

**From:** Lara Lustig <laralustig@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** 3/22/2021 12:45:25 PM  
**To:** esthermanheimer@avlCouncil.com  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** We need a change on the ACS School Board. Our kids can't wait.

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Dear Mayor,

At the ACS School Board Public Hearing last week on closing Asheville Primary School, Sara Shea, a member of our Asheville Primary community, was the last to speak. Sara is mom to Ivy, an APS student with special needs who is thriving at Asheville Primary. In her comment, Sara said that she was looking for clarity on the future of her child's education, and this is how Dr. Gene Freeman responded:

Speaking with *Xpress* after the meeting, Freeman cited Shea's comments as an example of what he describes as a "lack of civility" in the Asheville community. "I mean, when I took this job, had I known how difficult the community was, I'm not so sure that it would have been something that I was eager to jump into," he said.

<https://mountainx.com/news/parents-story-highlights-difficulties-connecting-with-asheville-city-schools/>

You can see Sara's 3-minute comment for yourself. See if you find it difficult or uncivil.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrPw1kFLHEs&t=1828s>

This kind of tone policing and gaslighting fits a pattern of behavior from Dr. Freeman that the families of Asheville Primary have been dealing with since the Fall. If a superintendent cannot listen to the concerns of families without feeling personally attacked, perhaps he is not cut out for this job.

It's not shocking that Dr. Freeman is behaving this way. It tracks with his comportment at previous school districts. What's shocking to me is that our Board of Education chose to hire him, [knowing his history](#).

And from the ACS Board of Education right now? Silence. In private conversations, they may voice lukewarm concerns, but they take no action to serve our kids.

Many folks have suggested that I write to you to support the reappointment of Joyce Brown and James Carter. I have had long phone conversations with each of them, and I find them to be kind and well-meaning people. But I fear that they do not have the strength to set this ship right. We need strong leaders for the ACS District who will stand up for children, families, and teachers.

Again, I implore you to listen to educators and appoint Jackie Carr McHargue, Pepi Acebo, and Libby Kyles to the school board.

Thank you.

Lara Lustig  
West Asheville