

From: Gene Freeman <gene.freeman@acsgmail.net>
Sent: 12/11/2020 2:21:15 PM
To: Pepi Acebo
Cc: Shaunda Sandford, Martha Geitner, Joyce Brown, James Carter, Patricia Griffin, Brownie W. Newman, Alfred Whitesides, Robert Pressley, terri.wells@buncombcounty.org, parker.sloan@buncombcounty.org, lamar.joyner@buncombcounty.org, Amanda Edwards, Jasmine Besch-Ferrara@buncombcounty.org, Esther Manheimer, Gwen I
Subject: Re: Asheville City Board of Education Special Called Meeting Notice and Agenda for December 14, 2020

Mr. Acebo,

There were two zoom town hall meetings with staff and parents concerning APS earlier in the school year. Those were advertised and well attended. In those meetings parents, staff and community were given a voice. The concerns and safety of the staff and children were discussed and the cost to maintain the current building which is an ongoing large expense. This is particularly relevant when you have a school that is half populated less than a mile away. Hall Fletcher is a wonderful building and is able to house the Montessori program as well as any expansion of that program if the board considers that in the future. A

Our pre-k program is not being reduced and there was never any conversation about freezing or expanding the program. I agree that pre-k programs are terrific for students however we have no data on that or any programs to assess their potential. That is something that we need to do and start looking at outcomes that can be scientifically substantiated.

Best,A

Gene Freeman

On Fri, Dec 11, 2020 at 1:07 PM Pepi Acebo <unitblocks@gmail.com> wrote:
Greetings, Board, Council, and Commission --A

The Asheville City Schools Board of Education did not permit public comment at its December 7th Regular Meeting as required by law.

Public comment was nominally permitted only in-person and only for individuals who signed up for public comment, but the sign up sheet for public comment was in a room to which the public was denied access immediately before and during the meeting. The December 7th Regular Meeting lasted for less than 2 minutes and 40 seconds and was never broadcast in the overflow space provided.A

I was present, in-person, to speak to the importance of maintaining and expanding our exceptional quality Asheville City Schools preschool program. Many other members of the community would have been present if the proposed agenda had included any information about the superintendent's report that was summarily referenced and approved without public comment or transparency.

I request that the Agenda for this Zoom meeting be amended to allow public comment before any action is taken and that the public be notified of the Board's intent to accept public comment.

The proposed actions include the permanent disposal of school property listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings. This proposed sale of long-term assets in order to fill short-term funding gaps is couched as a disposal of excess property in need of maintenance. It is not excess property. It houses our Asheville City Schools Preschool Program and other programs. The property is not threatened by NCDOT widening of I-26, which will not encroach on the school property lines. The property does require maintenance, as do all Asheville City Schools properties.

In agreement with prior members of the ACS Board of Education, my position personally and as a middle school PTO president is that we cannot close the racial testing and assessment gaps we see in K through 12th grades without universal access to quality pre-K. While this is by no means the only need in our society, it is foundational.

What I'm hoping for is a school board and a superintendent that can look beyond the current Covid-19 crisis and work to build community support and secure funding for universal access to quality pre-K as the foundation for closing testing, achievement, and opportunity gaps.

Voting to sell the Asheville Preschool property with no forward-looking plan in place, and without public comment, is a step backward.

I hope the City and County will continue to recognize this as a foundation for equity and reparations, and that the Dogwood Health Trust will recognize this as a funding priority as they have done with ACS's PODS initiative.

My experience is that, if we build the right vision, the money will come. For me, that vision is providing universal access to quality pre-K so that every student starts Kindergarten with the skills they need to be ready to learn and every student succeeds K-12.

We will not close the testing, achievement, and opportunity gaps without closing the gap in access to quality pre-K.

The Public should have access to public comment to say as much in the public interest.

Thank you for all you do for our community!

Yours in service,

Pepi Acebo, president

(Text or email is best)
828-450-0185 cell
unitblocks@gmail.com email

Montford North Star Academy PTO
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MNSA PTO page on Facebook:
[facebook.com/mnsapto](https://www.facebook.com/mnsapto)

Parents and Families of MNSA group on Facebook:
[facebook.com/groups/mnsapto](https://www.facebook.com/groups/mnsapto)

----- Forwarded message -----
From: **Kimberly Jones** <kimberly.jones@acsgmail.net>
Date: Fri, Dec 11, 2020, 11:18 AM
Subject: Asheville City Board of Education Special Called Meeting Notice and Agenda for December 14, 2020
To: <amy@musicallies.com>, <ieskadebettencourt@gmail.com>, <mollyvirsuel@mac.com>, Adrienne Bell <Adrienne828@gmail.com>, Adrienne Bernardi Vance PTO <adriennebernardi77@gmail.com>, Ashley Cooper <ashley@easilyamazed.com>, Bettie Council <lionessdear@yahoo.com>, Bob Smith <rgsmith193@gmail.com>, Curry First <cfirst@mac.com>, Damita Wilder <redemeddjw@yahoo.com>, Daniel McDowell <dbmcd49@aol.com>, Gene Casey <genework1@yahoo.com>, golissa@hotmail.com <golissa@hotmail.com>, Guy Sayles <guysayles@gmail.com>, Jim Abbott <sfiabbott@gmail.com>, John Brigham <mrphysh@juno.com>, Kaola Smallwood <spiritoflightkao@gmail.com>, Kate Shem <kateshem@gmail.com>, Linda Wilkerson <linderwilkerson@gmail.com>, Mahan Siler <jahan2226@gmail.com>, mary alm <fargogal@bellsouth.net>, Matt Menne <matthewjmenne@yahoo.com>, Nancy Ackerman Cole <nancyacole1@gmail.com>, Pepi Acebo <unitblocks@gmail.com>, rebeccastrimer@gmail.com <rebeccastrimer@gmail.com>, Todd Donatelli <todd.donatelli@gmail.com>

Greetings,

Please find attached below the Special Called Meeting Notice for the upcoming Asheville City Board of Education Work/Closed Session Meeting on Monday, December 14, 2020, at 12:00 p.m. Via Zoom.

[Specific information for joining the meeting can be found here.](#)

Thank you and stay safe,

Kimberly

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Kimberly Jones
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"The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education."
- Martin Luther King, Jr.

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Best,

Gene Freeman, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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