

From: Jensen Gelfond <jgelfond@me.com>
Sent: 2/5/2021 12:43:54 PM
To: sheneikasmith@avlouncil.com
Cc:
Subject: Save Asheville Primary School

Greetings Vice Mayor Smith,

I witnessed my first ACS school board meeting this week, and it was shocking. I saw an out-of-touch, anti-equity agenda being rammed through by the superintendent, ACS board, and ACS administrative arm. The casualty will be Asheville Primary School, Asheville's first and only public Montessori school. It is being merged with an existing traditional school, and new student registration has been frozen. This is a death knell for public Montessori in Asheville.

If you watch this week's BOE meeting, there was no commitment from ACS to continue Montessori teaching, nor any kind of acknowledgement or understanding that continued access to public Montessori education is important for equity. There was also a stifling of public comment, with those running the BOE meeting stating that only 30 minutes public comment would be allowed, and chat in the zoom room was disabled. Prior meetings have had virtually no public comment even when they were advertised as town halls. The process has thus far been a sham.

As the husband of an Asheville Primary School teacher who was there when APS was founded, and seen the amazing progress the school has made over the past 3 years, it was shocking to see the careless attitude from the school system around the decision to kick APS out of its existing building and freeze new student registration.

As a local business owner, I want to see our community foster a quality education for all, so we can raise young ones from all backgrounds who are committed to positive change in their home community. I see that happening every day at Asheville Primary School. The road has not been easy, but the school is in a strong position to continue if the school board and superintendant do not cut it down. Stop the destruction of this school and dismantling of public montessori education.

This school represents a step forward for equity in Asheville. Stand up for this amazing school by holding the school system to account, and by appointing new school board members who will make informed decisions with the kids' best interests at heart. Appoint Libby Kyles, Pepi Acebo, and Kate Brewer to the BOE.

Asheville Primary School should continue as a fully recognized public montessori school. The community is ready to support it.

Jensen Gelfond
West Asheville