

EACC Comments for the BOE

1/13/26

Chairperson of the Board of Education, Vice Chair of the Board, Superintendent Navarro, CCPS leadership, my Board of Education, distinguished guests, and those viewing online, I would like to address two important topics: our update on the workload committee and the issue of staff retention and teachers staying in Charles County,

The workload committee was established following a town hall meeting Dr. Navarro held with the Educational Association of Charles County (EACC). A Board member from EACC suggested forming this committee, and Dr. Navarro agreed it was worth our time to examine the issues at hand. The committee met twice and engaged in constructive discussions regarding staff concerns. While the outcomes of these meetings proved beneficial, with consideration given to elementary specials and science classes, many of the other concerns raised were deemed cost-prohibitive. We are all aware, both in this room and in the community, that the financial situation is unlikely to change anytime soon.

Two critical needs that staff have always expressed— and which deserve sensitivity— are money and time. While salary negotiations can take place in the next contract, time is an ongoing concern that continues to be compromised for staff. I have previously listed numerous responsibilities that must be fulfilled during planning periods, but this time I want to focus on just two: grading and lesson planning.

For example, a teacher with a class size of 25 and six classes will have 150 students. If we consider just one assignment that takes 30 seconds to grade (which is a generous estimate), it would take approximately one hour and fifteen minutes to grade that assignment. In a week with five planning periods, one planning period would be entirely consumed by grading that one assignment, leaving only 30 minutes left during the next planning period for any other tasks. This also doesn't factor in the time it takes to enter grades into the gradebook.

Let's also consider planning a lesson based on the results of that one assignment. A well-structured lesson typically includes a warm-up, the content for the day, and some form of conclusion or assessment. If we estimate that planning for one lesson takes 30 minutes for a master teacher, reaching that point would push us halfway into a third planning period, just from grading one assignment and planning one lesson. This does not take into account any additional time for creativity or research on a lesson that may be saved for later use. Thus, in a 5-day week, half of the available planning time would already be used up with these tasks alone.

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My main point is that educational time is crucial. What do you want educators to accomplish with their time, especially as the demands placed upon them continue to grow? Next year, we will see adjustments to several reading and math curricula. How will this impact teacher planning time? What measures will you take to ensure teachers have adequate time to teach, provide valuable feedback on assessments, and plan creative lessons? Adding half days to the schedule could provide teachers with the necessary time to determine how best to utilize it. That is one suggestion. What can and will you do to give teachers the time they need to do their jobs effectively?

The second issue I want to address is staff retention. I believe we rank among the top three counties in the state for hiring conditional teachers. The average length of service for teachers in Charles County for the 2024-2025 school year is reported as 8.9 years according to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), which reflects a 19.9% decrease from previous years. In comparison, the statewide average length of service in the state is 12.5 years, an increase of 1.1% from the previous year. Our sister county, Calvert, although experiencing a 1.7% drop, boasts an average service length of 16.5 years, four years above the state average. St. Mary's County has seen a 4.3% increase, reaching an average of 13.6 years, while Prince George's County's average service length is 9.5 years, despite a 1.4% decline. Garrett County, although experiencing a significant 31.4% drop, still averages 9.3 years. Remarkably, the only county that matches ours in the lowest average tenure is Somerset, with the same 8.9 years. We are tied for the lowest average length of service in the state.

All counties face budget challenges. Therefore, why are we hiring the highest number of conditional teachers in the state? Why do we have the lowest years of service? I will leave it to you to draw your own conclusions on this matter. In light of what I presented about time, I would like to ask you a couple of questions. What steps can you take to attract and retain certified teachers? How can you assist them in effectively supporting the students of Charles County? Ensuring they have enough time would be a substantial first step.

Thank you.