

From: Lara Lustig <laralustig@gmail.com>
Sent: 3/5/2021 4:23:02 PM
To: sandrakilgore@avlcouncil.com
Cc:
Subject: The ACS school board is failing our children. You can change it.

Dear Councilwoman Kilgore,

With some of the highest per-pupil spending in our state and some of the worst racial disparities in student outcomes, ACS is failing our children.

Where is all that money going if it's not being used to support our kids? It's not going into teacher pay. Our district is 14th in the state for average teacher pay, and we have much higher housing costs and living expenses than much of the state.

How is that money being spent? I believe we have a right to know. This is taxpayer money, and we have a right to call ACS and the School Board to account for how it is being used or misused.

The district certainly doesn't need to spend \$90,000 on outside consultants to hold another round of "listening sessions." There have been five rounds of listening sessions in the past 10 years. As a veteran ACS teacher shared, "At some point, listening becomes a strategy to avoid response! Here are the headlines of the last five:

- Hire staff reflective of the student population.
- Redress teachers who fail to implement practices from racial bias and systemic racism training.
- Fire teachers with years of patterned racial discipline disparities.
- Implement culturally responsive curricula with a focus on community engagement and multi-modal projects.
- Increase academic enrichment opportunities and time to learn with year-round options.
- More pre-k and pre-k transition programs.
- Hire more social, mental health, and health workers to respond to the systemic inequities afflicting our community.
- Stop tokenizing our existing staff of color and pay them for the additional work they do advising systems and practices.
- Hire more teacher assistants 3-5 to support reading interventions.
- Pay local experts to facilitate racial bias and equity training vs outside consultants.
- Do something, measure what you do, report what is done, and reward those who do it and hold those who don't accountable."

Our current school board has failed to provide the vision, leadership, and fiduciary oversight of the district that our children deserve. They have hired Superintendents who have started initiative after initiative without sticking to one plan to produce real results for our kids. They have blamed teachers and parents for the district's failures. They have let the district continue to drain our resources while further worsening outcomes for our Black children.

We families have no reason to think that current board members would change this trend if reappointed, and neither should you. They have already demonstrated that they are not up to the task. Please do not reappoint the current board members. If you did, you would be cosigning the failures of the district. You would be attaching yourself to a sinking ship.

Please do what they won't. [Listen to teachers](#). Please appoint Libby Kyles, Jackie Carr McHargue, and Pepi Acebo to the ACS school board. We need strong skills and brave leadership to turn this district around and set us in the right direction: deeply focused on the success of all our kids.

Representation by City Council is the only avenue we, as families and taxpayers, currently have for school board accountability. Please take this opportunity to make real change for the good of our children and our city.

Thank you,

Lara Lustig

ACS parent of 3
West Asheville