**Elyse Dashew**

Zip Code of Residence 28211 (and 28134 before that)

Years in Charlotte-Mecklenburg 16

Previous place of residence CA, RI, FL How long? Have lived in Charlotte longer than anywhere else!

**Children?** A daughter and a son  Their ages? 13 and 8

**If your child is/children are school age, what school/s do they attend?**

Waddell Language Academy f/k/a Smith Academy of International Languages

**If your child is/children are adults, what schools did they attend?**

They’re still kids!

**What is/was your experience with those schools?**

On the whole, our family’s experience with CMS has been extremely positive.  My children have benefited from exceptional teachers and amazing opportunities at Smith Language Academy and Rama Road Elementary.

There have been some blips along with the way with trying to navigate through the system, particularly regarding addressing certain needs of one of my children…and there has been CMS budget-induced turmoil…but overall we feel very blessed with our children’s educational opportunities.

I realize not all families have the same experiences, and I am motivated to cultivate a system where a greater number of children have a chance to thrive.

**What have you done to educate yourself about the history of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools?**

Even before making the decision to run for school board, I felt compelled to educate myself about the history of CMS.  In the midst of the budget crisis of last year, I realized that old wounds were being reopened, and I began a journey to better understand the past that had shaped the present.  The education that I began over a year ago is continuing.

I have been inspired and intrigued by multiple visits to the Museum of the New South. I have read books and articles and talked with a number of people knowledgeable about the history of our schools and our community, including Bill Anderson, Bishop George E. Battle, Dianne English, Molly Griffin, Rob Harrington, John Lassiter, Mark Leggett, Bolyn McClung, Richard McElrath, Anna Spangler Nelson, Willie Ratchford, Bob Simmons, Sarah Stevenson, John Tate, Tom Tate, Richard Vinroot, Joyce Waddell, Charlotte Watkins, Coach Joe White, Ann Wood, Louise Woods, as well as teachers who have taught in the system for decades, and friends and neighbors who grew up in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

**Which of the following books about Charlotte, its schools, and public education in general have you read?**

( X )The Dream Long Deferred by Frye Gaillard (  )Boom for Whom? by Stephen Smith

 (  )Class and Schools by Richard Rothstein (  ) Schoolhouses, Courthouses, and State Houses by Eric Hanushek and Alfred Lindseth

 (  ) The Shame of the Nation by Jonathan Kozol   (  ) Other?

The Dream Long Deferred is one of my favorite books – a powerful story. I’ve been hunting for a copy of Boom for Whom ever since Tom Tate suggested it a few months ago – thought it was out of print but just learned Park Road Books can special-order it, so am eagerly awaiting my copy. Have also ordered Kozol’s book.

**Other books I’ve read recently:**

·    All God’s Children: The Bosket Family and the American Tradition of Violence (Fox Butterfield)

·    First in America: An Education Governor Challenges NC (Governor James B. Hunt)

·    On Any Given Day (Joe Martin)

·    The Last Dropout: Stop the Epidemic (Bill Milliken)

·    The Measure of Our Success: Letter to My Children and Yours (Marian Wright Edelman)

·    The Paradox of Tar Heel Politics: The Personalities, Elections and Events that Shaped Modern NC (Rob Christensen)

·    Stretching the School Dollar: How Districts Can Save Money While Serving Students Best (edited by Frederick Hess)

·    Whatever It Takes: Geoffrey Canada’s Quest to Change Harlem and America (Paul Tough)

**Please share pertinent information about your background/experience which will inform your work on the Board of Education.**

I ran a small publishing company for many years, and my husband and I currently own a video production company. Thanks to my small business background I have the skills to operate within a budget, communicate clearly and effectively with employees and customers (or constituents), and creatively solve problems. My efforts to hire qualified employees have also driven home the importance of a well-educated workforce.

  I majored in Anthropology at Brown University. This background gives me an appreciation for how powerfully our experiences are shaped by culture. Principals and teachers need the flexibility and training to tailor teaching techniques to best reach immigrant students and their families. In our increasingly global community in CMS, this is key to narrowing the achievement gap and increasing the graduation rate. In addition, my studies in a rigorous liberal arts program have equipped me with critical thinking skills ­– an ability to recognize preconceived notions, to anticipate unintended consequences, and to thoroughly research an issue from multiple angles before coming to an informed decision.

  I chaired the School Leadership Team at my children’s school during a time of upheaval. This taught me to rally a community to channel our passions into productive engagement, to work together for the common good, to take a positive and fact-based approach to problem-solving, and to strive to interact respectfully and compassionately with others in the community and with government officials.

  I co-founded and co-chaired MeckFUTURE, a grassroots network that successfully united families from over 40 schools in support of adequate funding for public education. This was a broad-based group, including school supporters with very different backgrounds and worldviews. I learned the power of joining voices and building bridges. If CMS is to survive and thrive, we need more of this. I am committed to applying these advocacy lessons learned to the school board.

  Most importantly, I am a mother. I have something in common with thousands of parents and grandparents of CMS children. We all love our children; we all want what’s best for them; we all want our kids to be safe, and to have the best educational opportunity possible. We’ve all experienced the anxiety and frustration when we don’t know how to get our children the help that they need. And many of us have felt moments of pride, joy, and gratitude when we’ve watched our children thrive. On the school board this quality will inform me more than any other.