

**Shawn Starcher**

**Commissioners Meeting speech April 24, 2024**

Good evening commissioners and thank you for allowing me to speak. Again, my name is Shawn Starcher and I have been proudly teaching in Charles County for 26 years. 24 of those years have been for Charles County Public Schools. I currently teach at La Plata High School and I have had the privilege and the honor of teaching a program known as the Teacher Academy of Maryland for the last 10 years. The TAM program is a grow your own program here in the state of Maryland that grants high schoolers a chance to complete student teaching internship experiences while they are enrolled in high school. These student teaching interns that I have the honor to teach and supervise in the TAM program are motivated, talented, kind, patient, caring, and a truly lovely group of humans. My high school teaching job is hard work, let me be very clear about that, but it is also an absolute joy because I have the privilege to teach and supervise these future teachers.

Now that I have introduced myself and my students to you, let me explain why I am here today. I am taking the time to speak to you today because I am here to ask for your support. I am here to ask for your support of the proposed operating budget put forth by Dr. Navarro and the Charles County Board of Education. I am here to ask for your support on behalf of the young future teachers that I represent. They are exactly the kind of future teachers we need in our county. If we are to continue to offer the excellent educational opportunities that we currently provide in Charles County Public Schools, we need talented humans like my student teaching interns. So, I am here to ask for your support in funding a school budget that will ensure that talented humans like my TAM students will come back to Charles County Public Schools. We need their skills, we need their talent, we need their motivation, we need their kindness, we need their patience, and we need their ability to deeply care for their students. We need them. So again, I ask for your support. Our future CCPS students need humans just like my TAM students, so I know that they, too, are asking for your support.

Oh, and one more thing. I have shown my TAM students our negotiated agreement's salary scale. And now they WANT to come back. So I urge you to support the Board of Education's proposed budget, so that my talented TAM student teachers will become my colleagues one day, when they come back.