

**From:** Kaola Smallwood <spiritoflightkao@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** 2/9/2021 5:06:03 PM  
**To:** councilgroup <ashevillencouncil@ashevillenc.gov>  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Fwd: Selection of Proposed School Board Members

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From: **Kaola Smallwood** <[spiritoflightkao@gmail.com](mailto:spiritoflightkao@gmail.com)>  
Date: Tue, Feb 9, 2021 at 1:42 PM  
Subject: Selection of Proposed School Board Members  
To: <[AshevilleCityCouncil@nc.gov](mailto:AshevilleCityCouncil@nc.gov)>

Good Morning CouncilMembers,

Thank you for the work you have done and continue to do for the students enrolled in Asheville City Schools.

I was an active listener on the 10:00 a.m. call pertinent to the School Board Process where you sought direction on the next steps for the Asheville City Board of Education appointments. I read the cover letters and resumes of each of the 16 applicants prior to the onset of the meeting. I therefore, have several concerns as a result of my participation and your choice of applicants:

- 1) There was one (1) Hispanic applicant, Pepi Acebo. He was not a finalist, so the brown community already has no representative on the School Board.
- 2) The three (3) applicants who are the strongest and obvious proponents to effectuate changes in consistency and continuity in the continuum of services for our students (Pepi Acebo, Libby Kyles, and Kate Fisher) were not designated as finalists.
- 3) It appeared that Stephen J. Blount was considered because of his Juvenile Justice background. That was a bit frightening and disconcerting when I consider the incarceration rate of black and brown males in our society. I really appreciated his experience and work at YTL; however, what is his style?
- 4) Councilwoman Moseley asserted that George Sieburg was an equity trainer. His resume clearly states that he "Oversee[s] Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives" in his current position at Homeward Bound of WNC. He has held this position for less than a year. How does this "overseeing" manifest itself? Additionally, during his four (4) months at Asheville City Schools foundation, he "Trained in Equity Literacy Institute." How long did he train there, and what was the nature of that training?

We need to be careful not to hone in on a few "buzz" words and phrases. During my principalships in the urban communities of NYC, I was trained for three (3) by the Dr. Lorraine Monroe Leadership Institute. Even after I retired in 2005, I elected to continue in the Institute because the training, I felt, was unrivaled. Dr. Monroe used to always caution me, as I wrote the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) for my school, and updated it annually, that I was never to write in the Action Steps that I would have "ongoing anything. It's a red flag that absolutely nothing is going on. Specify EXACTLY what you plan to do." Clarity counts for successful implementation of the

continuum of services in any school district or building.

I am requesting your cooperation in considering the concerns which I have stressed here.