00:00:00:00 - 00:00:20:12

Emma Jaschke

Seem like they're going to go that route. I mean, we don't have like we didn't have teachers didn't get raises, you know, their position cuts. I don't feel like they really have the budget to like, bring a counselor to every school. So it's pretty frustrating that they decided to cut this, program that the district doesn't have to pay for at all.

00:00:20:14 - 00:00:39:22

Emma Jaschke

And I think, like, as far as trying to I don't know if we're trying to get Centerstone back or like, what we're going to try and ask for, but I think it's important if we're available to be at the next board meeting, and we kind of in with a game plan of like what we want to ask for.

00:00:39:25 - 00:00:41:07

Emma Jaschke

Yeah.

00:00:41:10 - 00:00:51:07

Aaron Fowles

That's good. Qualia, Qualia and I do have something to add. Or is your hand raised from the I'm angry section?

00:00:51:09 - 00:00:54:16

Q Hatcher

It's raised from the I was trying to get it off of the,

00:00:54:18 - 00:00:58:29

Aaron Fowles

It's a no. You're just you're just that angry, and we all are, right?

00:00:59:02 - 00:01:26:13

Aaron Fowles

Yeah. So and I this is kind of an absolutely. All right.

Sadie – student at UTC

 So I go to the University of Tennessee and tell telling you that. And, then I'm getting my master's in the school counseling and education. So I don't know the full scope of the entire situation, but what, like, really gets me is, what are we doing now for like, the service was removed and there's people who need help and we're not doing anything right now.

00:01:26:18 - 00:01:28:25

Sadie – student at UTC

And it's just very sad that we.

00:01:28:27 - 00:02:00:26

Aaron Fowles

All right. So let's let's kind of, we'll back and do a little context, you know, about how things work in schools, where money comes from, where it doesn't come from, how it's and inequitably spread around. And Megan, could talk later about the school funding 101 sessions that public school strong is doing. But, you know, last year and Emma brought this up, you know, the school board doesn't have the ability to levy taxes, right?

00:02:00:28 - 00:02:32:17

Aaron Fowles

The school board has to go second for supper every year to the county commission. And last year, the county commission boldly stated, despite a large increase in property tax value, that they were going to keep it completely revenue neutral and stick with what's called a maintenance of effort budget, thereby leaving Hamilton County schools and its employees to deal with inflationary pressures on their own.

00:02:32:19 - 00:02:59:04

Aaron Fowles

And as Emma said, one of you know, there are two consequences. Two primary consequences of this, one, a reduction of a one half position per school. And two, educators did not get a step increase. Now, June 15th was when the county commission voted on that budget. Guess how many people were in the audience?

00:02:59:07 - 00:02:59:27

Lisa Durham

How many

00:03:00:00 - 00:03:01:06

Aaron Fowles

Two.

00:03:01:08 - 00:03:02:21

Lisa Durham

Wow. Okay.

00:03:02:23 - 00:03:27:11

Aaron Fowles

Two people were in the audience. Right. So there are certain issues that like are are widely thought and there's issues that are deeply felt and that are some that are both, but apparently that wasn't one of them. So, you know, we're in this situation and one of the positions that they allowed that the district was allowing people to cut were the student support coaches.

00:03:27:11 - 00:03:52:01

Aaron Fowles

Right? So a couple years ago, the district implemented student support coaches. Before that, they were SEAD coaches. And I'm going to tell you what, there was a county commissioner because this was like during the slush time of that Covid money, but there was a county commissioner, smart guy, nice person, called me and said, hey, Aaron, are these, sead coaches?

00:03:52:01 - 00:04:48:10

Aaron Fowles

Are they socialists? Flat out was like, was totally sincere. Wanted to ask me if the district was going to put socialists in the school. So there has been a bit of a longstanding distrust, of mental health services in the schools. And a lot of that, though not all, flows through, one particular political party. And, and that that narrative gets amplified, when there are people speaking at the school board every month, hammering in the message that they're, I think, last for a a year or two ago, it was Freirian socialists, in fact, knocking of Paulo Freire who is my homeboy, I named my pet cat Paulo after Paulo Freire

00:04:48:10 - 00:05:18:17

Aaron Fowles

 Wrote a lovely book called pedagogy of the oppressed. So there has been this longstanding distrust of mental health services in the schools. And, there was a major funding cut last year, so we had the Centerstone thing. So something so why do we think they decided to cut centerstone no cost to the district. And are you.

00:05:18:20 - 00:05:23:12

Aaron Fowles

Crystal?

00:05:23:15 - 00:05:51:04

Crystal Boehm

Hey. So I mean, from what we know, just from behind the scenes chats that we've had with, Allied school board members and, I mean, and there were some comments that were actually said at the school board meeting, it seems to be overwhelmingly that the conservative members of our school board do not like that centerstone treat our LGBTQ community, and that they are not a faith based counseling services, they said repeatedly.

00:05:51:04 - 00:06:08:05

Crystal Boehm

Why centerstone, why centerstone? And which was answered with the fact that it's a school based that they have a school based counseling program? You know, Ben Daugherty actually came out and said that he didn't know what their ideology was. And I want to be like, you know, the ideology, which I actually emailed them and asked, you know, the ideology.

00:06:08:05 - 00:06:30:10

Crystal Boehm

And every teacher that is in the schools, like, that's such a dumb thing to say. And it doesn't matter what your ideology is. This requires parental consent. So it's really not up to you. And your ideology. And then, who was it, Jodi Schaefer said that she was concerned by some things on their website. And then just the responses that we've we've seen from other school board members.

00:06:30:13 - 00:06:46:07

Crystal Boehm

I know Steve Slater, my mom lived in his district and, you know, his response, but, well, their faith based, you know why? You know, why can't my church be allowed in there? And it's like, gosh, do you really not understand how this works? And they don’t or they don't care.

00:06:46:10 - 00:07:08:12

Aaron Fowles

So let's let's talk about that website. All right. So essentially, you know, the unspoken thing is that like they're afraid Mr.. I'm going to come in and make all the kids gay and make them all trans and whatever. Right? So let's look at the website and let's see if we can find a spot where it says we're coming in to make all your kids gay and make all your kids trans.

00:07:08:12 - 00:07:38:07

Aaron Fowles

All right. I'm not sure we're going to find it, but let's try, locations. No, those are just the states. They operate in services. So we have, maybe it's in children and family or who we serve. Children. The family is try to, inpatient care recovery now looks pretty good to me. Who we are. It's all pretty good.

00:07:38:09 - 00:08:03:26

Aaron Fowles

Maybe this is their education because they do operate in the schools. Now this is their educating. So I'm saying nothing here about that. Now, what we do now. Right. So if someone has these comic books that they use for their serious. Okay. Now here's one. This is spark. This is about vaping, right? Spark is they're like mental health superhero rising from the air.

00:08:03:29 - 00:08:21:14

Aaron Fowles

You can even go and you can look at all of them and read them. I'm not sure if rising from the ashes is about. They're pretty nifty. That kind of looks like a school member, right? They're kind of bizarre. And what we think and look like, one of our school board members, I don't know, kind of am I am I the only one who sees that?

00:08:21:16 - 00:08:26:04

Several speakers

Okay. No, I totally see that, Betsy. is that is like a villain in the comic?

00:08:26:06 - 00:08:50:29

Aaron Fowles

I don't know, I haven't either. I just thought it funny. So I mean that there's, you know, it's a comic book if you actually take the time to read it is whatever one for bullying. Maybe this is cyberbullying, I don't know. Sobering truth. There's some in Spanish now here's where it gets a bit sinking because there's nothing.

00:08:51:02 - 00:09:19:16

Aaron Fowles

They've actually taken something off their website. There's something. And I did come on. It's silly. All right. If you Google Centerstone comic books, you're going to see this is on their what is on their news and events section. But if you open the link it's that page can't be found. So this was a and this was only as a this was on there of like a week and a half ago.

00:09:19:18 - 00:09:46:26

Aaron Fowles

And this is about a comic book about, non-binary or transgender youth. Right. So this used to be on their website. It's not there now. And so I believe that there is a school board members who saw this and just lost their minds. Right? They saw that. And they say, well, that's the evidence that they're just going in there to make other kids gay and transgender.

00:09:46:28 - 00:10:30:03

Aaron Fowles

Now, granted, I'm saying that they should play, but it's all part of a narrative. Right? So I maintain that this really had nothing to do with mental health. And, you know, if it did, we would take a little more seriously the fact that suicide rates in Hamilton County are on the increase. Now, there was a board member who was quoted in that article who said, well, look, if we have centerstone and suicide is on the increase in Hamilton County, maybe that part of the problem, I don't think that has a lot of like scientific merit because you have to do it.

00:10:30:03 - 00:10:57:23

Aaron Fowles

But for analysis, like how much more of what it did have increased had they not been available? Right. So I'll stop sharing here. So I mean, that's where we are. Y'all know there are rumors that there is something in the works to address the situation that there might be, a different sort of RFP to maybe specify the services.

00:10:57:26 - 00:11:23:03

Aaron Fowles

I'm not, I don't know, but even if that does happen, there's absolutely no guarantee that, a school board is going to go for it, because one another kind of, thing to think about here. School board races became Partizan just a couple of years ago. I think it was 2021, maybe 2022. You know, prior to that, school board races were nonpartisan.

00:11:23:05 - 00:11:41:28

Aaron Fowles

But then as part of the Covid emergency package, oh my gosh, it's an emergency. We need parties and school board races. So a lot of the people who voted on this, were took part in a Partizan election. I think everyone now has gone through a Partizan, so they had to go through a primary and the no votes.

00:11:41:28 - 00:11:49:01

Aaron Fowles

There's only one who has to face reelection next year. As far as I can tell.

00:11:49:04 - 00:11:51:00

Emma Jaschke

Which one.

00:11:51:02 - 00:11:57:11

Aaron Fowles

I believe it would be Gary. I think he's the only one who would face reelection next year.

00:11:57:13 - 00:12:00:08

Tammy Barnes

Joe Smith also. Right.

00:12:00:10 - 00:12:02:28

Aaron Fowles

If he decides to run again.

00:12:03:00 - 00:12:06:27

Tammy Barnes

Oh, okay.

00:12:06:29 - 00:12:30:06

Aaron Fowles

Which I've heard various things about, but I don't know. I mean, he if he wants to keep this, he won't have to run again. So that that's an aspect. So the question then becomes, what do we do? So a lot of people are sent the emails. Right. That's great. Send the emails. You know that's lovely. And it gets your voice out there.

00:12:30:06 - 00:12:47:22

Aaron Fowles

They, you know, but at some point, especially if it's a change like a forum email, like click here to email your board member. Click right. They've learned to ignore that then. So what else we got.

00:12:47:24 - 00:13:12:00

Lisa Durham

Go to the state. Because legally for our law we have to have like by Tennessee state law there has to be counselors inside each school. That is mandatory. Okay. You can go look it up. I can even I think I'll copy and paste it that law so many times I have to go find it. Give.

00:13:12:01 - 00:13:15:29

Aaron Fowles

Me school counselors.

00:13:16:02 - 00:13:21:08

Lisa Durham

It's, I think, school counselors, but, I mean, like, all we don't even have anybody, right?

00:13:21:09 - 00:13:22:01

Aaron Fowles

Well.

00:13:22:04 - 00:13:36:01

Lisa Durham

I mean, like, social workers and but social workers cannot do the same things. And and then you don't understand that, and they have no clue because the they have no work. Okay.

00:13:36:01 - 00:13:56:10

Aaron Fowles

Your your particular situation might be a tad strange because you're not officially a school, you're a program. And I'm not saying that to justify it. I'm not saying that to excuse it. I'm just saying that's probably but what the comeback would be. But yeah, I mean, every school has counselors. We have social workers, we have student support coaches.

00:13:56:12 - 00:14:06:13

Aaron Fowles

That's going to be the comeback, right? Like we already have all these things. Right? So we have to think about what do we say to that failure. Please, please.

00:14:06:16 - 00:14:11:06

Q Hatcher

Quaila like Michaela.

00:14:11:09 - 00:14:12:22

Aaron Fowles

Yeah, I.

00:14:12:25 - 00:14:13:29

Q Hatcher

Am, so.

00:14:14:01 - 00:14:15:21

Aaron Fowles

It's okay.

00:14:15:24 - 00:14:36:02

Q Hatcher

I share office with the school counselor, so she's really filling it with our center phone person. Gone. And even though she's been to school, she's been a counselor for a couple of years. She's not necessarily equipped to handle some of the issues. And now we don't have a social worker. So she's taking on the social worker part.

00:14:36:05 - 00:14:53:22

Q Hatcher

And so like right now she's like at the point where she's like, I can't do this alone. What do you do? We have our student support coach. But like she's new, we have new admin. So it's like I can see her like buckling under the pressure. She's like, I still have to do my lessons with the teachers or the classroom.

00:14:53:22 - 00:15:06:18

Q Hatcher

So she's just, like, struggling right now. And normally she's really upbeat. But it's like every day something's thrown at her. So she was like, when she heard about Centerstone, she was just like, oh my goodness, what am I going to do?

00:15:06:21 - 00:15:12:14

Aaron Fowles

So right.

Thomas Carver

Over at Harrison and we've got two couselors and 800 students so our counselors are being pulled apart at the seams. My counselor is supposed to come into my classroom. Today, she comes in every Friday at 945 and spends 30 minutes with the entire class, she couldn’t do it today because something else came up. Like I said, they are being pulled apart at the seams.

Aaron Fowles

And those of you who are, not educators here, school counselors are evaluated just like teachers are, right.

00:15:46:06 - 00:16:18:13

Aaron Fowles

They have to be observed. And after they have all this kind of weird teachery stuff, the rubric is a little different. But, I mean, it's not like a school counselor is sitting there all day having one on ones with kids. Very often they're going into classrooms and they have lesson plans and they have a schedule, so they're not as flexible in order to respond to an emergency or if they're like, if they're taking their time with with a student who's having an emergency, but they're supposed to be getting observed, that can actually hurt their career.

00:16:18:15 - 00:16:44:20

Aaron Fowles

So, you know, the overlap is different. And these student support coaches, some of them help kids who are disciplinary. Some of them they're not they're not mental health professionals. Right. And social workers, you know, they have their own sphere. So I mean, centerstone fills a gap that that I mean, school staff just aren't that's not that's not what they're supposed to.

00:16:44:20 - 00:16:49:25

Aaron Fowles

That's not what they're doing. Right. That's just not what they're trained for.

00:16:49:28 - 00:17:13:18

Emma Jaschke

So, Erin, I'm wondering in your opinion, like if we went to the school board and said, hey, we want to reinstate the MOU with Centerstone and like essentially kind of ask them to revote on it. Like, how would you see that going based on all the pushback that they've gotten? Because we really only would need one board member to change their mind?

00:17:13:20 - 00:17:24:23

Aaron Fowles

Yes and no. They're they're, one of the people who voted to keep the MOU, potentially did it in error.

00:17:24:25 - 00:17:29:10

Emma Jaschke

Which one?

00:17:29:12 - 00:17:31:06

Aaron Fowles

I'm not gonna say it.

00:17:31:09 - 00:17:35:01

Tammy Barnes

Okay. You want me to say it? Yeah.

00:17:35:03 - 00:17:37:15

Aaron Fowles

I'm not going to say it.

00:17:37:18 - 00:17:58:04

Tammy Barnes

He told me so. I don't care. I'll say it. I talked to students later, and I talked to him the day after the school board meeting, and he told me that Felice called him that day. So, on Friday after the school board meeting and told him that she voted yes, mistakenly, that that was an error. That's how I would have thought.

00:17:58:06 - 00:18:20:12

Aaron Fowles

So there's, the need is that one of the people who voted no will have to move to reconsider. That's a parliamentary thing. The move to reconsider. So if you want to if you're going to go there and you're gonna make a sign, make the sign, say move to reconsider. And then, you know, you need to get six people to vote.

00:18:20:12 - 00:18:24:29

Aaron Fowles

Yes. Second, all around.

00:18:25:01 - 00:18:57:13

Aaron Fowles

So, so which brings us to, like, organizing tactics. And this is where, I don't know how big this coalition actually is. Right. 25 people RSVP to be on this call today. 17 are here. We had two people show up on Tuesday. That's a whopping 19 people. That's not enough, right? That's. Now there are 500 people who send emails.

00:18:57:15 - 00:19:26:16

Aaron Fowles

And I'm sure we'll get people to, like, showing up at the school board meeting. Is is a good move. I would suggest varying your outreach. What would it look like if everyone just sent a letter to the school board? A handwritten letter? You could send it to the school board. I'm not going to go out and give out candidate, you know, elected officials home address.

00:19:26:18 - 00:19:59:18

Aaron Fowles

But that information is publicly available. But, you know, you'd want to do it in a targeted, targeted way, right? If we had 100 people on this call, we'd be in a very different place. No, Mikayla, we do not. So, you know, I think. The best option is to kind of just glob on to what maybe many of you have already been doing.

00:19:59:20 - 00:20:18:01

Aaron Fowles

Right. Send the email, go to the board meeting, sign up to speak. Here's what's going to happen when you sign up to speak. They're going to take everybody who wants this forward, which is going to be like a bazillion people, and they're going to give them the same exact amount of time as everyone who's going to be voting against.

00:20:18:02 - 00:20:45:22

Aaron Fowles

This would be like four people. But all that to say, it is important that there's that visual huge mass of people, right? And this is what people felt during the budget hearing like. And this, this is what blew my mind right? When the school board was doing the budget hearing. And there was talk about cutting special ed services, everybody rolled in right there, there, like people were outside.

00:20:45:22 - 00:21:06:12

Aaron Fowles

But then when it came to actually vote on the darn budget, there were two people. So there's got to be this prolonged engagement. And yeah, and that's kind of where I am. So, I mean, what are your thoughts on what what we do from here?

00:21:06:14 - 00:21:34:29

Lisa Durham

From people need consistency. Then we need to we need to ask people to be consistent because, I mean. I mean, everybody needs consistency, children and consistency. Why not adults okay. And people need reminders, you know, hey, we need to be there. This is not just a one time deal. It's important if you want change, you have to be consistent.

00:21:35:01 - 00:21:35:28

Aaron Fowles

Okay.

00:21:36:00 - 00:21:39:05

Lisa Durham

You need to come up with a motto.

00:21:39:08 - 00:22:10:07

Aaron Fowles

Move to reconsider. Move to reconsider. That's it. What else do you think we can do?

Thomas Carver

What if parents can? Don't.

Aaron Fowles

I would be careful as an educator talking to parents about this. I would leave that for our non educator friends, who are not as constrained educators. Public school educators have constraints on their First Amendment rights.

00:22:10:09 - 00:22:35:26

Aaron Fowles

Especially if it possibly pertains to information that they gained from their employment. So if, for example, if I were to go to a you know, school board meeting and say, well, the kids, you know, the kids at my school have, you know, all these mental health needs, I could actually get in trouble for that because then I'm kind of like speaking about the students at my school in a way that they may not wish to be spoken about.

00:22:35:29 - 00:22:42:11

Tammy Barnes

So I would leave that to our our outside friends.

00:22:42:13 - 00:22:56:21

Tammy Barnes

So what do you suggest the outside friends could do as far as reaching, I wouldn't even know how to begin reaching those parents.

00:22:56:23 - 00:23:23:21

Aaron Fowles

Well, I mean, you all have networks. You all have your personal networks, like, everyone you know is on some social media account. And every and every one of your friends who is a parent is in some crazy Facebook group for parents. Right. Like, if social media is what we got, use it like, but going and and online organizing is more than posting names.

00:23:23:21 - 00:23:50:24

Aaron Fowles

It's like going into spaces where people are and, and and messaging there. And I would say the most important thing is that we tell stories, right. Facts and data aren't going to do squat. Tell have people tell their story. And if you're going to write the school board, don't write the school board and wag your finger at them and column stupid butt heads.

00:23:50:27 - 00:24:18:07

Aaron Fowles

Write the school board and tell the story about how Centerstone has affected their family or a family of someone they know. Now that's going to be hard, right? Because a lot of the people in this call right now, quite frankly, if they're not in the schools, may not be that closely affected by this. Which makes it hard, right?

00:24:18:09 - 00:24:43:16

Aaron Fowles

You. Yeah. Finding some way to do that is just without a larger mass of people. I'm not going to put my. I'm not going to suggest any educator put themselves on the line. You just never know, right? Especially my non tenured educator friends. I'm not going to suggest they go out on the line. I think showing up and that is showing up is good.

00:24:43:18 - 00:25:03:18

Aaron Fowles

Speaking about the topic of general interest is okay. Like public school educators can speak about a topic of general interest. You can go on to your social media and say, I think it is wrong to deny students mental health services, but you should know, educators should go out and say, you know, the students at my school did this.

00:25:03:25 - 00:25:30:25

Aaron Fowles

That would be bad. And so I mean, that that's I mean, that's what I got with, with this kind of with a small group of people. I think we need to find ways to, to amplify it in a way that's that, that you can do. And quite frankly, online organizing might be it without, without. If we had 100 people, we could do something else.

00:25:30:25 - 00:25:45:00

Aaron Fowles

Right? We can all go somewhere and throw things in the air, but we don't have that, you know, hell is a half empty room. So. All right, Megan, what you got for folks?

00:25:45:02 - 00:26:06:17

Meghan Gilbert

Yeah, I don't as far as, public school triangles. So, yeah, there's there's some teachers that are part of the trans community members, just for a brief, brief overview for folks that may not be familiar, the values are honest, equitable, safe, fully funded, public school. And so what that looks like is we show that school board.

00:26:06:17 - 00:26:27:27

Meghan Gilbert

I love that AMA you posted that you guys cover a sign up to go to school board to, you'll see in our public school some charts. And so I just wanted to plug that, you know, speaking. Claire, you know what Aaron said about prolonged engagement? You know, part of going to school board and building that relationship with our school board reps.

00:26:27:29 - 00:26:50:27

Meghan Gilbert

You know, so going beyond the, the emailing and, like, continuing that conversation in that relationship and, there's other public school trans folks on this call. But, Aaron also briefly mentioned that we we're putting together the school funding 1 to 1 series that will be happening in a lot of districts that are also going to be having school board elections next year.

00:26:50:29 - 00:27:12:21

Meghan Gilbert

But that's because, you know, as Aaron also mentioned, there is a lot of, you know, uproar around budget time. And then like, you know, gets away and there's summer and then there's school and all of that. And so, we want to put that conversation back in the community and, gets more community input and action.

00:27:12:24 - 00:27:35:13

Meghan Gilbert

And so, you know, I know the intent in this meeting today was, okay, do we have enough support to do something in response to Centerstone. And so I just wanted to plug that, like we definitely plan to pack out September school board meeting. I know there's a number of folks that are planning to speak. I think it will probably go like budget time where there's a bunch of folks I want to speak, they'll lump us all together.

00:27:35:13 - 00:28:03:04

Meghan Gilbert

But, yeah, I'm really, you know, if if there's, some interest in, a larger collective action, I'm definitely here for it. And that's. Yeah, I want him to be a part of this to see if there is something that we wanted to do together. But, I'm always looking for input from teachers and otherwise. So, Chris Oakley's out for this call.

00:28:03:04 - 00:28:13:19

Meghan Gilbert

If you have any other, I think, please go on this call. But do you have anything else? I just want to put that out. There is another opportunity to engage.

00:28:13:21 - 00:28:32:20

Crystal Boehm

Yeah, I would just say shameless plug. If you see us in our public school strong shirts at a school board meeting, please come up and talk to us. And if you have any interest in joining public school strong, drop it in the comments and Megan and I will reach out to you.

00:28:32:23 - 00:29:01:10

Aaron Fowles

And, you know that they are going to lump you all together. So I would think of ways and we can even discuss some here, like what can you do if you're just gonna be sitting there like, what can we do? Lisa had an idea for some slogans. Open up the chat window, share a slogan. I don't know.

00:29:01:12 - 00:29:04:21

Aaron Fowles

Or can anyone think of anything else,

00:29:04:23 - 00:29:08:20

Lisa Durham

That every every child matters?

00:29:09:26 - 00:29:20:23

Lisa Durham

I mean, that is kind of, you know, the same thing, you know,

Aaron Fowles

Hashtag 2600, right now.

00:29:20:26 - 00:29:23:26

Aaron Fowles

Come on, kids these days.

00:29:23:28 - 00:29:31:27

Lisa Durham

Let me ask you this because you said facts and statistics don't matter.

00:29:31:29 - 00:29:36:12

Aaron Fowles

I don't say they don't matter. I say they don't. They don't move.

00:29:36:14 - 00:29:48:05

Aaron Fowles

Right. You're not going to move somebody with statistics. You're not going to move their heart.

00:29:48:08 - 00:30:21:11

Aaron Fowles

Rate for a story Kent Pierce. Because I if you're a hard hearted on something I mean, I'll use an example. Maybe I'll say this, you know, Nancy Mace, representative represented everybody. She's come back. She went into the Epstein, victim hearing, and it got briefly social, viral. I guess she came out just, like, in tears.

00:30:21:13 - 00:30:31:12

Aaron Fowles

Right. And this was not because somebody bombarded her with statistics. She heard a story that broke her heart.

00:30:31:14 - 00:30:58:00

Lisa Durham

A certain way to get in touch with any, Any, the children or the families that really didn't touch the children, but any of the families that were really involved in Centerstone maybe to reach out to them and say, this is very important. I mean, is there any way possible I mean.

00:30:58:02 - 00:31:25:12

Aaron Fowles

I can imagine I would not encourage any public employee to do that. But I would not as double plus not encourage any public school educator to do that. Otherwise, yeah. I can't imagine there's not. Again, online organizing might be the way to do that. Tara.

00:31:25:14 - 00:31:50:29

Tara Phillips

Yeah. I was just going to ask if, I am not a public school teacher. I'm a former teacher. I'm a member of, public school. Strong. I'm interested in maybe, like, putting it out there that, if your family has been positively impacted by Centerstone, reach out and share your story. Is that, like, maybe a tactic that we could take?

00:31:51:02 - 00:31:59:14

Tara Phillips

Just sort of like putting it out there into social media and they could reach out if they're comfortable and want to share something like that.

00:31:59:16 - 00:32:17:27

Aaron Fowles

That is a good tactic. And trying to get it far and wide. But again, I, I can not encourage any of my public school educator friends to do it. Because it just puts them in a, in a weird situation.

00:32:18:00 - 00:32:40:11

Sadie

As a college student, is there anything that I can do that gets that information out? Because, I mean, I found out because of Facebook and from work and from friends, and like, I mean, I have my own story. Now, I didn't go to Hamilton County. I went to a different place. But either way, like, I just I don't know what steps I'm able to take.

00:32:40:13 - 00:33:08:15

Aaron Fowles

So, I mean, I'm not an attorney and I can't speak to your. I'm not an attorney, so I cannot speak to your specific situation. But you are. I mean, you're a citizen, right? You can do things, but I don't, you know, if you're a student at a public college, I also want you to be careful, about, you know, there's, you know, and anyone who is in any way involved with, like, money that is public.

00:33:08:20 - 00:33:32:14

Aaron Fowles

You have a lot of weight on your shoulders. And I don't want any any. There are things that can be done that can be effective. And and we have to bear in mind. Right. We also whatever happens, this happened to me. And it can be it can be a vehicle of building power and and demonstration of a sense of power.

00:33:32:16 - 00:34:00:02

Aaron Fowles

No matter what happens. Right. Because at this meeting, there's going there are going to be like bazillions of people who are not member like there's going to be educators there who are not members of HCA, and there's going to be, you know, non educators who are not members of public school strong. And so this is a key opportunity to, Angelica, that is a beautiful idea.

00:34:00:02 - 00:34:22:01

Aaron Fowles

Right? I'm actually going to drop something in the drop in the chat. That's I haven't heard it for a while. This is a about nearly 200 non nonviolent tactics based off the work of a guy named Jean sharp. And the explanations of all and lots of different tactics. This explanation is to say, who else is?

00:34:22:01 - 00:34:26:06

Aaron Fowles

On the other hand, having.

00:34:26:08 - 00:34:43:10

Tammy Barnes

I wanted to share, what I did in my email, I didn't I didn't send in one of the form emails because the last time I talked to him, he told me he had 50 plus. Now, this has been, almost two weeks ago, but still only had over 50 emails in his inbox. But most of them were form emails.

00:34:43:10 - 00:35:11:21

Tammy Barnes

And so I don't I don't think he went to read all those. So what I did in mind, I stated the facts, this this is how this is affecting you know, you're just this decision. These are the consequences. But then I went into a story about my youngest son who has not received services from Centerstone. So it wasn't about that direct relationship, but it was now he's 15 at this point.

00:35:11:21 - 00:35:48:01

Tammy Barnes

But when he was in elementary school, we noticed that he had some anxiety going on, and there was things going on in the classroom that was affecting him. And he did need counseling. And so I did take him to a therapist. And I said at that time, I was only working two days a week, and I was able to I had the luxury of being able to take him to these appointments, if that had been with my two older children when I was working full time at Erlanger in surgery, taking call, there's absolutely no way that I would have been able to take my child to therapy, and Centerstone is a service that I would

00:35:48:01 - 00:36:10:07

Tammy Barnes

have needed. It didn't have any effect on Steve Slater, but I did send it to all of the school board members. And so I just wanted to give that example of a story that I shared that wasn't directly related to Centerstone, but it was my story. So for what it's worth,

00:36:10:09 - 00:36:31:12

Aaron Fowles

That's that's good. Thank you. And so, like I said, when we have, you know, not knowing what people are willing to do, I mean, if we had I think we talked about this, if we had like a bunch of people, we could all roll up in there with like a stone in our hand and then just, like, drop it in the middle of the boardroom floor.

00:36:31:15 - 00:37:02:03

Aaron Fowles

Right. But if 20 people do that, it's a nuisance. If 200 people do that, it's it's a movement. So it becomes a numbers game. And, numbers aren't there. So, you know, I think we have the option of just leveraging what we've got. Right. You know, in the schools that you go to, every school has got a flip and Facebook group of parents, every single one.

00:37:02:05 - 00:37:27:29

Aaron Fowles

Right. Find it. You might need you might need to dig around if it's one your kids go to. But like I said, I'm not sure if if people on this call, if if their children, you know, are at a school where this is an issue where centers don't even provide services, I don't know. So I think we have to kind of confront that reality as well.

00:37:28:03 - 00:37:33:20

Aaron Fowles

You know what I'm saying?

00:37:33:23 - 00:37:58:01

Aaron Fowles

And I mean, I for the for the people who are educators, who are who are seeing this with your eyes, it I, I know it's constraining that you don't want to go out there and say, well, I work at this school and it's so important there. And you can say that maybe directly when you're talking to someone, if you're talking to a school board member, if you want to say that, that's fine, but don't do it publicly.

00:37:58:04 - 00:38:20:15

Aaron Fowles

Right. You don't want to do anything public that, you know, shares knowledge that you gained about working about students because, you know, if one person says, oh, you know, Emma says that MVC is an example. You know, you can punch me if you don't like that. You know, she works at a school that's very limited in size.

00:38:20:15 - 00:38:41:01

Aaron Fowles

And so if she says something about her students, I mean, there's not that many to choose from. And she just pointed out a lot of a lot of her students, William. Mikayla. And then Joy. Okay, that's the order. I saw it on my screen.

00:38:41:03 - 00:39:05:07

Michaela Winter

Yeah. First of all, thank you to T.A. for hosting this face. And thank you to everybody being here. I know time and energy has been spent on this. And I, for one, am really encouraged by the groundswell of organizing happening, around this and that same. I know I've seen, quite a few class action and sign up links for this next school board meeting.

00:39:05:10 - 00:39:28:27

Michaela Winter

Like the A project and PTA for a myriad of groups. And I'm curious, if there's any space where, like, those groups are connecting and talking about, you know, what the numbers of signups that we all have are and then what may be some next steps. From there.

00:39:29:00 - 00:39:57:27

Aaron Fowles

It happens informally, but we're all very jealous. I know, like a lot of these groups get very jealous, and I'm one of them, so, I mean, I don't, I don't know, on on our end because especially because, like, we are I mean, I work for TDM staff, right? Hamilton County education Association as a separate entity. And, you know, the people who are here are members of the Hamilton County Education Association that I work with.

00:39:57:29 - 00:40:21:25

Aaron Fowles

So, you know, and and there's there's some differences between that. Right. So for this issue and I've spoken with, with Meghan and I've spoken with some other people, and I think what's going to happen is a lot of people are going to show up at this meeting. Right? I'm not concerned about their necessarily not being numbers, because on a very small number of people see the sign up and they're going to take action on it.

00:40:21:25 - 00:40:35:00

Aaron Fowles

Right. It's there's a small section of people, and there might be more who just show up, but coordinating it on the front end.

00:40:35:02 - 00:40:42:00

Aaron Fowles

I don't know.

00:40:42:03 - 00:40:49:16

Aaron Fowles

Join you had a question. Can you hub, can you say it out loud?

00:40:49:19 - 00:41:02:13

Joy Centurion

Yeah. I mean, just for, like, for truth or real, what do I tell this kid that keeps coming up to me in the hallway and saying, where did she go? And coming back? How come she's not telling me there was no explanation?

00:41:02:16 - 00:41:30:13

Aaron Fowles

Yeah. That's hard. My advice for you is to, you can say, centerstone is not is not here right now. I mean, that's it. Like, I wouldn't I would not, because you don't want to, the worst case scenario in the world, right? You say something, like, oh, you know, the the wicked, wicked school board took them away from you.

00:41:30:15 - 00:41:51:15

Aaron Fowles

And then a student goes home and repeats some, like, mistakes, what you said. And then that gets out there and you know, you don't want to be seen as disrupting the efficient operations of the school. So.

00:41:51:17 - 00:41:54:05

Aaron Fowles

I mean, really, the.

00:41:54:06 - 00:41:58:05

Joy Centurion

How is going to take that is is why did she leave.

00:41:58:08 - 00:42:09:25

Aaron Fowles

Like I hear and, Joy, I think your best bet at that point, as a, as an and as an employee, right, is to elevate that to your school administration.

00:42:09:27 - 00:42:28:07

Aaron Fowles

You know, because at the end of the day, it's it's their call. And I know that may not be a rewarding answer, but, you know, our my interest is all right. All right. Angelica.

00:42:28:10 - 00:42:29:24

Angelica Acevedo

All right. Can you hear me?

00:42:29:26 - 00:42:31:06

Aaron Fowles

Yes.

00:42:31:09 - 00:42:48:08

Angelica Acevedo

Hi. And I am an education reform organizer here in Chattanooga. I know that there are some, barriers for educators and sharing your experience and your place publicly. But there is a great group of people.

00:42:48:08 - 00:42:49:11

Aaron Fowles

Organizing.

00:42:49:13 - 00:43:06:23

Angelica Acevedo

Around the school board meeting about this issue in particular. And if you are looking to have your voice heard, if you need help with advocacy, writing, op ed support, there is a team that contact you over here at Publisher Strong and K love. And again, I want to hold space for how this is very technical and difficult for educators right now.

00:43:06:23 - 00:43:25:17

Angelica Acevedo

I know seeing your children like this and feeling like it's not safe for you to act on anything. I that the powerlessness that I don't wish on anyone. And so I want you to know that there are people in solidarity of you and the community members who want to do what they can to take care of you and the kids.

00:43:25:17 - 00:43:46:16

Angelica Acevedo

And so if you are looking to do something quickly, we do have the capacity to help do a quick turnaround before the school board meeting. So I will leave my email in the chat. And Aaron, thank you for hosting the space. And, you know, taking care of our teachers and advocating for their safety, especially through these really difficult times.

00:43:46:18 - 00:43:58:03

Angelica Acevedo

Hopefully we can figure something out as a community and make some waves in this space and see centerstone or a great, care for our kids returned as soon as possible.

00:43:58:06 - 00:44:30:07

Aaron Fowles

And as an educator, you can speak about things in a general way. You can do that. There are two Supreme Court cases that dictate. One is Pickering, one is Garcetti. And the general overarching kind of theme is that, you know, you have the right to speak about politics. You have the right to things that speak about things of general interest and concern, but you cannot share any information you gained as a result of your employment.

00:44:30:10 - 00:44:55:16

Aaron Fowles

Well, we are coming up at the one hour mark. I think the key actions now, definitely do the whole Emilia school board, you know, do that business, make every plan in the world to show up on September 18th, and you got to. You'll have to sign up to speak by September 12th, just to be safe.

00:44:55:18 - 00:45:21:16

Aaron Fowles

And I'll email out instructions on that to everyone. Just fill out that form. You know, things that concrete things that can be done. Again, we have to, you know, play with the fact that we think there might already be, an administrative fix on the way, which is ideal. But we don't want to. We don't want to let go based on that notion, it keep the pressure on.

00:45:21:19 - 00:45:42:25

Aaron Fowles

Right. So we do have to keep the pressure on even after this meeting. It's not like, oh, I went to the meeting. My advocacy is just scratched. I feel great. So we're going to have to prolong that engagement beyond that meeting as well. Are there any.

00:45:42:28 - 00:45:50:01

Aaron Fowles

Last remaining thoughts?

00:45:50:04 - 00:46:12:13

Aaron Fowles

I hope this has been, beneficial, especially if you haven't had a chance to to pitch in yet. If there's something that's weighing on you that you've been dying to say. We have a few people who've been our quiet, our quieter friends.

00:46:12:16 - 00:46:47:09

Hayley Little

I'll speak. I think this has been really helpful. And I think everybody said pretty much like what I'm thinking. My biggest concern with all of this is just the undermining of mental health professionals. Just insinuating that they can't be professional and keep their personal beliefs and ideologies, separate from their job. And, Crystal, I know you mentioned it earlier when, Ben Doherty mentioned, like, he doesn't know the ideologies of Centerstone and.

00:46:47:13 - 00:47:11:19

Hayley Little

Yeah, that that is a bad argument. You don't know everything that your teachers believe. They don't all share the same value system either. And just going back to, like, the fact side of things and sharing that, I do think that's valuable in this situation, just because we do have so many people speaking, and just lying, like at school board meetings and sharing this information about this.

00:47:11:22 - 00:47:32:26

Hayley Little

I mean, watching that meeting, we watch school board members just repeatedly ask the same questions over and over and just, like, refuse to listen to the answers that we're being given. So, yeah, I appreciate people sharing like a mix of the personal stories. And then also just factually correct information.

00:47:32:29 - 00:47:51:28

Aaron Fowles

As valuable. Haley. No one else had talked about how this whole thing, like, demeans these absolute professionals who are doing their absolute professional work into, you know, in schools. That's a very, very good point. And I'm glad you spoke up with that.

00:47:52:00 - 00:48:09:03

Hayley Little

And they're they're making their decision based off of hypotheticals that they've imagined in their head, like there's no systemic evidence or history or pattern of centerstone not acting professionally. And, so they're yeah, it's just all these hypothetical because.

00:48:09:05 - 00:48:44:17

Aaron Fowles

A comic book on a website. Yeah. I want everyone to internalize this. This is not a like, reasoned decision. This was, a reaction to a comic book on a website. And so that is why I say stories are what are going to pierce the veil here, because a well reasoned argument doesn't prevail against an emotional action, right?

00:48:44:20 - 00:49:08:06

Aaron Fowles

So, I mean, we can we can do this and we can communicate our stories. And the stories of the kids in our community. But it's got to be authentic, right? So, it also they, they can't see it as the same cacophony of voices that they're used to hearing who have no connection to the issue directly. Right.

00:49:08:11 - 00:49:44:14

Aaron Fowles

So that would be my challenge would be how can we find people, you know, how can we find parents who are benefited from these services who don't, don't have it now, that's my challenge, you know, and maybe there's a few workarounds for it. But if we can find the parents whose families have benefited from these services and they tell their stories, that's a game changer.

00:49:44:17 - 00:49:48:17

Aaron Fowles

Yes.

00:49:48:19 - 00:50:11:16

Q Hatcher

I had a question. So what about the avenue? Like, if you knew one of the center stalling therapies because, like, one of them I'm friends with on Facebook, and she was just talking about, like, what she went through when she found out the decision and like, she was just talking about, like, how she felt that she would have closure with her kids.

00:50:11:19 - 00:50:29:13

Q Hatcher

And so I know she's in multiple schools, so she's in I know my daughter's high school and then she's in elementary school. Then I got it. So is there avenue that we could, I guess, I don't know, how could they also talk about how this affects them?

00:50:29:16 - 00:50:52:28

Aaron Fowles

I'm sure they're already at it. Okay. We had a centerstone counselor definitely come out, to our meeting on Tuesday. I think that'd be a great one. And I thank you for for raising that. If we had centers on counselors talking, like, directly about, hey, here's what I did at school and here's what the abrupt closure of the MoU means, for.

00:50:52:28 - 00:51:03:28

Aaron Fowles

And if I would suggest that they maybe not say the school name, but I think that they have their different rights and things. I don't, I don't I don't know the deal. But.

00:51:04:01 - 00:51:06:29

Q Hatcher

Did they sign us to go to the school board meeting?

00:51:07:02 - 00:51:08:03

Aaron Fowles

Anyone can sign up to.

00:51:08:03 - 00:51:11:05

Q Hatcher

Okay. Okay.

00:51:11:08 - 00:51:41:27

Aaron Fowles

Absolutely. You know, they could do that. And I think they absolutely should, you know, different perspectives on this are valuable. You have one of the. Well, I thank everyone for coming. It is 630. I mean, I'll stick around. If anybody wants to chat. But I know it's getting dinnertime and but the kids, the bedtime for kids are crazy like mine.

00:51:41:27 - 00:51:47:00

Aaron Fowles

They go to bed early. It's a blessing. It's a blessing.

00:51:47:02 - 00:52:14:21

Aaron Fowles

Thank you all for coming. We'll be shooting out some emails, I'm sure, about things to do, but, hey, showing up physically at the board meeting September 18th. But I also want you all to commit to showing up to another meeting in, like, February or March, some stupid month that you don't care about yet. I want you to put that in your calendar.

00:52:14:23 - 00:52:39:18

Aaron Fowles

Right. So you just have that in your plan when you go to plan bowling night or whatever. Like not this Thursday, not this one. I'm going to another board meeting. Right. Because we don't there is activist fatigue, right? That is a real thing. And you can get it right. You can like we all have these plans, educators alive and myself.

00:52:39:21 - 00:53:01:17

Aaron Fowles

You have all these plans in August like July and August to like, oh my God, I'm going to do all these awesome things. And then like September comes and you had a day like Tom has had you know, your butt just got kicked and bam, Golden age television and they sell wine in boxes now. And you know, you can kind of lose the verve.

00:53:01:20 - 00:53:18:15

Aaron Fowles

So I encourage you to make another plan for later on in the year so you don't burn out. All right y'all. Oh my gosh Joe, you're being attacked. Oh my goodness. All right well thank you all. Y'all are awesome.

00:53:18:17 - 00:53:19:25

Emma Jaschke

Thanks Aaron.

00:53:19:28 - 00:53:28:15

Aaron Fowles

Thank you I'll stick around if anybody wants to chit chat. But the official part is over. Take care of y'all.