City of Asheville

BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

Application Form

Applicants are strongly urged to attend several meetings of a board prior to applying

Name of board or commission: Asheville City Schools Board

Your name: George Sieburg Home Phone #: 8282797649

Street address: 42 Alclare Ct City: Asheville Zip Code: 28804

Mailing address (if different): _____

Employer: Homeward Bound of WNC

Your position: Director of Finance, Operations & HR Office Phone #: 8287859910

Resident of City yes County _____ Race White * Gender Identity: (non-trans) man *

Are you a Homeowner or a Renter? * Homeowner Age: 46

Residence location (check one): Central _____ North ✔ South _____ East _____ West _____

Are you aware of any potential conflicts of interest that may arise during your service on this board (i.e., property interest, business interest, etc.)? If so, please explain: no _____. Potential conflicts of interest do not preclude appointments.

Please indicate the area(s) of expertise that you can bring to the above board(s), and then in detail list education, experience, reasons for your interest, and other factors that support your interest in serving **Applicants are encouraged to provide a cover letter and/or a brief resume. Please use additional sheets if necessary.**

I am a former middle school teacher, and I spent four years serving with the Asheville City Schools Foundation Board as their board treasurer and board chair. I also served as interim Executive Director of the agency in 2019. My two children are lifelong ACS students (currently they are a sophomore at AHS and a seventh grader at AMS), and we as a family are committed to public education. I have been involved with numerous conversations around equity within the district and was a part of three of the community conversations around the latest superintendent search. I am committed to the advancement of equity and justice for our city and for our city's children and their families, and I feel strongly that the moment is now to transform how we work within our local communities to better serve all students especially those who have been pushed to the margins by unjust practices. As a member of the school board, I would continue to center the voices of those who have not historically been listened to. I am excited for the opportunity to do so.

Return to:

City Clerk's Office
PO Box 7148
Asheville, NC 28802-7148

Email: boards@ashevillenc.gov
Telephone: 259-5839
Fax #: 259-5499

Signature: Richard George Sieburg

Date: 02/01/2021

E-Mail: georgesieburg@gmail.com

Fax #: _____

* This information is requested for the sole purpose of assuring that a cross section of the community is appointed.

GEORGE SIEBURG

42 Alclare Ct • Asheville, NC 28804

(828) 279-7649 **georgesieburg@gmail.com**

February 1, 2021

To Whom it May Concern:

It is with great enthusiasm that I am applying to for position on the Asheville City Schools Board. As a former educator and lifelong advocate for educational justice, I bring a wealth of experience, passion and commitment to the position.

My work over the past four yeats with the Asheville City Schools Foundation has coincided with a strong community push toward equity and justice within Asheville. As ACSF board chair and interim Executive Director, I was front and center in conversations around how our community must create educational equity and justice for those students who for too long have been pushed to the margins, creating gaps in achievement and opportunity that are broader than they have even been. I listened a lot in those conversations and learned the importance of centering the voices of those most impacted by decisions being made in halls of power. As a member of the school board, I would continue to uplift the voices of our community and live into the district's mission of educational excellence with equity.

As our community moves into a post-pandemic world, the opportunity for educational transformation in Asheville is prime; after all, it is out of crisis that revolutions in how we practice best take hold. As a member of the Asheville City Schools Board, I would welcome to opportunity to work with Dr Gene Freeman, central office staff, educators and school staff, parents and students, as community stakeholders, to transform Asheville City Schools into a leader in educational equity and justice.

Yours in community,

George Sieburg

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Engaged executive experienced in developing and strengthening organizations through expertise in **financial management, operations,** and **supervision.** Skilled at setting and meeting **financial benchmarks, managing teams, building relationships** with organizations and among communities. Extensive background as manager, bookkeeper, and administrator; particularly experienced in **analyzing financial data, creating budgets,** and **overseeing accounts.** Recognized as an **effective leader,** a **diligent financial steward,** and a **competent multitasker,** who is thoughtful, collaborative, and who drives progress through a lens of equity.

EXECUTIVE EXPERIENCE

HOMEWARD BOUND of WNC – Asheville, NC **July 2020 - present**

Director of Finance, Operations & HR

- Compile and Implement annual operating budget
- Administer federal, state, and municipal grants
- Oversee HR functions and facilitation of strategic planning of HR initiatives
- Oversee Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives
- Partner across departments to promote clear communication, teamwork, and collective work
- Oversee operational contracts
- Supervise operational support staff
- Facilitate committee meetings and interdepartmental meetings

FUSION SITE SERVICES – Nashville, TN & Asheville, NC

Transition Consultant **January 2020 – May 2020**

- Prepare sales figure reports for CFO
- Manage collections through A/R aging reports
- Oversee transition cost allocation, including sales tax, A/R and A/P
- Administer benefits program for transition employees
- Supervise social media marketing intern

ASHEVILLE CITY SCHOOLS FOUNDATION – Asheville, NC

Interim Executive Director **April 2019 – July 2019**

- Managed transition between outgoing long-term Executive Director and incoming ED
- Approved all financial expenditures
- Created annual budget
- Strengthened relationships with school partners and community stakeholders
- Managed staff of 9 employees
- Negotiated salaries and job responsibilities
- Planned and led staff meetings and supervisors meetings
- Engaged in state-wide conferences and cohort meetings to further organizational knowledge
- Trained in Equity Literacy Institute

ABLE RENT-A-JON & WASTE SERVICES - Asheville, NC

President/General Manager **June 2005 to January 2020**

- Maintained balance sheets & monthly/quarterly/annual P&L
- Prepared financial reports for company officers and partners
- Worked with company owner to implement streamlined operations
- Created annual budgets
- Set financial benchmarks for debt reduction
- Collaborated with area non-profit directors on event coordination

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- Maintained rented property, including scheduling maintenance
- Managed daily operations, including invoicing, scheduling, accounts payable, strategic planning and marketing
- Designed and implemented five-year growth plan
- Spearheaded employee hiring, including interviewing and employee evaluation
- Processed weekly employee payroll

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

CAROLINA DAY SCHOOL - Asheville, NC
7th-grade Language Arts/Social Studies Teacher **2003 to 2005**

- Compiled multi-disciplinary and grade-level curriculum for five-year accreditation application
- Built curriculum to accommodate differentiated reading levels, single-gender classrooms, and cultural literacy
- Submitted monthly grade reports and benchmarking
- Collaborated with high school teachers on curriculum continuity

CENTRO DE EDUCACIÓN CREATIVA - Monteverde, Costa Rica
Assistant Director / 7th-grade Teacher **2000 to 2002**

- Designed and implemented middle school educational benchmarks with horizontal and linear outcomes
- Administered bilingual literacy exam, and assessed database of comparisons and baselines for school improvement
- Provided curricular, material and evaluative support for multi-national staff
- Served on school hiring committee
- Led monthly staff meetings
- Co-facilitated meetings with director and presentations to school board

TEACH FOR AMERICA
WEST BALTIMORE MIDDLE SCHOOL - Baltimore, MD
7th-grade Language Arts/Reading Teacher **1997 to 2000**

- Designed and administered cross-disciplinary end-of-grade assessment to comply with statewide assessment program
- Led Team G, including convening monthly meetings and liaising between team and school administration
- Served as acting English Department head, leading departmental meetings and connecting at district meetings
- Mentored first- and second-year teachers, including classroom observation and assistance in securing resources

EDUCATION

MS – Curriculum & Instruction (1999): MCDANIEL COLLEGE - Westminster, MD
BA – English in Creative Writing (1997): NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY - Evanston, IL

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/AFFILIATIONS

Board Member: Asheville City Schools Foundation (Aug. 2016 – June 2020) (Board President 2018-19) (Treasurer 2017-18)
Lead Facilitator: "Seeing White" Lenten Equity Series, All Souls Cathedral (spring 2019)
Co-designer and Co-facilitator: Asheville City Schools Foundation's Equity Conversations (Spring 2018)
Community Cohort Member: Institute for Emerging Issues (November 2018 – present)
Member: Asheville Home Builders Association (2005 – 2020)
Member: Asheville Downtown Association (2017 – 2019)
Volunteer DJ: WNCW-FM (88.7), Spindale, NC (December 2014 – December 2018)
Board Member: Cathedral of All Soul's Kay Falk Literary Project (May 2009 – April 2013)
Contributing blogger: ashevillegrit.com (June 2016 – June 2018)
Founder & Facilitator: Evening with an Album (2013 – 2015)
Teacher of the Year finalist: West Baltimore Middle School (1998-2000)

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ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Intermediate Spanish, Fluency in Microsoft Office Suite, Fluency in QuickBooks Accounting Software, Proofreading

Board of Education Essay Questions
2021

1. Please describe specific experience you have had at a board of director's level and in oversight of a CEO, executive director, or organizational head. In doing so, please describe your views as to the roles and duties of board members versus senior staff.

For four years I served on the board of the Asheville City Schools Foundation. As with most non-profit boards, one of my main roles as a board member was oversight of the Foundation's Executive Director. I remember a specific board meeting, when our board chair reminded us that oversight meant two things: supporting the vision of the ED while also evaluating the ED's work. We had the authority to either back or deny the executive director's initiatives in relation to the Foundation's mission, and from our positions as board members, we had a certain perspective of the work. But that position was limited, the chair reminded us, and we needed staff to present another perspective.

The role of board members is to support the work of the executive director in relation to the vision and mission of the agency. A board traditionally has fiscal oversight and executive oversight, and because the executive director serves at the discretion of the board, ultimately the board evaluates her or him. However, given the volunteer nature of a board, I believe it is problematic if a board fails to engage not only senior staff but all staff in that evaluative process. After all, in any organization, personnel are most heavily invested in the day-to-day work; in the case of the school board, teachers and school support staff know what is happening within school walls each and every day. Principals and central office staff can speak to system-wide successes and challenges. Indeed, even students can and should weigh in on the efficacy of leadership. In other words, the evaluation of the superintendent, while ultimately the charge of the board, should and must be a collaborative effort among all stakeholders – and this is especially true within Asheville City Schools.

2. In what ways can Asheville City Schools effectively innovate?

In my decade as an ACS parent and involved member of our school community, I have seen the district initiate and then cast aside innovation after innovation, all in the effort to eliminate gaps in achievement and opportunity. Some of these innovations have been jettisoned because leadership changed, and therefore priorities changed. Others have been jettisoned for good reason – because the innovations were misguided or downright faulty to begin with. The challenge of initiating innovation is in determining if something is truly innovative. Initiatives are not innovative if they are just a repackaging of the status quo. Historically, true innovation comes from outsiders. These outsiders can exist outside of systems. They can also be present inside systems, but they are outsiders because their voices and ideas have been silenced or pushed to the margins. If ACS is going to truly innovate, it must seek input and ideas not from the same thinkers and program developers who dominate the landscape. It must seek input and ideas from those who have been silenced within and without the system for too long.

Innovation and the status quo are natural enemies, and the district will know that an initiative is truly innovative when the resistance to it comes from those same voices that are always heard. The system must center voices that for too long have been silenced; it must engage in initiatives and programs that seek to up-end the status quo. It must embark on bringing ideas and people in from the margins. Doing so is not only innovative; it is truly transformational.

3. What is your capacity for understanding and guiding on financial oversight, real estate assets, facility maintenance, and long range planning?

For fifteen years as general manager of Able Rent-A-Jon & Waste Services, I oversaw the finances of the company – and I did so in periods of strong growth as well as in terrifying contraction, during the Great Recession. While we did not own any real estate, we owned plenty of assets. Besides our personnel (an asset that's especially important to protect), trucks – and their reliability – were critical to our success. Maintenance of our vehicles was the most important thing in extending their lives, and I worked with our personnel to ensure trucks were maintained consistently. I created careful record-keeping and planning spreadsheets; they tracked the usage of our trucks, captured their asset value, and prepared for their replacement.

As treasurer and board chair for the Asheville City Schools Foundation, I dealt with a different set of assets, though they were equally important to the well-being of the organization. As the agency grew during my time there, we understood that we were operating in an environment of sustained economic growth. Our long-range planning, particularly around our reserve fund, focused on protecting our assets when the economy slowed, so that we could still provide strong programming to our community – and still support students and teachers through our grants and scholarships.

Now, as the Director of Finance, Operations, and HR for Homeward Bound, I am charged with overseeing the financial health of the entire agency. Homeward Bound has property in West Asheville that is being renovated to provide housing for our clients. Additionally, we are under contract to purchase a motel and convert it to stable housing. In both cases, I work closely with our Housing Development director to create construction budgets and annual operating budgets. These two real estate assets play a key role in supporting the agency's mission. Properly maintaining them doesn't just ensure financial health for the agency in both the short- and long-term; it also ensures safety and security for our clients, which is the heart of our work. My experience with a variety of organizational assets

shows that I understand how critical all assets are to the strength of an agency – and to the success of the community the agency serves.

4. Many school districts face continuity of leadership, especially at the level of superintendency. What would you do to promote continuity of leadership? And what do you see as your role working with the superintendent to build a strong partnership?

In Major League baseball, there exists a distinction between "small-market" and "large-market" teams. Small market ballclubs don't have the resources that large market clubs do, and sometimes players use being a part of a small market club as a springboard to the larger market teams. So how do small market teams compete? They are deliberate about maintaining a club culture and system – no matter who is part of it – and they are deliberate about existing within the larger ecosystem of their cities. The system is secure enough to survive a star leaving the team, and the ballclub is a pillar of the community, alongside social services, other business ventures, the local government. Small market teams are woven into the fabric of their cities.

Asheville City Schools has much in common with small market ballclubs; oftentimes the prestige of working in a larger district means that time in ACS is merely a stepping-stone in someone's career. Continuity of leadership becomes a problem in the same way that it can be for a ballclub: a vacuum is created if leadership leaves, and the system then must build all over again. But if the system is woven into the fabric of the city, if leadership is embraced across not just the school community but the city's various communities as well, and if system takes precedent over personnel – then continuity of leadership doesn't become a problem. Whether leadership turns over often or (better) leadership remains because of the value of being such an important part of the ecosystem, continuity survives. My role on the school board would be to ensure that the system has protocols in place to protect the community's vision should turnover occur, to cheerlead the efforts of school leadership within the district and throughout the City, and to promote open avenues for building relationships across different City systems, so that leadership understands their value in the workings of the city as whole.

5. In your opinion, as a school board member, what is your role in representing our community when making a decision that would be unpopular with a large number of your constituents?

The answer to this question lies within the question itself – in the word community. I feel strongly that for Asheville City Schools, "our community" ultimately is the body of students in our system. Every decision the district makes must be made to better educate, empower, and support the students of Asheville City Schools. If I am unable to say the decision best represents our students, then I shouldn't be making that decision. But once that decision is made, I must remember that many constituents can become upset because they feel the decision is impacting them personally. Unpopular decisions are usually unpopular because they threaten the status quo, because they threaten long-entrenched power structures – and that can feel like a personal affront. Additionally, constituents might be upset because they wonder how the decision impacts them individually, or how it impacts their child. In conversation with constituents, I must remind them that decisions that elicit such responses are usually transformational; while they might seem personal, they are the opposite of that. I must have the data and narrative to explain how this decision will positively affect our community. And ultimately, I need to remind them that they – whether a stakeholder, a parent, or a student – are a part of the investment into "our community."