

EACC Comments to the BOE

2/10/26

Chairperson Kreamer, Vice Chair Thomas, MY Board of Education, Superintendent Navarro, CCPS leadership, guests, and all the stakeholders who are watching or will watch this.

I would like to begin today by addressing some key points from the upcoming budget presentation. I am going to steal some of their thunder and address the strategic priorities. According to the publicly released slides, our first priority is “equipping every student with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college, careers, and beyond.” Our staff—the ones on the front lines—are responsible for making this happen.

The second priority is to” foster safe, inclusive, and healthy learning environments where every student and staff member feels valued, supported, and empowered to thrive.” It is our staff who create these environments and ensure that students feel secure. Their involvement is essential in their daily work, as it empowers the 27,000 students in Charles County.

To be candid, the majority of the work related to these first two priorities is carried out by those directly interacting with our students, not by the leadership in this room, including myself. While we gather as leaders, we acknowledge that the real work is done by our front-line staff. I will discuss how we can show our staff that they are valued shortly.

The third priority focuses on attracting top-notch staff to support success across all roles in our schools. This is the area I want to emphasize. What are we doing in this room to attract and retain that staff? This is a critical issue that we must address together. I urge you to advocate for our staff. As we enter budget season, it's vital that we voice our support for the

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contract we have already agreed upon. Please extend your advocacy beyond this room—discuss it with friends, colleagues, and on social media. I also encourage you to join us in speaking at the Commissioners' hearings about the importance of honoring the commitments made to our staff. It is important that the staff know that this body will fight for them and stand with them.

We need to consider what must be done to ensure this contract is honored, especially during times when we may face budget constraints. Typically, cuts to staff salaries receive little attention and almost seem expected. I know this because we agreed to a cut last year regarding what should have been a settled discussion. We met, reached an agreement, signed, and yet did not receive what was promised.

However, consider the power you hold. The salaries that this body has already agreed upon should serve as the foundation of our budget discussions. Upholding this commitment would help us attract staff and demonstrate to our community that the Board of Education values its agreements, allowing staff to rely on them. I am asking you to support the contract that we have all already agreed upon.

The fourth priority is “to build strong and collaborative partnerships with families and the community to support student learning, well-being, and success.” It may sound redundant, but if we expect parents to support student learning, we are also asking them to support our staff. Beyond the tremendous care that parents provide for their children, they should stand alongside you, me, and the staff to ensure that the commitments made by this board

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are honored. We cannot discuss stakeholders without asking them to support the staff and the agreements they already have with this body.

I support the four strategic priorities because I support the staff who are tasked with fulfilling those priorities. I am asking you to support the staff that carries out the priorities of this district and to fight to honor the commitments you have already made.