

# CINCINNATI PUBLIC SCHOOLS FINANCIAL FACTS

July-December, 2024



## MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

CPS Family,

Time and time again we have said the words "Sound Financial Stewardship". We stand by a commitment to provide financial information and insight into how the district uses taxpayer dollars to provide successful outcomes for our students. Sound financial stewardship includes being pillars of financial integrity within our community and my staff and I are determined to continue to serve our community in that capacity. It is the duty of the Treasurer's Office to uphold the pillars of financial integrity through transparency, accountability, and sound financial stewardship. Through the efforts of this newsletter, we are attempting to provide the you, the community, with insights on how the district utilizes taxpayer dollars. Throughout this newsletter you will find information around the use of our General Operating Budget, stories on the financial impact of students, the efforts of our quality improvement projects and upcoming important financial dates.

I invite you to provide any feedback or suggestions for future newsletter topics using the QR code provided below. I also encourage you to visit our district financial website for further information or upcoming events. Thank you for taking the time to review our newsletter and thank you for all you do for our great community.



**Jennifer M. Wagner**

Treasurer / Chief Financial Officer  
WagnerJ@cpsboe.k12.oh.us



[bit.ly/CPSFinancialFactsSurvey](https://bit.ly/CPSFinancialFactsSurvey)



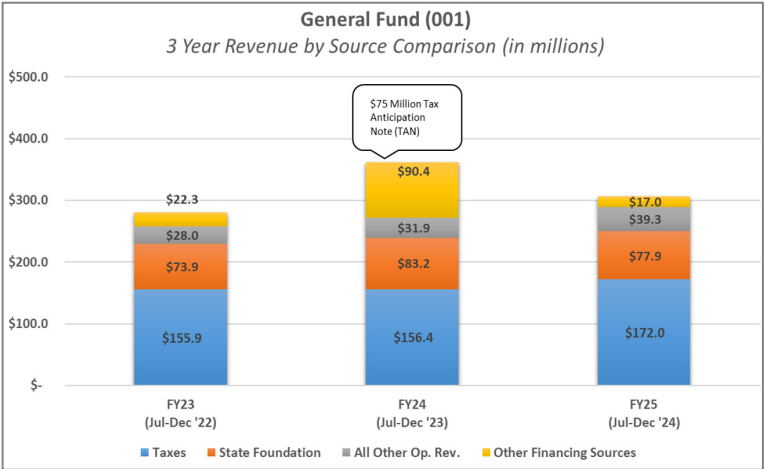
# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## General Fund: Revenue 3 Year Comparison

The General Fund is the chief operating fund of the district. The General Fund has four main sources of revenue:

- 1. Local Real Estate Taxes
- 2. State Foundation Payments
  - Payments to city, local and exempted village school districts.
- 3. All Other Operating Revenue
  - Community Reinvestment Act Payments
  - Tax Increment Finance
  - Donations
- 4. Other Financial Sources

The information presented in the graph shows a 3 year comparison of revenue for the date range of July - December of each year.

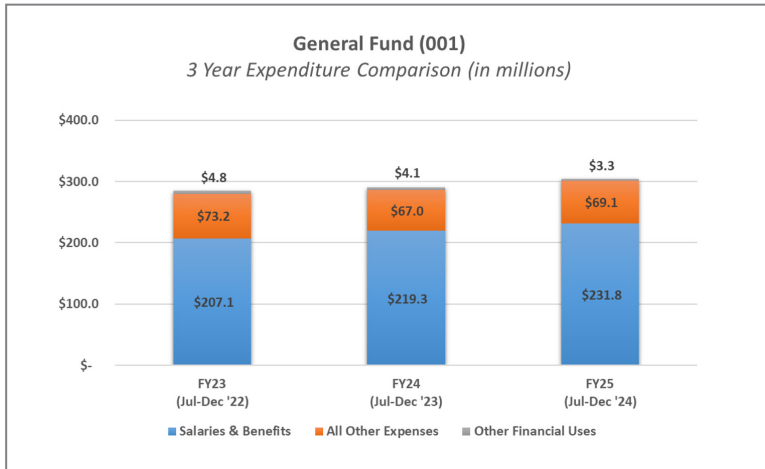


**\*Note (graph above): FY24 Other Financing Sources are increased due to Tax Anticipation Note. Property tax revenue also increased due to increase in property values. State funding revenue is higher due to increases in the new biennial budget**

## General Fund: Expenditures 3 Year Comparison

Expenditures are defined as monetary amounts expended on personnel, projects or supplies. When considering expenditures, we look at things like salaries and benefits for CPS employees. We also look at things like contracted services and supplies which are categorized in the graph as "all other expenditures".

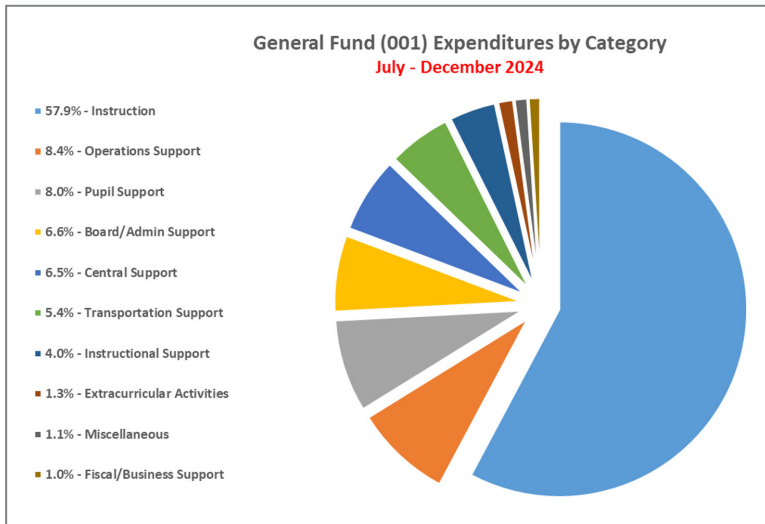
The following graph is a representation of a 3 year comparison of expenditures for the date range of July - December of each year.



## General Fund: FY 2025 Expenditures by Category

The Ohio Auditor of State's Office provides school districts with the "Uniform School Accounting System (USAS)" in order to properly code and identify financial transactions. This system provides a guide for CPS when identifying our expenditures in order to properly record the expenditures.

The following graph represents the different categories of expenditures CPS has recorded for the General Fund for the 2025 fiscal year as of December 31, 2024.



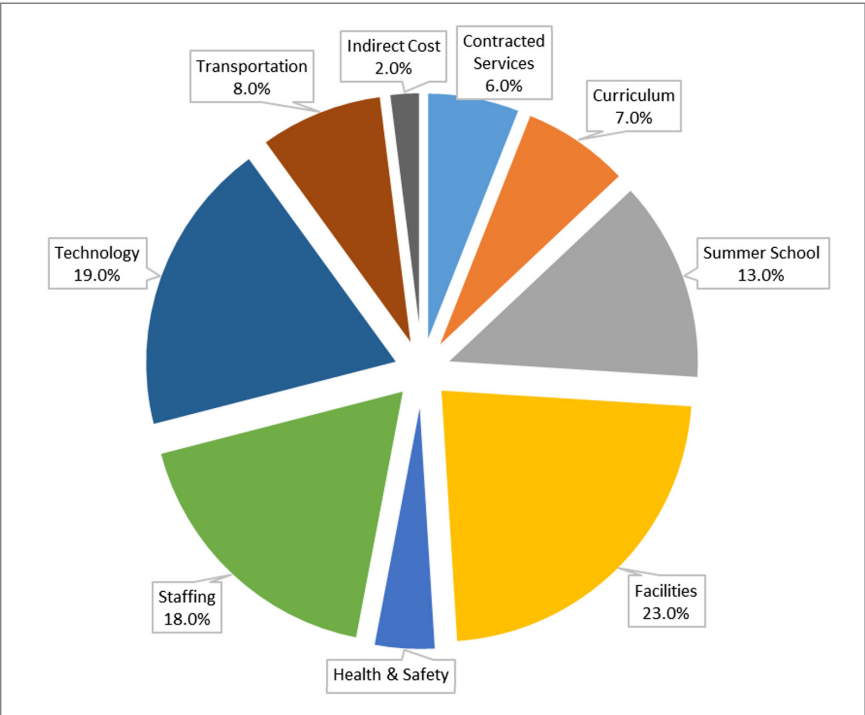
# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## ESSER Summary as of December 2024

### ESSER Spend by Category

The Elementary Secondary Schools Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) was originally provided by the U.S. Department of Education for school districts across the country to prevent, prepare for and respond to COVID.

The Final Expenditure Report (FER) for the remaining ESSER funds was filed with the State in December of 2024. All spending obligations were to take place prior to September 30, 2024. The graphs below show the breakdown of the spending of these funds by category.



**Note:**  
78% of Contracted Services were Nursing Service contracts  
55% of Staffing represents Instructional Staffing

Category	ESSER I "Response"	ESSER II "Remote Learning"	ESSER III "Recovery"	Total
Contracted Services	306,792	452,830	3,526,289	4,285,911
Nursing Services	194,457	4,941,989	10,045,269	15,181,715
Curriculum	684,131	3,478,675	19,806,990	23,969,796
Facilities	1,641,224	7,826,938	63,527,425	72,995,587
Health & Safety	4,479,512	7,135,113	715,024	12,329,649
Staffing				
Instructional Staff	2,039,268	14,961,783	14,777,857	31,778,908
Support Services Staff	732,356	7,045,391	17,767,366	25,545,113
Summer School	298,173	23,493,724	16,589,188	40,381,085
Technology	8,597,758	15,982,678	38,133,563	62,713,999
Transportation	551,398	5,951,861	20,766,181	27,269,440
Indirect Cost	482,845	1,616,100	3,128,044	5,226,989
Total	20,007,914	92,887,082	208,783,196	321,678,192

# QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (QI)

Cincinnati Public Schools partnered with Children's Hospital to undergo a series of Quality Improvement trainings in order to improve current financial processes within our district.

Quality improvement (QI) can be defined as a continuous and systematic approach to achieve measurable improvements in efficiency, effectiveness, and performance of a particular process. Children's Hospital's QI principals are grounded in the Model for Improvement, which is a framework for planning, testing and evaluating ideas for improving processes and outcomes.

We follow three guiding questions when beginning QI work:

- 1. What are we trying to accomplish?
- 2. How will we know that a change is an improvement?
- 3. What changes can we make that will result in improvement.

Once these three questions have been addressed, we follow the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles to begin testing ideas for improvement.

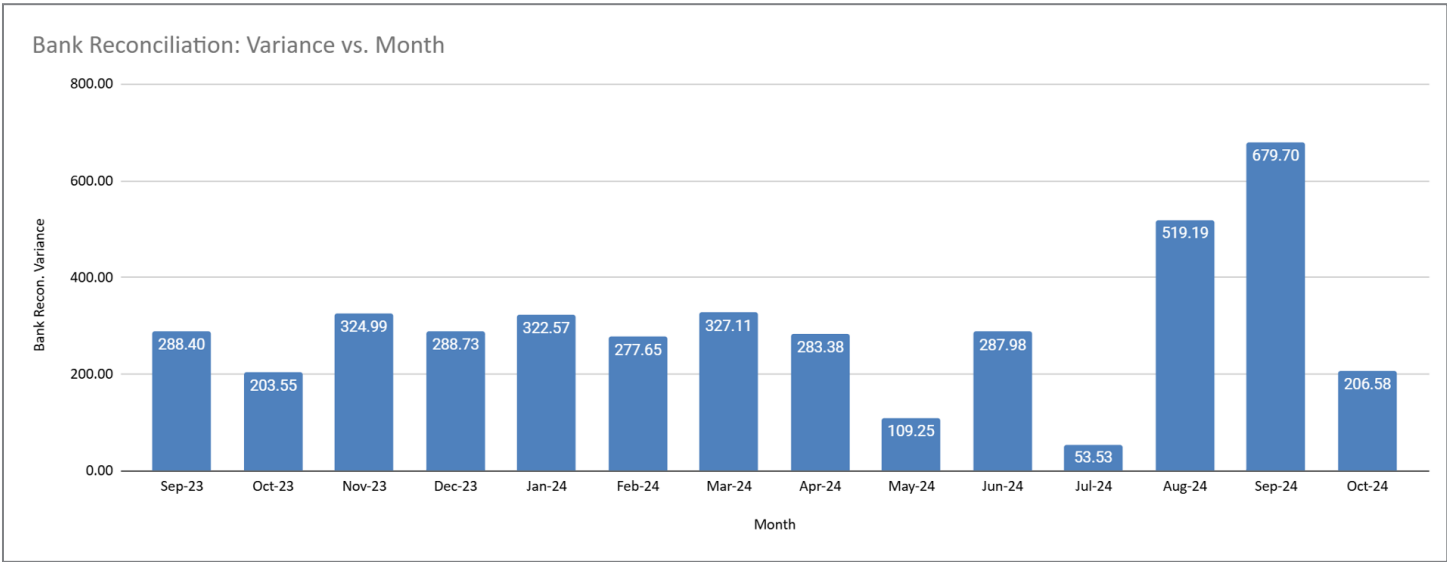
Below you will see an example of a current QI process being implemented by our Sr. Accountant on our Accounting Operations team around the process of our Bank Reconciliation.

**Team:**  
Accounting Operations

**Project Part 1:**  
Bank Reconciliation - The process of matching our bank account balance to our general ledger cash balance.

**Variation:**  
Difference between our bank balance and our general ledger cash balance. This can be a result of a data entry errors, failure to properly follow procedures, etc.

**Current Results:**  
0.000225% difference between our bank account and our general ledger.

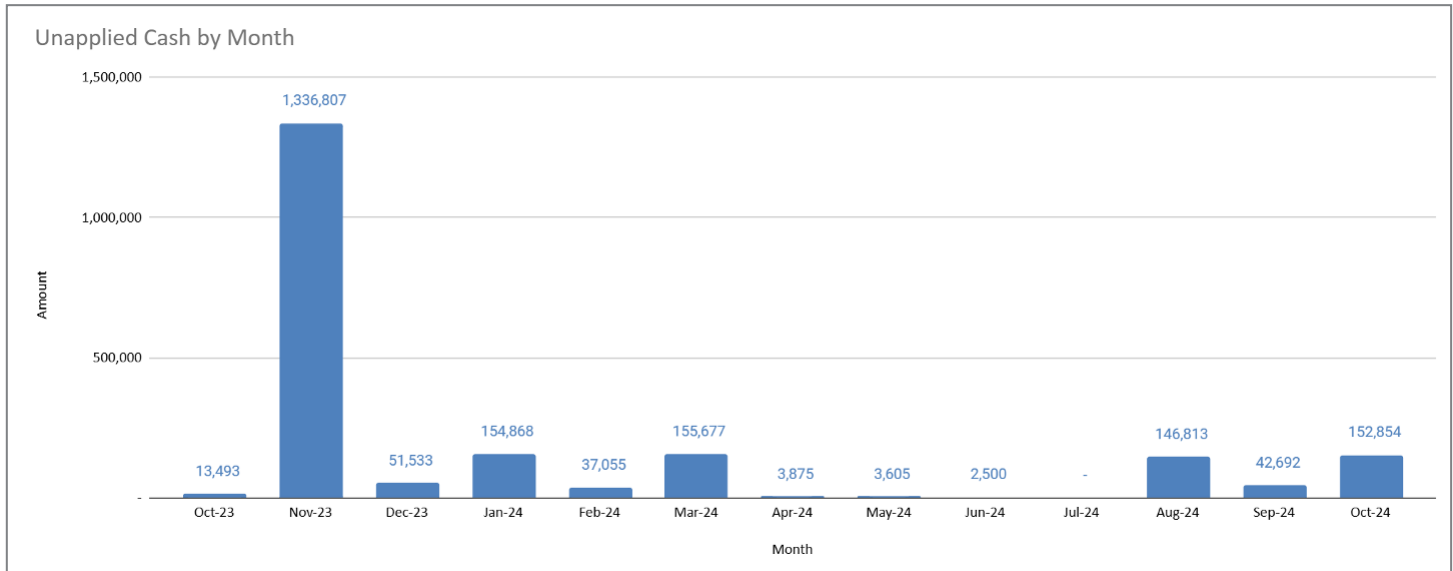


\*Graph represents dollar amount difference between bank account and general ledger

# QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (QI)

## Project Part 2: Unapplied Cash -

Checks and/or ACH payments received without enough information to post to the proper account. These payments are deposited in our bank account, in accordance with district policies in alignment with Ohio Revised Code, then recorded in the "Unapplied Cash Account" within our general ledger. Our team then researches these payments until the proper account is located and the payment is then applied to the correct account.

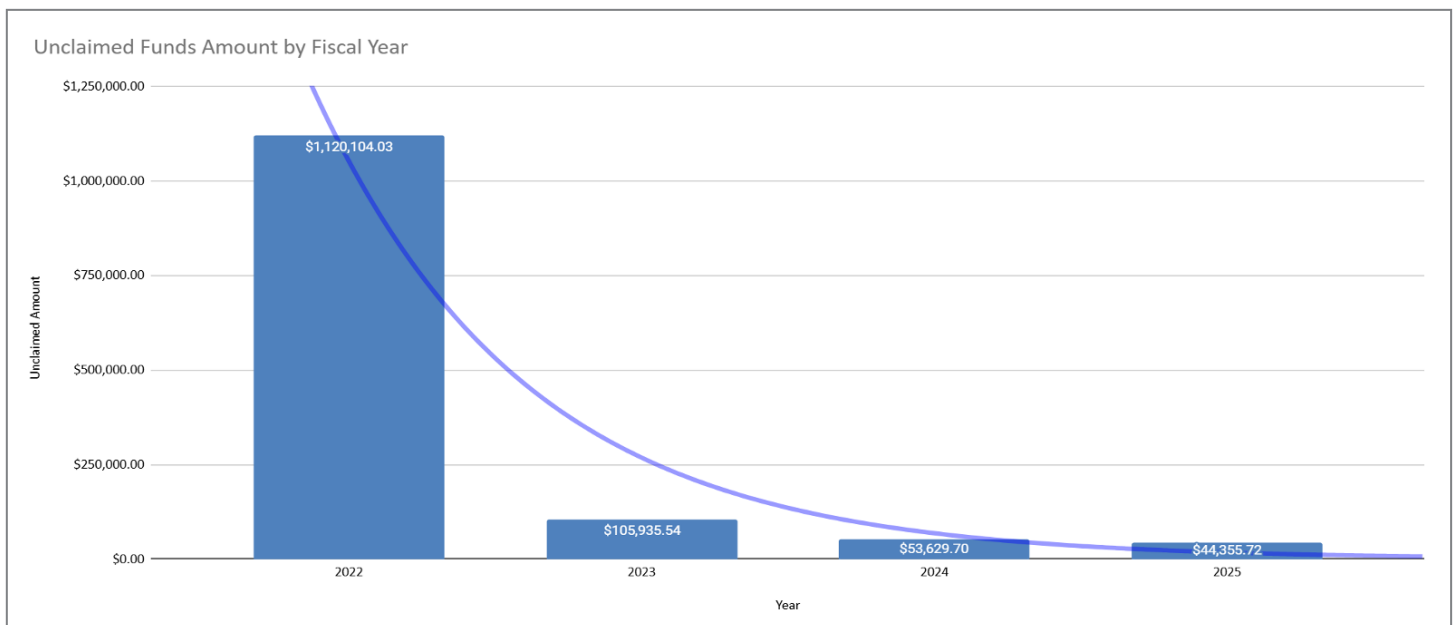


**\*Graph represents dollar amount of unapplied payments per month. These vary greatly depending on the size of the payment. (i.e. a large ACH payment can be upwards of \$1M+ without adequate backup documentation)**

## Project Part 3: Unclaimed Funds -

Checks issued by CPS but never cashed by the receiver. Accounting Operations team then attempts to contact the payee to retrieve any information they can in order to have these checks reissued. The team also posts the unclaimed funds data on the CPS Website under Unclaimed Funds.

**Current Result:** Since 2022 over \$1,000,000 reduction or a reduction of 96% (see graph below)





## STUDENT IMPACT

### CPS Zoo Academy

Srividya is passionate about air quality, and as a senior at the Zoo Academy, she wants to help make the world a healthier place: "Being at the Zoo Academy and working with the Cincinnati Zoo's CREW (Center for Conservation and Research of Endangered Wildlife) has given me a heightened sense of sustainability and conservation." Srividya is currently conducting a capstone project, with the assistance of a CREW mentor, using phytoremediation to mitigate air and surface pollution. Srividya notes, "My mentor from CREW has helped me with the preliminary research and methods and guided me on how to test and measure the effectiveness of companion plants, polyculture planting, and usage of tissue culture in removing pollutants."

The Zoo Academy is a full-time program for CPS juniors and seniors with a focus on plant and animal sciences. Students take all of their coursework on zoo grounds and perform 8 work-based learning hours each week with Cincinnati Zoo staff and Zoo Academy partners. These learning experiences include animal husbandry in various zoo areas, veterinary internships, administrative shadowing, maintenance team internships, hands-on horticultural education, and several other opportunities to prepare students for careers in animal and environmental fields. Career Technical Education (CTE) monies fund experiential learning opportunities and consumables for class activities and capstone projects, like Srividya's, providing the aquarium tanks, plant seeds, and soil that she needs to conduct her research.

Throughout the school day, students at the Zoo Academy work hands on, not only with zoo keepers and staff, but also in the classrooms. They learn how

to use hand tools and to research, design, and build bird houses, bat houses, and other animal habits in their Engineering, Safety, and Project Management course. They work with dog and cat models in their Veterinary Technician class to identify anatomical parts, suture wounds, and bandage injuries. Sheep brains and squids are dissected for Animal Anatomy and Physiology. Students establish and maintain hydroponic tower gardens and portable light boxes in their Plant and Horticulture course to learn about sustainable herb and food growth. Through the Zoo Academy's articulation agreement with Cincinnati State, these educational experiences can help students earn pre-apprenticeship industry credentials for graduation and open doors to future career opportunities.

Of course, the Cincinnati Zoo is the Zoo Academy's founding and most obvious partner, but we also work with a variety of other organizations to bring opportunities to our students. Every year, students apply math and structural engineering concepts to build a canoe with the Camping and Education Foundation's Urban Wilderness Program. After the build, students go to Burnet Woods for a leadership day to float their canoe and learn outdoor survival skills. The Civic Garden Center comes into our classroom and brings students to their facilities to teach horticultural skills and environmental stewardship. With La Soupe, students learn how to prepare and cook nutritious meals.



25 Students  
involved in  
creating animal  
habitats

La Soupe  
provides 320  
meals per year  
to our students

La  
SOUPE  
CINCINNATI, OHIO



## STUDENT IMPACT

An instructor from Project Yoga comes to the Zoo Academy every week to help students destress; We also take students out of the building to learn from leaders at WaterWorks, the Metropolitan Sewer District, Newport Aquarium, Green Acres, Cincinnati State, UC Blue Ash, Columbus Zoo, ORSANCO, Keep Cincinnati Beautiful, Millcreek Alliance, and many more. From bio blitzes at Bowyer Farm to learning canine CPR at MedVet, Zoo Academy students are exploring their own interests and learning from experts. All of these partnerships offer students mentorship, leadership development, progress towards earning graduation seals (Ohio Means Jobs and Community Service), and job opportunities. These community partnerships and mentorships are invaluable to students.

The impact this program has had and continues to have on students and society is profound. For the past fifty years, Zoo Academy alumni have gone on to become zoo keepers and environmental scientists all over the world. Some have started nonprofits, animal rescues, or doggy daycare facilities. Some have conducted biological and environmental research used to change policies. Recent Zoo Academy graduates include a veterinarian in Romania, an environmental educator in Alaska and Colorado, a primate keeper at Houston Zoo, and a naval welder in California. Many have stayed in Cincinnati, giving back to their community in jobs such as landscaping, outdoor photography, working as vet techs in clinics and emergency animal hospitals, performing water quality testing at Cincinnati Water Works, and monitoring safety protocols at Metropolitan Sewer District --- and staying right here at the Cincinnati Zoo to further its mission of environmental stewardship, education, and outreach. In fact, just about everywhere you look at the Cincinnati Zoo there are Zoo Academy alumni. Directors, education staff, curators, head keepers, team leaders, and animal experts throughout the Cincinnati Zoo are Zoo Academy graduates. Approximately 1/3 of the current zoo staff graduated from the Zoo Academy.



One of the biggest impacts of the Zoo Academy is that it empowers students to make positive change. Through multiple experiences, they learn that the world is bigger and more diverse than one can even imagine, and that we all — humans and animals alike — have a right to live here. Being able to communicate with one another, listen to the perspectives of various stakeholders, collaborate, and come up with solutions to complex issues is the key to saving species and keeping our planet alive. In Srividya's case, she has seen first-hand how air pollution affects people in India and in the US, and she has found her way to contribute to a solution: "In most parts of Hyderabad, where I'm from, the air feels heavy. There's dust and smog that you can physically see, making it hard to breathe. Phytoremediation is one technique that can aid us and future generations. Using these techniques in urban areas is an effective way to remove pollution sustainably and improve biodiversity."

This year, the Zoo Academy is celebrating its 50th graduating class. There are other zoo programs in the nation but none that offer students such an immersive experience - fostering deep relationships and a passion for our living world that will last forever.

**Catherine Kemme-Hazlewood**  
Zoo Academy Team Leader



For more information on  
the CPS Zoo Academy  
please visit:



[bit.ly/CPSZooAcademy](https://bit.ly/CPSZooAcademy)



## FAST FACTS

This section is used to bring about the fun and excitement of our finances from our history. The point of this section is to share fun facts from the history of Cincinnati Public Schools and how our finances have changed over time. Please use the link at the beginning of the newsletter to provide your input and fun topics you would like to learn more about!

### 100 YEARS AGO

Nutrition is of the utmost importance for our students of Cincinnati Public Schools with student dining services being an important factor of the district's budget.

However, in 1925, after years of being closed, Bond Hill School re-opened their lunchroom and requested to add one cook to the Board payroll at \$10 a week. This request was made to meet the school's large demand.

100 years later CPS employs hundreds of lunchroom staff to help meet the breakfast and lunch needs of our students. In addition the Student and Dining Services department staffs a large team of professionals year round who ensure CPS students have quality dining experiences.

# 1925



## UPCOMING NEWS & EVENTS

### 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR

**March 21:**  
Budget, Finance  
and Growth  
Committee

**April 1:**  
Just Ask Jen -  
State Legislators

**April 7:**  
Board Business  
Meeting

**April 18:**  
Budget, Finance  
and Growth  
Committee

**April 21:**  
Board Business  
Meeting