

ACPS TAGAC Candidate Forum
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Hello! I am Ashley Simpson Baird. My husband, Andrew, and I are both natives of Northern Virginia so it was only natural that we would choose to raise our children here. We chose Alexandria specifically because we wanted our children to live in an urban area with diverse and integrated schools.

I have spent my career improving public education. I have been a teacher, a coach, an administrator, a central office employee, a researcher, a policy analyst, a board member, and of course, an ACPS parent. In fact, I will have children in ACPS school through 2037 when my third child graduates from high school. I will bring all of these perspectives to the decisions that I make on the Board.

I am also a fluent Spanish speaker. This is particularly important given that thirty-seven percent of ACPS students identify as Hispanic/Latinx—making them the largest racial and ethnic group in our school system. I started learning Spanish in elementary school, solidified my fluency during my Peace Corps service in Bolivia, and one of my Master’s degrees in teaching Spanish (the other is in teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages).

While I have many big ideas for ACPS, there are so many existing challenges that we need to tackle before making any sweeping changes. Principal among them are ensuring COVID mitigation in school buildings (especially for students under 12 years old), addressing unfinished learning from the pandemic, supporting students’ mental health, and improving district-wide communications. TAG is an important equity lever within ACPS but we cannot view it in isolation as it is impacted by many other decisions related to Tier 1 instruction, staffing, and resource allocation.

One big lesson from the pandemic is that we have seen that it is essential that we have parents of current ACPS students on our school board. We need policymakers who are living the realities of the policies they enact. What’s best for schools and what’s best for families are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they are intricately intertwined.

I left teaching to complete my doctorate so that I could have a greater impact beyond my classroom and school. I have done that through my research and policy work but that has mostly been outside of Alexandria. Now, I want to use my skills and expertise to make our city’s schools strong. My campaign slogan is “Strong Schools, Strong Communities” because thriving public schools are an essential component of a city that serves its residents well.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you’d like to continue the conversation. You can reach me at ASBforSchoolBoard@gmail.com.