



The Government Relations Committees of the Asheville City Association of Educators, Buncombe County Association of Educators, and Asheville-Buncombe North Carolina Retired School Personnel

2026 ACS School Board Candidate Questionnaire

Please email your completed questionnaire by August 18, 2026
to: bcae.ncae@gmail.com **AND** ncae.acae@gmail.com

Questionnaires will be published prior to elections for the general community to understand your relationship with public schools. Completing a questionnaire does not guarantee an endorsement. However, ACAE, BCAE, and NCRSP will not consider endorsing candidates without a completed questionnaire. Candidates who return their questionnaire by the deadline, will be invited to a 30-45 minute interview with ACAE, BCAE, and NCRSP members to be considered for endorsement. These interviews will take place August 29 & 30, 2026 and we will reach out to schedule.

Please include your contact preferences below:

Candidate Name: Rebecca Strimer

Campaign Address: 51 Houston Street, Asheville, NC 28801

Campaign Email: rebeccastrimer@gmail.com

Party Affiliation: Democrat

Position Sought: Asheville City school board member

Candidate Background

1. What is your relationship to public schools (student, parent, educator, school employee, volunteer, etc.)?

I am a current school board member and parent of two students at Asheville High School; I also served as a board member for the Asheville City Schools Foundation and a volunteer at Hall Fletcher Elementary School.

2. Why are you running for office, and why do you believe you are the best candidate? If you are an incumbent, what do you consider your most significant contributions while serving in office? Please provide specific examples and explain why voters should elect/re-elect you.

I am running for office to continue the progress made over the past three and half years. I believe steady leadership is key to the success of the school district, and I have built a strong relationship with Dr. Fehrman and other stakeholders that will support the ongoing health of the district. While ACS continues to draw ire from state leaders who would prefer to consolidate our district with Buncombe County, board stability and integrity will be central in protecting the district. My re-election will support our efforts to sustain ACS for the long-term.

I believe that the newly developed strategic plan provides the roadmap to this sustainability, and I will work to ensure we implement the plan with fidelity and integrity. A strategic plan that leaders ignore is no plan at all. The focus areas of the plan - 1) Climate/Culture, 2) Student Outcomes, 3) Educator Development, and 4) Operations/Finance - lay the foundation for decision-making that will enhance the experiences of students, educators, and families.

Also, I am proud of the role I played in establishing the Meet, Confer, Collaborate process. As an early and vocal advocate for establishing this process, I am grateful that ACS is leading the way in NC to elevate the discourse about the importance of involving educators in district operations. Over the past year, I have celebrated the successes and worked to understand the challenges of MCC. I am keenly aware that the road ahead is long and must continue to center tough conversations. As a board member, I will support all voices at the MCC table and encourage the process of finding common ground and solutions together.

Please check one answer for each question.

3. If elected, do you commit to using your office to advocate for a certified living wage for all public school employees, including contracted workers?
☒ YES ☐ NO
4. Do you support public school employees having the right to collectively bargain?
☒ YES ☐ NO
5. Do you support maintaining legal protections and equal opportunities for LGBTQ+ students and staff in our public schools?
☒ YES ☐ NO
6. Do you support protecting the rights, safety, and well-being of all students regardless of race, religion, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or immigration status?
☒ YES ☐ NO
7. Do you believe private school vouchers have a negative impact on public school funding and services?
☒ YES ☐ NO
8. In the 2025-2026 school year, ACAE and ACS began a Meet, Confer, Collaborate process. If elected or re-elected, will you commit to voting to formalize this process as district policy?
☒ YES ☐ NO
9. In the 2025-2026 school year, ACS hired a firm to conduct a facilities assessment and feasibility study. In the coming year, the Board will vote on what actions to take in light of

this information. If elected or re-elected, will you commit to voting against any proposal that results in the closure, consolidation, or major reconfiguration of an ACS school?

☐ YES ☒ NO

School Funding, Compensation, and Advocacy

10. If you answered "Yes" to Question 3, how would you work with fellow local and state elected officials to provide living wages for teachers and school staff? If you answered "No," please explain why.

The key to any plans for fair wages is rooted in state funding. Until the constraints of being lowest in the nation for funding change, we have few tools at the local level to achieve living wage. In this past budget process, I was happy that we approved a pay increase for classified staff to ensure every staff person received a minimum of a \$1 per hour raise. The high cost of living in Western North Carolina is a challenge with no easy solutions, and it's our duty to ensure we both carefully steward funds and maximize compensation for staff at every possible opportunity. I commit to keeping our focus on living wage and exploring every avenue towards achieving it. I fully advocate for the implementation of NCAE's Kids Over Corporations efforts to turn the judicial and legislative branches towards the values of kids and public education. This is the path to an un-gerrymandered state where the will of the people can and will support appropriate funding for public schools.

11. How would you use your office to advocate at the county and state levels for school employees and retirees? Examples may include COLA increases, health insurance, longevity pay, master's pay, and retirement benefits.

I already use my office to raise awareness about the crisis that exists in NC public education funding. I encounter people regularly who do not yet understand that the days of Jim Hunt are long gone and that kids and teachers are not getting what they deserve. Education and teaching remain revered in many circles, but the reality of how educators are treated is not understood. NCAE has laid out the path that we all must diligently follow to turn the tide of decision-makers in Raleigh. Fair wages, master's pay, enhanced retirement benefits, and longevity pay are key tools that need to return to attract and retain the best educators. It's what our kids deserve.

12. What should the working relationship between the school board and county commission look like? Do you support the new county funding model as implemented this year? Explain any ideas you may have regarding long term budgeting and planning mechanisms.

The work we did over the past year is what I believe the relationship should look like. Elected officials listened closely to county and school staff who have the most knowledge of the complexity of funding for each system. We increased funds for schools and created an approach that allows the school districts to have more certainty about their funding. Electeds are already making plans to keep meeting so we have open lines of communication about how to work together for kids.

Governance and Leadership

13. Describe how the Board of Education should evaluate the Superintendent. What qualitative and quantitative measures should be used to assess performance? What role, if any, should school staff play in the process of evaluating the Superintendent?

The most effective way to evaluate a school superintendent is to tie performance to the district's strategic goals. ACS has four strategic priorities - 1) Climate/Culture, 2) Student Outcomes, 3) Educator Development, and 4) Operations/Finance. The board's duty is to assess the superintendent by using processes and instruments that are fair and factual and connect directly to how well the district is achieving the aims of the strategic plan. Each component of the strategic plan includes key performance indicators that provide data to illustrate how the district is doing. Twice a year the board meets for a retreat to learn about progress on these goals. Additionally, once a year the board provides the superintendent with a formal performance review. This allows board members to support the superintendent with setting specific goals related to key areas of growth that will further enhance the district. Staff and families both have a role to play in the evaluation process by participating in surveys and sharing feedback directly with board members about their experiences in the district.

14. What steps should Asheville City Schools take to recruit and retain highly qualified educators and staff, particularly educators of color and bilingual employees?

As we did in the 26-27 budget, we will prioritize compensation as much as possible. To retain staff, I believe professional development that aligns with excellent teaching and culturally relevant practices is key. Experiencing the satisfaction that comes with being an educator is key to retaining staff. Teaching is a profession where excellence is cultivated from collaboration and peer learning. Teachers need to be trusted to teach and elevated in their roles as peer leaders. They deserve schedules that make sense and clear expectations from administration so they can focus on what's best for their students using strategies that are proven effective and enhanced by their unique contributions. Cultivation of a professional climate where educators have support and resources to activate their creativity and judgement will enhance our district's ability to recruit and retain diverse staff.

Additional Comments

Are there any additional comments you would like to share with voters regarding public education and your candidacy?

It has been my honor to serve this past term as a member of the Asheville City Board of Education. The work is challenging, but the mission could not not be more important. I believe that we will foster and sustain the educational excellence that children in Asheville deserve, and I feel grateful to be part of this work.