



May 8, 2023

### #NotAnotherBrickNotAnotherBond

This was, and still is, our organization's campaign slogan that communicates our stance concerning the blatant disregard the past elected county and school officials have shown towards Ashley Academy. As early as 2015, the original bond proposal presented by school officials at that time to the County Commissioners was \$552.5 million, which included the construction of a new school for Ashley Academy. The Forsyth County Commissioners approved a reduced \$325.8 million bond package, which was later raised to \$350 million due to the factorization of the 8 year inflation estimated rate. The \$350 million bond placed on the November 8th 2016 ballot and approved by voters discontinued the funding for a new Ashley Academy. Ironically, the \$350 million bond comprised new school constructions for Konnoak Elementary and Brunson Elementary, plus \$29.4 million in a project list of capital and operational improvements in various schools across the district. These capital expenditures and operational improvements consisted of general infrastructure maintenance such as roof, electrical units, generator replacements and most importantly HVAC/Ventilation improvements. These renovations and new school projects targeted capacity issues experienced in many schools across the district.

Out of the \$350 million generated from the 2016 bond, Ashley was only allotted \$900,000 to pay for design plans for a future Ashley. In early 2018, a new indoor air quality report conducted by Mid Atlantic Associates confirmed the presence of mold in Ashley's air conditioning units and ventilation of the building. This air quality study was conducted only after several complaints were filed by students and teachers who were suffering from severe migraines and respiratory illness. WS/FCS responded on several occasions that mold was not a problem until the 2018 study. This clear discriminatory pattern caused Action4Equality to file a [civil rights lawsuit with the US Department of Education](#).

The suit was stalled by then-Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

As a consequence of leaving Ashley Academy out of the funding for general renovations and maintenance, school officials had to revert back to other funding sources to approve for Ashley, including \$1.585 million to replace the damaged HVAC units. This negligence on behalf of the Board of Education clearly exemplified incompetence in leadership concerning budget planning and misallocation in school funding. It also reflected a lack of concern for equity.

The community is clear about what [they want to see](#) in a new Ashley School. *And they are ready.*

When land was purchased in July 2021 to build a new school, we wrote of the unfinished work that remained: "Building a new school for Ashley is just one small part of reversing inequity, for those who are interested in actions and not just words. This is **urgent, unfinished business.**" Nothing has changed.

As the WSFCS Board of Education prepares to submit its annual budget to the county commission, A4E stands firm on the slogan "Not Another Brick, Not Another A Bond." **WSFCS *must* prioritize the building of a new Ashley in its estimated \$427 million facilities project budget and the additional unused \$38.2 million that remains from the last bond passed by Forsyth County voters.**