ASHEVILLE CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING

Administrative Offices - Board Room

Monday, May 11, 2026 at 5:00 PM

BE IT REMEMBERED: The Asheville City Board of Education met in a regularly called session on Monday, May 11, 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.

Page

1. REGULAR MEETING

1.1 CALL TO ORDER - Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

5:01 PM

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

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

1.4 APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

Motion to approve the agenda

Moved by: Amy Ray; seconded by: George Sieburg

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

The motion passed 7-0

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

1. Educator Appreciation Week
2. Kenan Fellows Program - Congratulations to Sara Monson
3. Bob Moog Sound School
4. Finance Team Certificate of Excellence
5. Better World Day with Asheville Middle School 7th Grade
6. Senior Decision Day
7. Representative Lindsey Prather Visits Asheville High
8. Prom 2026
9. USA Olympian, Lauren Tanayo, Visits Hall Fletcher Running Club
10. Bus Driver Appreciation

3. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE - Dr. Kim Dechant, Chief of Staff

ACS Legislative Update Spring 2026

Dr. Dechant Shared the following:

Governor Stein Released New Budget Proposal

- Moratorium on Opportunity Scholarship Vouchers
- Educators Salaries & Support
- Early Childhood
- Public School Supports
- Salary Increases

2026 Legislative Short Session with New Bills

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.

Motion to Extend the time for Public Comments.

Moved by: Pepi Acebo; seconded by: Liza Kelly

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

The motion passed 7-0

Because the number of individuals signed up for public comment would have extended the session by more than 30 minutes, a vote was called by the Board to approve the extension of time.

4.1 In-Person Public Comment

1. Mindy McCormick
2. Katie Williams
3. Elizabeth Davis
4. Kim Fink-Adams
5. Jesse McLean
6. Bruce Mulkey
7. Jean Lipsey Edwards
8. Adam Salvitti Gucwa
9. Claire Bailey
10. Ona Armstrong
11. Nora Silverstein
12. Zekie Puthem
13. Magnus Mulholand
14. Ceil Brothwell
15. Maria Jackson
16. Henry Heaton
17. Christina Mason

5. CONSENT ITEMS - Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

5.1 Draft Minutes

SPECIAL CALLED OPEN MEETING - Apr 02 2026 - Minutes

WORK SESSION - Apr 13 2026 - Minutes

REGULAR MEETING - Apr 20 2026 - Minutes

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

Mountain Professionals - Drivers Education

Republic Services of NC - Waste and Recycling Collection

Tarheel Paving & Asphalt- AHS Parking Lot Repaving

TruBlue Services - Parking Lot Resealing at AHS, AMS, and Dickson

Western Waterproofing DBA Western Specialty Contractors- AHS Tuckpointing at CTE Building

5.3 Personnel Report - May

Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda

Moved by: Amy Ray; seconded by: Rebecca Strimer

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

The motion passed 7-0

The Board approved the Consent Agenda, including the minutes from the April 13, 2026, Work Session, with the following correction to ensure compliance with work

session protocols:

- **Correction:** Under the "Board Action" section, the heading and text were updated to "Next Steps" to accurately reflect that no formal action was taken.
- **Amended Text: Next Steps:** The Board agreed to put the proposal on the Consent Agenda for the next Regular Meeting. April Dockery and Amanda Rigsby will draft a letter to put on the consent agenda for efficiency.

6. ACTION ITEMS - Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

6.1 Strategic Plan Recommendations:

Updated Vision, Mission, Board Core Values, and Strategic Plan Objectives

Vision, Mission, Board Core Values, and Strategic Plan Objectives Memo

Motion on Action Item

Moved by: Amy Ray; seconded by: Rebecca Strimer

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

The motion passed 7-0

6.2 FY 27 Budget Memo to Buncombe County Commissioners

FY 27 Budget Memo

Motion on Action Item

Moved by: Amy Ray; seconded by: George Sieburg

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

The motion passed 7-0

6.3 **Compass Group USA Chartwell Dining Services** - Food Services Management Co

Motion on Action Item

Moved by: Amy Ray; seconded by: Rebecca Strimer

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

Nay: Pepi Acebo

The motion passed 6-1

6.4 **EL Education** - Staff and Leader Professional Development, Strategic Planning, Monitoring, and Implementation Support

Motion on Action Item

Moved by: Amy Ray; seconded by: George Sieburg

Aye: George Sieburg, Amy Ray, Sarah Thornburg, Rebecca Strimer, and Jesse Warren

Nay: Liza Kelly and Pepi Acebo

The motion passed 5-2

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT -Dr. Fehrman 7

May 2026 Superintendent Remarks.pdf

Dr. Fehrman's remarks included the following :

1. Strategic Plan Update - Student Advisory Council Feedback
2. Teacher Working Condition Survey Results
3. MCC Update

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

No comments from the Board Chair

9. FUTURE MEETINGS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Early Dismissal for Students

Friday, May 22, 2026

12:00 Noon K-5

1:00 PM 6-12

Holiday- Memorial Day - No School for Students and Staff

Monday, May 25, 2026

Work Session

Monday, June 1, 2026

Administrative Office - Board Room

Regular Meeting

Monday, June 8, 2026

Administrative Office - Board Room

Special Called Open Work Session Meeting

Tuesday, June 30, 2026

Administrative Office - Board Room

10. ADJOURNMENT - Board Chair, Sarah Thornburg

7:44 PM

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Moved by: Amy Ray; seconded by: George Sieburg

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

The motion passed 7-0

Dr. Maggie Fehrman

Dr. Maggie Fehrman,
Superintendent

Sarah Thornburg

Board Chair, or Designee





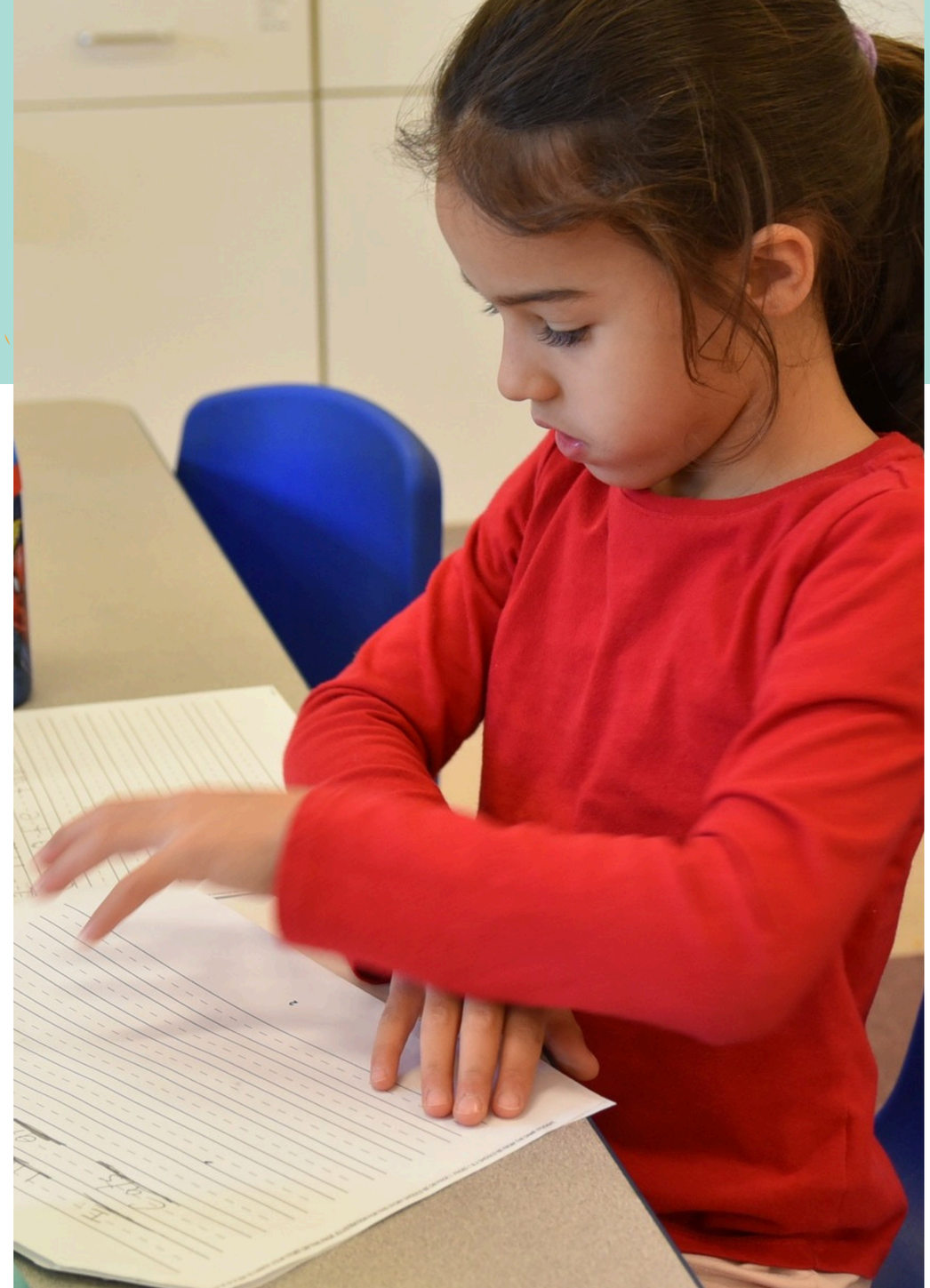
May 2026 Superintendent Remarks

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01. STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE - SAC FEEDBACK

02. TEACHER WORKING CONDITION SURVEY RESULTS

03. MCC UPDATE



YOU CAN GET IT



IN ASHEVILLE CITY SCHOOLS

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



STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE
SAC FEEDBACK



VISION ALIGNMENT ACTIVTY

Asheville City Schools • Shared Vision for 2029 • March 24, 2026

What do we want to see in place 3 years from now (2029) as a result of our united efforts?

Elevated Student Voices To Enrich the Learning Experience (D)		Increased Support for Public Education (E)	The Cultivation of Effective Learning (F)	
Student	**School Board**	**School Board**	**Student**	**School Board**
student engagement in curriculum building	Student Gov't in every school, including Randolph	ACS leads advocacy efforts to push NC to fund schools	diverse learning environments	differentiated + individualized learning
more diversity in teachers & students	student board member	collaboration among all stakeholders	more creative or artistic work	student demographics do not predict outcomes
		serve on state & national advocacy teams	curriculum is alive with solving real-world problems – learning is meaningful	Black and Brown students in AP/Honor classes
		weekly columns(s) in media publications	field trips	educators of color: = or more than population
		universal single payer healthcare	quality over quantity in work	Black student outcomes are above total goals
		universal early childhood education	hands on learning – no more "sit & get"	balanced assessment systems
			classes structured around unity of purpose	learning happens everywhere (outside)
			more educational (but fun) field trips	active, multi-disciplinary learning
			de-digitalization of schoolwork	structure sets the tone
			creative liberty	high degree of symbiotic engagement (educators & students)
			more hands-on work	active, outdoor learning that's meaningful
			learning is active & engaging	no more out-of-school suspensions- effective alternatives
				100% graduation rate
				light & color in classroom learning environments



SAC FEEDBACK

Warm Feedback

1. Focus on continued teachers' professional learning
2. Rebuilding Trust and improving communications
3. Naming critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and real-world learning opportunities
4. Safety Focus and Improvements



SAC FEEDBACK

Cool Feedback

1. Desire to see detailed action steps
2. Collect feedback from teachers while building action plans
3. Strengthen support for veteran teachers
4. Stronger stance on vaping
5. Clarify priorities
6. Identify alternative funding sources



FOCUS

THEME

OBJECTIVE

Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Development

Premier District For Exceptional Talent

Asheville City Schools is committed to building and sustaining a diverse, high-caliber workforce. We attract, hire, and retain exceptional educators while fostering a culture where every employee can grow, lead, and advance within the district.



TEACHER WORKING CONDITION SURVEY



HIGHLIGHTS:

- Staff responded favorably to the teacher leadership questions
- **88.67%** of staff stated that their school was a good place to work and learn a **16.23%** increase from 2022
- **82%** of staff shared that there is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in their school a **12.88%** increase from 2022
- **91.33%** stated that they were proud to work at their school

TEACHER WORKING CONDITION SURVEY

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH:

- Additional supports for staff wellbeing
- Fostering trust in the buildings
- Create systems for more involvement in the budget
- Being involved in the hiring process at the school level
- More opportunites for teachers to facilitate professional development
- Use of time (i.e. interruptions, reduction in paperwork, need for additional instructional time)



MEET CONFER COLLABORATE

- Professional Development Expectations
- General Teacher Job Description
- Continued Budget Conversations





DISCUSSION