

Expanding supports to students and families – Year-Round Model (Board Member Brenda Thomas)

Good evening. I am Brenda Thomas, member of the Board of Education of Charles County.

I am here tonight to thank the members of the Board of Charles County Commissioners for their continued support of public education. I also want to highlight a critical area of the Charles County Public Schools Fiscal Year 2025 budget request – expanding student services and supports to a year-round model.

In the fiscal year 2025 budget request, Charles County Public Schools is seeking funds to support the movement of some key student support staff – school counselors, psychologists, and pupil personnel workers – from 11-month positions to 12-month positions. As you are aware, the needs of children do not simply cease upon the last day of school. We must continue to provide our students with help through the summer months so they can return for the next school year ready to learn.

We need the funding in our budget to expand critical roles such as counselors, psychologists, and pupil personnel workers so they can continue their work with our students and their families to ensure students have the wrap around services they need and return to school ready to learn.

The fiscal year 2025 budget request also includes funding to support the expansion of high school counselors to 12-month positions. High school students need support over the summer to look at graduation requirements and explore post high-school options. We also have many high school students taking advantage of the summer school program. Families need to know there is a

counselor available at their home school to help them through summer school at either earning original credits or making up classes needed to graduate.

As my colleagues who spoke before me shared, the demand for Charles County Public Schools to support students with special needs is growing. And this growth does not end over the summer months. The budget request also includes modifying a special education instructional specialist position to a 12-month, year-round position so our students receiving special education services have a designated person overseeing their summer programs.

By supporting the school system's fiscal year 2025 budget request, you are helping support extended learning programs and services for students year-round. On behalf of the Board of Education of Charles County and Charles County Public Schools, I urge the Board of Charles County Commissioners to fully fund our fiscal year 2025 budget request so that we can continue to support all children, year-round, in Charles County. Thank you.