. So, I'm going to stop talking now and then at the end, we will answer your questions, but I'll turn it over to Will Xiong at this time.

**Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 10:20**

Okay, thank you. Welcome all of you.

**Dean of Student Will Xiong (AASD - West High School) 10:22**

All right, thank you, Greg. All right. I'm just going to speak a little bit about my role at Appleton West and how I support attendance. Okay, good evening to everyone. I'd like to thank all of you guys for allowing me to speak about how attendance is supported at Appleton West, especially in my role. Again, my name is Will Xiong. I work in the Student Service Department at Appleton West as the Dean of Students. Most of my days are consumed with supporting students when navigating their school days and supporting student attendance.

**Dean of Student Will Xiong (AASD - West High School) 10:58**

Student attendance, supporting it, what does that look like at the high school level, especially from the Dean of Students position? Our Student Service Department consists of two deans, myself and my colleague, Jay Coonen, and our assistant principal, Christine DeBoer. We meet with each individual at risk students to understand their unique circumstances. We believe that every situation is unique. The meeting invites students, families and the school to meet with each other to build trust and to help each other problem solve the situation. It encourages dialogue, and in return, we build deeper connection with our students, their families, and the community. Our department also partner with our school counselor, our SRO, and our school psychologist in hopes of graduating all of our students at Appleton West. We also think outside the box and conduct home visits, and we work with outside resources to support our family. We partner with the Outagamie County Youth and Family Services. We also partner with the Boys and Girls Club truancy reduction and assessment center. Along with all these agencies, we also partner with agencies around us that support mental health. That is a little bit about how I support attendance over at Appleton West, and I thank you for your time.

**Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 12:36**

Thank you.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 12:43**

Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak with all of you. I'm Wendy Falk. I am one of the counselors over at Appleton West High School, and I am also the counselor liaison leading all of the high school counselors in Appleton.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 12:56**

So, school counselors actively support the provision of dozens of support of supports provided to our students. A school counselor revises students schedules to complement a student's career interests, and we support students in their career exploration. We assist in students in creating plans for their post-secondary efforts. A school counselor typically meets with students individually and in small groups, to provide social and emotional support as well as instruction and executive functioning, coping strategies, problem solving. It's completely natural for a school counselor to provide classroom instruction regarding lifelong social, emotional, academic, and career-based skills, in addition to meeting with our colleagues, our parents, and community members regarding the well-being of our students and how we can build on the well-being of our students.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 13:54**

Each moment is an opportunity for engagement. Everything from providing extra hygiene supplies, to problem solving with our students, to supporting students who are overwhelmed by their homework—it all matters, and

it all comes down to providing mental health supports for our students. On average, in the Appleton Area School District, a school counselor carries a caseload of roughly 400 students. That's—250 is what's the recommended load. And for that 400 students, there can be phone calls to parents, home visits for students unable to come to school, students processing a social issue in their group, reporting bullying, attending intervention meetings for students, and of course, our attendance team meetings. Yes, we're another member of that attendance team, and we attend the meeting itself, but we're also called on, often, to be that trusted adult that provides the supports necessary to remove any barriers that are preventing a student from attending school.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 14:54**

The guiding principles of our work as educators are simple all starting with Maslow's hierarchy, the pyramid that shows us that we have to meet the basic needs of a student before we can ever talk about helping them learn. I love to say Maslow before bloom. You have to do the basic work before you can ask him to do the higher-level thinking.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 15:20**

We also worry about unconditional positive regard, which means that no matter who you are, no matter where you come from, regardless of what has happened or what you've done, every single person, every single person, deserves a trusted adult who will listen with caring, compassion, and respect. School counselors are known for their compassionate listening, and we're known for rolling up our sleeves when a problem gets deep, and being outside of the box thinkers that can solve. If a student needs our help, we're ready. We roll up our sleeves and jump in. We cannot do everything, but in every situation, we make sure we can do something or get them to someone who can. And while we're out of our depth, we rope in the supports that are necessary, but we never leave a student behind.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 16:16**

While those ideas are core to the professional beliefs of counselors, all professional educators entered this profession because they too believe in the value of those relationships, and they too are purveyors of the dozens of supports and programs the AASD offers and that encompass the very addressing the very essence of this issue—the basic needs that students have, the barriers that prevent them from getting what they need, and how we can help in removing those barriers.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 16:50**

A school counselor cannot diagnose and treat a mental illness, just as a community therapist cannot provide the social, emotional, academic, or career supports knowledgeable, like those of us who are school counselors. We specialize in those skills. This is why it takes a village to raise kids and to protect our children because we all have different tools, different abilities, and by bringing them together, we can ensure that we have done everything possible to provide for and protect our greatest resource, which is the future generation of this community.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 16:50**

But for the chronically absent, for the chronically absent student, none of these are possible. This is because when a student is absent from school, they not only miss out on their learning, they're unable to benefit from the myriad of services we provide within the school walls. We are an inclusive community. We believe in outreach, but our services are to be provided within the school. When a student cannot come to school, it's vital that we make every effort to help students cross that barrier. But we cannot do this alone. No matter how much we care about our students as their counselors, we're not licensed as therapists. That's a common misconception. While we both are—while both counselors and clinical therapist have their master's degree in counseling, our internship experiences and our licenses are completely different, and that means that we do not provide the same services.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 16:50**

I'm thinking of a young lady who transferred into our school this year. She came to us identified as a student with significant needs, requiring an IEP, a strong trauma history. In fact, she never knew a time where there wasn't significant trauma and significant level of homelessness. They grew up not only afraid of many adults, but believing that adults could not be trusted and that it's okay for adults to hurt her. Growing up for this student, meant they were never able to learn, because school is the place you went and sat in a room where no one taught you and nothing was expected of you because you had a disability. When the student came to us at West last year, she sat my office on her first day, and I told her that we see our students and staff as family, that everyone belongs to the family, and we don't always like what everybody in the family does, but they're still part of the family, because families work together, problem solve together, we celebrate and cry together, but most importantly, we grow together.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 16:50**

That student ended up spending a lot of time in the counseling office and soon started coming to school more and more. At first, she came down to see us just to talk about her worries and her concerns, but over time, she was stopping in to say "Hi." She was coming in to tell us about her school day, or to tell us about something she learned, or to tell us something really cool that happened with a friend. During her time with us, she accessed her services and began learning along with her classmates, feeling like she fit in. She started participating in school activities, and eventually, her family, with the help of AASD staff, was able to access stable housing and other services they desperately needed, including medical services and food support.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 18:33**

Counselors deal with ambiguous things like feelings. So, it's important to know that we're also skilled in the practice of accessing, analyzing and reporting objective and subjective data. The American School Counselor Association, with which we fully align, requires that school counselors utilize any form of data available to inform decision making on all levels. This means we do not make decisions based on whims and fancies. We are making decisions as all professionals should, with a thorough review of all the information that we have available to us. That ensures that we are making best practice decisions based on research and specific to our students, to ensure that they receive nothing less than the very best we can offer.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 19:19**

If I'm paying attention to that data, then I'd be thinking a lot these days about the increasing number of students missing weeks of school—weeks—due to hospitalization for mental health concerns. I'd be thinking too about the students lying in bed at 8:05 in the morning instead of their first hour class, not because they're bad students and not because they're bad kids, but because they have mental health needs they have no idea how to address. I'm thinking about the parents as well, because so many of them call our office every day asking for help because they don't know what else to do to help their children. And then I can't forget to include the grandparents, the aunts and the uncles, the foster parents, because the structure of families is far beyond what a lot of us grew up with in a traditional world. And all of those extended family members who further support the raising of our students, they too, feel powerless, because they see the needs, but they're not empowered to help.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 22:20**

Family members found employment and were able to establish themselves in the community. We knew when something was happening with her or the family, because suddenly she would miss several days of school, and then she came back. She knew that school was the one place that would always help not just her but her whole family by connecting them to the necessary supports they needed. The student stayed home early on, but she

felt that her family needed her at that time, but when they started to see as a group, what the fam—what the school could do to help the family, the attendance became far more consistent. They even found the courage to perform in our annual talent show, and that student glowed for days because she was approached by so many staff and students who had no idea she has an amazing gift of song.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 23:12**

This student is part of the Appleton West family, and it's not because we wrote her case about attendance, but it's because we showed her—we physically showed her—every day that our team is committed to students, and we show it in our words, our actions, our decisions, and in every moment we approached her with caring and compassion.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 23:32**

Unfortunately, not every student experiences that success. At the end of this school year, the AASD experienced a chronic truancy rate of 40%. Now that's the number that I had received at the end, so if it's adjusted since then, I apologize. But 40% of our students exceeded the 10 absences allowed a student per DPI. Along with this chronic truancy we know that other challenges are facing our students outside of the school. According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey most recently administered, mental health issues plaguing Wisconsin students rose to the single greatest health risk facing students under the age of 18. Further, the survey showed 51.6% of high school students experience anxiety, 35% experienced depression, 18.6% of Wisconsin's high school students contemplate suicide, 14.9% of those have an active plan to carry out the suicide.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 24:34**

So, when I hear those numbers, and then I think about the 40% of our Appleton students who are inaccessible to us due to attendance challenges, I'm not just worried about the students. I'm terrified. I'm terrified of the opportunities we miss to help, to connect our students with the necessary resources that they desperately need, and if we apply those YRBS survey averages to the 4,879 AASD high school students, this means that currently we have 2,488 students experiencing anxiety. We have 1,707 experiencing depression. We have 907 contemplating suicide, and 727 students who are actively making a plan for suicide. How many of our chronically absent, 40% students fall into those categories? What scares me is, I don't know, and I think we really need to be thinking about that.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 25:48**

In the last three years, since I was hired as a school counselor in the AASD, I've heard a lot about the concerns of our citizens of the community, suggesting that Appleton is com—is contributing to a school to prison pipeline when engaging the municipal code to address attendance. But in fact, the numbers actually tell a very different story. The state of Wisconsin reports that 7% of the inmates that are housed in adult prisons at this time are known to be there for crimes committed when they were 17. According to an article published in Learning For Justice magazine, one of the single greatest indicators for the school to prison pipeline is if a student drops out of high school. In other words, the more distance they have from school, the more at risk a student becomes. Further, the article sheds light on the exclusionary practices such as, you know, things like suspension and expulsion, as being more of a factor where the school to prison pipeline is concerned, not accountability in attendance. In fact, accountability in attendance was not mentioned in the article. The AASD is engaging dozens of supports and programs to ensure there's no other way to reach a family before a referral is made to the county.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 27:11**

Bottom line, the research actually supports doing what we can to keep kids connected to school, not separate from it in order to avoid the school to prison pipeline. Research further shows that the more connected to

school students are, the more they academically achieve. Need more? How about knowing that according to the Child Trauma Academy led by Doctor Bruce Perry, the single greatest predictor of resilience in children is a strong relationship with a trusted adult.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 27:46**

We will continue to make every possible effort as a district to provide the support and resources we can to students and families, ensuring our students have the scaffolding necessary to be successful. With every support, every program, every step we take to engage our students and our families, we share a consistent message that Appleton does not—not ever—give up on students. And I got to be honest this—I'm entering my 27th year as an educator, and this is the first district that I've been a part of where I truly feel like I can say that mean it. It is only when we stop acting, stop noticing, stop reaching out, and we stop communicating, that the school to prison pipeline will grow.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 28:31**

Today, I'm inviting you to be part of the solution. I'm asking for your help. One of my very favorite TED Talks features a retired veteran educator, Dr Rita Pearson—you may have seen it—and she insists that every child deserves a champion. Today, I'm asking if that champion will be you. What are you willing to do for the good of our community and most importantly, to champion the right of every student to receive the education and—that they richly deserve and graduate ready for college or the workplace? We need you to partner with us, and as long as we act, acting together, we can help all of our students achieve and graduate ready for the life they wish to create for themselves. Every child deserves a champion. The question is, will that be you? Thank you.

**Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 29:27**

Thank you.

**Ryan Marx (AASD - Science Teacher) 29:36**

Hello. My name is Ryan Marx. Thank you for allowing me to speak. I have a lot of things that Wendy said, so I'm not going to repeat too many, but as a teacher, I'm just, you know, talking about things that we do to make sure that we have successful students. And we do everything, and I mean everything. Everything's online. We email them, we email parents, we make phone calls, and it's still not enough. And our superintendent here, Greg, who's done an incredible job, and he's not gonna give up, but we need your help. We have an awesome school board. Someone's right here, Kay Eggert.

**Ryan Marx (AASD - Science Teacher) 30:15**

And we know we have a problem. 27 years of teaching, I still have the passion, but the passion is with the students. We need the students in class, and that is a no brainer. And we have Polly here, who I know, who has an incredible—done an incredible job with the SRO program. And I know there are some people that are afraid that say, well, they hear police, "We don't want the police involved." And I get that when people will get it that way. But I can tell you firsthand, our SROs are absolutely amazing. We have no teeth in the game. This is the final, final spot where we where we can save some of those students. And I loved what Wendy said. We all care about our community. Obviously, you guys on city council. How are these students, you know, that if you're not going to allow us to give a truancy citation, they're not going to be successful. I mean, we can look at stats, you can look at all that, but obviously, you know, a lot of them are to end up in our community. We want our community safe. We want them to get a diploma. For them to get a diploma, they need to be in school. And that is, you know, pretty simple.

**Ryan Marx (AASD - Science Teacher) 31:31**

Other things that I had on there, you know, obviously there's a direct correlation between grades and attendance, and I get the mental health issue. Obviously, it's been a crisis in—we found out during COVID, students need to be in school. Okay? I have a son that that has depression issues, and you know, if he could, he would stay at home and but both of his both of his parents are teachers, and we do not allow it, but some people do, but we need a final step that we can, you know, ensure that these students are coming to school to be able to see the counselors, be able to get the help they need. And my thing is, you know, like also trying to find something that they are connected to, some type of club, some type of—doesn't have to be a sport, it could be, you know, something else—but to find, you know, that connection, where they, you know, feel part of, part of that school.

**Ryan Marx (AASD - Science Teacher) 32:26**

And then, you know, I said, you know, the big thing is, you know, especially about our, you know, community, we'd have to have, you know, accountability, and there has to be some consequences to action. And I'm not saying that, you know, like, the police, they're just—it's a, it's a, you know, tool for us, the final tool. But if there's something at the end, even of those 700 to 800 students that Greg was talking about, if they know there's something, some of them are to get to school a lot faster. But right now—and I can tell you firsthand—so many students that I talked to, you can say, you know, detention, detention, let's suspend them. That doesn't work—okay? We need to have you support us, and I hope that you guys can vote yes for allowing us to have a truancy citation. Thank you very much.

**Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 33:27**

Thank you.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 33:33**

So, we'll just open it up for questions. Do you have questions for any of the three individuals or myself who spoke here tonight?

**Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 33:40**

Sure, we'll open it up for questions. Before we get to that, just so everyone here is aware, there's no action taken tonight. The vote will be later, probably late August, if the schedule remains the way I intend it to be. So, no action tonight. This is all information. A future meeting will have action related. Let's open it up for questions. Alder Van Zeeland.

**Aldersonperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 34:05**

Thank you, Chair. I'm not sure who to direct these to, so I'll just throw them out there, and whoever can answer I'd appreciate it. So, from what I understand, as far as looking at citations or where the council comes in into play here is when we are unable to reach students or their parents. We talked about those 30 students that are not reachable. If students and their parents are not reachable and kids aren't coming to school, is that not already a social services issue of some sort? Is that a legal issue? I mean, it feels, at a minimum, like there's a welfare check safety issue. Is that something that the city is involved in as far as the police department or the school district with county services? Is there absolutely nothing?

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 34:56**

Laura Jackson will speak. Laura's our Executive Director of Student Services.

**Aldersonperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 35:00**

Thank you.

**Laura Jackson (Executive Director Of Student Services) 35:02**

Yes. So, we're talking about the students who we have not been successful in reaching, the county has not been successful in reaching and engaging with the families. We've done home visits. They partnered with us. Sometimes our SRO is along on those home visits. We've all—we've done what we can, and we have a wealth of supports within the building, but we do extend out, as you're saying. So, we've already would have had county try to have county supports, but they haven't engaged with county. They haven't engaged with us, and we would have done multiple home visits by this point.

**Alderman Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 35:42**

Is there not a parental—parental law? I think I recall—

**Laura Jackson (Executive Director Of Student Services) 35:47**

So, there is a state truancy—a law in the state on truancy and that law would be—I can't think of the exact wording of it right at this moment, I'm so sorry, but you—it would be the parents responsibility to get the child to school. And so, then you would—we would be seeking something for the parent, a citation for the parent regarding truancy. And we have not done that at—utilized that option at this point. We've discussed it, but we have not utilize that at this point.

**Alderman Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 36:25**

Okay, thank you. If our attorney could look into that. I don't know if you're prepared at this time, if you have any more to offer.

**Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 36:32**

Which? Director two? Go ahead, I was going to ask you to comment,

**Darrin Glad (Assistant City Attorney) 36:36**

Yes. So, the contributing to truancy is a state law. It's a criminal offense. It's been on the books as a ordinance as well through the entirety of this. So that option's been on the table either through criminal or through ordinance.

**Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 36:50**

But just to clarify, it's related to citing the parents.

**Darrin Glad (Assistant City Attorney) 36:54**

It's—yes, contributing to truancy is—

**Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 36:56**

And anyone from AASD, maybe Greg, is there—is there a reason why that hasn't been taken—not taken advantage of—but used as a tool?

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 37:06**

We've been told not to use that. We've been told that it will not be prosecuted by Outagamie County, and so we haven't gone in that direction.

**Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 37:14**

Okay. Thank you.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 37:15**

And then the other piece is my understanding is welfare checks are not for school attendance, that a welfare check is—and I don't know if Chief Olson could speak to this or not, but we've been told, again, that's not what an SRO would do as far as a welfare check.

**Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 37:31**

May I follow up?

**Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 37:32**

Sure, go ahead. You still have the floor.

**Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 37:33**

I'm not sure if this is for you or for the attorney to check into, but is there a reason why the county said that they would not move forward with any citation given to a parent for contributing to truancy? Was there any reason given?

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 37:50**

They just simply told us that they would not prosecute. So don't know the reason why. I think, like a lot of people outside of the schools, they're saying this is a school problem the school needs to solve, and we're saying that we're doing as much as we can. We are considered the leading district in the state of Wisconsin around attendance, having two full time social workers as attendance coordinators. Our attendance coordinator speak at state conferences. And so, we feel like we're missing this final tool. And the—you know, many individuals outside of our district are saying "We think you could do more." We disagree. We don't think there's any more that we can do based on our resources. And that's basically where our conversations have ended with the county.

**Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 38:40**

Okay. May I?

**Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 38:42**

Yeah, go ahead.

**Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 38:43**

Okay. I'm not sure if you're aware, but the City of Brookfield, their school district had just had—well, the city council had received an ordinance for truancy, and the superintendent there declined to move forward with the legislation, and I'm just going to read what the chief strategy officer said. They said "'It was mistakenly added to the agenda. Our district leadership to team did not support moving forward with the truancy ordinance,' noting that there is no research that suggests issuing student citations has a positive impact on re-engaging students." And I just like to hear your how you differ from what they have said in Brookfield,

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 39:34**

I would say that where we differ the most is our student population, our demographics. Brookfield is the most fluent [it sounds like he says "fluent" but I'm guessing he means "affluent"] district in the state. We don't necessarily compare ourselves, nor do we attempt to learn from a district like that. We're more looking at Green Bay, Oshkosh, Sheboygan, Janesville, districts that have very similar populations, high levels of poverty. Um. We believe that the urgency for students living in poverty to be in school is more than the urgency perhaps for other districts. So, Brookfield is simply not a district that is like us.

**Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 40:10**

But wouldn't that be more difficult on the students coming from a disadvantaged background to receive a ticket or a citation?

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 40:20**

We certainly hope that a student doesn't ever have to pay a ticket. We want a student to engage with us. We want their family to engage with us. We absolutely know that even if a ticket is given, that doesn't necessarily mean that a student's going to have to pay that. That gets adjudicated, and it is our hope that they would never have to pay it. But when we look at the tradeoff between not graduating from high school and perhaps getting a ticket that pushes them to come to school and they do graduate, we do think that ticket is worth it.

**Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 40:53**

Can you tell me more about what you mean by "We hope they never pay a ticket?" What—what sort of a process are you looking at? Are we, are we to—are we not here yet?

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 41:02**

You know, it really is when the former ordinance was in place, there would be roughly 700 students that would start in the process of a citation. The majority, 90% of those students, did not receive a citation. About 10% did. Then from there, a small percentage actually paid the ticket. It could be community service. It could be a ticket that is held open so that if a student attends school, then that ticket gets expunged. Now those—that is not—as a school district, we don't get to make that decision, so I can't necessarily speak how that would work. It really is going to be with the city and then with the county, but really it is our hope that, through that process, that a student starts to change their behaviors and that ticket can go away. I don't know if, Attorney Glad, if you can explain a little bit more about how it worked in the past, but I know that we don't control that piece. Once it is an SRO giving a ticket, then it moves away from the school district.

**Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 42:13**

Go ahead, Attorney Glad.

**Darrin Glad (Assistant City Attorney) 42:14**

See how there's multiple layers of discretion involved in the process from whether the district wants to move forward with pursuing a ticket, then the police officer has discretion whether to issue a ticket, then the prosecutor on how to handle the ticket and what dispositions are available and what are appropriate in a given case. And then the courts ultimately make the decision as to what the disposition is, and that includes the fine as well.

**Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 42:43**

One more follow up question. So am I'm misunderstanding—it sounds like what you described just now with the previous ordinance, with, you know, starting out with 700 students working your way down, it—am I misunderstanding this number 30 that you gave us before about these are the only students that we would be looking at citations. Or are we saying we're starting with the 700; this this threat will be for everyone starting in the beginning?

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 43:18**

No. What you see in that flow chart, the majority of that support didn't exist—

**Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 43:24**

I see.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 43:25**

—six years.

**Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 43:25**

Okay, okay.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 43:26**

And so—

**Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 43:27**

I just wanted to clarify that, because what you said I thought I was understand you, but I wanted to make sure it's clear for the public that.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 43:35**

So, the 30 students are students either who did not attend one day of school this year, or they perhaps stopped attending school at some point during the year, and we had no further communication with them—

**Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 43:48**

Okay. Perfect.

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

—for several months at a time. So yeah, that's what I'm referring to.

**Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 43:52**

Okay, so I was understanding correctly. So that's good. I have a couple things rattling around, but I'll—

**Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 43:59**

No, that's an important clarification because I think from the beginning, it was my understanding that this would be the last tool in the toolbox. Toolbox has been emptied. It's this. This is the toolbox. Everything has been utilized. We're down to 30-40, whatever the number is, smaller amount than the huge number that was on in in—I don't even really want to get into the past, because I—we all know that, you know, we don't—we're not wanting to go back there. But I think it's also good to understand what that process looks like, and the county's involvement, of course, and the city attorney's office involvement in that. So, I will go to Alder Fenton.

**Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 44:43**

Thank you, Chair. Um, first thing I want to do is congratulate you, because I'm not a math teacher, but these numbers are impressive. So, if you start with seven to 800 students who are—have action, and you get down to 30, my math tells me that that's 96 to 97% of your students that you're able to reach and make some progress with. And I appreciate the clarification from Alder Van Zeeland's question, because if I'm understanding correctly, the truancy ordinance was repealed in 2019 so you've made this progress in five years, and in the middle of that, we had COVID years.

**Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 45:28**

I mean, I applaud the passion. I applaud just the desire that everybody has. I mean, I am predisposed—I'm the child of an educator. I'm the parents of—the parent of two public school teachers. So, I know that people who do this work do it because they care about the kids, but—so my question—so you've made amazing progress, even with the highest hurdle placed in your way. So, getting down to here. So, we're able to reach, you know, 96

97% of people who are truant somehow. So now if I get over to the very far right, and we've got the 30 students—and anybody who wants can answer that, if—so, we have our two arrows, two boxes in our flow chart going down, so we consider a county truancy referral, and then the right-hand box would be the citation that we're asking. So, can you explain to me or anybody explain to me, so what happens in a county truancy referral, and what would be the difference, or what you're asking for in a city citation for truancy? How would those things be different, and what are we asking for that we're not getting now?

**Stacey Nitka (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 46:51**

I'm Stacey Nitka. I'm the elementary attendance coordinator. So, Stephanie Marta, the high school, the secondary attendance coun—coordinator would be here normally answering this question, so I'll do the best that I can. But when we refer students to the county, what we're doing is trying to provide support for them and their family. So, we refer them because what we have at school is not enough for them, is not enough for their family. They're not getting what they need. So, then they have an intake, and then they look and see what kind of resources the family might need, whether that be family therapy, whether that be individual therapy, any other resources that the school does not have or the school cannot provide. They have other access, access to other community resources and things like that. Where, where—and then if a student isn't responding to that, if a parent isn't responding to that, that's then where we're looking for, for something else, a different tool, a citation. Does that answer your question?

**Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 47:48**

Yes. And can I follow up with another question? And so, we've already talked about with Alder Van Zeeland bringing up and Attorney Glad the reluctance of the county or to address the existing state law about stu—er, parents. So, am I correct in assuming that you're envisioning—the district is envisioning—a citation given to the student that the student would either pay the penalty or serve the—whatever would come up as the penalty, that this would be a student penalty?

**Stacey Nitka (Attendance Coordinator - AASD) 48:23**

Yes, I believe so, unless Greg wants to speak a little bit more.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 48:31**

Our experience, and you probably will understand this, is that our elementary attendance issues, we know are parent led, right? When you get to high school students, it's often the parents are asking us for help and saying, "I can't get my child to go to school." It really is, when a student gets to be 14, 15, 16, years old, they're—the challenge is with them more than their parents. So really at the high school level, we've never considered anything around a ticket for a parent, just because we know that we're trying to build relationships with parents to support their child. And as you can imagine, when we look at a student, and if we know that their challenges are maybe AODA issues in the house, might be homelessness, a citation isn't going to work. That's not what they need. They need the county support, and so that's what Stacey was just referring to. But really, it's us working with the family, working with the parent at the high school level to support their child.

**Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 49:35**

Thank you. Okay, so following up on that a little bit, so the state truancy laws, which appear to me to be the basis for most of the municipal ones around the state, are really pretty punitive, and in a district like we are where we have a lot of students who are at lower income levels—and in the high school level, these kids need to work because of their family situation. So, have you workshopped anything about proposed penalties? Because, again, my concern is that we get into a situation where they lose their driver's license, which means, okay, they can't work, and some of these people are contributing to their families support. So—or do you—have you workshopped any kind of penalties that you would propose?

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 50:34**

So, I want to back up just a little bit. We have so many options for students to attend school, including two virtual options and so—or an option like a Central Alternative School, where it's built into half of their day to work and the other half is to attend classes. So, we we'll look at it, and, you know, as a school counselor, Wendy talked about all the different opportunities and options that we have for kids in terms of figuring out what's going to work for them. And so, before we have to think about a truancy citation, we're going to look at what can we do with that student to support them if they have some need to go to work. Certainly, driver's license—it's interesting, less and less kids are getting driver's license. We know that, that's what the research says, but we support transportation in terms of how can we help them get to and from it might be work, it might be to and from. So, we cover the cost of Valley Transit 6th through 12th grade year-round, all of our students have passes for Valley Transit. So, you know, we're looking for all of those solutions before we would even get to this point where we'd be talking about a citation. And so, you know, it's our hope that one of those solutions works for a student, whether it's a half day schedule, whether it's a full virtual schedule for them, but again, the kids we're talking about, they aren't even engaging with us to have those conversations.

**Alderman Denise Fenton (District 6) 52:02**

Thank you.

**Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 52:05**

Alder Hartzheim.

**Alderman Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 52:05**

Thank you, Chair. I envision this process, or I think of this process as all opportunities for engagement. As the school counselor mentioned, that's every one of these is an opportunity to reach a child who isn't being reached. So, I see this unable to reach square in the end, and I go this ticket, whether it be punitive or not punitive—we can talk about that later, because that can be worked through the court system. I see that as another opportunity to just go, "Knock, knock. Please, just pay attention. We just want to reach you, at least for the opportunity to tell you there are other ways that you can participate in learning." So, I don't see this as this school to prison pipeline or anything like that, and that may—I maybe Pollyanne-ish in that thought process, but I see it as the—as we've talked about numerous times, this is another tool in that toolbox, another way to just reach, even if it's "Boy, I'm so upset that the city issued me a ticket." If it says on the ticket, "You can reach out to the school and the ticket be expunged," you've reached that child. You've reached that student who's borderline adult. So, I see it as an engagement opportunity. I don't see it as a punishment, especially because of all of the other opportunities for engagement that are shown here.

**Alderman Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 53:48**

I also envision a truancy citation, like, "Oh darn it, I got a parking ticket," or, "Oh darn it, I got a speeding ticket." There's always opportunity to work with whatever court system or the police department or the SROs to determine how to manage that ticket. It doesn't automatically have to be a student who cannot afford a ticket now has to pay this fine. It's another way to say, "This is your this is how we get a connection to you."

**Alderman Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 54:22**

So, I understand and appreciate all the concerns that folks have, especially because of our city's past with truancy citations, but I am encouraged that this could be that one—even if it's—of those 30 kids, even if it's two, three, and there's—they get this ticket and go, "Oh my gosh, I have to do something about that." That's we've reached them. And I encourage us to try to think in that manner rather than we're hurting or harming a young

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adult by giving them a ticket. I just think if we reframe that thought process, we can kind of move forward in this without—with helping and reaching out without hurting the next generation. Thank you.

**Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 55:18**

Alder Fenton, and then—

**Alderson Denise Fenton (District 6) 55:20**

Oh no. Van Zeeland was first.

**Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 55:20**

Alder van Zeeland, okay.

**Alderson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 55:22**

Thank you, Chair. You know, as my colleagues have brought up, there is a trust situation in the community with the District, and I appreciate everything you've done. It's—this is not to say everything you've done here isn't great. I just want to talk a little bit more about how we can address the trust issue and the problem at once. I had made a note here, Wendy F—was that the counselor who spoke? Yes? Okay. That Wendy had said that there are adults calling the school and begging to help for their children to get to school. And I'd like to hear from them. I'd like to hear from those parents what they think would reach their children, because we did have an open truancy ordinance before, and things got out of hand, and I think it's our responsibility now to ensure that doesn't happen again. So, I'd like to look at tailoring issues to these specific folks, and that's just not a perspective we've seen here. So that's something that I'd like to see before our next meeting if possible.

**Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 56:37**

Any thoughts on that? Superintendent Hartjes.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 56:40**

I want to make sure I understand exactly what you're asking for. You know, two things that I do want to comment about. One is I've spent a lot of time in the community talking about this over the last two years, and what is interesting to me is that the perception in the community about the work that was done six and seven, eight years ago is that it was all bad, and that that's not necessarily case. And I think a lot of that is just how it was portrayed in the media. There were a lot of kids who were successful because they were supported. But I agree with you 100% there's a there's a lack of trust right now.

**Alderson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 57:15**

Well, and I'll just say, from someone who heard some of those people come here, I don't agree with you. I disagree. I disagree that it was a media perspective. I think that there were people who did have real, valid concerns. That—and I think you're trying to fix those. So, I just want to make that clear that I—this is not me trying to hold anyone accountable for things that happened before. I want to move forward, but in order to do that, I want to hear this perspective so that we can—we have to be diligent here too, you know. When the ordinance was in place, as it was before, there were concerns. Even if many students did feel supported, there were some real serious issues. And so we have to look at that, and we have to plan for that. And that's what I'd like to do, is I'd like to—I'd like to hear from the perspective of the parent who needs help and find out what they need. Do they think a citation is going to be helpful? I'd like to hear that. Do they think that their student would show up because of the monetary penalty? I—that's just a perspective that I haven't seen in in any of the data that I've looked through, and it sounds like it's very important, and it sounds like it's the key to what we can do to find a solution here. So.

**Ryan Marx (AASD - Science Teacher) 58:33**  
Can I add something to that?

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 58:37**  
Hold on.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 58:37**  
Let me finish. So, what I think would be really important, what we've talked about, is some type of trial period so, like you said, things don't get out of hand and escalate, where all of a sudden 30 kids becomes 100 kids. And so, something that would maybe be like a four-semester trial, where we could come back and give a report at the end of the first semester, even the first two semesters, so you have a real clear understanding of how it's working.

**Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 58:37**  
Hang on.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 59:06**  
And I think when we met in the stakeholder meeting, one perspective that I didn't have as a principal—so I was a high school principal at West High School during the time of when there was truancy court. And the explanation was it became—it was kind of like a boiling pot, and eventually it was going to simmer over. And that was something that was interesting perspective that I hadn't heard before and that really made me think about, yeah, how do we make sure that doesn't happen this time? How do we make sure that kids aren't unintentionally harmed by what actions we're trying to take to help them? And so, I think that it has to be, we think, a trial period of some time. So, I'll step down. I don't know—

**Alderson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 59:46**  
If I could just finish.

**Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 59:48**  
Yeah, that's great. I don't want to get too bogged down in the past, but I think it's important for us to understand that no one wants to see us develop something and have it morph into the past.

**Alderson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 1:00:00**  
Right, right. And our problem is, is once we put an ordinance in place, we really no longer have control over that here. So, you know, we can't tell you what to do. We have to have a trusting relationship. So.

**Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:00:13**  
It was always my understanding that it would be a bit of a trial period, and there would be reporting as to how are things going? Is it making a positive impact? Do we need to adjust? Do we need to look at alternative options? I know you had the science teacher that wanted to speak.

**Ryan Marx (AASD - Science Teacher) 1:00:32**  
I just wanted to back Greg on this. You know, instead of just trying to focus on a few people that you're saying that have issues with it, it has to be a whole. I've been here 27 years, and I know we don't want to go to the past, but I know firsthand many, many students, way, way, way more students, that the old ones saved, legit save their lives, and I could bring them in, have them talk, but many students that they saved, brought back to school, or else they were involved in drugs, involved in all kinds of stuff, but that truancy citation was the wake up call that they needed. And my issue is that we need all you guys to be on board. It's just a tool. You know,

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there has to be some consequences. I just can't believe we're going to argue about we need kids in school. As a teacher, I need to see them. I need to have them in school. And that that's the main issue.

**Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:01:30**

Okay, thanks. Sure. Use the microphone. Use the microphone, please.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 1:01:36**

So, to specifically address your point about the parents, certainly I can think of specific parents, and I'd be happy to contact them, but the parents that I was speaking of were not parents back when this was happening to my understanding, and so they didn't have the history to know. And in fact, they would speak to me and say, "Well, Mrs. Falk, this doesn't make sense. When I went to school, this is what happened to you. Like, where is that? What's going on? Isn't something supposed to happen, because my kids not going to listen until that happens." And I said, you know, "I hear you. Things have changed since you and I were in school, and so it works a little different now. Let me share with you that process." And I've been hung up on so many times from parents in anger, because where is the support? They're angry, and frankly, I'm at a point where all I can do is empathize with a parent. I have nothing left. We've tapped the tool box.

**Wendy Falk (AASD - School Counselor) 1:02:40**

To further speak to that we know, developmentally speaking, that a healthy, developing adult, their brain is fully developed between the ages of 24 and 26. And that's assuming that nothing traumatic has happened in that time. And if you look at all the theories around moral development—and I can't quote the stuff completely right now—but when you look at all the theories around moral development, moral development starts at the at the base level, and a lot of it is with just ideas, and they rely on tangible things. People in the beginning stages, especially in their teenage years, first rely on tangible things—things I can see, hear, touch, feel. That's where they are in the development of their values and morals. Now we're not here to preach to them, but what we are trying to do is help them understand this is what is asked of you as a responsible citizen. This is what's asked of you. And if that weren't the case, then I guess I would ask, why does a bill collector come after you and you're not paying your bills? We're doing the same thing. We do it to people all the time, except in this case, we're saying to them, "We really don't want your money. We want you because we care about you. And I think any one of us would trade—keep the money, get here." And even if we go to their houses, when we do those home visits, will take the paperwork with us. Do you want other options? If you're interested more in homeschooling, if you're interested in other things, we can help you with that; you just have to tell us, and people don't want to make a commitment. And everybody's in a different place with their development. But the big key—you have to take them where they're at, and that's what we're trying to do. But some people, this is where they're at.

**Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:04:38**

Thank you. Okay. Go ahead.

**Alderson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 1:04:40**

I just want to clarify why I'm asking this. It's it—we've asked what dispositions the school district is interested in seeing in an ordinance. You know, Alder Fenton asked that earlier, and when we ask that, we hear that that is going to be our decision. So, I'm just trying to find a way to figure out which dispositions are reasonable. And so that's the one thing that jumped out at me from the conversation was, well, maybe this perspective will help. So that—I don't know how to figure out what disposition is best. What it—does the school district have a position on which dispositions this city council should be looking at? Because it feels like you're asking us, and that's where my questions are coming from.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 1:05:33**

So, I don't believe we're asking you, but we know that we don't have the authority to decide what the dispositions are. We've looked at other districts, and we can continue to do that. We can share that. We've seen districts that, on a second offense, they'll give a \$500 ticket. We don't have any interest in that. But again, we don't make that decision. But if it would be helpful, we could give a sample of here's the districts like I talked about, Sheboygan, Janesville, Green Bay, Racine, Kenosha, that we feel ours are similar to us as a district, and we could explain here's what they used.

**Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 1:06:09**

Yeah, I'd like to see what they use, and I'd like to see the data that shows that these things work. So that—I would appreciate that, and that's why I'm asking for it. It's because—it's not because I'm trying to challenge your your—what you're saying about your situation. It's because I'm trying to get to the point where we have to put together what this ordinance looks like. And so that would be helpful.

**Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:06:34**

Sure. Is it district one?

**Police Chief Polly Olson 1:06:36**

I have district one. I'm just listening to all of these questions obviously go back and forth. And I just want to remind the committee that we have a meeting coming up in August, the stakeholder meeting, and those are discussions as far as what this could look like through the court system. Those are all discussions that we're having collaboratively that those decisions haven't been made yet in terms of—

**Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 1:06:58**

Well, I didn't think they would be made. I just wanted to put out there that's what I'm looking for, so that you—when you do meet, that you can discuss.

**Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:07:08**

And I think it's important point, because I think what a lot of people saw the resolution or heard the resolution being read, they're like, "What does this look like?" At the end of the day, what does this really look like from a penalty standpoint and enforcement standpoint? And I think what I've heard is, you know, if the amount of students is greater than 30-40, there's stakeholders that aren't interested in participating.

**Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:07:33**

I think it would be good to have some information relative to other districts. And I think—I think it was our conversation where you mentioned there was a local district that has the substantial penalties?

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 1:07:33**

I would agree. Yeah, I would agree that in talking to City Attorneys and their capacity to take this on and talking to the court, their capacity to take this on, everybody wants to do what's best for kids—right? Everybody in this room, at the city, at the county—we're just trying to figure out what is that, what's going to work the best, and what is our capacity for all of this? So, when we said, as a district, you know, at that time, at that meeting, there's only maybe 20 kids that had reached that point where we said, you know, we can't we can't reach them any longer, it was 30 at the end, I believe the—and I don't speak for the city attorneys, but they felt that's a reasonable number. The county said, in terms of Carrie Schneider said that's a reasonable number. So that's, you know, where we think from a stakeholder meeting, we believe that we're all on the same page, but again, trying to figure out, how do we all do this together? And so, the idea of a flow chart came out of that meeting, where everybody needs to understand, okay, what do you do as a school district, and where does then the city pick up

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from where the district was, and then where does the county pick up from there? And that's our next meeting that we're that we're scheduled for in August, is to kind of put those three pieces together. Say, all right, what does this look like for a child, a student?

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 1:09:11**

Yes, yes. And we, we have local districts already, so we know what Kaukauna, what Menasha, what Neenah, are doing, but we—we'll go out and we'll get some more information from some of those districts. So again, we always compare ourselves, and we learn from and we share with districts that are like us and also our local districts. So, from Oshkosh to Green Bay, we have that information.

**Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:09:34**

Okay, sure, I think that'd be good to get and share. You know, just because Appleton doesn't have this doesn't mean that we have to enact it, but I think it would be good to see what our surrounding districts are doing as it relates to a similar ordinance.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 1:09:48**

Sure.

**Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:09:49**

Anything else, Alder van Zeeland?

**Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 1:09:51**

No.

**Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:09:51**

Okay. Alder Fenton.

**Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 1:09:53**

Thank you. Thank you, Chair. I just have a quick question, and I'm going back to March where we had the habitual truancy and the chronic absenteeism figures for—and I know that we had—the habitual truancy seemed to be increasing over but the chronic absenteeism since the spike in 2021-2022 was kind of inching down. Do you have the 2024-'25 numbers? And then, like for 2023-2024 we had 20.3% of students who were both. And then, you know, 811 not on—do we have the updated figures for—to see how you're progressing with the plan.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 1:10:40**

Right. I would say we had a disappointing year in that we added an attendance coordinator, and in Stacey. So, she focuses on elementary, which means Stephanie Marta focuses on secondary, and our chronic absenteeism rate went up this year. So, it's just over 25%. It—very similar to the last two years, but, right, we had seen a little bit of a decline from '23-'24—er, from '22-'23 to '23-'24. Now in '24-'25 we went up a little bit again in chronic absenteeism. So, but we have—all of that was calculated over the last couple of weeks, and we can share that information as well.

**Aldersperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 1:11:19**

Okay, thank you.

**Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:11:20**

We're looking at—?

**Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:11:21**  
Looks like post pandemic, it's about 25%, correct?

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 1:11:24**  
Right.

**Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:11:24**  
Okay.

**Aldersonperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:11:25**  
Yeah, we're looking at middle schoolers who were forced out of school during COVID are now high schoolers. So that—we might be in this trend of kind of coming back around after we've got a few more years under our belt.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 1:11:42**  
I hope so.

**Aldersonperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:11:42**  
I agree.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 1:11:44**  
We are certainly are expanding all the resources we feel we can put towards attendance and that student success here. And really, I don't want to say we're out of ideas, because Stacey and Laura and our counselors are attending conferences. They're sharing—you know, I talked last time I was here about what we learned from Atlanta school district about how they have a late bus that goes around at 10 o'clock, and just says to kids, "We get it; you missed the first bus; we're going to come around and try to pick you up." So, transportation is probably the biggest area we're looking at what can we do there? Obviously, there's a cost, but certainly we're looking at all different solutions.

**Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:12:20**  
Yeah, everything I've seen tells me and shows me that you're doing things that I wouldn't have even envisioned you needing to do, like the late bus. Anyone else? Alder Fenton, did you have anything else?

**Aldersonperson Denise Fenton (District 6) 1:12:35**  
No, thank you.

**Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:12:35**  
All right. Alder Hartzheim? Okay. Good. I think you have a few good takeaways, good discussion today. Thank you all for presenting. Appreciate you coming. Thanks for the updates, the additional information. We'll look forward to another update before the stakeholders meeting, and then after the stakeholders meeting, we'll look at bringing this back to the committee for some sort of action on the resolution. Call it mid to late August. I think the stakeholders meeting is when? August 13.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 1:13:05**  
I believe it's August 7.

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**Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:13:06**

Seventh? Okay. So, we'll have to look at the schedule of meetings after that and see where, where our—this committee meets post-stakeholders meeting.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 1:13:15**

We also are working with the city to host a community listening session.

**Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:13:19**

Oh, good point.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 1:13:19**

And so, hoping that we'll hear, you know, some of the concerns, and possibly be able to address those concerns at that time or listen to solutions and ideas.

**Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:13:31**

Okay, good point. Thanks for—thanks for addressing that. Do you have you have any questions for the committee members as to what we might be looking for future updates? I think you got some direction on sharing some data.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 1:13:44**

Right. Yeah. Absolutely. I think—would it be best for us to, like, email information or to come back here?

**Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:13:51**

I think it would be best to come back here and have a public conversation about it, open meeting. You know, that way, you know everything is—in an effort to be fully transparent on everything—

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 1:14:02**

Yes.

**Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:14:02**

—let's just include it in a packet, included in your presentation.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 1:14:06**

Okay.

**Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:14:06**

And then we'll have all the information we need to make a decision at some point.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 1:14:09**

That sounds great.

**Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:14:10**

Okay, great.

**Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 1:14:11**

Thank you.

Safety and Licensing Committee  
Wed, Jul 09, 2025

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Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:14:11  
Thanks.