

Basic Attendance Questions

- Can you explain the absence policy?

[AASD Board Policy 430 - Student Attendance](#)

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The Appleton Area School District believes there is a positive relationship between school attendance and student success. It further believes that school attendance is a responsibility shared by students, parents, schools and community.

The District, in accordance with State law, requires that all students between six and eighteen years of age (and those students enrolled in 5-year-old kindergarten) attend school regularly during the full period and hours, religious holidays excepted, that the school in which the student is enrolled is in session until the end of the school term, quarter or semester of the school year in which the student becomes 18 years of age, unless they have an acceptable excuse, meet attendance exceptions outlined in state law, or have graduated from high school. Although not required by state law, students in 4-year-old kindergarten are expected to attend 4K programming on a regular basis and excused and unexcused absences will be determined based on the procedures described in this policy. It is the responsibility of each school's attendance officer to determine if an absence is excused, unexcused, or truant.

A student will be considered excused for school attendance if the student is considered temporarily not in proper physical or mental condition to attend school, but can be expected to return upon termination or abatement of the illness or condition. The school attendance officer may request that the parent/guardian obtain a written statement documenting the existing condition.

A student may be excused in writing by the parent/guardian prior to an absence occurring. Under this provision, absences through prior parent request cannot exceed 10 days in a school year.

A student who has reached the age of 16 years and meets criteria established in Wisconsin statutes may also be excused from school attendance to participate in programs leading to high school graduation or high school equivalency.

No student shall be denied credit in a course or subject solely because of an excused or unexcused absence.

Please include how the following are recorded:

- o Late to school - [Excused \(EXTD\)](#) or [Unexcused Tardy to School \(UNTS\)](#) - does NOT count toward habitual truancy or chronic absenteeism for secondary schools
- o Late to a single class - [Excused \(EXTC\)](#) or [Unexcused Tardy to Class \(UNTC\)](#) - does NOT count toward habitual truancy or chronic absenteeism for secondary schools

- o Absent – Excused - ILL (Illness), ILLM (Illness - medical note provided), APPT (Appointment), APTM (Appointment - medical note provided) - counts toward chronic absenteeism for letters, unless a medical note is provided
- o Absent – Unexcused - UNEX (Unexcused) - counts towards habitual truancy for letters

- Are there times when someone in the school can call an absence unexcused, even if a parent has called to say that a child will not be present?

Generally - no. However, if a 10-day letter has been sent to a family, a medical note is required for further absences. In those cases, even when a parent/guardian calls to report an absence, the absence will be marked unexcused (the family is made aware of this).

- What efforts are made to ensure attendance records are accurate?

Administrative assistants are frequently checking to ensure that attendance has been taken by all teachers.

Additionally, the absence request portal and voice mail system is checked by administrative assistants multiple times per day, and attendance is marked accordingly.

Families have the opportunity to view their child's attendance record at any time via the parent portal, and may contact the school if they have questions about an attendance mark.

- What remedies are available to correct any attendance mistakes?

Administrative assistants and building administrators are able to correct attendance mistakes when necessary.

From the Wisconsin Department of Education

What is the purpose of truancy laws?

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



The DPI says the goal of truancy laws is to address barriers to achievement and positive youth development through the following examples: [We have provided information below for these six points.](#)

- o Increased graduation rates
- o Improve workforce
- o Build community
- o Support well-being
- o Reduce the risk of negative outcomes
- o Increase protective factors and positive outcomes

- Can you provide us the data that AASD uses to measure these goals?

[Below are graduation rates for the past four years, which the State calculates for us. The data includes students who need a 5th or 6th year of high school.](#)

Class of 2021		4-year	5-year	6-year	7-year
	Black	63.5%	76.7%	83.1%	84.3%
	Hispanic	79.2%	85.8%	86.6%	86.6%
	White	88.1%	92.7%	93.2%	93.4%
	EL	66.7%	78.1%	89.0%	89.0%
	SWD	55.8%	74.2%	79.9%	79.9%
	ALL	84.8%	90.4%	91.4%	91.8%
Class of 2022		4-year	5-year	6-year	7-year
	Black	68.8%	73.5%	75.5%	
	Hispanic	75.4%	81.3%	82.1%	
	White	89.3%	92.5%	93.7%	
	EL	66.2%	82.1%	86.6%	
	SWD	60.4%	70.4%	75.6%	
	ALL	86.5%	90.2%	91.5%	
Class of 2023		4-year	5-year	6-year	7-year
	Black	61.6%	73.0%		
	Hispanic	73.6%	81.5%		
	White	91.7%	94.6%		
	EL	60.4%	76.9%		
	SWD	65.9%	79.7%		
	ALL	86.7%	91.3%		
Class of 2024		4-year	5-year	6-year	7-year
	Black	71.4%			
	Hispanic	80.1%			
	White	91.9%			
	EL	71.0%			
	SWD	68.8%			
	ALL	88.4%			

We do not have a metric for “improve workforce” or “build community.” We have tried several different ways to track our alumni but have not found a way to measure students beyond graduation effectively. We have data on post-high school enrollment into two- and four-year colleges and the military, but there is no data on the workforce.

We use panorama surveys to monitor the “well-being” of our students. Below is one example of the type of data that we include.

Sense of Belonging

Your average

68%

3,723 responses

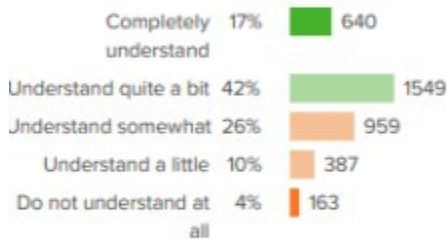
Change

▲ 6

since last survey

How did people respond?

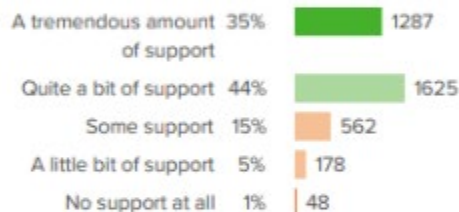
Q.1: How well do people at your school understand you as a person?



▲ 6 from last survey

Favorable: **59%**

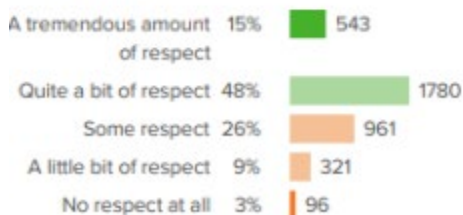
Q.2: How much support do the adults at your school give you?



▲ 6 from last survey

Favorable: **79%**

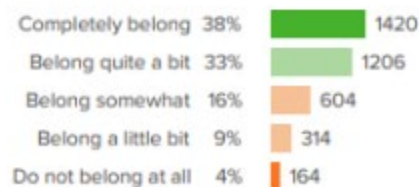
Q.3: How much respect do students at your school show you?



▲ 6 from last survey

Favorable: **63%**

Q.4: Overall, how much do you feel like you belong at your school?



▲ 6 from last survey

Favorable: **71%**

To monitor the “risk of negative outcomes” we use the Youth Risk Behavior Survey that is available through the State. I don’t want to overwhelm you with survey data, as this survey is very comprehensive. Below is a sample of the data that is available to us.

We believe that we “increase protective factors and positive outcomes” with everything we do in our schools. We think, for many children, school is the safest place for them and the key to having positive outcomes. We monitor this work with our Coherent Governance policies. (Please let me know if you would like more information on these policies)

Social Media/Screen Use

- 78.9% of students reported using screens three or more hours every day.
- 53.3% of students reported using screens after midnight at least once per week.
- 15.5% of students reported using screens after midnight every school night.
- 41% of students reported using social media hourly.
- 17.8% of students reported being bullied online.

Physical Health

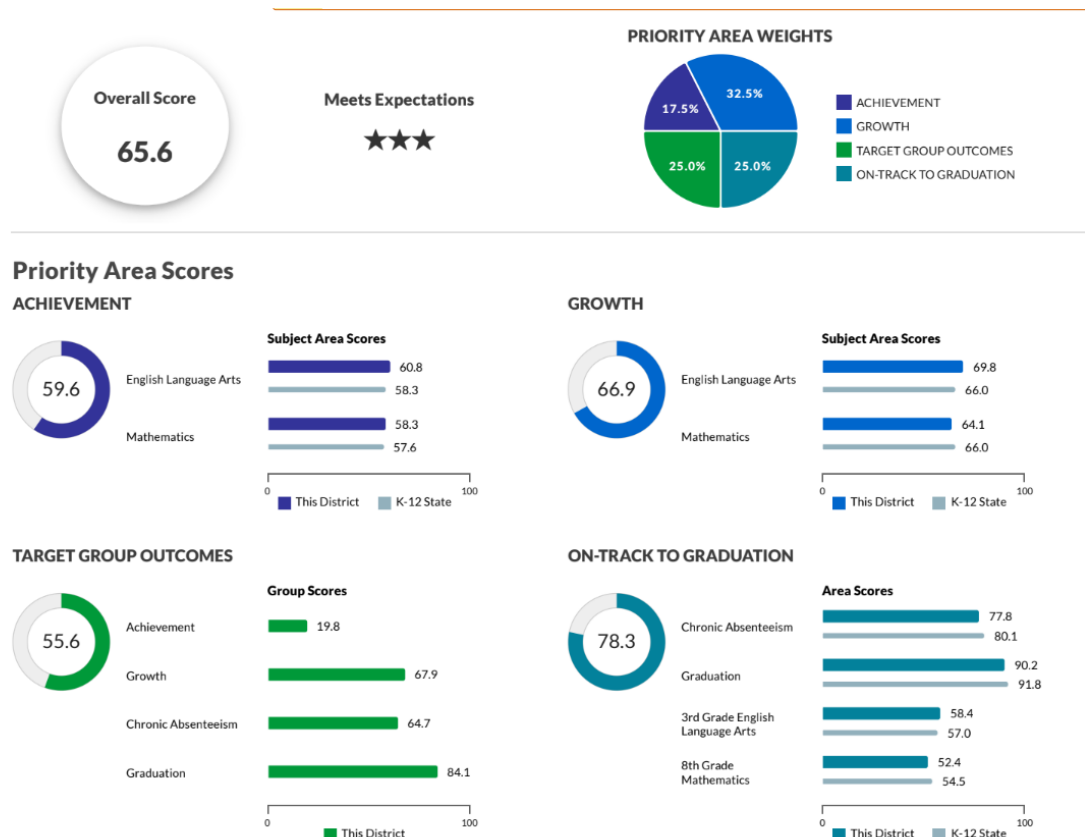
- Nearly one in five students (19.5%) reported five or fewer hours of sleep per night.
- These students were more than three times as likely to report depression and nearly two times as likely to report anxiety.
- 14.8% of students reported no physical activity in the past week.

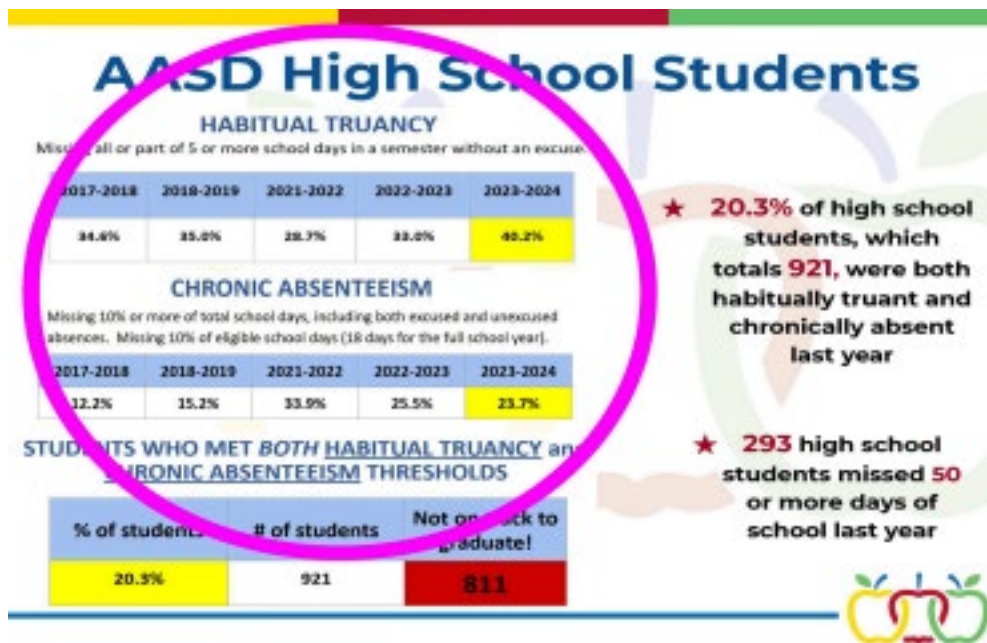
AODA Use

- The rate of alcohol use among students has declined overall since 2007.
- One in three students reported having ever vaped.
- 3.4% of students reported smoking cigarettes within the last 30 days, the lowest rate ever on the YRBS.

- How does the graduation rate of a district enter into the evaluation or funding of a district?

Graduation rate does not impact funding, only enrollment does.
As for the evaluation of a district, the graduation rate accounts for 6% of our overall score...see the bottom right corner below.





Habitual

Truancy (The Type of Truancy Addressed by State Law)

The data shows that habitual truancy - defined as missing all or part of 5 or more school days in a semester without an excuse - was below 2017-2018 rates until last year.

- In the presentation, habitual truancy was described as not as concerning, but how can that be if it is solely unexcused absences and the rates are higher/highlighted?

We highlighted to draw attention to the latest year's data. We are not as concerned about truancy as we are about absenteeism. We feel a student can be truant and still be successful, whereas a student who is chronically absent, which means missing more school, will struggle to find success. We also recognize that a student could be truant because they do not have a parent who excuses them.

A student can qualify for habitual truancy by having only 5 unexcused class periods over a semester. Additionally, a student can qualify for habitual truancy after having 5 unexcused absences in a semester. The outcomes for each of these students can look very different in terms of academic success. So, just because a student meets the criteria for habitual truancy, does not necessarily mean that there is a significant concern for their success. Chronic absenteeism encompasses all absences, excused or unexcused, and gives a more comprehensive picture of a student's attendance. When a student becomes chronically absent, missing 10% or more of school days, their chances of academic success decrease significantly.

- Why did the habitual truancy rate drop after COVID?

We do not have an explanation for why our truancy rate dropped to below pandemic levels in 21-22, or why it has increased over the past two years.

Chronic Absenteeism

The data provided for chronic absenteeism—defined as missing 10% or more of total school days, including both excused and unexcused absences, missing 10% of eligible school days, and missing 18 days for the full school year—shows that chronic absenteeism doubled in 2021-2022 but has COME DOWN each year since.

- Chronic Absenteeism includes excused absences – but can't that be explained by illness? Especially with something like COVID-19 for which there can be health complications and at one time guidance was to quarantine for 5 days?

Yes, chronic absenteeism includes all absences, including illnesses, family trips, college visits, etc. We have found that families are more comfortable keeping a child out of school since the pandemic. However, we believe 50 or more absences are going to limit a student's learning and success. These are the students with which we are looking for help from the City.

If a student has a chronic illness keeping them from attending school, our school nurses are involved and may even provide homebound services.

Habitual Truancy & Chronic Absenteeism

- Since the ordinance was repealed in 2019, how does AASD scientifically analyze this data and come to the conclusion that lack of ordinance/citations is at fault for attendance concerns?

We don't believe that the lack of an ordinance is a cause for attendance challenges, but it is an effective support and a reason to attend school for many students. We have data from 2009 through 2019 to compare to our current data, testimonials from other districts that have an ordinance, and our experience as educators from when the City had an ordinance.

- How can 110 of habitually truant & chronically absent students still

be on track to graduate?

Students need to earn 3 credits per semester to be on pace to graduate. So, although they have missed 18 or more of the 175 school days last year, they passed 6 classes in each of the semesters. These students certainly are not reaching their potential as a student, but they are doing enough to pass their classes.

- How many of the 293 students who have missed 50 or more days of school last year are nearing the age of 18 or have turned 18?

The following shows the breakdown of these 293 students...Freshman - 67, Sophomores - 63, Juniors - 87, Seniors - 76

- How have the alternative programs been adjusted since the pandemic?

The biggest adjustment is how flexible we are with the alternative supports outside of our usual structures. The most successful of these programs is our Option 3 which takes place over the summer and is separate from our summer school program.

Teachers are also providing opportunities for evidence of learning beyond the end of the semester. This work has been ongoing for nearly 10 years, but has been more prevalent since the pandemic.

We also increased our spots at the FVTC Quest program and Central High School.

Outcomes for students who are not successful:

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



During the presentation, there was a comparison of truancy tickets to tickets for illegal activity.

- Why is AASD comparing truancy to illegal behaviors like speeding while using programs that acknowledge that the context and motivations behind these issues are very different?

We are trying to show that the consequences of a truancy citation are no more punitive than for a speeding ticket, or perhaps tobacco possession. We are finding that many people in our community immediately connect a truancy ticket with truancy court and punitive measures.

- Why should be similar even though behaviors like speeding are more severe and impactful because they adversely affect public safety?

We are trying to show that ticketing is used to teach and manage behaviors, whether for speeding or truancy.

- How can AASD argue that subjecting a student to a ticket with monetary penalties and/ or legal consequences doesn't contribute to a student's financial situation/risk of poverty or use of government assistance or to imprisonment?

We hope a student never has to pay a fine, and through different dispositions such as community service, a fine would never need to be paid. There are several alternative paths once a student is engaged with the School Resource Office.

However, we do believe getting a ticket is of great value to a student if it changes their behavior and sets them on a trajectory to graduate from high school.

- What are the penalties if a student is ordered to pay a ticket and cannot do so?

In the past, most students did not have to pay the ticket unless they ignored the judge's orders. The first order from the judge would be to attend school, if they do this the ticket is expunged. If they do not follow the order to attend school, the next time they had to see the judge they may be given community service. Again, if they complete the community service, the ticket would be expunged. As I said above, the hope is a student never has to pay the ticket.

- How can AASD justify the threat of monetary penalties through citations when according the the Wisconsin Policy Forum:

"Rates of chronic absenteeism for students classified as economically disadvantaged were nearly three times as high as their non-economically disadvantaged peers in 2023 – 31.6% compared to 11.3%. On the other hand, their rates improved more from 2022 to 2023 than rates for more affluent students, the latter of which remained almost twice as high as pre-pandemic levels."

<https://wispolicyforum.org/research/chronic-absenteeism-persists-in-all-corners-of-wisconsin/>

- o Given this information, what good is the threat of a monetary penalty over an economically disadvantaged student?

We believe this is better than the alternative of not graduating from high school.

- o Doesn't it seem plausible that the absentee rate for affluent students remains high because they are unbothered by simply paying a ticket?

Our data does not support this statement.

- If 70% of the adults in the prison system cannot read and write,

wouldn't that point to more elementary-age interventions which would not be resolved with student truancy tickets?

We added an Elementary Attendance Coordinator position this year, which is staffed by a social worker. She is working to provide support at the elementary level similar to our high school support. However, at the elementary level, a parent is generally ensuring a student gets to school, at the high school level it is the student.

At the elementary level, we look at success as being more related to reading and math test scores as there is not a credit component to courses, and most if not all students progress from grade level.

- If so, why is AASD saying that high school intervention is most important. Our greatest concern is at the high school level because time is running out with this level of student, and the challenges are different. In addition, we feel it is appropriate for an SRO to engage with a high school student, but not an elementary student.



In the presentation, we met Stephanie Marta, an Attendance Coordinator in her third year, and were told there is another Attendance Coordinator that is new this year.

- Are attendance-related positions funded with general funding or through grants or pandemic-related funding that is not sustainable?

Our two Attendance Coordinators and our six part-time attendance staff members are all funded with general funding that we control.

- If the funding is not sustainable, are these items in the budget next year? *It is sustainable and yes.*
- Are these new positions devoted only to attendance or do staff have multiple responsibilities?

The two Attendance Coordinators are devoted full-time to attendance. We are the only district in WI that has two full-time social workers focusing on attendance. Our high school and middle school positions are part-time, with the rest of the positions being focused on alternative education.

- What happens during the meetings of the attendance teams?

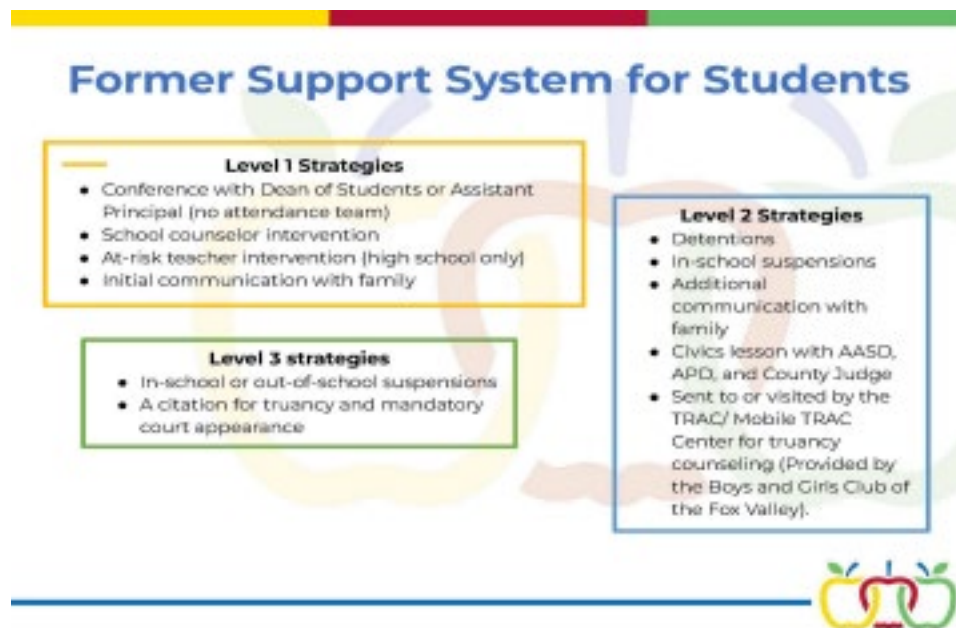
Attendance Teams at all schools meet weekly or biweekly to review attendance data, identify students who may benefit from additional support, monitor the progress of current attendance plans, and collaboratively problem-solve attendance-related concerns. These teams typically include the attendance coordinator, school administrator, dean, school social worker, school nurse, school counselor, and youth advocate—though team composition may vary slightly depending on the school site.

- What are the recommended ratios for support staff like school psychologists, social workers, and counselors and are what are the current ratios for these positions within AASD?

We would love to have more support staff working with our students, but we have a \$10 million budget shortfall this year and are projecting a higher shortfall next year. So, we will not be adding staffing in the foreseeable future. With that being said, we could have 100 social workers at our high schools, but it wouldn't matter if we cannot get a student to come to school to access the support.

Below are the ratios recommended and our current staffing.

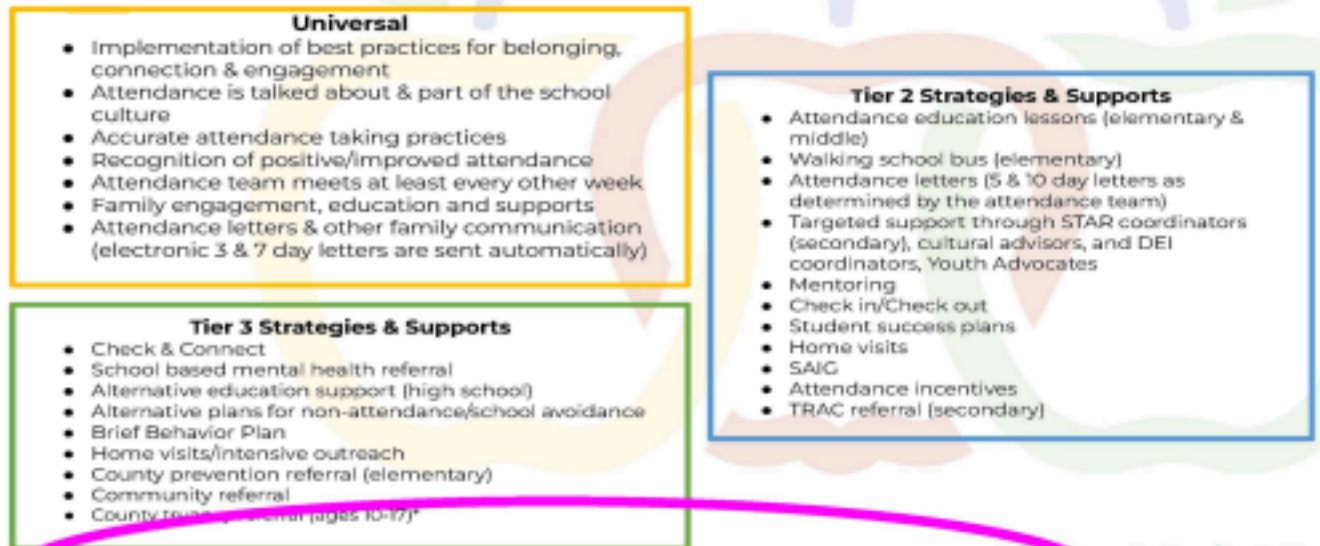
Ratios of Student Service Staff/Student		
Role	Professional Organization Recommended Ratio Students/ Staff	Current AASD Ratio
School Counselor	250/1	419/1
School Psychologist	500-750/1 based on additional data	858/1
School Social Worker	250/1	830/1
Notes: Ratios are calculated using the total student population based on third Friday count		



- Which of these strategies remains?
All “Level 1” supports remain. At “Level 2”, additional communication with the family, Civics lessons (middle only), and TRAC remain. No “Level 3” remain.
- Which of these strategies were discontinued?
Detentions (some), out-of-school suspensions, and the citation.
- Which does AASD plan to reestablish if the ordinance is reinstated?
Just the citation, and perhaps we would expand the Civic lessons to the high school.

Current Support System for Students

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



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



Universal supports (Tier 1) should be larger than Tier 2, and Tier 2 larger than Tier 3.

- Can you explain why this doesn't look like that?
You are correct. We modified the visual for the presentation because the text was too large for our funnel design. Regardless of how the design looks, we do want 80% of our students to be successful through our "Universal" supports, an additional 15% with our "Tier 2" supports, and the final 5% through our "Tier 3".
- Is it because all grade levels are combined?
It is more about the interventions and how best to describe them.
- Can you provide more explanation of these programs and what they do, broken down by grade level, listing the schools where they occur?

4K

- Weekly attendance team meetings
- Families receive an automatic attendance letter when a student reaches 14 days absent
- Home-Visits

- Family Support Plans- social worker meets with the family and develops a plan to address barriers to attendance

K-5

Universal (All Elementary)

- Schools focus on making sure every student feels welcome, connected, and engaged.
- Attendance is a regular topic of discussion and an important part of school culture.
- Teachers take attendance accurately and consistently.
- School Attendance Teams meet at each school weekly or biweekly to review attendance data, identify students who may benefit from additional support, monitor the progress of current attendance plans, and collaboratively problem-solve attendance-related concerns
- Students are recognized for good or improved attendance. This may be done school-wide or by grade level, depending on the need of each school as determined by the attendance team.
- School staff work closely with families to educate about attendance (ie. how to call in your student, health related concerns, etc) and provide support and resources when needed.
- Families receive attendance updates, including automatic electronic notices after 3 and 7 days of absences.

Tier 2 (All Elementary)

All supports are individualized based on the specific needs and barriers of each student/family

- Transportation support, such as a walking school bus
- Families may receive attendance letters after 5 and 10 absences
- Frequent check-ins with a trusted adult
- Mentoring: A positive adult at school meets with students regularly to increase connection to school, set goals, discuss attendance, and support other aspects as needed.
- Social Support Groups facilitated by a support staff team member provide targeted support and skill development on attendance related issues (ie. school anxiety)
- Attendance incentives establish positive attendance habits/patterns by providing gift cards or other rewards for achieved goals.
- Home visits to connect with families who are unable to be reached by phone or email and to provide more personalized support for students who are disengaged or not attending school.

Tier 3 (All Elementary)

- Check & Connect: evidenced-based mentoring program designed to improve school attendance. Mentors receive specific training on this model. There are trained mentors in every school building.
- TRAC (Truancy Reduction & Assessment Center), through the Boys and Girls Club, has been piloted at 2 *elementary schools* this year. We hope to continue to grow this program at the elementary level.
- Additional mental health/social-emotional support in school (LYNC, school-based mental health, individual meetings with school social worker/school counselor/school psychologist).
- Alternate schedules and individualized plans for students who display school avoidance or school refusal.

- School Refusal Support Plan- a collaborative plan created by the school and family to increase success of the student and ensure consistency across environments
- Frequent and scheduled home visits to collaborate with family.
- Wraparound meetings- meetings that bring together all relevant team members including family and outside professionals if needed.
- Early Truancy Intervention Referral- Outagamie county works with a select few elementary level students and families. The goal is to prevent further truancy by providing families with needed support and resources that the school is unable to provide. This is a voluntary program and is only available to a few families per year.

GRADES 6-8

TIER 1 (all four middle schools)

- Middle schools focus on making sure every student feels welcome, connected, and engaged.
- Attendance is a regular topic of discussion and an important part of middle school culture.
- Teachers take attendance accurately and consistently.
- Regular School Attendance Teams meet at each school weekly to review concerns and support students.
- Students are recognized for good or improved attendance.
- We work closely with families to provide education, support, and resources.
- Families receive attendance updates, including automatic electronic notices after 3 and 7 days of absences.

TIER 2 (all four middle schools)

- Families may receive attendance letters after 5 and 10 absences to keep families informed.
- Student Success Advisors, Coordinators, and Youth Advocates provide targeted support.
- Frequent check-ins with a trusted adult help students stay on track.
- Student success plans are created to support better attendance.
- Mentoring: A positive adult at school meets with students regularly to increase connection to school, set goals, discuss attendance, and support other aspects as needed.
- Social Support Groups facilitated by a support staff team member provide additional support.
- Attendance incentives establish positive attendance habits/patterns by providing gift cards for achieved goals.
- Home visits to connect with families who are unable to be reached by phone or email and to provide more personalized support for students who are disengaged or not attending school.
- TRAC (Truancy Reduction & Assessment Center), through the Boys and Girls Club to promote school attendance and academic engagement by supporting youth with attendance challenges through timely, effective assessments and case management (available to middle and high school students).

TIER 3 (all four middle schools)

- Check & Connect: evidenced-based mentoring program designed to improve school attendance. Mentors receive specific training on this model. There are trained mentors in every school building.
- Additional mental health/social-emotional support in school (LYNC, school-based mental health, individual meetings with school social worker/school counselor/school psychologist).
- Alternate schedules and individualized plans for students who display school avoidance or school refusal.
- Frequent and scheduled home visits to collaborate with family.
- Attendance Education Lessons - provided to students (and their families) who have met the threshold for habitual truancy. These lessons are a partnership between AASD, Outagamie County Youth & Family Services, and the Appleton Police Department. The lessons provide information and education to students and families regarding the school district and state policies related to attendance and truancy, barriers to school attendance and how schools can support students and families, and potential outcomes if improvements are not seen with school attendance.
- Wraparound meetings- meetings that bring together all relevant team members including family and outside professionals if needed.
- County truancy referral (ages 10-17) - partnership between school, family, and Youth & Family Services to address barriers to school attendance and provide support that schools do not have available.

GRADES 9-12

TIER 1 (all three high schools)

- High schools focus on making sure every student feels welcome, connected, and engaged.
- Attendance is a regular topic of discussion and an important part of high school culture.
- Teachers take attendance accurately and consistently.
- Regular School Attendance Teams meet at each school weekly to review concerns and support students.
- Students are recognized for good or improved attendance.
- We work closely with families to provide education, support, and resources.
- Families receive attendance updates, including automatic electronic notices after 3 and 7 days of absences.

TIER 2 (all three high schools)

- Families may receive attendance letters after 5 and 10 absences to keep families informed.
- Student Success Advisors, Coordinators, and Youth Advocates provide targeted support.
- Frequent check-ins with a trusted adult help students stay on track.
- Student success plans are created to support better attendance.

- Mentoring: A positive adult at school meets with students regularly to increase connection to school, set goals, discuss attendance, and support other aspects as needed.
- Social Support Groups facilitated by a support staff team member provide additional support.
- Attendance incentives establish positive attendance habits/patterns by providing gift cards for achieved goals.
- Home visits to connect with families who are unable to be reached by phone or email and to provide more personalized support for students who are disengaged or not attending school.
- TRAC (Truancy Reduction & Assessment Center), through the Boys and Girls Club to promote school attendance and academic engagement by supporting youth with attendance challenges through timely, effective assessments and case management (available to middle and high school students).

TIER 3 (all three high schools)

- Check & Connect: evidenced-based mentoring program designed to improve school attendance. Mentors receive specific training on this model. There are trained mentors in every school building.
- Additional mental health/social-emotional support in school (school-based mental health, individual meetings with school social worker/school counselor/school psychologist).
- Alternate schedules and individualized plans for students who display school avoidance or school refusal.
- Alternative education supports.
- Frequent and scheduled home visits to collaborate with family.
- Wraparound meetings- meetings that bring together all relevant team members including family and outside professionals if needed.
- County truancy referral (ages 10-17) - partnership between school, family, and Youth & Family Services to address barriers to school attendance and provide support that schools do not have available.

For example:

o Are all programs focused on improving middle school student attendance offered in the same way at all of the district middle schools?

[*see above](#)

o Are all students able to access these programs as soon as the need is identified? o Which have waiting lists and how many students are on each waiting list?

[Attendance teams determine the need for interventions, and which intervention is appropriate for students on a case-by-case basis.](#)

Mental health referrals often have a waiting list and are dependent on the program and the time of year. TRAC sometimes has a waiting list, but typically not for long, and the waiting list is typically only 1-2 students at a time

- What data can you provide to show these programs are successful?

2023-2024 school year

Attendance incentives:

SEMESTER 1 2023-2024

- 167 attendance plans tied to incentives were in place during Semester 1
- 115 students met their goal and received their attendance incentive (68.9%)

SEMESTER 2 2023-2024

- 140 attendance plans tied to incentives were in place during Semester 2
- 99 students met their goal and received their attendance incentive (70.7%)

Middle school attendance education lessons:

- 111 students across 4 middle schools participated in Attendance Education Lessons November 2023 through May 2024
- Of those students, 72.97% (81/111) increased their attendance rate since the time of their Attendance Education Lesson.

Check & Connect intervention:

- 58 students participated in the Check & Connect Intervention during the course of the 2023-2024 school year.
- 65.5% (38/58) of those students increased their attendance throughout the course of the intervention

County truancy referrals:

- 118 county truancy referrals completed during the 2023-2024 school year
- 26.3% of students who were referred to the county for truancy increased their overall attendance rate from the time of the

referral (*please note: it takes time for the county to put interventions in place, so outcomes for truancy referrals look different after a long period of time)

- Why are some of the habitually truant students referred to the county and some are not?

Some students who meet the criteria for habitual truancy have only missed 5 class periods unexcused throughout the course of a semester - a referral to the county would not be appropriate in these cases. We implement interventions for students whose truancy is more significant. When a student is not responding to these interventions or is refusing to engage with the school, a referral to the county is then considered.

- What happens when a student is referred to the county?

When a student is referred to the county, a truancy intake meeting is scheduled by the county with an intake worker. The student and family are required to attend the meeting, as well as a staff member from the school district. This typically includes the secondary attendance coordinator, a school administrator or dean of students, and when possible, the student's identified trusted adult at school. The purpose of the truancy intake meeting is to identify the reasons behind the student's truancy, barriers to school attendance, and strategies and supports that can be implemented by the school and/or county to assist the student and the family. Typically, a Deferred Prosecution Agreement is put in place by the county intake worker. This agreement is between the county and the student/family. The intake worker has the option of referring a student to juvenile court, but this option is rarely used, and only in cases where the family refuses to attend an intake meeting and/or is uncooperative with the intake worker.

- Can you provide the data for county referrals broken down by year and grade level since the data we received combines middle school and high school?

2023-2024:

Middle school - 26 students

High school - 92 students

2022-2023:

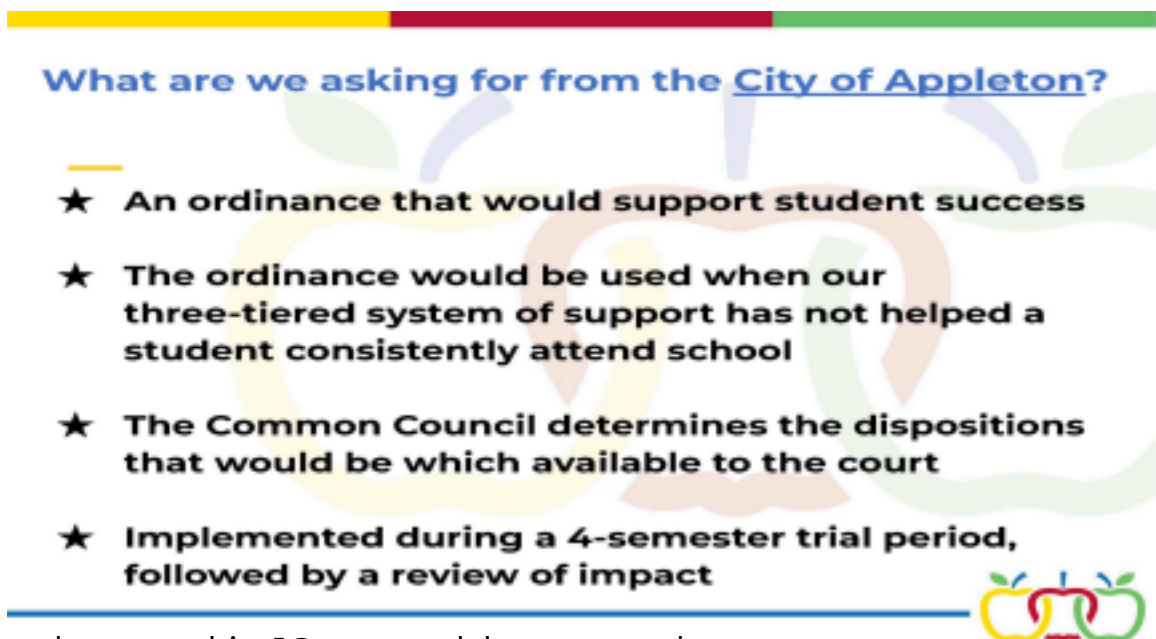
Middle school - 28 students

High school - 74 students

2021-2022:

Middle school - 35 students

High school - 45 students



As I understand it, 18-year-olds cannot be ticketed for truancy.

- How does AASD suggest dealing with those students or students nearing the age of 18 if the ordinance were to be reinstated?

The state law requires all students between the ages of 6 and 18 years of age to attend school regularly. Once a student turns 18, school attendance is not required. As a result, an ordinance would not be necessary for these students. High schools provide many opportunities to re-engage these students through alternative education measures, however, some choose not to participate.

- For example, what happens to a student who falls under the label of truant as a 17-year-old who then turns 18

before the end of school?

Until a student turns 18, we would implement our attendance plan as we would a student of any other age.

- Is there any point where a truancy or truancy-related ticket appear on a student's public Circuit Court records?

Tickets for minors are not included in public Circuit Court records.

In the presentation and in interviews, AASD insists that the City of Appleton/Common Council need to determine the dispositions.

- What dispositions does AASD suggest that would prevent the documented harm that occurred under the previous ordinance?

The point we were trying to make, and what we have shared anytime we have been asked, is that we want to work with the City and the County on the dispositions. The most effective is an order from the judge for a student to start attending school. Community service is another disposition that had some success and does not cost the student anything. We didn't want the City to think we were telling them what to do.

- Why did AASD support a written resolution that would simply restore the previous ordinance without including the suggested dispositions or including the trial period?

We didn't feel it was our place to include the dispositions and when working with Bill Seibers on the resolution, he told me to put a draft together, which I did. This is the first resolution I have ever drafted, so didn't know how much detail to include. We simply wanted the resolution to open the door to discussions around the possible citation.

In Chambers, you mentioned that Oshkosh has a teen court

as an example of an option, but that a solution like that takes a lot of resources.

- Appleton does not have a municipal court, so wouldn't the creation of a teen court be done at a county level?

Yes.

- Who would pay for such a program?

We would be willing to contribute to the cost, but the burden would fall primarily on the County.

- What were the costs of the previous Truancy Court and who was responsible for payment?

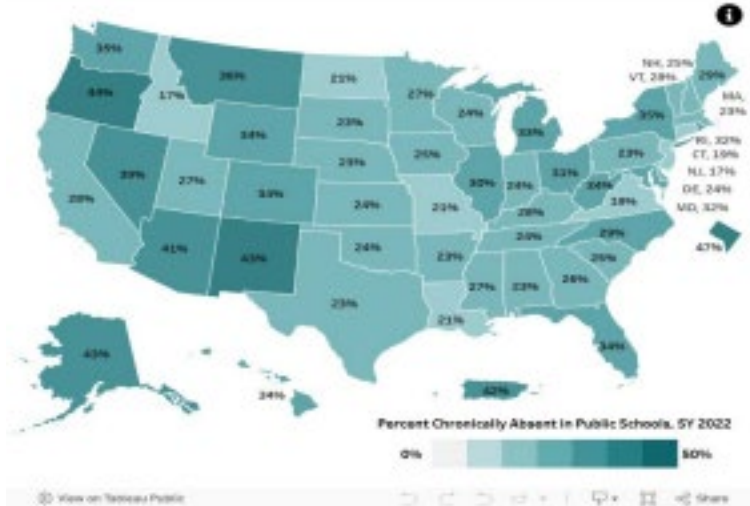
The AASD provided staff time (assistant principal, dean of students), the city provided staff time (SROs, attorneys), and the County provided staff time (judges, court commissioner).

- Why should the city create a court system to handle only truancy citations if AASD can already refer students who are habitually truant to the juvenile court?

We cannot refer students to the juvenile court. We can refer to the County through "Youth and Family" services, and if they do not get engagement from the student they can refer to juvenile court. Youth and Family Services rarely refer cases to juvenile court for truancy.



On March 22, 2024, Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona wrote:

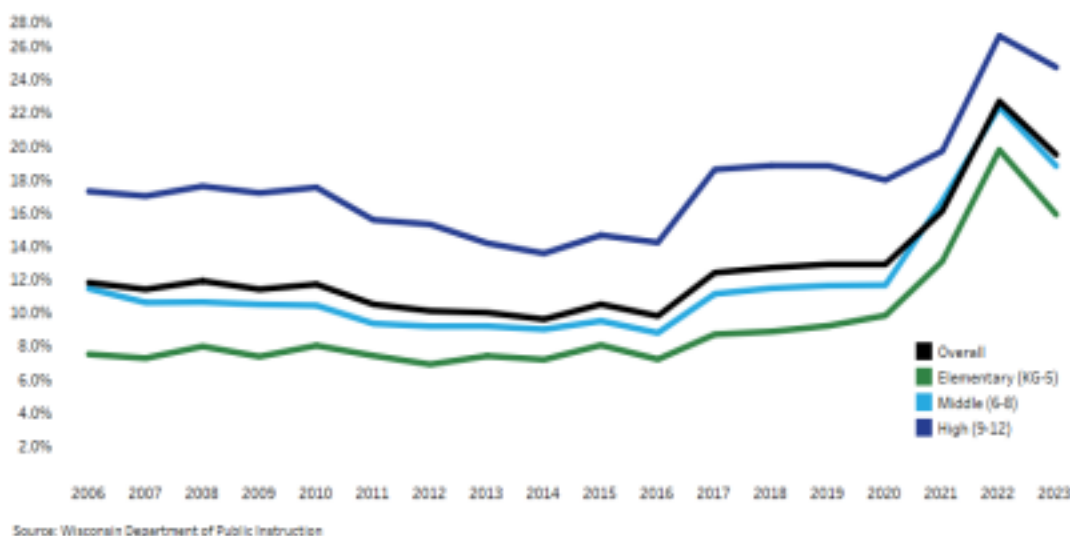


“Though chronic absence derives from multiple, often interconnected factors, research points to student disengagement, lack of access to student and family supports, and student and family health challenges as significant drivers.

These challenges may present differently by school type—for example, high school-age students are more likely to cite competing demands such as staying home to be caregivers to younger siblings or a sick family member or working outside the home to financially support themselves or their families.”

- How does bringing back a truancy ordinance and ticketing address these causes of truancy?

Figure 1: Chronic Absenteeism Remains Furthest Above Pre-Pandemic Norms for Elementary Students
Rates of chronic absenteeism in Wisconsin by grade level



There certainly are many reasons why students struggle with consistent attendance, as Miguel Cardona states, but we cannot help a student if they do not answer their door, or phone, or mail. We need a way to get a small number of students to engage with us, to take that first step into school to let us help them.

We continue to try different approaches and supports, but all of them require the student to be engaged.

During the presentation, it was stated that Superintendent Hartjes believes AASD is one of the only larger school districts without a truancy ordinance.

In addition, according to recent data, chronic absenteeism is affecting most Wisconsin schools.

- If most larger districts have an ordinance, and appear to have the same issues with post pandemic attendance, why would the ordinance resolve those issues in Appleton?

Because these districts do not have the robust 3-tier support system that we have. We believe this is an additional critical support that other districts are using that is not available to us.

We don't think an ordinance is going to resolve chronic absenteeism, but it will be the difference-maker for some students. Even if it is 5 kids or 10 kids, we believe it is worth it. We struggle to give up on kids, to accept that some students are just not going to come to school.

In 2022-2023, there are school districts in the top 5 rates of Chronic Absenteeism and the bottom 5 rates of chronic absenteeism that do not have local truancy ordinances.

- Given this information,, how would a truancy ordinance/ticketing will improve the rates of chronic absenteeism in AASD?

We are unaware of a district in the state of Wisconsin that does not have a truancy ordinance. In fact, when we talk to other districts they are shocked that we do not have an ordinance.