



# Addressing Truancy: Next Steps

Appleton Area School District

# How does attendance impact student outcomes?

- Attendance is an important life skill that will help students be successful, graduate from college and keep a job.
- Missing 18 days, or about 10% of the school year, can drastically affect a student's academic success.
- Students who are chronically absent in kindergarten and 1st grade are far less likely to read proficiently at the end of 3rd grade.
- By 6th grade, absenteeism is one of 3 signs that a student may drop out of high school.
- By 9th grade, regular school attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores.
- The academic impact of missing school is the same whether the absences are excused or unexcused.
- Absenteeism in the first month of school can predict poor attendance throughout the school year

# Background Information on Truancy Court


**School-based Truancy Court was established in 2009 to address challenges:**

- Many students and families were not attending hearings at the courthouse after receiving truancy citations.
- Communication between various agencies supporting students and families identified as being habitually truant was inconsistent, leading to ineffective systems.

## **Truancy Court Outcomes:**

- Habitual truancy was reduced by 24.01% from 2008/09 to 2010/11.
- Habitual truancy was reduced by 22.61% from the first two years of implementation to the most current two year period of implementation.
- Over 70% of students who received the Civics Lessons did not end up in Truancy Court.

## **Significant concerns identified in Nov/Dec 2018 Independent Review:**

- Due process rights of students.
  - Treatment of students/families in Truancy Court.
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# Action Steps: Short Term Administrative

- Administrative review of report and recommendations from the independent review and AASD data related to Truancy Court.
- Movement of truancy to the Student Services Department in conjunction with attendance/school climate team.
- Administrative/staff/partner meetings for communication and feedback
- Developing plans for students with current truancy challenges.

Timeline: 12/21/18 - 1/8/19



# Advisory Truancy Task Force

## Why?


To collaborate with community members and partners to support students and families in achieving regular attendance in the AASD and to address truancy concerns using evidence-based best practices.

## What?

A representative group (AASD staff and administrators, community members, mental health provider/ screener, parents/families, students, APD, County, Boys and Girls Club (TRAC/STAR), etc.) led by Assistant Superintendent Polly Vanden Boogaard.

## How?

All members will be open to a collaborative approach, understand the advisory nature of the group and follow established norms.



# Action Step: Establish Advisory Truancy Task Force

## Targeted Objectives:


- Develop targeted goals for attendance/truancy rates with progress monitoring checks to assure we are on track to meet our targeted goals.
- Build background knowledge around compulsory attendance laws and guidelines.
- Research and review current available resources to support regular attendance.
- Seek potential new resources for students and families around attendance.
- Research and review comparable school districts in Wisconsin regarding evidence based practices to support regular attendance and associated relevant data - what's working?
- Provide multiple perspectives from community members, invested agencies, the court system and school personnel.
- Provide fidelity checks on the truancy process (Universal, Tier 2 & Tier 3).

**Timeline:** 1/31/19 - Finalize Task Force Membership

2/15/19 - Finalize Task Force Meeting Dates



# Advisory Truancy Task Force: Purpose

- Collaborate with community members and partners to support students and families in achieving regular attendance in the AASD and address truancy concerns using best practices. Review independent report summary, its recommendations and relevant data.
  - Build background knowledge of attendance laws.
  - Review updated/revised AASD truancy process and procedures related to due process rights - clarify the three areas of review/evaluation and how this is accomplished.
  - Propose additional Tier 3 Interventions to prevent truancy.
  - Propose collaborative approaches to address habitual truancy.
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# Make Up of Task Force (20-25 members)

- Community Members (2)
- AASD High School Level Rep. (2)
- AASD Middle School Level Rep. (2)
- Mental Health Provider/Screenener (1)
- AASD Elementary Level Rep. (1)
- Boys and Girls Club (TRAC/STAR Programs) (2)
- AASD Parents/Families of Current Students (2)
- AASD Psych/Social Worker/Nurse (2)
- AASD Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer (1)
- AASD Homeless/Foster Care Coordinator (1)
- Appleton Police Department (1)
- AASD Students (2)
- City of Appleton (1)
- Legal Action of Wisconsin (1)
- AASD School Climate Coordinator (1)
- AASD Special Education Rep. (1)
- Outagamie County (1)
- Grand Chute Police Department (1)



# Internal Action Step: Review of AASD Process and Procedures

**Goal: Ensure that our internal procedures follow due process guidelines**

- Legal Counsel to review all letters around attendance sent to families.
  - Collaborate with City's Assistant City Attorney and SRO Coordinator to ensure consistency and understanding from all agencies involved.
- Addressing areas of documentation/evaluation per state statutes.
- Review of best practice guidance around attendance and students with disabilities.
- Review current Mental Health Screener and how this can guide supports to provide to students.

**Timeline:** 1/31/19 - Implement revised procedures



# Internal Action Step: Student Records Review/Training

## Goal:

- Review and update AASD's Student Records Policy
- Provide specific training around student records to the following groups:
  - Administrators
    - All/New
  - Student Services Staff
  - Administrative Assistants/Secretaries
- Develop an annual training rotation/protocol so that training is provided in a routine and consistent manner

**Timeline:** 3/1/19 - Board approval for revised policy

4/1/19 - Training schedule in place



# Internal Action Step: Review of Current Staffing

## Goal:

- Determine ways to designate district attendance/truancy advocate position(s) who can solely focus on attendance and truancy
- Full implementation of school attendance teams by the end of 3rd Quarter

**Timeline:** 2/15/19 - Recommendations for Staffing

3/21/19 - Attendance Teams in place at all schools





**Questions?**