



Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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May 8, 2026

Dear Board of Charles County Commissioners:

This communication serves as my formal request on behalf of Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) for \$430,000 in emergency one time funding to support short-term and long-term safety and security efforts for the school system. I appreciate the longstanding relationship CCPS leadership and the Board of Education of Charles County have with the Board of the Charles County Commissioners. It shows a collective commitment to the education of all children in Charles County and continued support for the investment in public education.

Now I ask for your support and consideration of an urgent request for funding to specifically target immediate school safety and security initiatives within our schools. In recent weeks, CCPS has experienced an increase in students bringing weapons, including handguns, to our schools. As you are aware, we had two handguns recovered on back-to-back days at St. Charles High School last week. I recognize both an immediate and urgent need to implement additional proactive safety measures so the school system can further prioritize safely educating students, ensuring parents that our schools are safe places to learn and reassuring staff that our facilities are safe places to work.

My request for \$430,000 is separate from our current operating budget, fiscal year 2027 budget request and any maintenance of effort funding. It is a one-time emergency funding request that will directly support the initiatives below.

- **A mobile weapons detection program (metal detector technology).** This would include the use of portable, walk-through style weapons detection systems. The technology would be placed at facility entry and exit points, but movable so the equipment can be used during other activities, at other entry/exit points and at other school system events.
 - To effectively manage the technology, CCPS would need to add eight (8) additional full-time positions to oversee use at a cost of approximately \$815,000. These positions would be absorbed into the existing operating budget.
 - Estimated mobile weapons program cost is **\$300,000**.

- **Expansion of gun detection program.** CCPS currently employs this technology across 44 schools and centers for exterior camera coverage. CCPS pays a cost per license and would like to increase licenses to install this technology on indoor school/center cameras. The technology scans visitors for visible guns and provides immediate notification to staff and authorities of visible guns on school grounds.
 - Estimated cost to expand: **\$80,000**.

- CCPS is currently installing remaining licenses on internal cameras at St. Charles High School and will prioritize secondary school internal cameras.
- **Community and student pilot programming.** CCPS seeks to engage with community members and experts with lived experience in gun violence prevention in schools and communities. We seek seed funding to explore programming that can be replicated across our school communities.
 - Estimated cost for Pilots: **\$50,000.**

These initiatives are complimentary to what CCPS is already doing to proactively prioritize student, staff, and facility safety. I ask that you please consider this request and recognize its importance to the safety of our students. Safety is a shared responsibility and is not just limited to CCPS, Monday through Friday, during the school day.

In addition to this request for \$430,000 in one-time emergency funding, I have also asked the Charles County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) for increased support that may have budgetary impacts for that agency. These asks include additional patrol unit support for the perimeter of St. Charles High School for the remainder of the school year and as needed across other school facilities. Additionally, we hope we can continue to utilize K-9 support for gun detection in our facilities. While CCPS exists to educate children, there are adults in the community who need education in gun safety. While we have increased parent engagement programs in recent years, a strategic partnership with CCSO can help us embed this important topic into opportunities for family and community members led and designed by content experts in law enforcement and public safety.

I also believe in learning through seeing and will again reference the CCSO Hope Trailer for drug awareness education. It models an experience-based focus for community members and is portable. A similar solution regarding guns and gun safety would only help further educate the community about not only gun violence, but how easy it is for youth to access these items at home or from their peers. I hope this is an option that our county can explore.

I ask you to please consider this urgent request. Many of you have either attended recent meetings CCPS held to discuss weapons incidents in which community members are asking for more support, or you are hearing from your constituents about now being the time to do more in the name of safety. The importance of investing in school safety is at an all-time high in our community. Please help us continue our proactive approaches to ensure our children are safe.

Sincerely,



Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D.
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