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 Board of Education

Your name: James C. Carter Home Phone #: 828-301-2894

Street address: 112 Courtland Ave. City: Asheville Zip Code: 28801

Mailing address (if different): _____

Employer: United Healthcare

Your position: DSNP Community Outreach Office Phone #: 828-301-2894

Resident of City Asheville County Buncombe Race Black * Sex M ✔ F ___ * Age 47 *

Are you a Homeowner or a Renter? * Homeowner

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: _____. 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.**

As a current member of the Asheville City School Board, I have utilized my skills in several areas such as board governance, management, and community engagement. I have made myself available to speak with students, families, teachers, and staff about their needs, especially during the current COVID-19 pandemic. I continue to ask difficult questions, to hold the superintendent accountable, and to make sure that transparency is maintained.

I am an alumnus of the Asheville City School system. My daughter was a student in the system from K-12, graduating from SILSA in 2012. I went on the graduate with a BA in History from UNC Asheville. I have served on, and chaired, numerous boards in Asheville. These boards include: The Literacy Council of Buncombe County, UNC Asheville National Alumni Council Board, Children First / CIS, and OnTrack Financial Education & Counseling. I continue to find ways for ACS to collaborate with community organizations.

It is my fervent desire to make sure that our students, especially those students of color, have everything to be successful, and to make sure that any barriers to that success are removed. I hope to continue serving on the board, so that I can continue to work with our superintendent and staff to work through the issues in our district.

Return to:

Sarah Terwilliger, Deputy City Clerk
Post Office Box 7148
Asheville, N.C. 28802-7148

E-Mail: sterwilliger@ashevillenc.gov
Telephone: 259-5839
Fax #: 259-5499

Signature: James Calvin Carter

Date: 1/20/21

E-Mail: james.calvin.carter@gmail.com

Fax #: _____

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

James C. Carter – Board of Education Essay Questions / Responses

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.

The Asheville City School Board of Education is not my first experience serving on a board of directors. I have served as the board chair for 2 non-profit boards in Asheville. The first was with Children First / Communities in Schools. The second was with the Literacy Council of Buncombe County. I have also served on the executive committee of the board of directors for OnTrack Financial Literacy and Education. As board chair, I was responsible for leading board meetings, conducting regularly scheduled executive committee meetings, and conducting the yearly performance evaluation for both executive directors. I found that it was important to work closely with the executive directors, which allowed for a more productive implementation of ideas and more consistent response to concerns from stakeholders. To maintain a good working relationship, I would meet with the executive director on a monthly basis and provided guidance when asked. As a board member, it is my duty to provide governance, oversight, and support to the organization at all levels. Although the executive director is the head of the organization, it is vital that the board be made aware of all aspects of the organization's operations. This doesn't mean that the board is to do the work of the organization, but to provide guidance to the organization. This is where the role of senior staff comes in. Senior staff are tasked with implementing the strategic plans of the organization, addressing any concerns from the board, keeping the board informed of important happenings within the organization, and conveying important information to the staff within the organization. Senior staff also work to implement the directives of the executive director, who in turn receives guidance from the board. It is not the job of a board member to "be in the weeds" of the daily operations of the organization. The executive director, and senior staff are ultimately held accountable for the successes or failures within the organization.

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

I feel that Asheville City Schools has used some innovative methods over the last year, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, to reach out to most students. Pivoting to set up virtual learning, where there was none, in a short time allowed for our students to continue their education. Although the last 11 months have been hard, we have seen successes among our students. Listening to parents, ACS worked to keep our student's instruction in-house, rather than through an outside for-profit learning platform. ACS has worked closely with the city and county to provide internet access to some of our poorest students, to ensure that they can access virtual learning without interruption. The district also made sure that all students have the needed technology platforms to maintain their schoolwork through these trying times. In the area of the minority achievement gap, ACS worked collaboratively to form partnerships in the community to help facilitate the PODs has helped to assist some of our hardest hit students. I do feel that the district could have opened this opportunity to more students over the last 7

months, but with the impending re-opening, I hope that we will be able to help more students. There are still opportunities for ACS to work with other institutions such as UNC Asheville and other community organizations, to help address ongoing issues within our district.

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

In my years of service on different boards, I have become very well acquainted with budgets and financial oversight. Fiduciary responsibility is one of the most important duties of any board. It is customary and expected to have up-to-date presentations on the organization's financials. I also have experience in working with organizations in managing and acquiring real estate assets. For example, as a board member with the Literacy Council of Buncombe County, I worked with executive director when the lease was up on the old building, and a new space was located and acquired. The board worked with the executive director to facilitate this transaction. Regarding facility maintenance, in relation to Asheville City Schools, I do have a working knowledge of what it takes to maintain our buildings. I find that it is best to leave the day-to-day maintenance operations to the experts of the organization, but with the understanding that they should always keep the board aware of any pressing issues. In terms of long-range planning, I find that this is best done during the organizations strategic planning. This planning can include expansion of current facilities, acquisition of new properties, and the possible reduction of facilities no longer in use or in disrepair. A thorough yearly review of all organizational assets is essential to the growth and sustainability of any organization.

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?

I feel that it is important to grow talent from within. At times, it seems that ACS has jumped to looking outside of the system for many important positions. I know that there are times when a superintendent has brought individuals into the system with them, and that there can sometimes be a lack of experience among individuals in the system. In the same way that teachers can be groomed to become assistant principals and then principals, the same should be true with our staff at the central office level. Our assistant superintendents should be able to step into the role of superintendent should the need arise, but there should be a pool of individuals who can move into higher positions. With that, I will require that the superintendent create a list of those staff members that have exhibited leadership qualities. I will also require the superintendent to present a concise succession plan, that would be shared with all senior staff. This succession plan would be reviewed on a yearly basis as part of the superintendent's annual review. Although the creation and implementation of the succession plan is the superintendent's responsibility, board members can have a role as advisors to the superintendent regarding his/her choices.

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?

As a school board member, I am appointed to make decisions that affect all Asheville City School students. Unfortunately, it is not possible to make every single person in our district happy. When I make a decision, that is unpopular with many ACS constituents, it is my role to explain what factors went into my decision-making process. I strive to make myself available to our constituents to ask questions and to give them the opportunity to share their opinions and views with me. As a board member, I am accountable to our constituents but cannot make decisions based solely on the individuals who express the most displeasure.