

Public Comment For Item 25-0298: Resolution #3-R-25 Truancy Ordinance

Safety and Licensing Committee

Wed, Mar 26, 2025 5:30PM

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 00:58

Okay, so the first action item is 25-0298. It is resolution 3-R-25 which is the truancy ordinance, which was submitted at the last Common Council meeting by Alder Siebers. I'm going to give Alder Siebers an opportunity to speak, because that's what we typically do when someone submits a resolution and it comes to committee. The person that submitted it gets to speak first.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 01:21

I do want to say a couple things though. One, thank you all for coming. I love to see things that people get passionate about and come to meetings. We love when people attend our meetings. I do—I will give everyone an opportunity to speak that wants to speak. So, thank you for signing up ahead of time. If you didn't sign up and you want to speak, we'll give you an opportunity at the end.

[Cut]

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 06:27

Okay, let's go to the public comment, and there are eight people signed up. If you're not signed up and you want to speak, after we get through the last person on the sign-up sheet, you will have an opportunity to speak. Please try to limit your comments in the interest of time, but we certainly want to hear your thoughts, concerns, ideas. So, let's start with—is it Jacs Anderson? Okay, I'm gonna turn the podium microphone on so the audio records properly.

Jacqueline Anderson (Greenville Resident) 06:59

Good evening. I stand before you a parent of an AASD student, a professional psychotherapist with an expertise in teen development, and deeply troubled by the district's proposal to reinstate truancy enforcement. Before we even entertain the idea of truancy enforcement, let's ask: is AASD fully meeting the needs of its students with existing programs? One, are they following ethical standards for school counselor to student ratios? No. Most schools in the district do not meet the ethical standards met by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for student to school counselor ratios, which is 250 to one. For example, Einstein Middle School has two school counselors in a ratio of 436 students to one counselor, well above the recommended maximum. So, I ask, how effective are restorative strategies that involve a school counselor, if the school counselor is unavailable? How can students engage with staff if staff is inaccessible to them?

Jacqueline Anderson (Greenville Resident) 08:00

Number two, are all students who want to connect with a PATH counselor able to do so? No, the PATH program is only offered in 23% of the schools in the district, nine out of 38, with one therapist showing up once a week at most locations, and has a wait list by October of each school year. Research indicates that 87% of Gen Z youth experience anxiety, stress, depression, or other mental health challenges. Given this reality, what is Appleton's plan to expand mental health support for at risk students?

Jacqueline Anderson (Greenville Resident) 08:34

Three, what are—what are—are the new restorative programs fully developed and given time to work before jumping to punitive solutions? Doubtful. What evidence does Appleton Area School District have regarding the

effectiveness of the restorative interventions implemented over the past three to four years? Given the district's acknowledgement that previous disciplinary approaches were overly punitive and they were doing it wrong, how have these new strategies been evaluated for success? It is a justified expectation to allow these restorative interventions adequate time to demonstrate their effectiveness rather than shift towards punishment over progress, which is not best practice on how we support and educate our students.

Jacqueline Anderson (Greenville Resident) 09:17

In his presentation, Superintendent Hartjes stated that there is no difference between a speeding ticket and a truancy ticket for a 16-year-old. This comparison is inadequate and shows a lack of understanding of the complex factors behind school attendance issues. Council person Siebers' resolution calls students "a habitual truant" in the very first sentence, labeling them by their struggle, instead of recognizing their need for support. This reflects a troubling lack of empathy and understanding. Truancy tickets are not a solution. It's a regression into punitive discipline that has been shown time and time again to disproportionately harm students of colors, students of color, students with disabilities, LGBTQ+, and students from low-income families,

Jacqueline Anderson (Greenville Resident) 10:03

I urge the Common Council to reject any efforts to criminalize students under the guise of truancy enforcement, and instead, I ask that you hold AASD accountable for meeting ethical school counselor to student ratios and expanding access to mental health services, ensure existing student support programs are fully funded and developed before resorting to punitive measures, demand transparency from AASD and require that parents and community members be properly informed and given consistent chances to participate in decisions that impact their children. And lastly, advocate for alternative solutions that engage families, support students and address the real barriers to attendance. Thank you.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 10:44

Okay, thank you. Okay, when you do come up to speak, I'm going to go by the list, but just give your name and address for the record. So, your address was [XXXXX] Greenville? No, that's okay. Just want to make sure we have it on the record. Okay, so thank you for making your comments. Amanda Rudd, you're next.

Amanda Rudd (Appleton Resident) 11:08

So, it's Amanda Rudd, and it's [XXXXX] in Appleton.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 11:13

Thank you.

Amanda Rudd (Appleton Resident) 11:16

So, hi.

Alderman Chris Croatt (District 14) 11:17

Hi.

Amanda Rudd (Appleton Resident) 11:18

My name is Amanda Rudd, and I am speaking out tonight against the proposed ordinance to reinstate truancy tickets to students at AASD. I am a parent and an advocate of a neuro divergent daughter who will often miss classes due to burnout, so I am one of those parents speaking out that you want to hear from tonight. I fear that using law enforcement instead of addressing the root cause of truancy will further isolate, stigmatize students, and put more pressure on not only the student but entire families who face hardship.

Amanda Rudd (Appleton Resident) 11:58

In my past, I was often truant myself due to intense bullying during my time in school. Skipping school was my way to run away from what felt like a dangerous situation. Since nobody was there to come to my aid, I felt like it was up to me to protect myself.

Amanda Rudd (Appleton Resident) 12:21

After I heard about the potential reinstatement of the ticket policy, I shared my concern with some other people. I received overwhelming feedback against the ticketing policy in response. I am here tonight to share some true stories from the feedback that I received. The people who came forward have asked to be kept anonymous and are not able to attend, but they gave me permission to share. When you listen to the stories, you can hear that kids are doing what they need to do, or what they feel they need to do to survive in a system that is lacking support. So here we go.

Amanda Rudd (Appleton Resident) 13:06

I pulled my high schooler—I pulled my high schooler at semester because of this. Appleton school did nothing. I tried to transfer and was told I couldn't. Police were involved, self-harm. There's no support in Appleton for bullying. Not to mention how terrible her grades were from all the anxiety and distractions. It was awful. I can share that she is thriving in a virtual setting now.

Amanda Rudd (Appleton Resident) 13:35

I was truant in school also, not for bullying. I lived in a house where I took care of my parents. By the time I was in high school I seldom went. I finally dropped out. I got my GED the week my class graduated and went on to get my BSN in nursing. I'm now a director. Fining me would have been an added stress in my life when I was already managing my household for the most part. They should look at the root cause of truancy and deal with that issue.

Amanda Rudd (Appleton Resident) 14:10

I was severely bullied in school. My senior year, I went to school on Mondays, and then I got my homework, and then didn't return until Friday to turn it in in the morning. I had all advanced classes and was in the top 10 in my class, and yet they tried to prevent me from getting my high school diploma due to the fact that I only attended 80 of 180 days of school.

Amanda Rudd (Appleton Resident) 14:38

We had that meeting with my youngest. She's a bundle of anxiety and is avoiding school.

Amanda Rudd (Appleton Resident) 14:45

This gives me such vivid memories of raising my daughter and crying on the floor at like 3am trying to think of an excuse to call in for the school secretary as my daughter was recovering from burnout. I never thought we'd get through it, or that I wouldn't end up in jail for truancy. The best thing that ever happened to me as a parent was her not being in school anymore.

Amanda Rudd (Appleton Resident) 15:12

Last week was the first time in at least a year that my daughter was able to attend a full week of school. She has complex medical issues and misses a lot for illness, tests, and the travel for procedures. We used to get really upset about the truancy letters and threats, but we gave up and decided that we would happily fight it out in court for her and so many like her. Once a truancy letter and her selection onto the Dean's List arrived on the same day. We thought that was the funniest thing.

Amanda Rudd (Appleton Resident) 15:46

So now I have shared seven personal stories in my short time here. Where there are seven voices, there are hundreds or maybe thousands more that prove using punishment as the solution will continue to discourage the engagement that they want and push students out of school.

Alderperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 16:08

Thank you for sharing the stories and your concerns. All right, moving on to Emily Voight. Welcome Emily.

Emily Voight (Appleton Resident) 16:18

Thank you, Chairman, for letting me speak. My name is Emily Voight. I live at [XXXXXX] Appleton. I have kids in this district, and even—and am even a teacher in this district, and so because of that, I need to say that my opinions do not in any way represent or reflect AASD, all right? So, I want to get that out of the way.

Emily Voight (Appleton Resident) 16:39

So, first of all, as a mother, I have experienced this. And while it was a while ago, my daughter had issues with truancy because she had mental health issues, and she would frequently call me to come and get her from school because she was being bullied and because of her anxiety, and then we would get those—the threatening letters. We even had to meet with the school police liaison officer. I had meetings with the school, and it was traumatic for me, because as a mom—and I was in school at that time to become a teacher myself. (My mother is a teacher. She's a well-known teacher in our school district.)—this is not something I was used to, because I never had this problem as a kid. I always went to school. So, like, being called into the office freaked me out, because it's like, oh my god, what happened? And why is it so bad? And it hel—and was really hard on my daughter too. And they never once asked us why she was having these issues. So again, that was a while ago. She graduated in 2020.

Emily Voight (Appleton Resident) 17:41

I also have children with—autistic children. Sorry, let me rephrase that. I have autistic children, and we had to specifically put it in my one of my son's IEPs that, that year because he was having sleep issues, and we were dealing with doctors and all this stuff, that he was not going to be able to attend as often because of his autism, and so that was like a whole issue right there that I had to advocate for.

Emily Voight (Appleton Resident) 18:09

Now, speaking as a teacher, I know students at my school that I teach and that could be considered truant, but what we have been doing instead is looking at the root cause. The first thing I ask my students when they are truant is—or they are approaching truancy—is "What's going on? How can I help? What's happening is anything going on at home?" What's hap—you know, things like that. Then I make some reports too, and then we have committee—like, not committee, but we have meetings about this, and we look at the number of times the child's been absent, and then we have the school social worker, or the—I'm trying to remember what her official title is, but she goes and then she meets with the kids. But she's not available to do this for everyone. And we, you know, have a lot of kids that have issues where I teach. I don't know if I should say where I teach, but there's a lot of kids with that are newcomers. There are a lot of kids that are—yell in my class. So, I feel like we really need to be looking at the root cause of what is causing truancy before we jump the gun and start looking into having them work with the city.

Emily Voight (Appleton Resident) 19:18

I don't think that you guys understand that a lot of these kids—the ones that I have myself—it's not them, it's their family, it's their parents. They can't get to school. They are taking care of their siblings. Their. you know, mom's car broke down, and now they have no way of getting to school because they live just inside the district

line, so they're no longer able to be bused, and the mom doesn't want them on public transit, but it's too far to walk, you know, for his age. And so, a lot of these things are beyond children's control. A lot of them actually, like, stem from either their own mental health issues, their physical health issues, or issues at home that need to be addressed.

Emily Voight (Appleton Resident) 20:05

So, I do not feel that this is an issue that requires any city input or county or law enforcement. This is a school district issue, and as you all are not teachers or social workers, you don't know how this all works, and I don't feel like your input is needed. Sorry. So, I ask you to please consider children like mine and the children that I teach when you're making these decisions. They are not always truant because they don't—they don't—sorry. Kids aren't always truant because they don't want to be at school. They want to be at school if they can. Thank you.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 20:40

Thank you, Emily. All right, next on the list, Gloria I don't want to get your name wrong. How do you pronounce it? De Grave? Okay.

Gloria DeGrave (Neenah Resident) 20:50

Hi there. My name is Gloria DeGrave. My address is [XXXXX] Neenah, Wisconsin. So, I'm here today because when I read the—when I when I read this proposition, it was pretty clear to me that there's a significant lack of understanding of the school to prison pipeline. Anytime that we are putting students in front of police officers, anytime that we are putting students in a scenario where there's, like, legal repercussions, that influences them for the rest of their life, and it increases their likelihood that they're going to end up needing to continue to interact with police officers. So, whatever we can do to stop that from happening is incredibly important. If you haven't researched the school the prison pipeline, I really suggest that you do before you proceed with putting any more you know, body to this idea.

Gloria DeGrave (Neenah Resident) 21:57

The other thing that I just want to address is that I was also somebody that was truant when I was in high school, and that was due to I was being abused at home, and I needed a space to go where I didn't have to have 100% of my time completely programmed and I could just decompress. And that was not available to me at school, because it was constant input, and so often I would—I would skip an hour or two here, an hour or two there, and it became problem. But there wasn't any other way for me to go through that. And if I had had adequate supports and adequate people checking on me, I maybe could have gotten help with the abuse at home instead. And that's really what I'm looking for here is for people to understand that these are children first, and that they are people. They are whole people dealing with whole issues, and they deserve more than to be drug in front of some police officers.

Gloria DeGrave (Neenah Resident) 21:57

The other issue that I want to talk about is the fine aspect. It's not like truancy court is some unique and new idea that nobody's ever seen before. We know what that looks like when it gets instituted in the city, and that looks like fines, and it looks like fines for poor families. And I was somebody that grew up with a family that struggled to make ends meet, didn't quite qualify for food stamps, but also couldn't quite afford groceries, and so when you take any amount of that away, it's—it exasperates all of the problems, right? So, I just really want to encourage you to really look at the whole picture, because truancy court is not the way to solve these problems. And I know that the idea is, you know, wave the magic wand and get it back to where it was. But truly, truancy court isn't a magic wand to get kids back in school. It doesn't solve any of those problems. So those are my comments for today. Thank you for your time.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 22:56

Okay, thank you, Gloria. Just to be clear, I—the presentation from AASD, they were not asking for a return to truancy court. Just want to make sure that we're clear on that. And I'm not sure the resolution asks for that either. Resolution simply asked for an ordinance on truancy. Okay, let's move on. Ben Niles. Welcome, Ben.

Ben Niles (Appleton Resident) 24:26

All right. Good evening, Mr. Chairman and assembled Common Council. My name is Ben Niles. I've been a resident of [XXXXX] Appleton, Wisconsin, for the past 22 years, and I stand here tonight to express my opposition to any potential punitive measures such as truancy fines or the like. These fines harm poor families. They do not address underlying reasons for why students miss school, and they only cultivate an adversarial relationship between students and the school.

Ben Niles (Appleton Resident) 24:57

If we treat missed class as a misbehavior to be punished, that doesn't get to the heart of the why, and there are many possible reasons. And I can speak for myself. Going to school wasn't easy for me, and my classmates weren't always the most understanding or accommodating, because I am neuro-diverse, level one [autist? autistic?]. And a close friend of mine, just to speak from side experience, she has severe chronic depression, and she has missed a lot of school from the time she graduated high school because she just gets burnout, as some of the speakers before me mentioned.

Ben Niles (Appleton Resident) 25:34

The point is we don't know what's going on in at risk students' lives if we don't ask. It could be mental health. It could be a sense of distrust. It could be the effects of poverty. It could be that young people take a look at what's going on at everything outside, and they feel like going to school is pointless.

Ben Niles (Appleton Resident) 25:53

Superintendent Hartjes claims he just wants to get students to engage, and this is being done as a last resort, and I'm not entirely convinced. We need to offer things to our kids that make them want to come to school. I don't have any easy answers or quick solutions, but in—any reimposition of fines on students who aren't coming to class isn't the answer. So, whatever's decided, we need to be proactive, and we need to find a better way. Thank you.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 26:21

Thank you, Ben. Next on the list is Robert Payne. Welcome, Robert.

Robert Payne (Appleton Resident) 26:30

Thank you. Good evening.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 26:34

Um, could you just give your address, please?

Robert Payne (Appleton Resident) 26:36

Absolutely. Um, [XXXXX].

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 26:40

Thank you.

Robert Payne (Appleton Resident) 26:42

So, I'm speaking out against the truancy ordinance. I'm a resident of the City of Appleton. I'm speaking as both a resident, former substitute teacher, and I'm also speaking, of course, as a former student. I'm not speaking as a parent or as a teacher. I'm speaking as a citizen that just wants his fellow citizens to have access to education.

Robert Payne (Appleton Resident) 27:07

And in the United States, we're fortunate enough to have the right to K through 12 education, so that our citizens can start off, regardless of circumstance, with the opportunity for a basic educational foundation, and part of giving each child the opportunity to be successful in this country is positioning them to make the most of their education once they graduate high school. Reinstating any kind of truancy fines, courts, whatever punitive measures that involve providing legal punishment to a student undermines that opportunity, despite claiming to enshrine it.

Robert Payne (Appleton Resident) 27:47

The goal is to make sure people actually get that education, but the reality is that there are many complicated reasons that can lead to a student's absence from class, as has been, as we've had many examples so far. While some of these are mundane, some not examples that were just provided, but there are sometimes mundane reasons why people don't make it. But as you just seen, many of these cases are serious. They're unavoidable. And by using the criminal justice system to investigate students and parents, at best, we're introducing unnecessary stressors into the lives of our students and families which will interfere with the academic process for the student, and at worst, it can lead to students and their families ending up incarcerated with criminal records that could follow their families indefinitely, limiting their economic opportunities, which can make an already rough home life even worse.

Robert Payne (Appleton Resident) 28:42

This treats these problems like a nail and not everything is a hammer. Excuse me, like, not everything needs a hammer. Students and their families should be able to work these problems out with the schools themselves. Teachers, school administrators, counselors should be given the resources they need to address these issues by coordinating with students and their families to maximize the opportunities for academic success. And if you are finding that this isn't currently being accomplished by the current state of affairs, I challenge you to actually reach out to the schools, not the superintendent, but the actual—the actual people in the schools, to make sure that they're given the resources they need to address these issues, coordinate with—so that they can coordinate with the students and their families to make—maximize the opportunities for academic success. And I ask that these were where we are spending our resources, instead of wasting taxpayer dollars on criminalizing struggling students and their families. Thank you.

Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 29:41

Thank you, Robert. Next on the list is Tiana Beebe. Tiana, are you here? Yes, welcome, and a little one.

Tiana Beebe (Appleton Resident) 30:00

Hello. I'm Tiana. My address is [XXXXXX] here in Appleton. This is Riley. **[She was holding an infant.]**

Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 30:06

Hey, Riley.

Tiana Beebe (Appleton Resident) 30:10

Anyway, I'm speaking as a parent. I have three children in AASD, one in high school, one in middle school, and one in elementary school. And I do have a child who would be considered habitually truant. My middle schooler

is autistic. However, that autism wasn't discovered until a couple of years ago. And now my biggest concern is for the students who do have a diagnosable condition but whose parents do not proceed with getting diagnosis to get them on the IEP. The only reason that my son is protected is because of his IEP process, and it took many, many years and a lot of ruling meetings to finally get him into that program and get him protected from potentially having consequences because he's autistic and he has Generalized Anxiety Disorder, ADHD and two learning disabilities. And for students whose parents are not proactive and who are kind of in the middle of that process, their students could fall through the cracks and something like this to criminalize them or even to suggest that they are less than could really be detrimental to that student, and that really worries me.

Tiana Beebe (Appleton Resident) 31:32

My son has a hard enough time coming to—he has a hard enough time coming to school as it is, because, many times because of that autism, he sees things as very black and white. And I actually have to give a hats off to Kaleidoscope. He attends a kaleidoscope, and they really do a good job at working with him. He has had close contact with the resource officers there, and he actually likes them. And so—and Miss Gibson and the other staff that I've worked with there have done a very good job at supporting him, at helping me work with him and my son's father to get him to school, because he literally will just lay in bed and say, "I'm not going." And he's 13, so getting a 13-year-old to go who literally just wants to lay in bed is impossible. And again, it's just that impulse control because of his disabilities.

Tiana Beebe (Appleton Resident) 32:29

And I do not want to see a student whose parents don't seek out a diagnosis, don't seek out an IEP, because it can be prohibitive—or inhibitive, sorry. It can be a very difficult process, and if the parent doesn't have the time or the resources to get their child into those programs, I could see them going into and being negatively impacted by an ordinance that could potentially have more of a lifelong consequence by setting them up with a mindset that they—that they're not good enough, for the students who have those mental health issues, who really struggle or have to take care of their families.

Tiana Beebe (Appleton Resident) 33:11

Myself during my senior year, I attended Appleton north. And my senior year, I was considered habitually truant because I was taking seven classes at school, three independent studies, and I had a part time job to help pay the bills, and it was a very exhaustive process for me. Now, I was absolutely worked with at the school, but it was a very difficult thing for me personally, and I don't want to see other students negatively impacted, and I support a lot of what the other people have said today about finding ways to bring more counselors into the school, to take the funds that would be pushed into truancy enforcement into mental health support, into helping these kids feel valued at school. Is there some way to incorporate more of a Montessori method where they are brought into having a purpose at school, having a job, having the ability to support other students? Kids who teach other kids tend to be more engaged in the process.

Tiana Beebe (Appleton Resident) 34:21

Now I don't know if these ideas can be brought about. I know some of this would be more of a school district thing versus a city thing, but when it comes to the an ordinance at the city, what's the point of an ordinance if it's not enforceable in some way? And so, I really disagree with an ordinance at the city level, and feel like the school district should be seeking for ways to push money into supporting these kids and being creative in a solution, instead of having a ordinance from the city that can be enforceable somehow. Thank you.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 34:53

Thank you, Tiana. And I'm glad you—I'm glad you noted that some of the ideas being shared here tonight are ideas that need to somehow, some way, get filtered to AASD because some of the thoughts on additional

counseling and things are all things within their control, their budget. but certainly, thank you for all your comments. Last on the list is Ronna Swift.

Ronna Swift (Appleton Resident) 35:18

Ronna Swift [XXXXX] and a known entity to you folks, for sure, because I keep sending you letters about various things, particularly this. And a huge thanks to the people that had the courage to stand up and talk. And I wish that the people that talk today and even others had a chance to get together, because there were some terrific ideas here. I'm not going to read my letter that I sent to you two times now that I figured out how to use the new website and have it corrected to all, and the mayor has it as well.

Ronna Swift (Appleton Resident) 35:59

I'm a retired guidance counselor. I retired from Oshkosh Correctional. I taught there for 15 years, and I served as a teacher in other districts. It's been a long haul with this truancy court thing. You guys know that. I was involved 8, 9, 10, years ago. We finally got the court shut down, and I was so relieved. And then it resurfaced last Wednesday night, and we didn't have a chance to speak. And I talked to Mayor Jake about that, that if you have a council rule that says only if the item is an action item then there's public participation, and I told him today, actually, that needs to be something the public needs to know about (because I came and I'm pretty experienced with this) that if it's if it's Council rule, and when you get the new councilors sworn in in in April, there needs to be something in there so that we know when we come to a meeting what's going on. That would be helpful.

Ronna Swift (Appleton Resident) 37:00

I can't believe I'm a little nervous because I didn't know I could say anything. And I have so many things, but they're on my laptop and I can't see the small print. First of all, thank you for letting us speak, which is appropriate in the diplomatic and democracy process. Okay. The district has followed the recommendations made by the Truancy Task Force, which I was very active with both before and after COVID. I'm very impressed with all the recommendations we made, how much progress has been made. Everybody needs to know that the money to hire more staff is tied up in Madison, and we need to get it out of there and get it to the school districts. That since Scott Walker, we have had a hard time with districts all over the state. Between that and vouchers, there's not enough money to hire the additional psychologists, counselors, social workers and so on.

Ronna Swift (Appleton Resident) 38:04

I am going to jump to something. I have to open my phone first. The most recent thing I sent to you was I had issues, and was hoping to talk to the city attorney about this, but he's out of the country, and the backup is in the middle of a very busy week. These are some of my concern, having worked with runaways and fringe populations all my adult life. If the student that gets the ticket is under the age of 18, what happens to that ticket when the student turns 18? Will it go into CCAP, the circuit court records? Will they possibly get a fine and have a bill collector come after them? And these are all in that letter. I see people taking notes. You've got it. Will it be possible to remove or delete the ticket if the student shows up and completes whatever is involved? Might the student be put into shelter care like my grandniece who was on the spectrum and had social anxiety, and her eyes swell shut, and she was put into shelter care. That's when I got involved. And then the parents got a \$2,000 bill. That happened twice. She was put on the electronic monitoring bracelet. Those days are done. That's not going to happen. I know that, but that's why I got involved.

Ronna Swift (Appleton Resident) 39:18

Will a student have to report to one of the circuit court judges? Will a student have county counseling available for themselves and possibly their family if it's appropriate? And one thing that I have been promoting all along is work with the family system. You don't take somebody out and think you can fix them and send them back. It

does not work. You have to work with the different systems. I could go on and on, but I've got much more than that.

Ronna Swift (Appleton Resident) 39:46

It would be punitive to put in a truancy ticket again. I think it's a cop out personally. Going to go a little further. I—oh, we gotta go further. Sorry. I don't think I need to say anything more. You know what I stand for, that I want the kids to be safe. And I'll tell you that I don't know these people that just testified. I'm the only one left over from last time. I want to meet all of you afterwards, if possible, and just say thank you because the kids we're dealing with are really hurting individuals. I don't want them to end up where I used to teach at the prison, and some of my kids from an elementary school where I was a guidance counselor years ago showed up in the prison system in my GED classes many years later because the system just didn't have the support in place. So good luck.

Ronna Swift (Appleton Resident) 40:49

Oh, my recommendation is that there be a committee between the county, Youth and Family Services, the police department, the school district, and the city that you folks work together to coordinate and explore what's going on here, and then, maybe, if there can be something where we can get together again at some point in the future, because you have our contact information. That would be helpful. It would be a positive start. I want this to be positive. And I usually have it more together than this, but I wasn't as ready as usual. Thank you.

Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 41:28

Thank you, Ronna, and thank you for your comments. I know how passionate you are about this and how much time you've put into it. All right, that that takes care of the list. Is there anyone else that didn't sign up that would like to speak? Yes. Name and address for the record, please.

Carol Lenz (Appleton Resident) 41:46

My name is Carol Lenz, [XXXXXX] in Appleton, and I was here to listen, but I decided to speak. I'm a retired teacher, and since I've retired, I've been working on advocacy for public education. And you all understand shared revenue. Public schools for 16 years have not even received an inflationary increase. So we are not meeting the needs of our kids. You can hear from the people that spoke, we are not meeting the needs of our kids. So the budget committee, the state legislature, is starting next Wednesday with a listening session in Kaukauna. You should all go and say the same thing you said here tonight, because you, the school, and these people shouldn't have to be here if we were funding our schools appropriately, and so I just couldn't sit there and let that go without saying that. We're all in this predicament because we're not funding our schools. Thank you for listening.

Aldersonperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 42:57

Thank you, Carol, and thank you for the comment about listening session, because that is an important opportunity for voices to be heard to those that have control over that funding in Madison. Okay. Is there anyone else? Yes, sir.

Scott Kornish (Appleton Resident) 43:16

Good evening. My name is Scott Kornish. I live at [XXXXXX] Appleton, Wisconsin. Like Carol I wasn't intending on speaking. I came just to listen. I spent roughly 40 years working in Human Services, working with youth. And I just want to say I would encourage you to wait for the results of the meeting. Ronna, you mentioned that possible having the groups get together to talk about—**[He turns to address the members of the public, which**

is not allowable under the rules. People giving public comment are supposed to speak to the committee chairperson.]

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 43:42
Sir.

Scott Kornish (Appleton Resident) 43:42
I'm sorry.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 43:42
Yeah, that's okay.

Scott Kornish (Appleton Resident) 43:43
Mentioned about getting grouped together to talk about what options might be and what it looks like. And I, my understanding is that is scheduled for April 15.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 43:50
Yes, there is a, I call it a stakeholders meeting, but important parties are getting together to discuss this. So, go ahead.

Scott Kornish (Appleton Resident) 43:57
So just based on my history and my knowledge of the system, the things that have worked and don't work, I would just encourage you to hang on, wait until the 15th, let those parties get together, talk about it. Let them come back to you and speak specifically to what are they looking at doing. Because I think we have something like citation coming out, and the examples that were given here tonight are great examples of youth who should not be fined, and I think the school district would say the same thing. Those are not youth who should be fined. And I do believe the school does a good job. We can always do better at trying to identify those underlying needs, what needs to be done, how do we support those students. So, I would just encourage you to wait until after the 15th, here are some more details to this, what it would look like, who specifically would we be looking at using the fines with, what happens when somebody's fined before a decision would be made, just to say no, thank you.

Alderson Chris Croatt (District 14) 44:55
Thank you, Scott. All right. Anyone else? Last chance. Anyone else? All right, we'll close public participation.