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MEDIA STATEMENT

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education Recaps CMS's Back to School Week and Mourns Annunciation Catholic Church and School Tragedy

Charlotte, NC – The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education issues the following statement:

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education wants to recognize the first week back to school for Charlotte-Mecklenburg School students, families, and teachers. As Superintendent Hill discussed this week, we returned this year to serving endless possibilities to CMS's 141,000 students.

- The launch of Infinite Campus which allows families to access an array of data on their student's learning such as announcements, attendance information, schedules and student grades.
- A 98 percent teacher "fill rate" – 67 fewer than last year and more than 300 fewer vacancies than the year before
- A fleet of 858 buses that transported students to and from school
- The completion of our final 2017 bond project, a new playground at New Burns Elementary School, while work also gets underway at seven schools around the district
- The successful temporary transfer of students to newer schools with better facilities while older facilities are being repaired or replaced
- And most importantly, a new safety protocol, called "I Love You Guys" which gives clear language for a range of urgent school situations

And while the Board celebrates a positive first week for our 141,000 students, we also want to recognize that was not the case for every district.

We are deeply saddened and troubled by yet another act of violence committed against young students of this country.

It is heart-breaking that two students lost their lives and many more of their classmates were injured at Annunciation Catholic School this past week. They all fell victim to the gunman's unconscionable actions – actions that cannot be explained.

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This Board believes that all student life is precious. We understand that no matter the location of young lives lost, when one child is killed, it affects us all. When survivors of such a tragedy are left to process violent, senseless and traumatic loss of life and injury, it affects us all.

"We understand that whenever a family sends their child to school, they pray, 'Please get my child home safely,'" shares Chair Stephanie Sneed. "As parents and grandparents, board members say that same prayer. Those prayers were not answered on August 27th for the families of Annunciation Catholic School."

We want our students, families, and staff to know that the CMS team will do everything within our power to make sure your prayers for your child's safe return home are answered.

These are the ways in which we do our best to maintain a safe school environment:

- CMS has adopted the Standard Response Protocol (SRP) for all schools, effective for the 2025-2026 school year. The new protocols use new terms to signify the levels of an incident. Please visit the back to school website to learn more:
<https://www.cmsk12.org/families/school-safety/school-response-safety-protocol>.
- Each school has emergency and safety plans developed in collaboration with our local law enforcement and emergency responders to guide effective and efficient responses. These plans are regularly practiced and reviewed.
- The District has its own police force – something that very few districts in our state and nation have
- School Resource Officers (SROs) are in schools and are trained for emergencies, and staff know how to contact law enforcement anytime there is a perceived threat to safety and security
- We have weapon detection systems in all K-8, Middle and High Schools.
- The "Say Something" self-reporting system is a tool where students and families can identify safety related concerns

As Superintendent Hill shared this week, together, we can create a culture of kindness, understanding, and inclusivity, standing against all forms of violence in our schools. The Board of Education and the CMS team stand with you, Annunciation Catholic School, and all districts across this country who work tirelessly to keep their students safe.

