

City of Asheville  
**BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**  
Application Form

**APPLICANTS ARE STRONGLY URGED TO ATTEND SEVERAL MEETINGS OF A BOARD PRIOR TO APPLYING AND/OR APPOINTMENT TO A BOARD**

Name of board or commission(s): Asheville City School Board

Your name: Leah Ferguson

Home Phone #: 828-275-2289

Street Address: 49 Johnston Blvd.

City: Asheville

Zip Code: 28806

Mailing Address (if different):

Employer: Buncombe County Department of Health- Community Transformation Project of WNC

Your position: Lead Coordinator

Office Phone #: 828-275-2289

Resident of City Asheville

County Buncombe

Race \* Multi

Sex \* F

Age \* 38

Are you a United States Citizen (check one)?

Yes

No

Residence location (check one):

Central

North

South

East

West

Are you aware of any potential conflicts of interest that may arise during your service on this board (i.e., property interest, business interest, etc.)? If so, please explain:

Part of my work is to be a champion for joint use agreements with existing facilities for physical activity in the region.

I was the co-executive director of the Asheville City Schools Foundation from 2008-2012.

I have a son who attends Vance Elementary School.



Potential conflicts of interest do not preclude appointments.

Please indicate the area(s) of expertise that you can bring to the above board(s), and then, in detail, list education, experience, reasons for your interest, and other factors that support your interest in serving (use additional sheets if necessary).

Expertise:

Legal  Technical  Fundraising  Community Contacts  Public Speaking

Business Management (Financial)  Business Management (Operational)

Details:

I have a Masters in Education. I have 4 + years of experience in Asheville City Schools. I have lots of experience understanding budgets and allocations. I have 15 + years of experience in grantwriting and organizational development.

Return to:

Maggie Burlison, City Clerk  
Post Office Box 7148  
Asheville, NC 28802-7148

Signature: Leah Ferguson

Date: 12-7-12

E-Mail: ctcbuncombe@gmail.com

Email: [mburlison@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:mburlison@ashevillenc.gov)

Telephone: 828-259-5601

Fax #:

Fax #: 828-259-5499

\* This information is requested for the sole purpose of assuring that a cross section of the community is appointed.

*Question 1) One of the most important functions of the school board is to evaluate and improve leadership. How would you go about relating to, evaluating, and improving school system leadership, particularly the Superintendent? How would the relationship between the Asheville City Council and the School Board best function in order to support strong leadership?*

First and foremost, I believe that there can be no expectation without agreement. It is the responsibility of the school board to develop a transparent process of evaluation that is agreed upon by the district leadership. I'm excited about the potential to support the new strategic plan as a school board member. I participated in that process, led by Peggy Dalman, and know that it was driven by authentic community engagement. I hope that while operationalizing the strategic plan, the school board has identified the core competencies school leaders need to accomplish the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

Using those core competencies, a thorough evaluation framework can be developed that is shared with leadership. Once you have a framework that is clearly articulated and agreed upon, it seems prudent to use a 360-degree evaluation technique. Current best practices research shows that evaluations that include parent and student feedback are the most effective way to understand the full picture of school systems.

School leaders set the tone, establish district culture, and are the most public face of the schools. Therefore, the school board should both provide clear and informed feedback to the superintendent, sharing with him how he or she is leading from the perspective of each stakeholder group. ACS's greatest benefit is its scale. Such a small district can be uniquely responsive to the community it serves. Moreover, I believe it is the school board's role to develop leadership within the district and to provide opportunities for school leadership to hone and master new skills.

The city council's role should be to provide the same level of oversight and support it provides to other appointed committees and boards. The Council should have clear expectations for each school board member and the school board as a whole. Several times during the year, the school board should present on its progress in implementing the strategic plan.

In short, the blend of clear expectations and agreements; good information from all stakeholder groups, and professional development support is powerful for evaluating and supporting leadership. This kind of framework can and should permeate the entire culture of the Asheville City Schools. I also believe that it is the role and responsibility of the school board to remove poor leaders. The research clearly shows that principals and district leadership play a large role in school success.

Question 2) *How would you address our school children's health and safety needs, including balanced nutrition and protection from violence? In the past the school just focused on educating our children. Unfortunately the paradigm is shifting to where schools are going from just educating to also protecting. What are your thoughts on how the school system should prepare to protect our children from abuse and predators?*

The contemporary social problems we face are great and schools alone are not capable of solving these problems. Over 20% of children in Asheville City live in poverty. Nearly all of those children attend the Asheville City Schools. Many children who live in poverty experience hunger daily and we know that being hungry impacts learning. To that end, schools provide breakfast each day to all children. While those meals can and should be healthier, we all should be grateful that schools have expanded and adapted to meet the needs of the whole child. The endeavor of public schooling is expensive. Ever-shrinking budgets mean that meeting the needs of the whole child requires community-wide attention and engagement.

For instance, to meet the nutritional needs of children we need more than free and reduced breakfast and lunch programs. We need advocates to ensure that the Farm Bill provides adequate federal funds for healthy meals. We need to rethink the entire system because the present focus on caloric intake rather than healthy foods is contributing to childhood obesity, which is on the rise in our community. We need to engage a variety of stakeholders and partners to address what is becoming a significant public health problem.

School violence is something that concerns all of us. I have spent time hiding in the dark, on the floor in my son's classroom through drills that are supposed to simulate an armed attack on the school. However, it's easy to be reactive and to over estimate the role that schools have in preventing such shocking and unspeakable violence- schools cannot do it alone. Keeping children safe is a community-wide role and responsibility that will require the efforts of law enforcement and mental health professionals as well as parents and public school leadership. We have to keep trying as a community to address these issues from a reasoned, responsive position. After all, while these events seem to be increasing, they are still the exception and not the rule.

Question 3) *If the N.C. General Assembly limits education funding to one school district per county, what would be gained and what would be lost? What role should the School Board play in the process?*

Unfortunately, the consolidation of funding to schools is a very real possibility. It is unclear how a funding consolidation would impact the city schools in its implementation. One possibility is that it could force a complete merger. The City Schools have evolved over time into a unique system that is geared to meet the specific needs of the students it serves. If the city schools were to be merged with the county schools it is likely they will lose unique characteristics and along with them much of the locally funded positions and programs. We are lucky to have assistant principals at every school and school-based social workers who meet the needs of children district-wide who are living in or on the edge of poverty.

I'm not sure there would be anything gained from a financial consolidation. Advocates for merger have touted cost saving through elimination of administrative leaders and reduction of duplication, but I'm not clear on how these numbers actually pan out. Should the school board be faced with this reality, however, they would be responsible for developing a smooth process. We would need to ensure that administration and school-based leadership continued to focus on the education of children, while we looked deeply, with help, at the new funding situation.

Question 4) *Given our current financial climate, what will it take to become, at all grade levels, the top school system in the state of North Carolina?*

Our teachers are the heart of our schools and our classrooms; any strategy to be the "top school system" should have at its core a strategy for recruiting, retaining, and training excellent teachers. From my perspective our system would be the top school system if:

- All of our students were competent readers by third grade;
- Our teacher evaluation process included peer review, classroom observation by master teachers, and student/parent feedback;
- Our schools are open, warm places full of busy excited children;
- Communication among leadership, teachers, and guardians was clear and transparent;
- The bottom line of every decision is "this is what is best for kids".
- Bad administrators and teachers are removed from their positions because accountability works best when all are held to the same standards.

Fundamental to evaluation is a balanced approach that doesn't start and stop with standardized test scores. School success should be measured by authentic metrics that take into consideration that teaching is an art form and students are varied and singular.

Question 5) *In what ways can the Asheville City Schools effectively innovate? How do year round schooling, magnet schools, and charter schools fit into your vision of an innovative school system?*

Effective innovation requires decision-making tools that are adequate and made transparent to all. One of the best things a system can do is develop decision filters. A decision filter helps to ensure that all the considerations are weighed in proportion to their relative importance. Innovation should only be employed to address a problem and when done right, can be a powerful tool. My process of activating innovation looks like this.

1. Look at the problem and identify its root cause.
2. Research evidence based models and promising practices for solving the problem;
3. Present the problem and the most viable solutions to stakeholder groups;

4. Run the most favored solution through the decision filters;
5. Depending on the size or scale of the innovation, identify the path for implementation. This could mean a pilot project at one school before up scaling district-wide

Through all of this we should really engage the community in the conversation. Which means, being forthcoming with information in a timely fashion, using technology to reach out, and going out to talk to hard to reach families.

There are many innovations worth employing in a system, but change for the sake of change alone is never a good idea. I favor a pragmatic approach motivated by identified needs and based in evidence.

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**APPLICANTS ARE STRONGLY URGED TO ATTEND SEVERAL MEETINGS OF A BOARD PRIOR TO APPLYING AND/OR APPOINTMENT TO A BOARD**

Name of board or commission(s): Asheville City School Board

Your name: Peggy Dalman Home Phone #: 254-0045

Street address: 45 Westchester Dr City: Asheville Zip Code: 28803

Mailing address (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: The Biltmore Company

Your position: Market Research Manager Office Phone #: 225-6727

Resident of City Asheville county Buncombe Race \_\_\_\_\_ \* Sex F \* Age 54 \*

Are you a United States Citizen (circle one)? (Yes) or No

Residence location (check one): Central X North \_\_\_\_\_ South \_\_\_\_\_ East \_\_\_\_\_ West \_\_\_\_\_

How did you become aware of the opening? \_\_\_\_\_ Webpage \_\_\_\_\_ Current Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_ eNews \_\_\_\_\_  
Government Channel X Newspaper \_\_\_\_\_ Radio \_\_\_\_\_ Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Agenda \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the area(s) of expertise that you can bring to the above board(s), and then in detail list education, experience, reasons for your interest, and other factors that support your interest in serving (use additional sheets if necessary). Expertise: \_\_\_\_\_ Legal \_\_\_\_\_ Technical \_\_\_\_\_ Fundraising X Community Contacts X Business Management (Financial) X Business Management (Operational) X Public Speaking  
see attached

Return to:  
Maggie Burleson, City Clerk  
Post Office Box 7148  
Asheville, N.C. 28802-7148

E-Mail: [mburleson@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:mburleson@ashevillenc.gov)  
Telephone: 259-5601  
Fax #: 259-5499

Signature: Peggy Dalman  
Date: Feb 22, 2009  
E-Mail: bpdalman@charter.net  
Fax #: 225-6139

\* This information is requested for the sole purpose of assuring that a cross section of the community is appointed.

**Peggy Dalman**  
**Education, Experience and Interest**

**Education:**

Bachelor of Arts - SUNY at Oswego in Economics  
Masters of Business Administration – Stern School of Business at NYU - Finance

**Experience:**

30 plus years of management experience:

- Market research and data analysis: expert at understanding organizational data to identify key strengths, challenges and opportunities;
- Budgeting/Finance: many years of budgeting experience; in periods of expansion and budget reductions;
- Customer Service: managed staffs in numerous settings providing training, coaching and setting standards – ACS has many stakeholders who all deserve outstanding service;
- Information Technology: understand the importance of technology in the management of an organization and for the students to be ready for the 21<sup>st</sup> century;
- Marketing/Sales: have the experience and knowledge to help take positive steps in improving the public's perception of ACS and engaging them in ACS

Active as a volunteer for the schools

- Committee co-chair for Asheville High Task Force
- Member of PTO Executive Board at Ira B. Jones Elementary
- Member of Out-Reach committee at Ira B. Jones Elementary
- Event related volunteer work and newsletters at Jones and Asheville Middle School

**Why I am applying:**

1. Passionate about kids: I believe that all kids can succeed – some have the determination and self discipline to make it on their own. Some children have families and friends who support them and keep them on track to graduate. But others need more help as they lack support outside of school. Asheville City Schools can not solve all the problems; but they certainly do play a key role in the solution. I would like to see our success rate continue to improve with every student. Those that we serve well – what else can be done to challenge them and prepare them for the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Those that graduate, but perform at less than their potential – how can we motivate them to do better? Those who don't graduate, how can we build a relationship with each of them to keep them in school and give them the skills they need to succeed?
2. Great school system: Asheville City Schools is a great public school system that continues to strive for excellence. They do an amazing job with the facilities and resources available. Many of the staff go above and beyond – donating time and money to help students. ACS, like many school systems, will face tough choices in the next budget cycle. My business experience with managing budgets will help identify how we can best manage the resources we will have available to continue to improve our performance.
3. Community Involvement: For me, the community, outside the school system, needs to understand that we all suffer when a child does not realize their potential – it is a loss that touches us all. The more we can make the connection for everyone in the community between their lives and the life of every child, hopefully, the more involved and committed they will be to help ACS help the children in our community.

## Asheville City School Board Questions Peggy Dalman

1. *What do you believe are the causes and solutions of our high dropout rate for students in the city school system?*

Dropout rates are a complicated issue and not easy to solve. Asheville City Schools is not the only school system trying to meet this challenge. The cost of children dropping out is borne by the entire community because statistics show drop outs are more likely to have lower household incomes, higher unemployment rates, more health issues and a higher likelihood to spend time in prison.<sup>1</sup>

I believe some of the key causes of children within the Asheville system dropping out are:

- no strong positive relationships with somebody at the school
- school material which does not seem relevant to students
- lack of support outside of school
- students' low self-esteem and/or poor self-image

Asheville City School system is aware of the problem and has many programs in place to reduce the dropout rate: AVID, FX at Asheville High, Advisor program at Asheville High, etc. I believe there are some key additional areas needing focus:

- Continue to identify ways to build meaningful relationships with each student
- Increase community involvement in the school – the dropout rate affects *everyone* in the community and the underlying causes can not be solved solely by the school system
- Identify the children at risk early and link them with extra support and programming
- Reach out to families early when children show signs they are not being engaged at school
- Build strong open communication between schools and families
- Ensure the curriculum includes relevance to real life and that it is explained to students

2. *Approximately 50% of students residing in the city limits are actually taught in county schools. What are your thoughts on the discrepancy in educational service delivery?*

I would like to understand the original reasons for structuring the school systems this way and determine if the logic still applies today. A careful plan would need to be in place, which would include all of the stakeholders, to investigate, evaluate and determine if a change is appropriate. This could be a delicate issue with strong opinions on all sides and it needs to be handled in a transparent and inclusive process to focus the discussion on the facts and the true pros and cons of a change. The overriding concern should be what is best for the students. Other concerns would include the following:

- How will resources be used most efficiently to provide the best possible education to students?
- What are the costs of making a change?
- What are the savings of making a change?



3. *What are your views on the role of the school system to community health, nutrition and childhood diseases?*

I believe the school system can play an important role in educating students about healthy lifestyles and nutrition. Some specific ideas:

- Set the example: serve healthy, nutritious and delicious food
- Include in the curriculum: what is a healthy lifestyle and why is it important
- Use locally grown food and/or organic food in the cafeterias
- Provide more training to cafeteria staff on preparation of healthy food
- Offer healthy lifestyle programs for Asheville City School staff: partner with Mission Hospitals to offer classes to staff, Fit 4 Life teams, staff newsletter with recipes, ideas on living healthy, etc.
- Encourage making exercise a part of daily life for students and staff

The school system can act as a resource for information for families about childhood diseases. Update families as necessary about any situations at the school, clearly communicate its policies on immunizations, and provide information about immunizations (timing, where to get them, why they are important, etc.). Ensure that all families are aware of the existing health centers at Asheville High and Asheville Middle school and all the services they can provide. Have the health centers reach out to students and families with information on diseases as relevant.

4. *How do you address the problem of the minority student achievement gap?*

The achievement gap is another complicated issue, prevalent across the country and not easy to solve. Some of my solutions are similar to the suggestions to address the dropout rate, since low academic achievement is one of the causes of children dropping out.

Some suggestions:

- Continue and expand the AVID program
- Identify kids at risk early – in pre-school or kindergarten, and provide the extra support needed to close the gap early in their school career (offer after school programs, remedial classes and tutoring, increase parent/teacher conferences, etc.)
- Provide extra resources/attention in the K-5 years to build self-esteem in children at risk
- Hire minority teachers
- Offer more outreach to families; particularly to those parents whose children are at risk such as community programs in their neighborhoods ( FACES is a good example)
- Coordinate effort with all resources in the community: government, non-profits, police, churches, etc, to identify ways for everyone to work together
- Educate the community at large about the costs to the community: lower tax revenues, more families needing assistance to make ends meet, higher crime rates, less skilled work force, etc.
- Create a task force to identify and study schools that have successfully closed their achievement gap with the goal of making recommendations on what programs would fit best with our population, size and resources available
- Review all current programs in place for this issue to identify the most successful and reallocate resources if necessary

I don't mean to imply that many of these ideas aren't already in place and/or haven't been tried before. I was a member of the Achievement Gap committee and studied the issue as part of the Asheville High Task Force – so I know how crucial it is to address this challenge and have a deep appreciation for its complexity.

5. *Should upper administrative staff be required to live in the City of Asheville, and why?*

I don't believe there should be a requirement for upper administrative staff to live in the City of Asheville. We want to have the best people we can find to fill these leadership positions and I believe such a requirement could limit the candidates interested in applying.

Hopefully, if upper administrative staff have children of school age, they would send them to Asheville City Schools regardless of where they live, although I would not make this a requirement either. I think there are many considerations that all parents need to take into consideration when making decisions about where their children will attend school.

City of Asheville  
**BOARDS & COMMISSIONS**  
Application Form

**Applicants are strongly urged to attend several meetings of a board prior to applying**

Name of board or commission: Asheville City Board of Education

Your name: Shaunda Sandford Home Phone #: 828-273-9445

Street address: 139 South Grove Street City: Asheville Zip Code: 28801

Mailing address (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: Family Preservation Services

Your position: Qualified Mental Health Professional Office Phone #: 828-225-3100

Resident of City Asheville County Buncombe Race Black \*  Male  Female\* Age 38 \*

Residence location (check one):  Central  North  South  East  West

Are you aware of any potential conflicts of interest that may arise during your service on this board (i.e., property interest, business interest, etc.)? If so, please explain: n/a

\_\_\_\_\_. Potential conflicts of interest do not preclude appointments.

Please indicate the area(s) of expertise that you can bring to the above board(s), and then in detail list education, experience, reasons for your interest, and other factors that support your interest in serving **Applicants are encouraged to provide a cover letter and/or a brief resume. Please use additional sheets if necessary.**

The Asheville City Board of Education may benefit from my areas of expertise which include my experience with working with children and families from diverse populations, my ability to meet people where they are to assist them with meeting needs and/or achieving their goals, the relationships I've developed with organizations as well as people in the community, and my ability to bring a unique perspective when faced with challenges. I also believe my past experience as an Asheville City schools employee will be helpful in making sound decisions related to the challenges of students and staff.

My interest in joining the ACS board of education stems from the many positive experiences I had growing up in the Asheville City School system, and wanting not only my children, but all children to have those same positive experiences while receiving a quality education. My desire is to serve my community by working together to find solutions to the achievement gap, offer new ideas on how to potentially breakdown the barriers to minority family involvement in schools, and afford all children the opportunity for a higher level of education.

I am a native of Asheville, and graduate of Asheville High School. I take great pride in the fact that I raised 2 children as a single mother while working full time as a teacher assistant at Hall Fletcher Elementary while simultaneously obtaining my bachelors degree in Social work from Mars Hill College. I have over 7 years of experience working in the Asheville City Schools system, over 15 years of experience working in the mental health and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities fields, and over 18 years providing respite care for children in foster care. I still live in Asheville and continue to raise 3 children, who all attend Asheville City Schools. I currently work full time with children and families as a Qualified Mental Health Professional with Family Preservation Services, and hold the Board Co-Chair position with Open Doors Asheville, a local nonprofit organization that connects local at risk children to a individualized network of support, enrichment, and educational opportunities.

I am confident that my knowledge and skill will make me a valuable member of the Asheville City Board of Education. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to meeting with you personally.

Sincerely,

Shaunda Sandford

Return to:

Maggie Burluson, City Clerk  
Post Office Box 7148  
Asheville, N.C. 28802-7148

E-Mail: [mburluson@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:mburluson@ashevillenc.gov)

Telephone: 259-5601

Fax #: 259-5499

Signature: Shaunda Sandford

Date: 2/23/15

E-Mail: ssandford@fpscorp.com

Fax #: \_\_\_\_\_

\* This information is requested for the sole purpose of assuring that a cross section of the community is appointed.

**Shaunda Sandford**

139 South Grove Street, Asheville, NC 28801  
(828)273-9445 [Shaunda0177@yahoo.com](mailto:Shaunda0177@yahoo.com)

2/20/2015

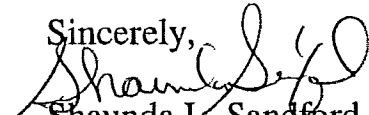
To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept my application for the Asheville City Board of Education. I have extensive experience working with diverse populations of at-risk youth and their families within many different settings. I believe I would be an ideal fit for your organization as it will allow me to utilize my education and social work experience; as well as my passion for promoting the well-being of our youth.

My most recent experience includes working on an Intensive In-Home Team with Family Preservation Services where I provide intensive, short-term, home based, crisis intervention services. This offers families in crisis the alternative to remain safely together, averting the out-of-home placement of children whenever possible. Also, I currently hold the position of Board Co-Chair with Open Doors Asheville, which is a nonprofit organization that connects local at risk children with an individualized network of support, enrichment, and educational opportunities.

While my resume and credentials attest to my professional qualifications, I have many additional personal experiences that support my knowledge and skills. My ability to network and utilize community resources has given me the opportunity to provide help to a wide variety of individuals from various socio-economic, cultural, educational and other diversified backgrounds.

I am confident that my experience and skills will make me a valuable member of the Asheville City Board of Education. Enclosed please find my resume for review. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to meeting with you personally.

Sincerely,  
  
Shaunda L. Sandford

## Shaunda Sandford

139 South Grove Street  
Asheville, NC 28801  
(828)273-9445  
shaunda0177@yahoo.com

### Education

Bachelor of Social Work, Mars Hill College- May 2008

### Employment Experience

#### Family Preservation Services-Asheville, NC

*Qualified Mental Health Professional*

February 2013-present

- Provide intensive, short-term, home based, crisis intervention services offering families in crisis the alternative to remain safely together, averting the out-of-home placement of children whenever possible.
- Deliver Intensive In-Home services to families with children diagnosed with mental disorders and experiencing mental, emotional, and/or physical challenges.
- Develop and maintain cooperative and collaborative working relationships with members of the client system.
- Plan, coordinate and oversee initial and ongoing assessment activities.
- Develop and implement crisis stabilization plans for clients.
- Identify and intervene to address barriers that impede the development of skills necessary for independent functioning in the community.
- Provide information for court reports and other client related reports as required, and attend court as requested and/or needed.
- Complete in a timely manner and maintain in accordance to guidelines, accurate clinical documentation of all services, interventions and client related activities.
- Apply extensive knowledge of children's Medicaid service definitions when obtaining basic, enhanced, and residential services.

#### The Arc of North Carolina-Asheville, NC

*Direct Support Associate (Part-Time/PRN)*

October 2012-present

- Provide advocacy and support services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Provide direct supports and services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) that enable them to lead full rich lives in the community.
- Collaborate with providers, employers, therapists, and other entities that care for consumer to make life easier, more fun, more meaningful and more stable.
- Assist individuals with physical disabilities perform routine personal care tasks.
- Document daily the interventions and progress of clients.

#### Turning Point Services-Asheville, NC

*Habilitation Technician (Part-time/PRN)*

May 1999-May 2013

- Engaged client in areas such as communication, social skills, and anger management, self-esteem, attention/focusing, and behavioral interventions.
- Facilitated conflict resolution and crisis intervention.
- Collaborated with teachers, therapists, and parents to ensure the best care for clients.
- Documented daily the interventions and progress of clients.

**Excalibur Youth Services-Greenville, SC***NC PRTF Coordinator*

February 2012-February 2013

- Provided care coordination for North Carolina at risk youth with severe mental health illnesses, substance abuse, or developmental disabilities in collaboration with their families and service providers.
- Linked parents to programs and resources within their community that provide support services to families as their child transitions out of psychiatric residential treatment facility.
- Built rapport with North Carolina group homes, foster care, and mental agencies while remaining updated and knowledgeable of their location and availability.
- Collaborated with North Carolina community mental health agencies to provide family support services.
- Provided telephone consultation with residential service providers and North Carolina LME/MCOs, attend residential treatment teams, and complete documentation for transitioning youth to a lower level of care.
- Provided support to families, therapist, and other team members with resource identification and planning.

**Community Action Opportunities-Asheville, NC***Life Coach/ Case Management*

November 2009-May 2012

- Provided comprehensive services designed to help low income families to move above the federal poverty income guideline and attain other life goals.
- Recruited clients; performed intake and needs assessment to determine client needs; enrolled them in appropriate programs to meet established goals.
- Referred clients to other service agencies as appropriate. Followed up on referrals to other agencies and advocated for clients in obtaining needed services.
- Maintained weekly and monthly contact with the clients for the purpose of monitoring progress towards the achievement of goals and objectives.
- Provided on-going individualized employment counseling and training to enhance the client's employability skills.
- Provided employment attire, tools, transportation and other supportive services as needed by clients for job search and work requirements within budget limitations.
- Maintained complete and accurate records on client activities; provided the Program Manager with appropriate statistics for weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual reports.
- Referred clients to appropriate local, state and national agencies as needed and assist clients with completion of necessary forms.
- Co-facilitated Nurturing Parenting classes for families identified as being at Moderate to High Risk for child maltreatment.

**Asheville City Schools -Asheville, NC***Exceptional Children Teacher Assistant- Hall Fletcher Elementary*

October 2006-November 2009

- Assisted pupils with a wide range of severe learning, physical, or behavioral difficulties.
- Assisted students with individual education, social, behavioral, and personal care programs.
- Supported students in social activities and community outings.
- Helped and supported students who have difficulty communicating with others.
- Assisted teacher with the organization of the classroom.
- Maintained clear and complete records.

**Asheville City Schools-Asheville, NC**  
Teacher Assistant- Claxton Elementary  
March 2002-June 2005

- Reinforced basic lecture material.
- Directed students to additional resources.
- Stimulated interest, enthusiasm, and encouraged student initiative.
- Maintained clear and complete records.

**Professional Affiliations**

**Open Doors Asheville-Asheville, NC**  
*Board Co-Chair*  
January 2009-present

Collaborate with Open Door staff and families to provide support and direction in implementing services to families. Open Doors help at-risk children, living below poverty level with a support network of local families who provide mentoring as well as transportation to extracurricular activities, tutoring, and school events.

**Buncombe County Department of Social Services**

*Differential Response Team*  
*Chronic Neglect Initiative*  
October 2010-May 2012

Selected to partner with a team of DSS Social Workers & Supervisors, Community Partners, and Therapists organized by the Buncombe County Department of Social Services to assist with preventing the cycle of repeated DSS involvement due to chronic neglect. Chronic Child Neglect refers to the ongoing, serious pattern of deprivation of a child's basic physical, developmental and/or emotional needs by a parent or caregiver.

**Certifications**

Motivational Interviewing, Certified Nurturing Parenting Facilitator, Certified "Making It Work" Instructor, NC Family Support Credential from Duke University, Child & Adolescent Level of Care Utilization System (CALOCUS), CPR/First Aid Certified, NCI/DPI Certified, HIPPA for Healthcare Professionals, Person Centered Planning, Person Centered Thinking, Communication Strategies, Blood borne Pathogen and Safety Training, Medication Administration Training, & Positive Alternatives Training

References available upon request

Shaunda Sandford  
2015 Interview Questions:

1. What do you view as the best and worst performance of the school system?

How would you propose to improve the worst and bolster the best?

A. Asheville city schools is a good school system with several standout programs. SILSA comes out to me for excellence in academics and consistently performing well in the state and here in Asheville. AVID is also a good program which appears to be very effective in pushing many students that are the first in their families to go to college. AHS students receive high SAT scores ranks among the top in the state. I also believe our district does a good job of promoting the arts which is very important to keeping students engaged as well as promoting critical thinking.

B. We certainly face many challenges within the district as well. From my observation one of the things that stands out is the absence of diversity at all of our school. Another concern is the alarming rate of disproportionate discipline between white and black students, which also contribute to the overall disparity with African American Students especially achievement issues. I also feel that teacher morale is an issue that must be addressed. We must find better ways to support teachers and assistants by developing more incentives so that they can better support our students.



- C. What I would do to bolster these programs is provide some incentives for the individuals who run successful programs. These programs are good because they have committed professionals, which is reflected in their results. I would also ask that their administrators receive feedback often from these professionals and students to do their best to support these goals, dreams and growth ensuring these programs maintain high performance. Conversely to improve on other issues we must not only recruit, but retain more people of color that have shown the innovative and inspiring spirit to work with the students who need the most support and empower them to do their very best. In addition, we need to find out what students, parents and teachers need to be successful in our district. Encourage our leaders to make connections with the most disenfranchised students and their families and show these families that they are wanted and welcomed in their district. African American professionals will come to Asheville however we need to make deliberate, genuine efforts to support them. We need innovators who will try and make efforts to work on discipline issues, and link staff that is committed and have good relationships with students and families while providing the relevant support to struggling educators and administrators.
2. Given the increase in school choice in the area, how do you think the school System should compete with the alternative schools?
- A. School choice is a big issue. I do not think we should compete but feel we should collaborate and find out what we can all do as a community of educators to educate ALL children to their potential. We should look at the models that families are moving to in

our surrounding communities and find out why families are choosing the alternative.

Once the data is examined Asheville City school professionals should work together to improve and implement versions of these strategies in our school district to increase interest in Asheville City Schools.

3. If the N.C. General Assembly limits education funding to one school district per County, what would be gained and what would be lost? What role should the School Board play in the process?
  - A. Limiting education funding to one school district would not only cause the Asheville City Schools district to lose funding, but we would lose a district that is very unique because it is a small intimate district that fosters opportunity to build relationships with your colleagues, across grade levels and campuses. It is easy to communicate and collaborate with different students and families. The gain with a large school district would possibly be better opportunities for employees to grow, move up and continuously bring in new creative talent.
  - B. If this were to happen the role of the School Board should be to support the state and local process to allow for a smooth transition and better support the students and staff as this would be a big transition with a lot of uncertainty.

4. Please describe specific experience you have had at a board of director's level and in oversight of a CEO, executive director, or organizational head. In doing so, please describe your views as to role and duties of board members versus Senior staff.
- A. In my tenure as a chairperson with Open Doors Inc. my board and I have developed all policy and procedures around how best to support our school district and the children and families we serve. We do this by reviewing the data we have that's specific to our children who attend Asheville City Schools, and form policies by finding the most effective approach. We gather information from the schools, parents, teachers, students, and stakeholders to obtain a holistic view of the student and their needs. This provides our organization with relevant information on how to shape programs that push students to achieve. We understand that many of the parents we serve have very little to no involvement in their child's education so we go out to their communities and homes to obtain the information needed. In the process we start building rapport with the families and provide them with the information and tools needed to support their child the educational setting.
- B. Board members are the governing body of an organization who research, create, and implement policy. Board members provide oversight by ensuring policy, and ethical practices are all in accordance with state, local, and federal law to support positive outcomes for the students we serve. Senior staff are those such as the superintendent, and other administrative staff whose role is to work closely with central office staff to shape

policy and over all functioning of the district to provide positive outcomes for the students that we serve.

5. Please share your perspective on relative academic performance of those Student groups who are African-American, those in poverty, and those that are not. What would be your priorities as a board member in this regard?
  - A. As a board member one of my most important goals is that all students receive a high quality education because it's their right. Many African American students in our district are not doing well. However I have to keep an open mind and work with my fellow board members and administrative staff to find solutions for these academic challenges because African American students, just as all students are vital to our economy and building a better Asheville. The same with students in poverty and those that excel. I would also add students with disabilities. If they do well we all do well the most effective way to get there is to work together and build real partnerships with parents and community members evaluating the effectiveness. Right now achievement of African American young men is vital. I would probably place that at the top of my list because that would include issues of poverty, excessive discipline, and achievement.

City of Asheville  
**BOARDS & COMMISSIONS**  
Application Form

**Applicants are strongly urged to attend several meetings of a board prior to applying**

Name of board or commission: Asheville City School Board

Your name: Martha L. Geitner Home Phone #: 828-279-1197

Street address: 5 Chantilly Drive City: Asheville, NC Zip Code: 28804

Mailing address (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: Retired

Your position: \_\_\_\_\_ Office Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Resident of City Asheville County Buncombe Race \_\_\_\_\_ \*  Male  Female\* Age 66 \*

Residence location (check one):  Central  North  South  East  West

Are you aware of any potential conflicts of interest that may arise during your service on this board (i.e., property interest, business interest, etc.)? If so, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. Potential conflicts of interest do not preclude appointments.

Please indicate the area(s) of expertise that you can bring to the above board(s), and then in detail list education, experience, reasons for your interest, and other factors that support your interest in serving **Applicants are encouraged to provide a cover letter and/or a brief resume. Please use additional sheets if necessary.**

Return to:

Maggie Burleson, City Clerk  
Post Office Box 7148  
Asheville, N.C. 28802-7148

E-Mail: [mburleson@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:mburleson@ashevillenc.gov)  
Telephone: 259-5601  
Fax #: 259-5499

Signature: Martha L. Geitner

Date: 1/12/15

E-Mail: marthageitner@gmail.com

Fax #: \_\_\_\_\_

\* This information is requested for the sole purpose of assuring that a cross section of the community is appointed.

I have had a love of learning my entire life. As a small child, I realized that my path was that of pursuing educational opportunities for myself and ensuring those same educational opportunities for those around me. As a result, my life has been dedicated to that early realization. My teaching career has been my livelihood as well as my passion. I would very much appreciate having the opportunity to continue my passion for and career in education as a member of the Asheville City School Board.

I am a retired teacher. My resume will outline my career, but I would like to add that even though I retired from teaching, I never really stopped working in the field of education. I am often kidded when seen in the hallways of the various schools where I volunteer. "Geitner! Just can't give it up, can you?" My response is always, "No!"

For the past three years I have worked in classrooms at Asheville Catholic School and Ira B. Jones Elementary School in the roles of tutor and classroom helper. I have worked with kids who are struggling, and kids who are excelling. I help teachers and students in any way that I possibly can because I so strongly believe in the value of the educational process. I believe that it is our responsibility as a society to help provide the best and most comprehensive programs available for our young people and to help facilitate those initiatives in any way we are personally able to do so. I believe that a village IS required to achieve those goals, and part of the needs of that village is the support and nurturing of those students, teachers, administrators and parents who are part of our Asheville City Schools Community.

I have been a student. I have been a parent. I have been a teacher. I am retired. My children are grown. My grandchildren are in school. I now have the time and energy and desire to serve my community in a different way. I would like to utilize my personal knowledge and experience to work for our Asheville Village as an Asheville City School Board Member.



Martha L. Geitner



# Martha Laughridge Geitner

5 Chantilly Drive, Asheville, N.C. 28804 (828-279-1197)

[marthageitner@gmail.com](mailto:marthageitner@gmail.com)

## Experience

Secondary Literacy Coach, 2005-2009

- Provided support for three Asheville City School high schools
- Worked on school and community wide committee to define and adopt relevant plans and strategies for the ACS Literacy Initiative, grades 6-12
- Facilitated a series of early release workshops to develop a system wide “essential vocabulary”, grades K-12 for all students in the ACS system
- Provided in-service training for all three schools
- Developed programs and trained educational and community volunteers
- Developed curriculum for all areas of instruction at high school level
- Provided bi-monthly classroom sessions for all 9<sup>th</sup> graders in preparation for taking the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade English I EOC
- Taught test taking skills for teachers and students involved in state testing program
- Facilitated workshops in areas of need for each school
- Leader of school wide book groups
- Literacy Training sessions
- Worked in conjunction with WCU on Connected Coaching Grant
- Worked with Technology facilitator to provide training for teachers/students in the use of new software applications
- Facilitated meetings, conferences, presentations, and workshops on various topics relevant to the literacy initiative for the Asheville City Schools
- Summer School teacher to remediate students who had not passed the 9<sup>th</sup> grade gateway in English or for upper level students who had not successfully completed requirements necessary to move to the next level

Foundations of English Instructor, Asheville High School, 2003-2005

- Developed and taught remediation classes (Foundations of English) to address the needs of individual students regardless of grade or reading level

- Trained volunteers to work with students using the ACS literacy goals
- Summer School instructor for the remediation of English I – IV students with an emphasis on basic reading and writing skills

6<sup>th</sup> Grade English/Social Studies teacher, Randolph Learning Center, 2002-2003

English Teacher, Asheville High School, 1995-2003

Teacher of English, freshman and junior levels

Designer of the "Communities in Schools" program for at risk ninth graders

Chairman of Faculty Council

Graduation Committee

Awards Committee

Cooperating teacher for Warren Wilson student teacher program

Trainer of student volunteers for UNCA, Mars Hill, and WCU students

Created program using high school students as tutors for students at Isaac  
Dickson and Randolph School

Created and implemented remedial reading course for ACS students

English Teacher, Alternative Learning Center, 1993-1995

Original staff member and designer of Alternative Learning Center, an  
alternative school for middle school students

Volunteer Trainer for community volunteers

Language Arts Teacher, Special Populations-LD Asheville Middle School, 1987-1993

Language Arts/Social Studies, AIG Teacher, Hill Street School

Language Arts Teacher, Asheville Junior High School

Manager of Boone's Reproductions, Wilson, N.C.

GED Facilitator, Wilson County Technical Institute, Wilson, N.C.

Language Arts/Social Studies, St. Genevieve/ Gibbon's Hall, Asheville, N.C.

Algebra/Geometry/English Teacher, Statesville High School, Statesville, N.C.

Language Arts/Social Studies, Goldston Elementary, Goldston, N.C.



## **Certification**

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Bachelor of Arts Degree in Secondary Education, UNC-CH, 1970  
Minor in Secondary English, grades 6-12

Mars Hill College, 1990  
Academically Gifted and Talented Certification, grades 9-12

Framework for Understanding Poverty, 2004

INTEL, 2008

## **Honors**

Asheville High School Teacher of the Year, 2001  
Memorial Mission Hospital Teaching Award, 1998  
WLOS Apple Award, 2000

## **Presentations**

## **References**

References are available upon request

1. What do you view as the best and worst performance of the school system?  
How would you propose to improve the worst and bolster the best?

1. In the areas of racial disparity ( and NOT just EOGs and EOCs) and reading scores, ACS does not perform as well as we might. Reading scores have flagged in the past and have been bolstered by a variety of literacy initiatives and programs. It is time to revisit the data previously collected by our literacy committees and review what might still be salient that is not being used at the present time. Elementary schools are searching for measures that will help improve literacy in our community. Partnerships with UNCA, Western Carolina University and Mars Hill University have been able to provide support, man power and resources in the past. A similar outreach to these institutions of higher learning could prove helpful.

ACS consistently looks for innovative solutions to our problems and concerns. This is one of our greatest strengths. We have an enormous access to resources and because of our small size, we are able to utilize those resources well. We are able to take what IS working and implement it into the entire system. One of the possible solutions to our racial disparity AND reading issues is the racial disparity training that is being funded by the ACS Foundation. Several grants have already been awarded to target these issues and more funds will hopefully become available to place this initiative into schools throughout our system.

Martha L. Geitner  
5 Chantilly Drive  
Asheville, North Carolina  
28804

828-279-1197

2. Given the increase in school choice in the area, how do you think the school system should compete with the alternative schools?

2. I find this question to be quite thought provoking. I honestly don't think we need to compete with the alternative schools, nor do I believe that we should. It is my opinion that our solution may be as simple as doing a better job of tooting our own horn. For years, we were the only game in town and didn't need to "advertise" our value. Now, however, we need to do a more comprehensive job of marketing and selling our product. There isn't an alternative school in the area that can compete with our resources, our personnel, our programs and our many areas of excellence. We have a STEM school, SILSA. We have a year round alternative with Hall Fletcher. Our Honors program beginning at the elementary level and continuing through high school has been recognized nationally. AND our A.P. courses of study are second to none in the state of North Carolina. This is only a sample of what we have to offer. We need to list our assets and make them available to the public for consideration. Alternative schools are just that, alternatives. ACS is the backbone of our community, and the community just needs to be creatively, consistently and conspicuously reminded.

3. If the N.C. General Assembly limits education funding to one school district per county, what would be gained and what would be lost? What role should the School Board play in the process?

3. At one point in time, there were many city school systems in our state. I was a student in one of those systems and can speak to my own personal experience. I remember the loss of community and pride and ownership in my high school and that school's reputation. There was a loss of identity in the sense that what had always been was no longer. It was difficult, to say the least, for the students and people in our small town who relished Friday night football and school wide functions. I could very well be describing the reaction of our Asheville City School's Family should our system merge with the county. I am aware that the General Assembly has the right to force a merger. This has been a topic of conversation in Asheville for many years. WHAT would we do? I have never heard of a system that has requested a CHANGE in designation once a merger has been completed. I have also heard that merging does not really save money. I assume a merger would be helpful in deciding future planning for location of schools and bus garages etc. It would possibly be more efficient as far as a consolidation of services such as warehouses and materials. I admit that I have NOT done an in depth study of this issue but would suggest that should such a funding issue arise, the role of the city school board should be to conduct an in depth study with members from the county school board to delineate the pros and cons as well as to outline process and procedures necessary to carry out the merger. The Board's role at this time would truly be that of governance and support.

4. Please describe specific experience you have had at a board of directors level and in oversight of a CEO, executive director, or organizational head. In doing so, please describe your views as to role and duties of board members versus senior staff.

4. My only true experience as a member of a board of directors was with a non-profit group , S.T.E.A.M.

S.T.E.A.M. or Success Through Education and Management, was a program that worked with the school system and other community resources to help young men and women achieve their highest potential both in school and in real world situations. It was quite successful for a number of years in this area. As board members, our responsibilities were truly governance and support. We set policy and monitored the implementation of said policy. The ACTUAL implementation of policy was then carried out by the executive director and his staff. Board members were the fund raisers for the program. We oversaw the budget. We met with potential donors. We hosted events to make the community aware of the program, its needs, and its successes. We donated our own time and personal resources as we were able. My personal view is that a board member ,if doing the job required, will become a resource to the "senior staff" and allow a system of support rather than micromanaging the system. A board member is NOT staff but IS responsible for making sure that policy is implemented and the goals of that policy are met by the administration, teachers and other responsible parties and personnel.

5. Please share your perspective on relative academic performance of those student groups who are African-American, those in poverty, and those that are not. What would be your priorities as a board member in this regard.

5. THE reason I have requested membership on the Asheville City School Board is to address the academic performance of all of our students, but MOST specifically those who are in poverty and our African-American population. I have worked in this system for many years and have yet to see a markedly significant change in the performance gap of several of our student populations. Because of my teaching experience, I KNOW that the achievement gap HAS to be eradicated. I don't have the answers, but I do have insights. I know that we have a wealth of brilliant young minds that may not be being challenged in the ways that would allow them to achieve their true potential. I know we have children who are homeless and hungry but who can excel given mentors and compassion. I am also aware of the many theories that attempt to explain the discrepancy among these student populations we see not only in Asheville but also across the United States, and while certainly thought provoking, the theories don't begin to address the realities. My main priority is to continue to pursue a solution to find a way to address our academic discrepancies and to ensure that ALL of our children find their gifts and talents. I obviously don't have THE answer, but I am dedicated to finding it.

City of Asheville  
**BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**  
Application Form

**APPLICANTS ARE STRONGLY URGED TO ATTEND SEVERAL MEETINGS OF A BOARD PRIOR TO APPLYING AND/OR APPOINTMENT TO A BOARD**

Name of board or commission(s): Board of Education

Your name: Matthew Ekdal Buys Home Phone #: 828 258 0082

Street Address: 22 Greenleaf Circle City: Asheville Zip Code: 28804

Mailing Address (if different):

Employer: Stay-at-home-dad

Your position: Office Phone #:

Resident of City Asheville County Buncombe Race \* Cauca Sex \* M Age \* 42

Are you a United States Citizen (check one)? Yes  No

Residence location (check one): Central  North  South  East  West

Are you aware of any potential conflicts of interest that may arise during your service on this board (i.e., property interest, business interest, etc.)? If so, please explain:

No.

Potential conflicts of interest do not preclude appointments.

Please indicate the area(s) of expertise that you can bring to the above board(s), and then, in detail, list education, experience, reasons for your interest, and other factors that support your interest in serving (use additional sheets if necessary).

Expertise:

Legal  Technical  Fundraising  Community Contacts  Public Speaking

Business Management (Financial)  Business Management (Operational)

Details:

Attached

Return to:

Maggie Burleson, City Clerk  
Post Office Box 7148  
Asheville, NC 28802-7148

Email: [mburleson@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:mburleson@ashevillenc.gov)  
Telephone: 828-259-5601  
Fax #: 828-259-5499

Signature: Matt Buys

Date: 1-17-13

E-Mail: [Mattebuys@gmail.com](mailto:Mattebuys@gmail.com)

Fax #:

\* This information is requested for the sole purpose of assuring that a cross section of the community is appointed.

*Matthew Ekdal Buys*

Education:

1988 Graduate of Grand Junction High School. Grand Junction, Colorado.

1992 Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts. Hope College. Holland, Michigan.

Statement:

I. My primary motivation for serving on the Asheville City School Board is to improve the quality of education for *each* student in the city. Indeed, every decision of the Board, in my judgment, should ultimately be guided by what is best for *each* student academically.

II. For the past 17 years, as a stay-at-home father of four children, I have come to appreciate and enjoy Asheville's schools. Many dedicated teachers and administrators have positively influenced my children. For that, I will always have a deep sense of gratitude and appreciation. I make these statements with confidence because I have been an active member of various Parent Teacher Organizations as well as a frequent volunteer in numerous classrooms for over a decade. Thus, I have experienced first-hand many teachers' and administrators' exemplary skills and commitment.

One of Asheville's greatest educational assets is that it attracts some of the most talented and innovative teachers and administrators in the country. That is why I believe with these teachers and administrators, given proper support and guidance, the sky is the limit for Asheville City Schools. Furthermore, it has been exciting and invigorating for me to experience so many good things that have occurred (and still are) in our city's school system, all the while watching my children and others benefit academically and personally.

That is not to say that all is well with our schools. Many things need to be changed for the better. For example, in my judgment, Asheville City Schools could do better educating students across the entire socio-economic and ethnic spectrum. Meaning, too often children who live in areas directly impacted by poverty and crime find that high-quality education is not available to them. Recently, how proud my wife and I were to watch our son on national television parade smartly with the Asheville High School Band in front of the President of United States but I could not help but wonder if President Obama noticed that only two minority students played an instrument as they marched proudly along.

Last year, I and other parents of students at Asheville Middle School saw a need for a change in the educational environment. Despite the school's many strengths, violence and drug-related issues plagued many of the students and teachers. So I formed "Parents for Asheville Middle School." Along with other concerned parents, I helped implement changes that positively effected students and teachers at the school. Today there are larger numbers of parent volunteers, increased academic emphasis in the classrooms, better discipline inside and outside the classroom, and uniform administrative support for teachers and students alike. It took many hours of work and many dedicated people to accomplish this. But it was worth it. The quality of education for *each* student at Asheville Middle School has been improved. And with the school's current administrative leadership, it is likely to continue.

I would consider it a privilege to bring this same positive attitude, energy, and commitment to the Asheville City School Board.



1. *One of the most important functions of the school board is to evaluate and improve leadership. How would you go about relating to, evaluating, and improving school system leadership, particularly the Superintendent? How would the relationship between the Asheville City Council and the School Board best function in order to support strong leadership?*

1. The board should evaluate and improve leadership by setting precise, measurable goals and holding school district administration accountable for meeting those goals. The superintendent should be given support and clear direction to run the system. In the board meetings I've attended it is easy to see our current board enjoys working with Mr. Johnson and has faith in his affable personality, work ethic and leadership abilities but if our students in most need continue the current stagnation in academic performance we must consider all options. Good communication between City Council and the School Board is critical because many vital components are needed to address the issues that revolve around our school system's biggest adversary: concentrated, generational poverty.

Asheville City Schools are amongst the best in the state at meeting the needs of our highest achievers. This accomplishment should be lauded. The literacy rate amongst our most at-risk elementary students, however, has decreased over the past five years and the high school has continued its trend of de facto segregation in band and AP classes. Decaying economic conditions have contributed to these declines but we must refuse to accept them as inevitable. The Charlotte Mecklenburg School District has increased graduation rates from 56 percent to 70 percent with gains for all schools and all groups of students. I would expect our Superintendent to evaluate and assimilate what Charlotte Mecklenburg is doing well. Mooresville schools might also be worth observing. Statewide their district ranks near last in terms of dollars spent per student but third highest in test scores and second in graduation rates. The majority of their students in the words of their own administrators, however, are 'test prepped.' Their students are not masters of the material and I doubt they are as college or job ready as our own, current Asheville High graduates.

2. *How would you address our school children's health and safety needs, including balanced nutrition and protection from violence? In the past the school just focused on educating our children. Unfortunately the paradigm is shifting to where schools are going from just educating to also protecting. What are your thoughts on how the school system should prepare to protect our children from abuse and predators?*

Children's health and safety should be held sacrosanct. Five years ago I played a supporting role in my friend Jane-Anne Tager's efforts to bring a salad and potato bar to Isaac Dickson. Dickson is the only elementary school in our city that has this healthy lunch alternative to the public school norm. Besides providing a healthy alternative for all students, a positive, unintended

side effect is that the salad bar has frequently attracted many families to Dickson, including those who might have otherwise sent their children to a charter school. I would love working with Beth Palien, ACS Nutrition Director, to explore healthier eating alternatives for all children in all schools but particularly Randolph where our kids with the greatest need have received the least choice and the least nutritional lunches.

Recently a *Time* magazine article claimed children were more likely to be struck by lightning than they were to be murdered at school. Yet a single incident can create an unforgivable tragedy. Years ago while I was volunteering at my daughter's class in Jones preschool, a homeless Vietnam Veteran wandered into the school through a normally locked entrance behind a group of kids returning from the playground. Fortunately he was just lost and disoriented but it took several long minutes for a police officer to arrive. Had he been armed and had violent intentions I doubt even an officer stationed at the front of the school could have stopped him but if federal funds become available, and it seems they will, I would welcome more SRO 'S (Student Resource Officers) into our schools. In particular officers like Officer Joe, who frequently mentors and changes the course of some of our most at-risk youth.

Our Safe Child policies must be strengthened. There have been lapses over the years, especially on overnight trips. We absolutely must do our utmost to protect our children and have a refocused commitment to adhering to safe child policies, along with a complete review from top to bottom of all our protocols.

3. *If the N.C. General Assembly limits education funding to one school district per county, what would be gained and what would be lost? What role should the School Board play in the process?*

3. I am opposed to any proposed merger of Asheville City Schools with Buncombe County Schools. My oldest son started off at a Buncombe County School. I found the educational experience substantially inferior to our city schools; my family moved inside Asheville city limits specifically to have our children attend city schools. The demographics and the needs of the students in the ACS system differ from those in the BCS system. Having both systems within the county offers choice for families. These points must be conveyed to our state legislators in the strongest possible terms. What would be lost? Excellence, flexibility, and the personal nature of a small system. What would be gained? A relatively small amount of taxpayers' money saved by eliminating duplicated administrative positions. If such a consolidation becomes inevitable then the Board must set acrimony aside and ensure that the needs of our students and our community will not be subjugated in the consolidation.

4. *Given our current financial climate, what will it take to become, at all grade levels, the top school system in the state of North Carolina?*

4. In the current financial climate we must continue to innovate while maintaining strong partnerships with groups outside the school system. Many outstanding families have been lost to charter and private schools such as French Broad River Academy, Odyssey, Rainbow Mountain, The Learning Community, New City, Hangar Hall, Francine Delaney and Evergreen. Every one of these schools formed because of deficiencies in our city and county schools. As we move forward we must strive to identify and correct these deficiencies. We can do better, and I have no doubt we can become the best system in the country considering Asheville's unique, caring, talented population base, but we must keep that talent in house by remaining an attractive option to everyone. I applaud changes such as single gender classes at AMS which have proven successful in bringing many families back to AMS.

New City has been remarkably successful teaching kids in poverty with limited resources: several children struggling at Dickson have left and found academic success at New City. How can we emulate their success? The school board and the school system must constantly strive to learn and grow, adopting and adapting and partnering with groups throughout the community: that way we can best meet the needs of all our students and families.

. *In what ways can the Asheville City Schools effectively innovate? How do year round schooling, magnet schools, and charter schools fit into your vision of an innovative school system?*

5. With our unique city's talent pool, the amount of ways Asheville City Schools can innovate are infinite. Already we have many successful innovative programs: the chefs program at Randolph, many highly successful after-school programs, and the Dickson Cafe and mug shop to name a few. We have, unfortunately, lost many opportunities as well. The year-round schooling and dress uniform initiatives at AMS and AHS were both fumbled, proving to be time and energy drains on parents and administration with palpable animosity and cynicism lingering on both sides. I favor year round education and so do most teachers but the devil would be in the details and as those details emerged in community focus groups they resulted in a large, highly organized, oppositional group of parents. At this very moment a new charter high school has rented space downtown. It would be extremely difficult to push any controversial issue through without losing parents and children. Under these circumstances having Hall Fletcher be a pilot school is the best alternative; if successful we will have solid data to make better decisions for the future. With more private and charter schools opening locally, burgeoning on-line school opportunities, and the possibility of school vouchers, we must map the future with

greater caution, listening to stakeholders, thoroughly examining all aspects of potential changes and building consensus from the ground up.

|