ASHEVILLE CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING

Administrative Offices - Board Room

Monday, March 9, 2026, at 5:00 PM

BE IT REMEMBERED: The Asheville City Board of Education met in a regularly called session on Monday, March 9, 2026, at 5:00 PM at the Administrative Offices - Board Room at 85 Mountain Street, Asheville, North Carolina, where and when the following business was transacted.

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1. REGULAR MEETING

1.1 CALL TO ORDER - Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

5:01PM

Equity Statement:*In Asheville City Schools we are committed to equity and anti-racist policies for all students and staff to learn and thrive. We recognize that our positions come with power, responsibility, and public service for the entire ACS community. We will model our commitment to equity through our practices and decisions. During this meeting, we invite a pause if harm has taken place, a moment to name the harm, and space to practice repair.*

1.2 QUORUM DETERMINATION - Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

Sarah Thornburg

Rebecca Strimer

Pepi Acebo

Liza Kelly

George Sieburg

Jesse Warren

Amy Ray - Absent

1.3 **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** - Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

1.4 APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

Motion to approve the agenda as amended: change Item 5.1 Policy 3000 from Action item to Discussion only; add action item to NCSBE; move item 7. Board Chair Comments to come before Item 2. Good News;

Moved by: George Sieburg; seconded by: Liza Kelly

Aye: George Sieburg, Sarah Thornburg, Rebecca Strimer, Jesse Warren, Liza Kelly, and Pepi

Acebo

Carried 6-0

2. BOARD CHAIR'S COMMENTS - Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

Board Chair Sarah Thornburg provided updates on three key items during her report:

- **2026-2027 District Calendar Review:** The District Calendar Committee has been reconvened to re-evaluate the alignment of the Spring Break 2027 schedule. This review follows ongoing discussions regarding regional alignment. The committee is scheduled to meet on Monday, March 16, with a follow-up report to the Board expected shortly thereafter.
- **Meet, Confer, and Collaborate (MCC) Meeting:** Chair Thornburg issued a correction and apology regarding the scheduling of the MCC meeting. The meeting is confirmed for this Wednesday. Board members Liza Kelly and Pepi Acebo are scheduled to attend, joined by either George Sieburg or Chair Thornburg.
- **South French Broad High School Historical Marker:** Chair Thornburg highlighted a productive meeting held on February 20 with 18-20 members of the South French Broad High School Alumni group. Building on the Board's approval last fall to fulfill a 2020 request, the meeting focused on gathering alumni input for the text and significance of a historical marker. The marker aims to acknowledge and preserve the history of the high school within the district. Further updates will be provided as the project moves into the informational gathering phase.

3. GOOD NEWS - Dr. Kim Dechant, Chief of Staff

1. Asheville City Schools Foundation's Annual Community Event - EDTalks
2. Southeastern Association of Business Officials Award - Congratulations, Heidi Kerns!
3. Ceil Scholarship for French Language Study - Congratulations, Michele Delange
4. CPR World Record Day
5. Read Across America Week
6. The New Infant Toddler Classroom at Lucy S. Herring
7. Varsity State Champions - Asheville Middle Ultimate Frisbee
8. School Social Worker Appreciation Month

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS - Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

Public Comment Guidelines

In-Person and Virtual Public Comment Guidelines can be found by clicking the link above.

The Board of Education greatly appreciates your interest in the Asheville City Schools (ACS) and we welcome your comments to the Board. Please be mindful of the following guidelines (per policy 2310):

Personnel and student matters are confidential and are therefore not appropriate for public comment . If you have a concern about an employee or a student matter, please contact or see the superintendent after the meeting.

4.1 In-Person Public Comment

1. Laura Gosnell
2. Sally Grau

5. CONSENT ITEMS - Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

5.1 Draft Minutes

WORK SESSION - Feb 02 2026 - Minutes

Closed Session Minutes - February 2, 2026

REGULAR MEETING - Feb 09 2026 - Minutes

5.2 Danish Exchange Program - Derek Edwards, Asheville High Principal

5.3 **Contracts/MOUs** - Dr. Kim Dechant, Chief of Staff

Capital Chevrolet - Purchase of three vehicles

James R Vannoy and Sons Construction - Renovations at Hall Fletcher

Trafera - Purchase of Student Chromebooks

5.4 Personnel Report - March

Motion to approve the Consent Items as presented.

Moved by: Rebecca Strimer; seconded by: George Sieburg

Aye: George Sieburg, Sarah Thornburg, Rebecca Strimer, Jesse Warren, Liza Kelly, and Pepi Acebo

Carried 6-0

6. ACTION ITEMS - Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

6.1 Policies First Read - Dr. Maggie Fehrman, Superintendent 6

This agenda item is for discussion only.

No Action Will be Taken.

Policy Code: 3000 Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program

Policy 3000 Memo

Policy Code_ 3000 Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program V.1 Clean - Google Docs.pdf

The board made some recommendations for changes to the policy for Dr. Fehrman. She will make the changes and present the policy for a second read at the April work session.

6.2 North Carolina School Board Association Legislative Committee Nomination - Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

Board Member George Sieburg would like to be nominated to serve as an at-large member on the NCSBA Legislative Committee.

Motion on Action Item

Moved by: Rebecca Strimer; seconded by: Jesse Warren

Aye: George Sieburg, Sarah Thornburg, Rebecca Strimer, Jesse Warren, Liza Kelly, and Pepi

Acebo

The motion passed 6-0

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT - Dr. Fehrman 9

March 2026 Superintendent Remarks.pdf

Dr. Fehrman shared information on Exceptional Children Funding and gave an update on the Strategic Plan.

Exceptional Children's Update

- ACS Serves 640 School-Aged Students
- EC Programming Membership for 24-25 and 25-26 School Year
- Enrollment Change in 24-25 and 25-26
- Funding 2024-2025 and 2025-2026
- Data for 24-25

Strategic Plan Updates

- Timeline
- Phase 4 Overview
- Student Vision Setting

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS/FUTURE MEETINGS -

Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

1/2 Day Board Retreat

Thursday, March 19, 2026, from 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Wrong Way River Lodge & Cabins

9 Midnight Drive, Asheville, NC 28806

Spring Break

April 6th - 10th, 2026

Work Session

Monday, April 13, 2026

Administrative Office - Board Room

Regular Meeting

Monday, April 20th, 2026

Administrative Office - Board Room

2025-2026 ACS Board of Education Meeting Schedule

9. ADJOURNMENT - Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

6:00 PM

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Moved by: Rebecca Strimer

Aye: George Sieburg, Sarah Thornburg, Rebecca Strimer, Jesse Warren, Liza Kelly, and Pepi Acebo

The motion passed 6-0

Dr. Maggie Fehrman

Dr. Maggie Fehrman,
Superintendent

Sarah Thornburg

Board Chair, or Designee

Policy Code: 3000 Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program

It is the goal of the Board that every student be provided the opportunity to receive an exemplary and sound basic education and graduate from high school on time with the skills, knowledge, and attributes to continue their education, enter the workforce in a position that pays a living wage, and become an active participant in our democracy.

The Board has developed a Portrait of a Scholar to clearly define these desired outcomes. The Board recognizes the critical role that families, caregivers, community partners including our local business, governing bodies, and non-profit organizations play in the success of our school system. To ensure that the educational program in Asheville City Schools meets world-class academic standards, the Board will maintain accreditation of its schools through a respected organization and/or the State Board of Education.

A successful educational program also depends on innovation at the individual school level. The Board is committed to allowing administrators and academic team leaders at individual schools to develop and implement plans necessary to ensure the educational success of their students.The Board has established a theory of action for school and district leaders as a framework for change. The ACS Theory of Action provides all staff with clear expectations and accountability measures. The ACS Board trusts our staff as professionals to ensure their classrooms are environments where all students receive world class education.

The educational program in ACS measures student achievement across three dimensions: character, mastery of knowledge and skills, and producing high-quality work. The Board believes that in order for the educational program to achieve exemplary and equitable outcomes ACS must provide each student with access to and/or the opportunity to:

- Engage in a curriculum that both challenges and promotes the joy of learning.
- Contribute to a school culture where all students feel a sense of belonging and work with staff to become effective learners and ethical people who make the world better.
- Engage in grade-level, standards-based curriculum that allows students to grapple with demanding and meaningful content.
- Engage in a curriculum that elevates student collaboration, voice, critical thinking, and reflection.
- Demonstrate proficiency not only on grade-level instructional standards as outlined by the State Board of Education, but also a deeper understanding

across and between all disciplines, including but not limited to the ability to read, write, and speak the English language, the fundamentals of mathematics and physical science to function effectively in a complex and changing society.
- Demonstrate knowledge of geography, history, economic, and political systems to think critically and make informed choices about issues affecting themselves, their communities, the state, and the nation.
- Demonstrate exemplary academic, career, and technical skills to successfully engage in post-secondary, or advanced education, or to pursue highly skilled career and technical pathways, enabling students to compete on an equal basis with others in furthering their education or obtaining gainful employment in contemporary society.
- Engage with classroom materials that reflect diverse perspectives, a wide range of voices, and lived experiences.
- Engage in classroom instruction that is alive with discovery, inquiry, critical thinking, problem solving, and collaboration so students can engage with and explore complex issues, text, and problems.
- Engage students in exploring core disciplinary concepts and applying real-world tools and professional skills to create meaningful, high-quality work.
- Engage in classroom instruction that fosters and celebrates character development.
- Reflect on their own learning by setting goals and tracking their progress towards standards-based learning.

These goals and objectives of the educational program will be used to guide administrators, teachers and the Board in all of their duties, including curriculum development, selection of materials and issues related to instructional time.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-12 art, 8 pt. 1: 115C-12(32), -12 -36, -47, -151; *Leandro v. State*, 346 N.C. 336 (1997) State Board of Education Policies ACCR-000, GRAD-006, SCOS-016

Cross References: Board Authority and Duties (policy 1010), Curriculum Development (policy 3100), Selection of Instructional Materials (policy 3200), Counseling Program (policy 3610)

Adopted: May 11, 1998

Revised: January 9, 2012

November 2, 2020





March 2026 Superintendent Remarks

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01. EC FUNDING

02. STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE



EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S UPDATE



ASHEVILLE CITY SCHOOLS SERVES **640** SCHOOL-AGED STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES



EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN PROGRAMING - ASHEVILLE CITY SCHOOLS

2025-2026 EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S PROGRAM MEMBERSHIP

- Preschool students - 35
- Kindergarten - Age 21 students - 640 (16.97% of Total ADM)
- Age 3-21 Students - 675 (17.89% of Total ADM)

2024-2025 EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S PROGRAM MEMBERSHIP

- Preschool students - 45
- Kindergarten - Age 21 students 541 (14.15% of Total ADM)
- Age 3-21 Students - 586 (15.32% of Total ADM)

24/25 TO 25/26 ENROLLMENT CHANGE

- Preschool Students - down 10 students
- Kindergarten - Age 21 Students increase of 99 students (16.89% increase)
- Age 3-21 students - increase of 89 students (15.18% increase)

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN PROGRAMING - ASHEVILLE CITY SCHOOLS

2024-2025 Initial Planning allotment - $3,020,968
2024-2025 Adjustments made during the year - $111,243
2024-2025 Final Allotment - $3,132,211

2025-2026 Initial Planning allotment - $3,106,988
2025-2026 Adjustments year to date - $0
2025-2026 Current Allotment - $3,106,988

This planning allotment is $ 86,020 more; however, overall, it is **$25,223 less** since we have not received adjustments this year

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN PROGRAMING - ASHEVILLE CITY SCHOOLS

State funding under PRC 032 is calculated at **$5,593.34** for each child participating in the district's Exceptional Children's program.

The number of exceptional children that are funded under PRC 032 is capped at the less of the district's December 1 Exceptional Children's headcount or 13% of the district's total Average Daily Membership (ADM), so ACS only received **$5,136.74 per student.**

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN PROGRAMING - ASHEVILLE CITY SCHOOLS

Asheville City Schools has a total ADM of 3772 students with 630 (K-12) identified as exceptional children, representing **16.70% of our student population**, above the state's 13% funding cap.

Due to this cap **140 Asheville City Schools students** in Kindergarten through twelfth grade participating in the Exceptional Children's program are not funded by the state resulting in a **shortfall of about $700,000.**

During the 2024-2025 school year, Asheville City Schools allocated and spent **$13,416.40** per student in the Exceptional Children's program.

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN PROGRAMING - ASHEVILLE CITY SCHOOLS

2024-2025 Data at a glance

NCDPI Per Pupil Funding $5,593.43

Actual PPF when divided across all EC students $5,136.74

Actual Spending $13,416.40

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATES



YOU CAN GET IT



IN ASHEVILLE CITY SCHOOLS

TIMELINE

PHASE 1

December 2024 - May 2025
Data collection and analysis.

PHASE 2

March 2025 - July 2025
Portrait of a Scholar

PHASE 3

September 2025 - March 2026
Update Vision, Mission, and create Core Values

PHASE 4

November 2025 - June 2026
Developing the Plan

PHASE 5

July 2026 - Beyond
Implementation and Monitoring



PHASE 4 OVERVIEW

- **November** - Completed SWOT, identified focus areas, prioritized areas to address, and formed focus area leadership teams
- **December** - Team updates, identify strategic initiatives, draft objectives, and inventory current initiatives
- **January** - Finalize strategy map
- **February** - Identify Critical Initiatives
- **March** - Build Action Plans
- **April 13th** - Initial Presentation to the BOE
- **May** - Updated Presentation to the BOE and Board Action



STUDENT VISION SETTING

- 20 SAC Members
- Vision Brainstorming
  - Visualization
  - Individual and Paired Idea Storming
  - Clustered Ideas
  - Named the Clusters
- Generated 5 Vision Elements
- Drafting Vision Statements for review on March 19th




Give to others
Respect everyone
Own your learning
Work Hard

DISCUSSION