



AL WHITESIDES, JAQUELYN HALLUM, SHARON WEST AND LEWIS ISAAC SPEAK TO STAFF

# Isaac Dickson PTO News

## Fall 2017

IN THIS ISSUE

## Asheville Desegregation Panel speaks at Isaac Dickson, back November 17 at the Soul Food Potluck

This year, school staff and parents are exploring the history of Isaac Dickson Elementary School within the larger context of segregation, desegregation and consolidation of Asheville City Schools. This exploration and community-wide conversation is part of the implementation of the first cornerstone of ICS (Integrated Comprehensive Systems) for Equity taking place across Asheville City Schools. Teachers, parents and the larger community will be participating in a series of conversations and activities that look into various elements of our local history and education system that have brought us to where we are today as a school and district.

To begin the process, our Isaac Dickson ICS team invited four prominent, long-term Black Asheville residents to come and share their experiences and perspectives on growing up in Asheville before, during and after the integration and consolidation of Asheville City Schools. The panelists included Al Whitesides, Jaquelyn Hallum, Sharon

West and Lewis Isaac. These speakers generously shared their stories and answered questions from teachers over the course of two hours on the afternoon of October 23. They provided thoughtful and insightful comments on a range of topics including the importance that role models played in their own education and life aspirations as well as the consequences that "urban renewal" and forced consolidation of Asheville City Schools had on the community and teachers. These same guests will be back to answer questions from Isaac Dickson parents at our Soul Food Potluck on November 17.

The Soul Food Potluck is a fun and popular gathering where Isaac Dickson families bring some Soul Food and companionship to share. The panel discussion will take place from 5:30 to about 6:30 and the potluck will take place in the cafeteria afterwards. Child care will be provided by Dickson teachers during the panel discussion.



### 2017 MacArthur Genius Award winner to speak on the state of school desegregation in the U.S.

Nikole Hannah-Jones, 2017 MacArthur Genius Award winner and New York Times Magazine staff writer, will speak on February 28 as part of a series sponsored by the Asheville City Schools Foundation

Page 2



### Cob Oven returns to Dickson

A new cob oven will be constructed on the IDES campus this spring

Page 5

# State of Desegregation

The Asheville City Schools Foundation (ACSF) is bringing New York Times Magazine staff writer and 2017 MacArthur Genius Grant award winner Nikole Hannah-Jones to Asheville to speak on February 28, 2018.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR DISTRICT-WIDE EQUITY CONVERSATIONS

January 25—Panel Discussion/Video: *History of Desegregation and the Legacy of Integration in Asheville City Schools*

February 28—Nikole Hannah-Jones: *State of Integration in the U.S.*

March 18 or 25—Leadership Conversation: *Equity Work in ACS Schools*

April 25—Parent conversation and work session: *Advocating for Full Integration, Inclusion, and Equity*



**Nikole Hannah-Jones**

Photo Credit: James Estrin/The New York Times

Her visit will be part of a four-part series planned to engage the community in a conversation about integration, inclusion, and equity in our schools.

The ACSF Board of Directors has decided that these community conversations will function as their board meetings for the first four months of 2018 and the conversations are intended as training tools to advance the work of the Foundation.

Input and participation from PTOs will be critical to the work's success. Asheville City Schools is partnering with ACSF and co-sponsoring these events.

Please check out [idespto.org](http://idespto.org) in the coming weeks for video & audio links in support of the visit by Nikole Hannah-Jones and take note of the planned community event dates.

Isaac Dickson parent Bryan Lemmel repairs the Little Free Pantry



## The Little Free Pantry is back

The Isaac Dickson "Little Free Pantry", built and maintained by Ms. Patti's Second Grade class, is back in commission after a car left the road, knocked it down and broke it.

You may have recently received a note from a second grade student asking for contributions. Little Free Pantries are intended as a way for community members to both give and receive. Contributors are doing a small part in reducing food insecurity in the school neighborhood as well as helping neighbors meet personal needs. This type of pantry is always open to those who want to use it.

Our school's pantry is located on Hill Street, in front of the school parking lot adjacent to the bus stop and the Little Free Library. Dickson grandparent Gratin Eaton led the original effort to build and erect the pantry. After the accident, parent Bryan Lemmel fixed and resurrected it.

Now it's your turn to help. Please contribute non-perishable food, water, personal care items and home goods when you can. Empty shelves are only a problem when no one is contributing; otherwise they suggest that the pantry is helping meet the needs of people in the neighborhood. Thanks for supporting our Little Free Pantry.

# Portrait of a Community

## Overview

The Isaac Dickson Elementary PTO is championing this exciting art project, which seeks to educate, inform, and beautify our building through the creation of lasting works of art. Our intention is that each child who walks through the halls will feel a sense of belonging. The first phase of the project will include four large murals that will hang on the long white wall outside of the cafeteria.

### THE CURRENT VISION

**Concept:** Four weeks of an artist residency with Christopher Holt to create educational, meaningful, relevant art for our school walls

**Participants:** Every student at Isaac Dickson

**Facilitated by:** Artist in Residence Christopher Holt and art teacher Paige Duft

**Funded by:** IDES PTO and the Asheville City Schools Foundation

**The role of parents, teachers & community members:** The PTO will be hosting a listening and input session about the project for parents and the broader community on Dec. 18 from 5:30 to 7:00 pm.



**Temple Avery.** Photo courtesy of Pack Memorial Library via the Asheville Citizen-Times.

## This first phase

The vision for this project is multi-year, but we are planning now for the first phase, which will take place this winter. For this phase we will take inspiration from the people and stories of Stumptown and the old Hill Street neighborhood. We want this part of the project to reflect the rich history surrounding Isaac Dickson Elementary and the structures that stood on the same grounds in years past. We hope to refresh our collective memory of the community and are excited to have students have a hand in creating art that they can view each day as they pass through the halls.

## The long-term vision of the project

In the coming years we imagine continuing to create art. We hope to go back into Asheville's history; returning to the footpaths created by the Cherokee and the animals that came before us as trade paths and natural crossings. We will also imagine considering the future; a more sustainable, cooperative, and racially equitable community. Ultimately we hope this artwork can help us consider both our past and present in order to create a new, more equitable model for the future.

## The artist

The Asheville City Schools Foundation has encouraged the PTO to seek a matching grant to help realize this first phase of this project. To that end, we have engaged with the artist Christopher Holt, who has completed a number of TAPAS residencies at Isaac Dickson and throughout Asheville City Schools. Christopher has also recently been awarded an Asheville Tourist Development Authority grant to create a large fresco at Haywood Congregation Church, an exciting project that Dickson students will be able to witness firsthand.



**Building of Cross-Town (E-W) Expressway, 1958.** Photo Courtesy Asheville Citizen-Times via the North Carolina Humanities Council.

## Ideas, techniques and artistic inspiration

In this project mural painting will be used to transform the 'arches' in the hallways to connect different wings of the school. The artwork might include, for example, portraiture of notable and everyday people that have helped shape the Isaac Dickson Elementary School community. We could also create maps that help us understand how the community was designed in years past. We could take inspiration from work by minority artists such as Kerry James Marshall, Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence, Aaron Douglas, Lois Mailou Jones, Kara Walker, and Carrie Mae Weems.

As our artist in residence Christopher Holt will hold artistic license in collaboration with Paige Duft for the first creations. But you do have a role in this project. **We are looking for your input as to what people, ideas, and narratives should be considered.** We look forward to hearing your ideas at our community ideas session on December 18.

### TO LEARN MORE AND PARTICIPATE

PLEASE ATTEND OUR LISTENING AND INPUT SESSION ON **DECEMBER 18 AT 5:30 PM** IN THE IDES MEDIA CENTER

# Isaac Dickson Receives Top Green Architecture Award

On September 21<sup>st</sup> Isaac Dickson Elementary School received the 2017 *Top Green School Award in the Carolinas* at the U.S. Green Building Council's Green Gala event held in Charlotte. This award recognizes the best sustainable schools in North and South Carolina and was awarded to the school's design team led by Innovative Design, Legerton Architecture and Elm Engineering. A number of architects from throughout the southeast toured the school on October 6.

As most of us know, Isaac Dickson Elementary features a number of sustainable design elements including natural daylighting in all the school's regularly occupied spaces, rainwater harvesting, geothermal heating and cooling, a community garden, a greenhouse, and numerous outdoor experiential learning features.

Unfortunately, the intended solar photovoltaic (PV) array was not able to be installed due to construction cost overruns. For this reason, the PTO launched a fundraising campaign last April in partnership with the Green Built Alliance after receiving the green light from the Asheville City Schools Board of Education. The ultimate cost of the 600 kWatt rooftop system is a little over \$1 million, with \$220,000 coming from a charitable fundraising campaign and about \$800,000 from private investors.

For the charitable contributions, donations are being accepted through the Green Built Alliance's [Appalachian Offsets](#) program ([cutmycarbon.org](#)). Businesses and individuals who contribute to [cutmycarbon.org](#) receive a tax deductible donation credit and offset their carbon footprint by contributing to a local green energy project.

An anonymous donor has provided us with a matching grant of \$110,000—half the amount we need to raise—and a number of businesses (acknowledged [here](#)) and individuals have contributed close to another \$20,000 so far. The

Isaac Dickson PTO and Green Built Alliance are working to secure another large donation, but we still need parents to spread the word about this project and encourage others to offset their carbon footprints through tax deductible contributions to [cutmycarbon.org](#). We are seeking to reach our fundraising goal in the next several months. The [Appalachian Offsets](#) program will then transition to funding new projects after Isaac Dickson's goal is met.

We can be proud that Isaac Dickson has been designed to LEED Platinum environmental standards and will be a net-zero energy user once the 600-kilowatt photovoltaic system is installed. The solar panels will also ultimately save Asheville City Schools over \$3.5 million in energy costs over their lifetime.

The rooftop panels will likewise prevent the emission of approximately 1,000,000 lbs (450 tonnes) of CO<sub>2</sub> each year. With carbon emissions in mind, the school's architects had a fully articulated fossilized skeleton of a 66-million-year-old Hadrosaur installed at school's front entry. The dinosaur was meant to bring increased awareness of the impact that abnormally rapid changes in the Earth's atmospheric conditions can have on the inhabitants of the Earth. The Hadrosaur was discovered by Dr. Steven Nicklas, the brother of Innovative Design architect Mike Nicklas, and later donated to the school.

We know that current carbon emission trajectories are insufficient to limit warming of the planet to 2°C by the year 2100, the target set by the Conference of Parties (see graphic on the right). Our solar panel fundraising effort is one way that the Isaac Dickson and greater Asheville communities can nevertheless help pursue that goal. The rooftop array will add to the many other features within the school that allow our kids to contemplate, experience and better understand the importance of pursuing an environmentally sustainable path.

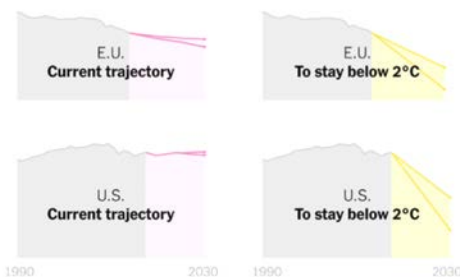
## SCHOOL BUILDING NEWS



A depiction of what Isaac Dickson will look like after the solar PV panels are installed



"Isaac Dickson Jr.", the resident Hadrosaur who greets the kids every morning.



Carbon emission trajectories for the European Union and United States

Graphic: The New York Times

# A New Cob Oven for Dickson

This spring second grade teacher Patti Evans is leading an effort to build a cob oven up on the eastern hill of Dickson campus by the orchard. This project will be funded by Bright Ideas with additional support from the PTO. Materials will be collected in March and the oven build, which should take about 10 days, will begin mid-April.

The cob oven project will be an effort to create a community space where students, teachers and families can gather to share in preparing, cooking and eating baked goods from a natural wood-fired oven. Cob is an earthen building material that is made of clay, sand, straw and water. It has been used for thousands of years to build structures.

At our previous facility Ms. Patti brought the community together to build a beautiful wood-fired cob oven that classes used often. We are thankful that this time around many of the same dedicated individuals have offered to support the project. Cob artists Meka Bunch and Susanne Taft, long-time sustainable building advocate /artists will co-lead the oven build. Heath Moody, a teacher at AB Tech is currently working with his class to build the oven's roof.

Dickson parents Kate and Emilio Ancaya of Living Roofs Inc. will guide us in installing a living roof. Former Dickson parent Kate Fisher will oversee the project. Additionally, before the oven is built the PTO plans to build a set of stairs leading up the embankment to the oven area. If you have any interest in helping build the oven, install the roof or help build the stairs, please let us know. We look forward to coming together in support of this project!



The cob oven is part of a larger series of planned PTO investments in outdoor structures this year on the Isaac Dickson campus. Other planned projects include a permanent shade structure for the K-2 playground area in front of the school and a garden tool shed in back.



*Isaac Dickson students chose a snake to represent the cob oven at the old school*

**TO VOLUNTEER TO HELP WITH THE COB OVEN OR OTHER PROJECTS**

PLEASE SEND A MESSAGE TO:  
[isaacdickson elementarypto@gmail.com](mailto:isaacdickson elementarypto@gmail.com)

OR LEAVE US A NOTE IN OUR MAILBOX  
IN THE FRONT OFFICE OF THE SCHOOL

## Update on Duke Energy Substation

In July 2017, Duke Energy Progress, LLC, closed on a property in downtown Asheville at the corner of Patton and Clingman Avenues, site of the former Hunter Volvo dealership. Duke has confirmed that, as a result of the sale, the Hill Street properties next to Isaac Dickson Elementary are no longer in the company's substation building plans. Further, as of this writing, Duke Energy Progress has indicated their intent to sell the parcels it owns adjacent to the school.



**Location of the proposed new Duke Energy substation in downtown Asheville.** Source: Buncombe County Land Records GIS.

## The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Hot Chocolate 10k is just around the corner!



**SPONSORS ARE NEEDED for the Hot Chocolate 5k & 10k Race.** Would you, your company—or a business owner you know—like to be a sponsor? All proceeds benefit students and teachers at Dickson!

Please follow the link and help us get sponsors:  
[www.hotchocolate10k.com](http://www.hotchocolate10k.com).

This year there is a race for everyone: The Marshmallow Dash, 1k Hill Climb, 5 and 10k races. Whatever your ability, there's a race for you. We'll also have a DJ on hand and a yoga warm up for the kids.

We also need all hands on deck on race day to help the event be a success. With four races and a Kid's Zone, we will need everyone to do their part. Please sign up to [volunteer](#) on the race page ([www.hotchocolate10k.com](http://www.hotchocolate10k.com)).

### Support Isaac Dickson Elementary PTO.

When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com),  
Amazon donates.

[Go to smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)

[amazon](http://smile.amazon.com)smile

Shopping online? We have a great new way to support our kids at Isaac Dickson using [AmazonSmile](#)—a website run by Amazon. In fact, it's exactly like Amazon and has the same pricing, but shopping on [AmazonSmile](#) benefits charities.

Just go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and make sure that **Isaac Dickson Elementary PTO** is listed as your favorite charitable organization. Then anytime you shop, Amazon automatically donates a small portion of the purchase price to our school! It's simple, and there's no additional cost to you.

There's only one catch...you must do your shopping on [AmazonSmile](#). Once you've signed up, Amazon will often (not always) ask if you'd prefer to shop on [AmazonSmile](#). You may also want to add a bookmark to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com). You can use the same account on both Amazon and [AmazonSmile](#).

We are not endorsing Amazon. But if you already shop there, this is a great way to support our school!

Isaac Dickson Elementary PTO, Inc.  
125 Hill Street  
Asheville, NC 28801

[isaacdicksonelementarypto@gmail.com](mailto:isaacdicksonelementarypto@gmail.com)

[idespto.org](http://idespto.org)

Please consider joining our meetings. The work sessions occur the first Tuesday of every month at 5:30 pm at the school. Our general meetings are usually the third Monday of every month, also at 5:30. Everyone is welcome at both meetings and we encourage meeting topic suggestions.