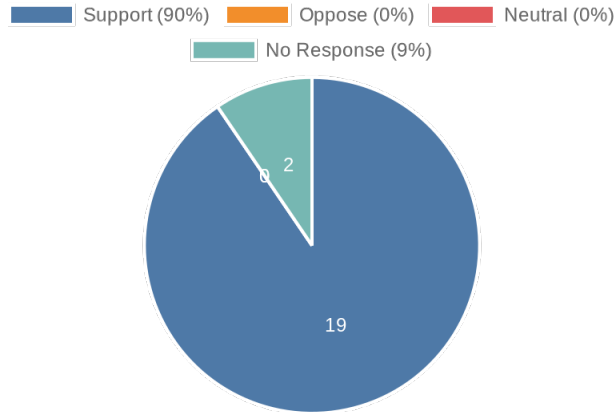


Agenda Item: eComments for 11. 26-0826 Consideration of Common Council resolution establishing an annual reporting and disclosure process to provide transparency regarding the portion of the Wauwatosa School District levy attributable to private school voucher and 2R independent charter school programs

Overall Sentiment



**Kim Storey**

Location:  
Submitted At: 10:44am 06-16-26

I am in favor of this resolution. I believe it is important to know how much of our tax dollars are being pulled from funding public schools to fund private schools. As the parent of a child who went through special education in the district and have seen the lack of funding for the program, it is disheartening that any tax dollars are going to another program.

**Derek Steinmetz**

Location:  
Submitted At: 10:15am 06-16-26

I support this resolution. This transparency is critical at a time when municipal and school district budgets are under intense scrutiny and pressure.

The current format overstates the amount of the levy that is available to fund our public schools. By disclosing the Voucher and 2A Charter funds being diverted from our public schools, our taxpayers and residents will gain a better understanding of the actual district budget when making critical funding decisions going forward.

**Melissa Lamers**

Location:  
Submitted At: 9:41am 06-16-26

I serve on the Wauwatosa School Board, but I am sharing my personal views and not speaking on behalf of the Board or the District.

I strongly support this resolution because transparency matters. Residents deserve to know and understand how much of the Wauwatosa School District levy is given to private school voucher programs and how those costs impact property taxes. Regardless of one's position on vouchers, providing an annual report ensures taxpayers

have clear, accessible information to make informed decisions and engage in meaningful discussions on public school funding. As a community, we should be committed to transparency and openness in government and public education finance. I encourage the Common Council to adopt this resolution.

**David Sanchez**

Location:

Submitted At: 10:24pm 06-15-26

I strongly support this resolution to establish an annual reporting and disclosure process for voucher funding on our property tax bills. Our local public schools are governed by an elected school board, hold public meetings, follow open records laws, and are directly accountable to the Wauwatosa community. Private voucher schools are not bound by these same standards.

If our tax dollars are being diverted to institutions where we do not have a democratic voice or public oversight, we at least have a right to know the exact financial impact on our district. Transparency is a nonpartisan issue. I applaud the School Board and the PTA for leading on this, and I urge the Common Council to stand with Wauwatosa taxpayers by passing this resolution.

**Nathan Ugoretz**

Location:

Submitted At: 7:44pm 06-15-26

I would like to record my support of the school board's Property Tax Transparency Resolution. The school board has already taken an important and responsible step by calling for greater transparency about how local property tax dollars are being used. I urge the Common Council to support that action.

Taxpayers deserve clear information. Many people look at their property tax bill and assume those dollars are going directly to support their local public schools. But under the current voucher funding system, public tax dollars are being removed from public schools and used to fund private voucher schools.

This is about honesty, transparency, and public accountability.

Our local public schools are governed by elected school boards. They hold public meetings, follow public records laws, serve every student, and answer directly to the communities that fund them. When local tax dollars are diverted away from those schools, taxpayers should be clearly notified.

At a time when school districts are facing tight budgets, staffing challenges, rising costs, and growing student needs, the public should not have to guess where education dollars are going.

The school board's resolution is reasonable and necessary. It gives taxpayers the information they deserve and helps protect the public's right to understand how public education dollars are being used.

I support the school board's resolution, and I encourage the Common Council to stand with them in support of transparency, accountability, and our local public schools.

**Nicole Etter**

Location:

Submitted At: 3:16pm 06-15-26

Wisconsin school funding is complicated, and it doesn't help when our property tax bills only show part of the picture. Many Wauwatosa residents probably don't realize that some of the tax dollars designated for the Wauwatosa School District are diverted to local private schools via the voucher system. The City of Wauwatosa has an exciting opportunity to be a leader in tax bill transparency in the Milwaukee metro area, and I hope this proposal moves forward.

**Katie Strelka**

Location:

Submitted At: 1:10pm 06-15-26

Transparency and accountability are nonpartisan - taxpayers deserve to be fully informed about where their dollars are being spent, particularly when faced with making crucial funding decisions - and voting.

**Mary Young**

Location:

Submitted At: 12:17pm 06-15-26

As a Wauwatosa resident and taxpayer for 19 years, I strongly support full transparency of the public cost of

private school vouchers. I believe it's important that residents easily see that their tax dollars are being directed to schools that are unaccountable to the community that is funding them. I applaud the Common Council for considering this annual disclosure.

**Emily Achor**

Location:

Submitted At: 5:00am 06-15-26

As a mom of two and a constituent of Wauwatosa, I believe it is important to have transparency about where our tax dollars are going. The property taxes I pay that are designated for education should support schools where I have a democratic voice through my vote and local representation.

**Laura Rhyne**

Location:

Submitted At: 8:21pm 06-14-26

I strongly support full transparency of the public cost we are forced to pay for private schools that don't have to abide by the same rules as public schools.

**Libby Kelley**

Location:

Submitted At: 4:25pm 06-14-26

In favor

**Jonathan Etter**

Location:

Submitted At: 1:33pm 06-14-26

As a Wauwatosa resident and tax-paying property owner for 19 years, an educator in our public schools, the parent of two children enrolled in our school system, and as a 2026-2027 Wisconsin Teacher of the Year, I strongly urge all members of the Common Council to support this resolution. Any school that accepts public funding should be fully accountable to the public and should be required to meet the same high standards of service to the their community, but because of the voucher system, this is not the case: private schools can and often do hire teachers who do not meet the same rigorous training and licensure requirements of public schools, private schools are not required to admit and serve all students, private schools do not need to provide the same special education services that public schools are required to provide, etc. While it is beyond the power of the Common Council to address these inequities, it can address one: make the public funding of private and charter schools accepting voucher funds as transparent and accountable to taxpayers as it is with public schools.

I believe that the primary argument made by opponents of this resolution is that it would unfairly target and hold up to scrutiny voucher schools for accepting tax dollars. I, however, would argue the opposite. By NOT including how much funding they receive, it is the PUBLIC schools that are being unfairly targeted and scrutinized. And if voucher schools feel so strongly that the public should not know anything about their funding, then they shouldn't take any money from the public.

**Rita Wiesneski**

Location:

Submitted At: 1:02pm 06-14-26

As a resident of Wauwatosa, with two graduates of and two current students of the Wauwatosa School District, I support transparency in our property tax bills documenting the requirement of the school district to levy for and pay funds to private school voucher programs. This disclosure will help taxpayers understand that some of the funds levied are not used in our public school district.

As Wisconsin PTA, and many other organizations such as WPEN, continue to raise awareness and advocate across the state for this same transparency, we can hope to see more taxpayers request the same disclosure on their tax bills thereby incentivizing the software companies to include the format/layout adjustment option in their future updates without added effort or cost on the municipalities.

As President of the Wauwatosa Council of PTAs, we also support this resolution and have previously sent the

following letter of support:

Dear Mayor McBride and our neighbors on the Wauwatosa Common Council,

The Wauwatosa Council of PTAs, Inc. unites and strengthens 11 local PTA / PTSA units comprising the council in order to further the mission of the PTA. The mission is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. The council and local units are all constituents of The Wisconsin Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. (Wisconsin PTA), a branch of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers (the National PTA) which is the oldest and largest child advocacy association in America. Proposing and supporting policies and laws that better the education and lives of children is one of PTA's most important roles.

As active leaders and volunteers in our school communities, we have seen firsthand the financial difficulties that all Wisconsin Public School Districts are facing due to the state funding formula. We have watched Wauwatosa School District leaders grapple with the gap between the state funding they receive, and the needs of students and staff in our district. Insufficient state funding has forced many Wisconsin communities to raise their own taxes via referendum in order to fund their public schools. Districts with failed referendums are faced with devastating cuts to staff and programming and continued deferred building costs. We are grateful the Wauwatosa community has shown its strong support of our public schools, passing 3 school referendums in the last 8 years to improve our school buildings and sufficiently fund their operating costs. While these referendums have provided the critical funding needed in the short term, the state funding model is not sustainable and will continue to devastate school districts across the state. One of the primary issues with the state school funding formula, is that a significant amount of our tax dollars are being diverted from public schools to private schools via vouchers. The cost of the private school choice voucher program to taxpayers has grown from \$700,000 in 1990 to \$700 million in 2026. Wauwatosa alone lost over \$2.1 million in school funding to school vouchers in the 2025-26 school year, and that number will continue to increase as the legislature expands the voucher program in Wisconsin.

While we understand the state funding model cannot be fixed until our state legislature commits to upholding their constitutional duty to properly fund our public schools, we know the first step to change is education and awareness. We believe it is important for Wauwatosa residents to be aware of their tax dollars being diverted from our public schools to voucher schools. It is our hope this awareness will lead to a greater understanding of school funding, and advocacy to change legislative choices from our elected officials in Madison. For this reason, we support the Wauwatosa School Board resolution to include the cost of school vouchers on Wauwatosa property tax bills.

We urge the Wauwatosa Common Council to take action to modify Wauwatosa property tax bills to include the cost of school vouchers to Wauwatosa taxpayers. We appreciate your consideration of this matter, and your attention to transparency and clarity for Wauwatosa residents.

Sincerely,

Wauwatosa Council of PTAs, Inc.  
Eisenhower Elementary PTA  
Jefferson Elementary PTA  
Madison Elementary PTA  
Roosevelt Elementary PTA  
Washington Elementary PTA  
Wauwatosa Montessori PTSA  
Wilson Elementary/WSTEM PTSA  
Longfellow Middle School PTA  
Whitman Middle School PTA  
Wauwatosa East High School PTA  
Wauwatosa West High School PTA  
Lincoln Elementary PTO\*  
McKinley Elementary PTO\*  
Underwood Elementary PTO\*

\* PTOs are not members of the Wauwatosa Council of PTAs and are not constituents of Wisconsin PTA or National PTA; however, the Wauwatosa Council of PTAs has asked for their unity in advocating on this matter.

**Phillip Morris**

Location:

Submitted At: 12:07pm 06-14-26

In favor.

**Hannah DAngelo**

Location:

Submitted At: 12:04pm 06-14-26

I am in favor of this resolution

**Jason Wautier**

Location:

Submitted At: 11:41am 06-14-26

Public Comment - Agenda Item 11 (26-0826)

Property Tax Bill Transparency - Disclosure of Private School Voucher Levy Amount

Submitted by: Jason Wautier

DISCLAIMER: I serve on the Wauwatosa School District Board of Education; however, I am writing as an individual board member expressing my personal viewpoint. This statement is not sponsored by the Wauwatosa School District and does not represent an official position of the Board of Education or my colleagues on the Board. I also communicated my support directly to Alderperson Franzen via email.

I am writing in support of this resolution. In my opinion, this is a straightforward transparency measure that Wauwatosa taxpayers deserve.

Currently, Wauwatosa property tax bills show the total school district levy but do not tell residents how much of that levy funds private school vouchers and 2R independent charter schools. This resolution fixes that gap with a simple, administrative disclosure on the tax bill insert.

Here are the facts that, in my view, support this action:

- Wisconsin's private school choice and special needs scholarship programs served 92,000 students statewide in 2023-2024.
- The projected cost of these programs exceeds \$1.8 billion during the 2025-2027 budget cycle.
- Five private schools currently participate in the choice program in Wauwatosa.
- Unlike district schools, these private schools are not required to publicly disclose their finances, follow the Freedom of Information Act, hold open meetings, or meet the same state educational standards.
- Voters can see referendum costs itemized on their tax bills, but not voucher program costs. I believe that is inconsistent.

This resolution does not change tax rates, levies, or funding formulas. It simply adds informational disclosure so taxpayers know where their money goes. Green Bay has already implemented this successfully.

I want to note factually that the Wauwatosa School Board did unanimously adopt a Property Tax Transparency Resolution on December 11, 2025, urging the Common Council to take this step. The Wauwatosa Council of PTAs has also formally endorsed this effort and contacted the mayor and all council members encouraging passage. Organizations like WPEN and Wisconsin PTA are advocating for this transparency statewide.

Regarding the tax bill vendor's format limitations: the insert approach in this resolution is a practical, immediate solution. As someone with 25 years in enterprise software engineering, I think there is every reason to expect that as more municipalities request this disclosure, vendors will adapt their standard layouts. Customer demand drives the product roadmap.

I urge the committee to pass this resolution and recommend adoption by the full Common Council. Transparency is not partisan. Taxpayers deserve to know what they are paying for.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jason Wautier  
Individual Board Member, Wauwatosa School District Board of Education  
Legislative Advocacy Subcommittee

**Brett Swanson**

Location:  
Submitted At: 11:36am 06-14-26

I am in favor. I support this resolution because it promotes transparency and public understanding. Wauwatosa taxpayers deserve clear, accessible information about how much of the Wauwatosa School District levy is attributable to private school voucher and 2R independent charter school programs. This reporting process does not take a position on individual families or schools; it simply helps residents see where public tax dollars are going and how state funding formulas affect the local school levy. Greater disclosure allows for more informed public discussion, better accountability, and a clearer picture of the financial pressures facing our public schools.

**Stacy Kodra**

Location:  
Submitted At: 11:33am 06-14-26

In favor

**Peter Baran**

Location:  
Submitted At: 11:10am 06-14-26

Having accurate information about how much of our tax dollars are going to non public schools would be very helpful.

**Andrea Fischer**

Location:  
Submitted At: 10:49am 06-14-26

Support - I'm a Tosa resident with children in Wauwatosa Public Schools and transparency of where tax dollars is going is important to me.

**Christopher Bauer**

Location:  
Submitted At: 10:32am 06-14-26

As a constituent of Tosa, I believe it is important that we have transparency of where our tax dollars flow. My property dollars earmarked for schools should flow to schools that I have a democratic voice in.