



Building **Brighter** FUTURES

PATHWAY TO SUSTAINABLE STUDENT SUCCESS



Building Brighter Futures Overview

City Council Workforce, Education, Training, and Youth

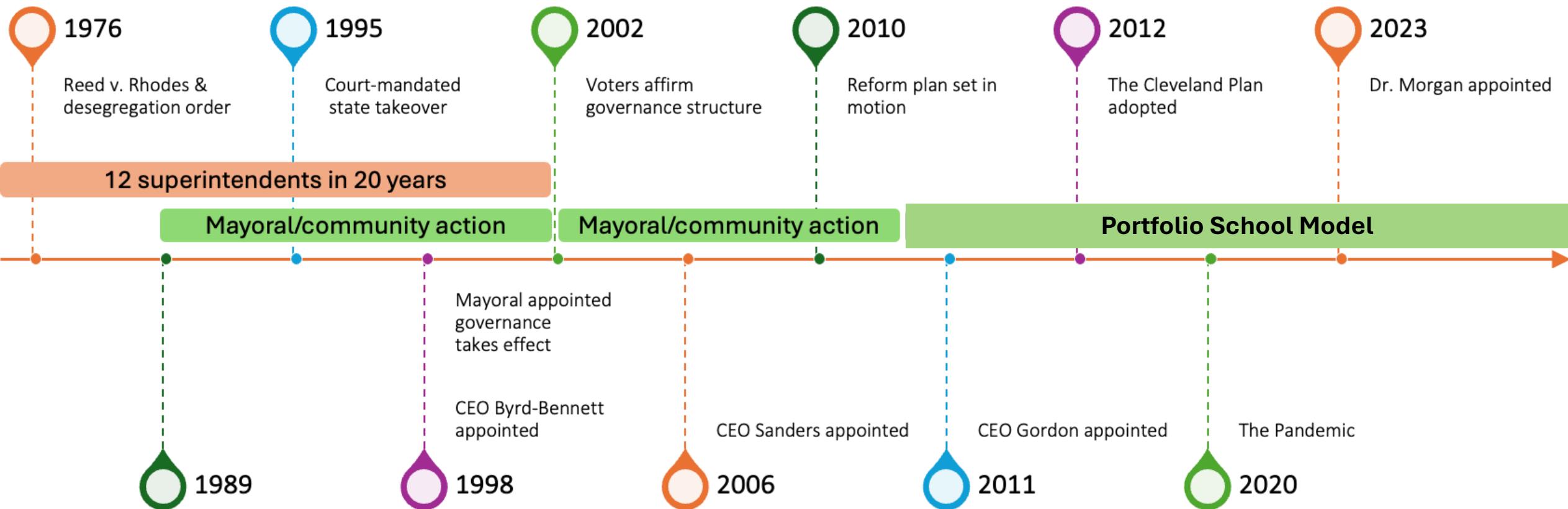
Development Committee Briefing

February 3, 2026

Cleveland Metropolitan School District History and Current Context



The Cleveland Educational Context 1976-2023





The Goals

1. Early Literacy

2. Math Proficiency

3. College Readiness

The Guardrails

1. Safety/Well-Being

2. Opportunity & Access

3. Community Engagement

Celebrations and Progress

Doing the work...

- Implemented online gradebook, ELA curriculum and cell phone policy
- Passed a combined bond & operating levy by a historic margin
- Implemented a refreshed student-based budgeting model
- Board adoption of Goals & Guardrails
- Launched public phase of Building Brighter Futures

... is getting results.

- Achieved a **3-Star Rating** for the first time
- **Upgraded credit rating** by S&P and Fitch despite adverse external conditions for public districts
- From May 2024 5YFC to May 2025 5YFC, the forecasted ending cash balance for FY28 year-end improved by **\$196M**.
- Rate of serious safety incidents down **from 3.5% (SY24) to 2.9% (SY25)**

2024-25 SY REPORT CARD

CMSD ★★★ LEVELS UP ACROSS THE BOARD



CMSD improves proficiency rates across
ALL testing subjects, exceeding pre-pandemic
rates in HS ELA, Algebra and US Govt.

% POINT INCREASE OVER LAST YEAR	CMSD Only	CMSD with Charters
Algebra 1	12.3%	11.7%
Geometry	8.0%	7.5%
K8 Math	4.8%	4.4%
Math Overall	6.2%	5.6%
HS ELA	6.4%	6.2%
ELA Overall	1.3%	1.0%
Science	5.6%	4.6%
Social Studies	9.9%	9.0%



This is our current reality

78% of
High Schools offer

**COLLEGE
CREDIT**

59% of
High Schools offer

**CAREER
PATHWAYS**

**LOW
ENROLLMENT**

hurts teacher &
student experiences

Only **70%**
of students in
**UPGRADED
BUILDINGS**

38%
of K-8s offer options
**BEYOND
ART, MUSIC & PE**

Academic improvement but our report card shows we need to work on preparing students for after HS



Last Year's Report Card

Achievement

Progress

Graduation

Gap Closing

Early Literacy

This Year's Report Card

Achievement

Progress

Graduation

Gap Closing

Early Literacy

College, Career, Workforce,
Military Readiness



Of the 2,449 students in the 2024 graduating class,

873 (36%)
successfully demonstrated college, career, workforce, and military readiness

“Phase 0”

July 2023 – March 2025



Late 2023: a perfect storm of challenges

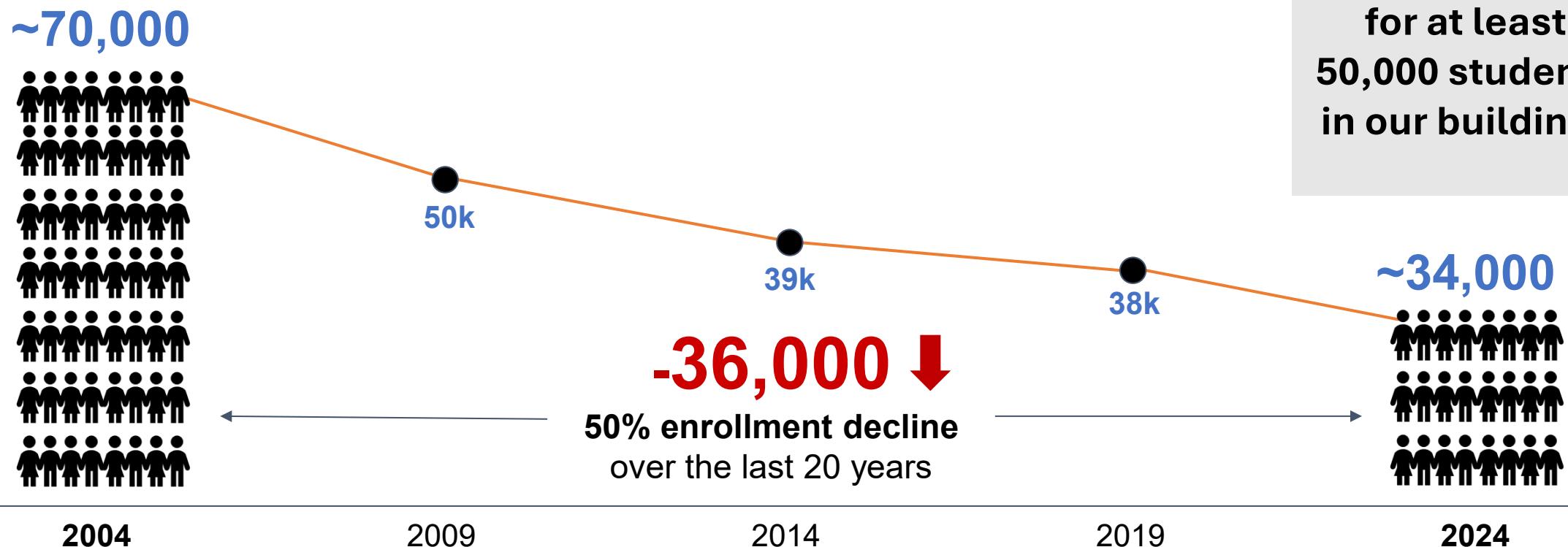


- Increasing costs + state funding cuts + ARP/ESSER cliff → OH fiscal precaution
- Entering a bargaining year
- Declining enrollment
- Inadequate building conditions
- Inequitable access to student experience

Phase 0: starting with the facts...



CMSD PreK-12 Enrollment from 2004 to 2024



Source: Ohio Department of Education, Fall Headcounts

* Note that values may not match current year totals, due to differences in Headcount vs End of Year enrollment methodology

... And building context around them.



**Historically low
births**



16% decline
Cuyahoga County
births

**Fewer school-
aged kids**



13% decline
County under-18
population

**Drops in school
enrollment**



15% decline
County-wide public
school enrollment

**Declines in CMSD
enrollment**



11% decline
CMSD enrollment

CMSD enrollment will continue to decline given these trends

Few CMSD schools have strong enrollment



11 of 61

K-8s with
enrollment
equivalent to two
classes per grade
or 450 students



3 of 27

High Schools with
enrollment
equivalent to 125
students per grade
or 500 students

Most of our buildings have been upgraded...



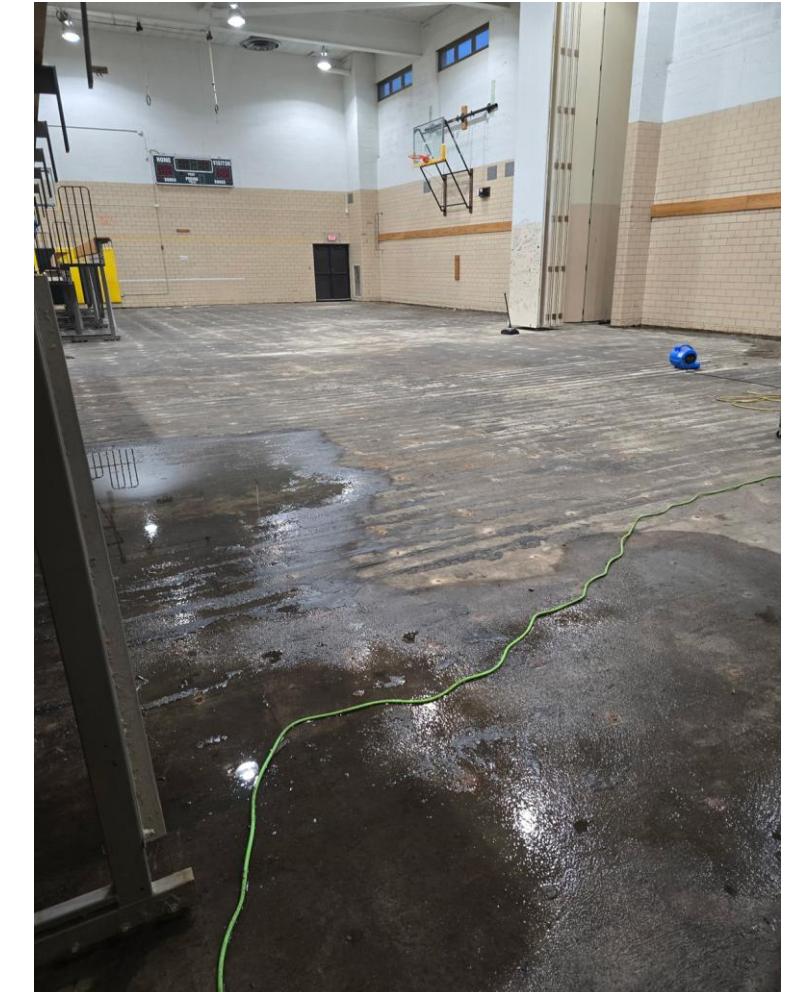
52 buildings rebuilt or renovated since 2001

70%

students served in upgraded buildings



... but not all of our buildings are warm, safe, and dry.



CMSD 5-year financial forecast, Nov. 2023



	FY22-23	FY23-24	FY24-25	FY25-26	FY26-27	FY27-28
Total Revenues	\$697.8	\$722.4	\$662.9	\$678.1	\$683.7	\$695.4
Total Expenditures	\$682.8	\$691.0	\$806.2	\$827.8	\$850.7	\$874.4
Net Revenues Excess (Shortfall)	\$15.0	\$31.4	(\$143.3)	(\$149.7)	(\$167.0)	(\$179.0)
Ending Fund Cash Balance	\$109.5	\$141.1	(\$2.3)	(\$152.0)	(\$319.0)	(\$498.0)
Encumbrances	\$16.0	\$16.0	\$16.0	\$16.0	\$16.0	\$16.0
Unencumbered Fund Cash Balance	\$93.5	\$125.1	(\$18.3)	(\$168.0)	(\$335.0)	(\$514.0)

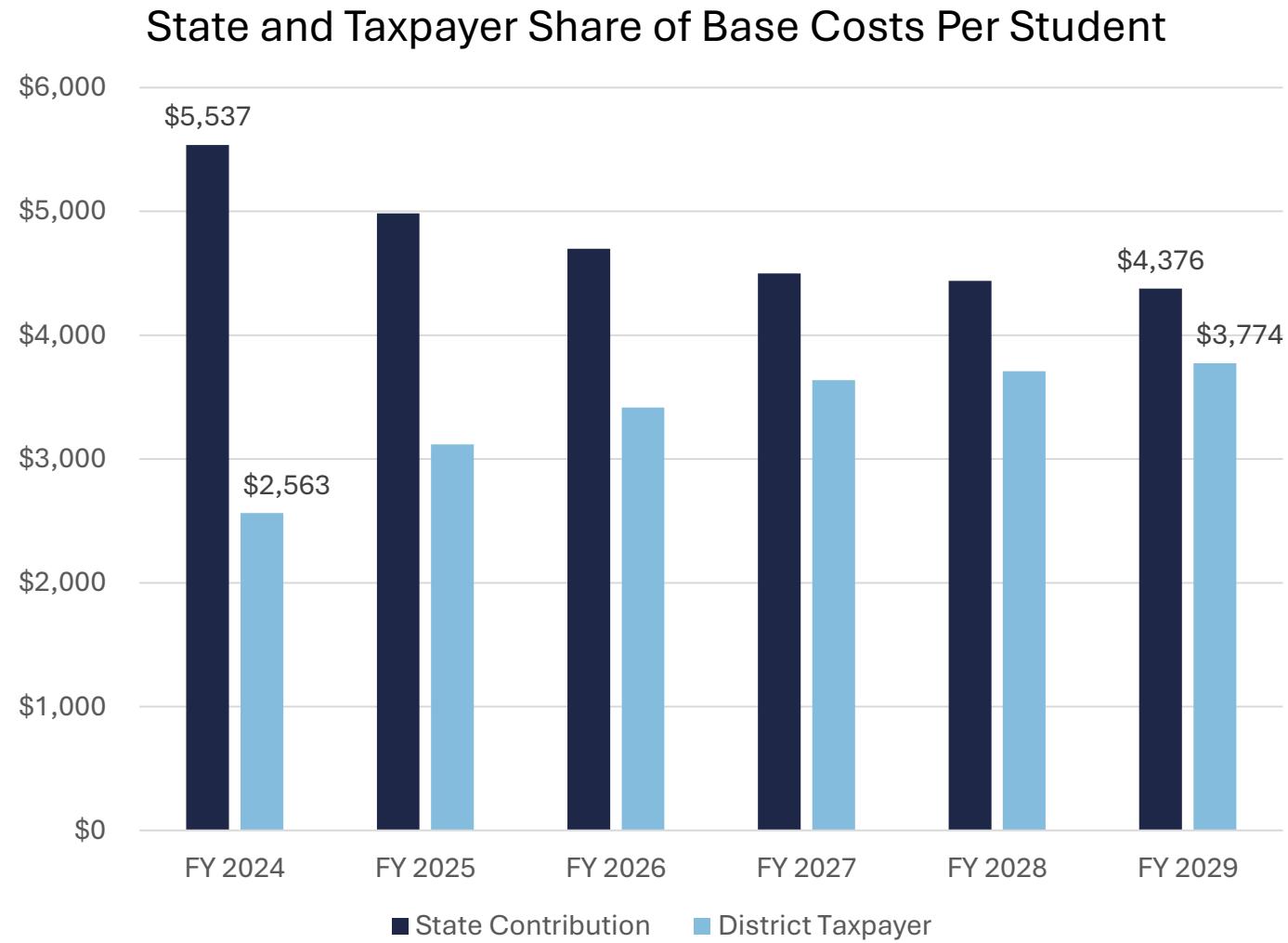
State Education Funding Relies More and More on Taxpayers



The State's expected share decreased by 21% from 2024 to 2029.

This increased the expected taxpayer's share by 47% from 2024 to 2029.

State funding per student (navy) decreases and the expected local contribution per student (light blue) increases.



Financial Context of Similar Districts (as of Oct 2025)



District	FY 2025 Cash Balance	FY 2025 Deficit	Depletion of Cash Reserves	Last Operating Levy
Akron¹	85 days	4.5%	FY 2028	11/2024
Cincinnati²	25 days	1.9%	FY 2028	11/2020 (11/2025 planned)
Cleveland³	56 days	0.6%	FY 2029	11/2024
Columbus⁴	124 days	2.4%	FY 2030	11/2023
Toledo⁵	32 days	10.8%	FY 2028	11/2024

¹Akron's forecast does not assume any reductions.

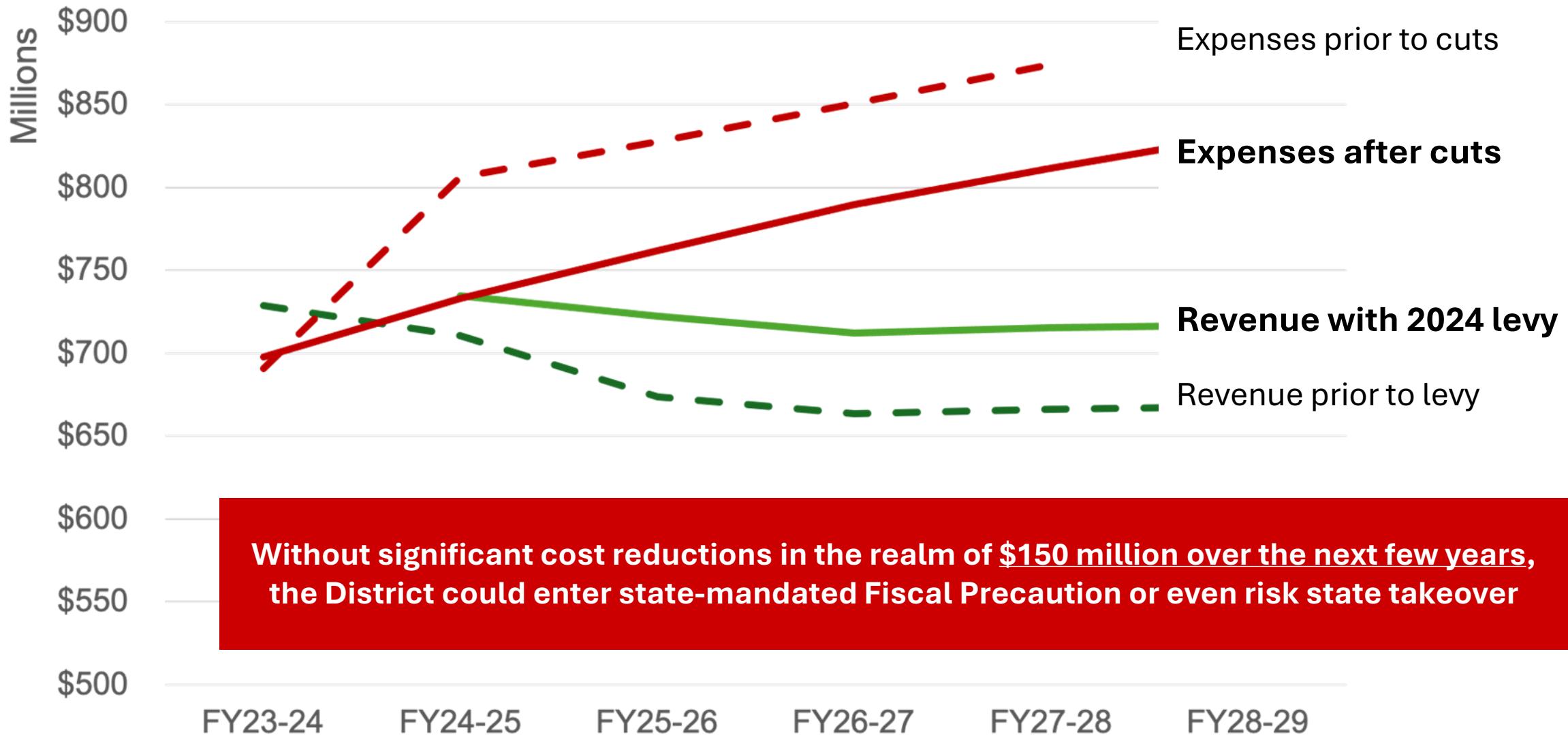
²Cincinnati has not presented an initial 2025 forecast. This is the May 2025 forecast.

³Cleveland assumes \$5 million (0.7%) in FY 2026 and \$35 million (4.8%) in FY 2027 in annual cost savings. Without these savings incorporated, Cleveland will deplete the cash balance by FY 2028.

⁴Columbus assumes \$50 million (4.0%) in annual cost savings beginning in FY 2027. Without the savings incorporated, Columbus would deplete its cash balance by FY 2029.

⁵Toledo assumed implementation of the Fair School Funding Plan. Actual revenue will be lower.

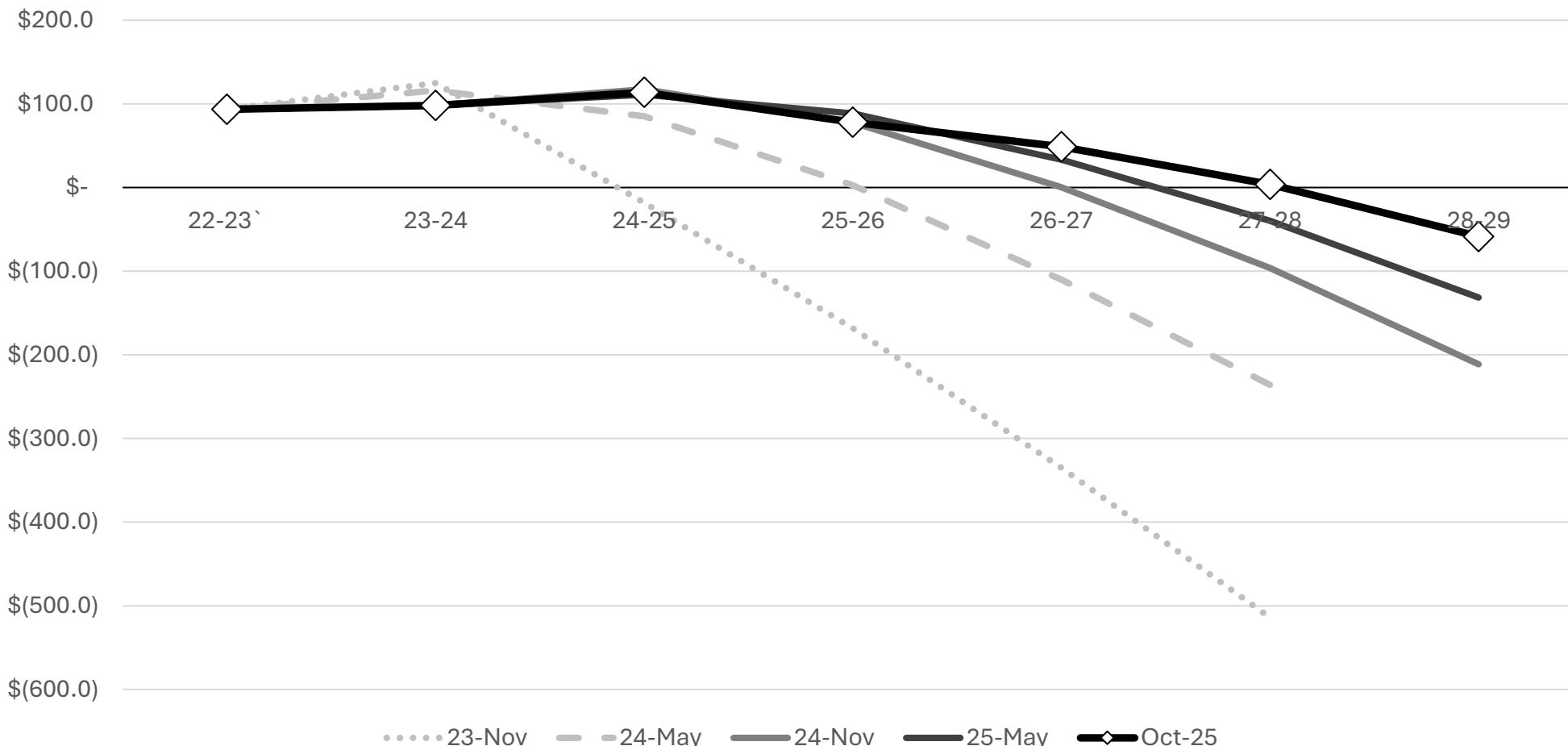
Due to state funding constraints, rising costs and an inefficient cost structure, the financial outlook remained challenging post-levy



The Work we have done over time to level CMSD expenses



Unencumbered Cash Balances



We have an opportunity and responsibility to act



- Building Brighter Futures is about making **responsible decisions** so **all of our students can level up** to better experiences and more opportunities
- Given our finances, the hard reality is that **we decide our fate or the state of Ohio will**

Phase 1

March 2025 – November 2025

**Engaging stakeholders in the facts...
starting with the WHY**



Our vision for students



**All CMSD students
are safe, engaged,
and successful, no
matter which school
they attend**



Our focus in since recommendations has been on deep engagement with impacted school communities



Phase 1 (Spring - Fall 2025)

Spring-Summer

- ⌚ Community meetings held in 100% of regions
- ⌚ Virtual meetings for those that missed mtgs.
- ⌚ Staff meetings at 100% of schools
- ⌚ Discussions with Student and Parent Advisory Councils
- ⌚ Board meetings
- ⌚ Numerous presentations to civic and faith-based groups
- ⌚ Small group and one-on-one briefings (including city council and elected leaders)

Fall

- ⌚ Community meetings round #2 held in 100% of regions.
- ⌚ Virtual meetings for those who could not attend in-person.
- ⌚ Open House presentation and school-level data shared at 100% of schools
- ⌚ Staff meetings at 100% of schools
- ⌚ Discussions with Student & Parent Advisory Councils
- ⌚ Expanded on-demand website resources
- ⌚ State of the Schools
- ⌚ Additional presentations to civic and faith-based groups
- ⌚ Small group and one-on-one briefings
- ⌚ Board meetings
- ⌚ Media briefings

Stakeholder feedback shaped our work along the way



CMSD has engaged a wide **variety of key stakeholders** in 2025, through forums such as:

- 13 regional community meetings
- 6 districtwide virtual meetings
- Staff meetings at every school
- Student and Parent Advisory Council Meetings
- Presentations to City Council, neighborhood and community groups



As a result, our recommendations incorporated thousands of inputs from our students, staff, and community



Our recommendations were grounded in data points shaped by community input



Primary Data

- Student enrollment
- Enrollment trends
- Building condition
- Building size and use



School and Neighborhood Factors

- Student outcomes (Report Card Star Rating)
- Special programming or unique models offered at a school
- Student demographics at each school (income, race, students with special needs)
- Student retention rates
- Regional historic and forecast enrollment trends
- Distance students travel to school (choice patterns)
- Number of school options nearby
- Physical barriers impacting walker safety
- Building details (green space, gym, auditorium, etc.)
- Cost to upgrade and maintain buildings
- Other neighborhood and historical factors

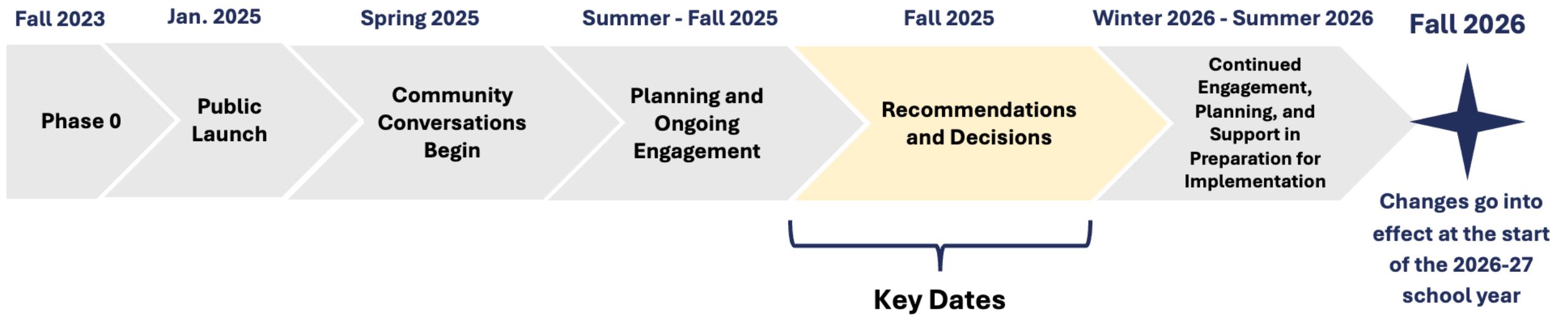
Phase 2

November – December 2025

The final Board-approved BBF recommendation



Building Brighter Futures Timeline



Recommendations made to Board

- Principal and assistant principal meetings
- In-person staff meetings at every transitioning, welcoming, and moving school
- Input from CTU School Chapter Chairs from every transitioning and moving school and other staffing groups shared with district leadership
- In-person family meetings at every transitioning, welcoming, and moving school
- Student support at impacted schools

Board voted on recommendations

Our focus in since recommendations has been on deep engagement with impacted school communities



Phase 2 (Fall 2025)

- ✓ In-person staff meetings at 100% of transitioning, welcoming, and moving school
- ✓ In-person family meetings at 100% of transitioning, welcoming, and moving school
- ✓ Student support at impacted schools
- ✓ Meetings with principals, assistant principals, CTU Chapter Chairs, and other school-based staffing groups
- ✓ Expanded on-demand resources on website
- ✓ Board engagement
- ✓ Small group and one-on-one briefings
- ✓ Media Briefings

We have studied every piece of input shared since BBF Recommendations were shared on Nov. 5th



Family meetings at impacted schools

Family meetings at every transitioning, welcoming, and moving school from November 12 to December 4

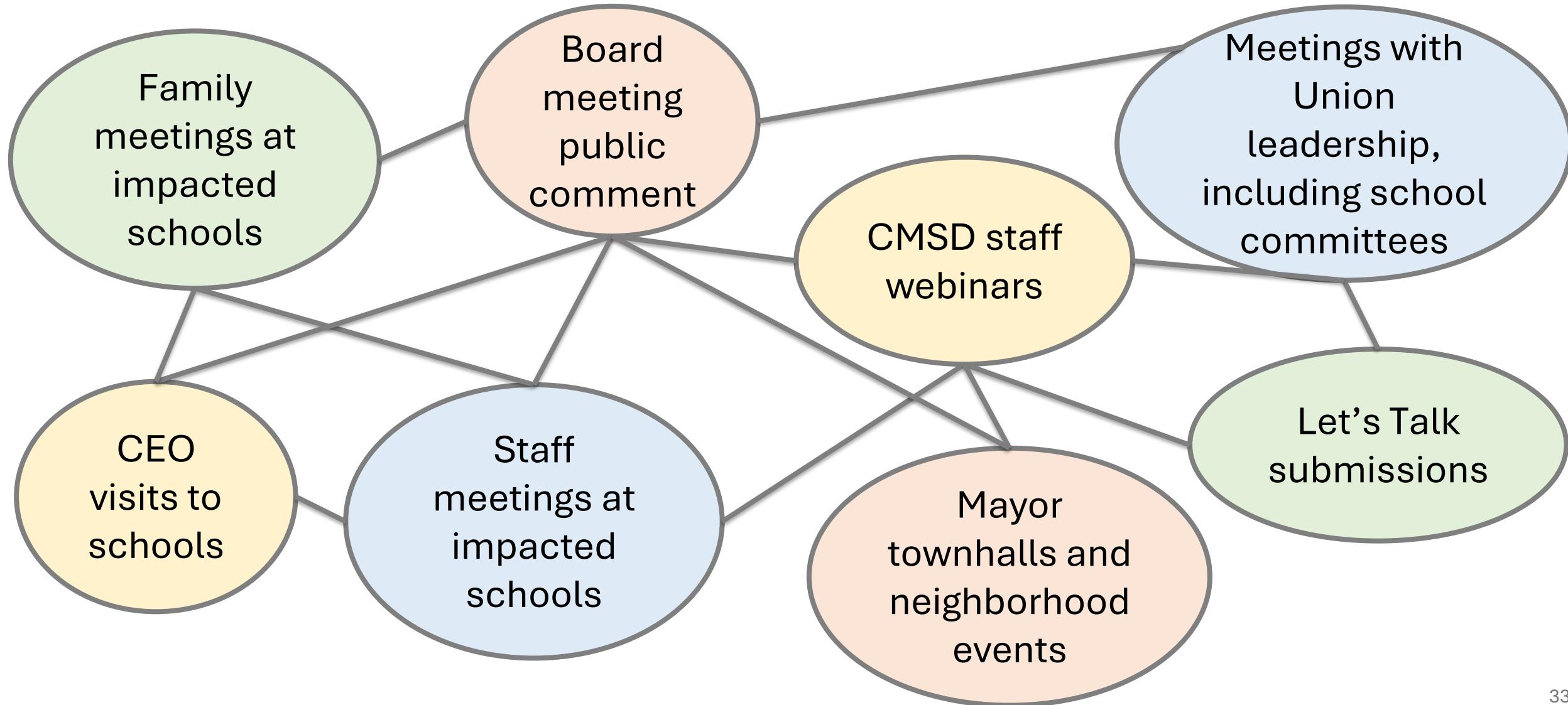
Staff meetings at impacted schools

Staff meetings at every transitioning, welcoming, and moving school on November 12, 18, & 19

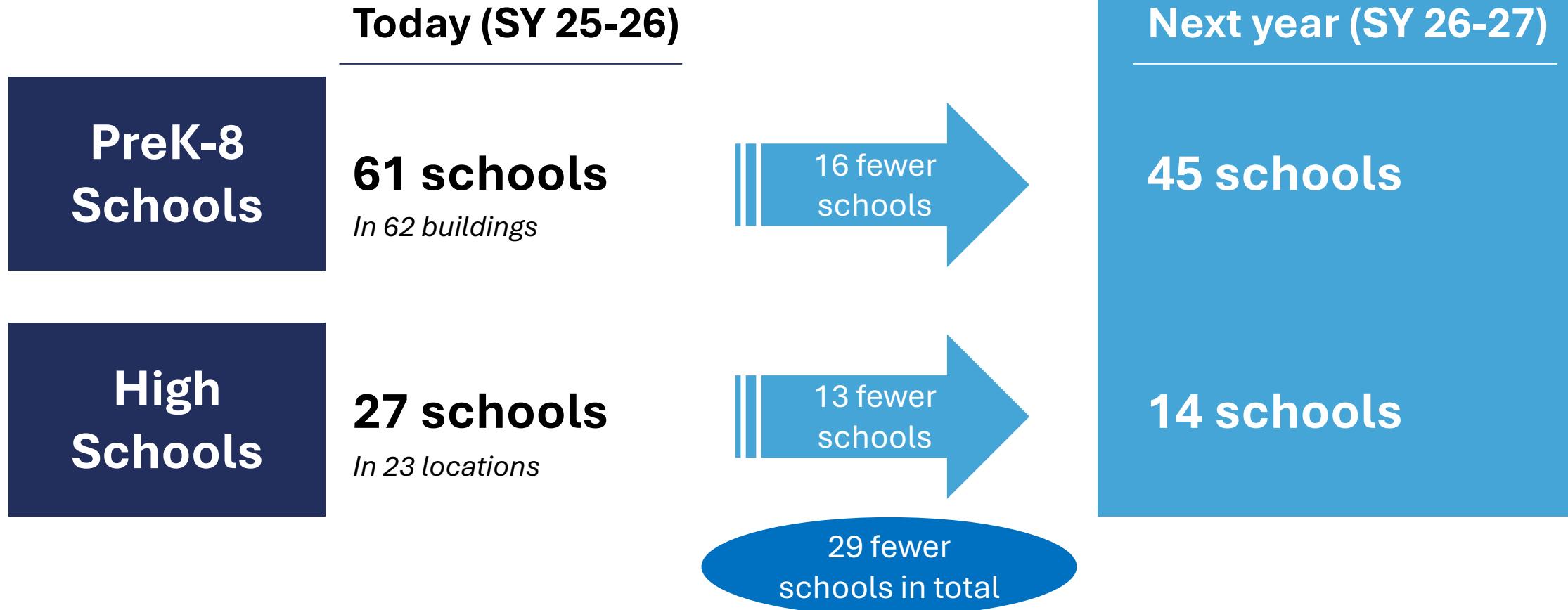


Over 100 meetings at impacted schools over the past month

Our focus between sharing recommendations and Board vote was on listening, and continuing to inform



In fall 2026, CMSD will operate 59 schools and continue non-traditional options



Non-traditional school options will remain as program offerings for SY 26-27, specifically Natividad Pagan International Newcomers Academy (K-12), School of One, Remote K-8 School, Remote High School, Virtual Academy, High Tech High, and educational programs offered to students in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center and residential settings.



Mergers



14 high schools currently on co-located campuses to merge within their 6 respective campuses

5 high schools to merge with a paired welcoming school in the welcoming school's building



High School Mergers – Co-located schools merging at current location



14 high schools currently on co-located campuses to merge within their 6 respective campuses

Current High Schools (14 on 6 campuses)		Future High Schools (and Names)
1. John Hay Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cleveland School of Science and Medicine• Cleveland School of Architecture and Design• Cleveland Early College High School	→ John Hay High School
2. Lakeside Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Davis Aerospace and Maritime High School• Cleveland High School for Digital Arts	→ Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. High School
3. John Marshall Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• John Marshall School of Civic and Business Leadership• John Marshall School of Engineering• John Marshall School of Information Technology	→ John Marshall High School
4. Lincoln-West Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lincoln-West School of Global Studies• Lincoln-West School of Science and Health	→ Lincoln-West High School
5. James Ford Rhodes Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• James Ford Rhodes College and Career Academy• James Ford Rhodes School of Environmental Studies	→ James Ford Rhodes High School
6. Garrett Morgan Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Garrett Morgan School of Engineering & Innovation• Garrett Morgan School of Leadership & Innovation	→ Garrett Morgan High School



High School Mergers – Merging to new location



5

HS mergers
requiring
change in
location

Transitioning School		Welcoming School
1. Collinwood High School	→	Glenville High School
2. Campus International High School	→	John Hay High School
3. MC ² STEM High School	→	East Technical High School
4. New Tech West High School	→	James Ford Rhodes High School
5. Facing History New Tech High School		



K-8 Mergers



16
K-8 mergers

Transitioning School	Welcoming School and Name
1. Hannah Gibbons	→ Memorial
2. Euclid Park	→ East Clark
3. Stephanie Tubbs Jones*	→ Franklin D. Roosevelt (<i>renamed Stephanie Tubbs Jones</i>)
4. Mary M. Bethune*	→ Daniel E. Morgan
5. Mary B. Martin	→ Wade Park
6. Alfred A. Benesch	→ George Washington Carver
7. Bolton	→ Harvey Rice
8. Charles Dickens	→ Andrew J. Rickoff
9. Adlai E. Stevenson	→ Whitney M. Young Leadership
10. Miles	→ Robert H. Jamison
11. Dike School of the Arts	→ Mound (<i>renamed Mound School of the Arts</i>)
12. Mound*	→ Albert Bushnell Hart
12. Mary Church Terrell	→ Wilbur Wright (<i>renamed Wilbur Wright School of the Arts</i>)
13. Waverly*	→ Joseph M. Gallagher
14. Louisa May Alcott	
15. Charles A. Mooney	→ Denison
16. Valley View Boys' Leadership Academy	→ Kenneth Clement Boys' Leadership Academy

*Indicates a building that will stay in operation as the new location for a district-wide specialty school



K-8 Moves



4 moves
of K-8 specialty
schools

Current Location	Future Location and Name
1. Kenneth Clement Boys' Leadership Academy (merged with Valley View Boys' Leadership Academy)	→ Mary M. Bethune building (renamed <i>Kenneth W. Clement Boys' Leadership Academy</i>)
2. Stonebrook-White Montessori	→ Stephanie Tubbs Jones building (renamed <i>Michael R. White Montessori</i>)
3. Dike School of the Arts	→ Mound building (renamed <i>Mound School of Arts</i> as part of merger with Mound) (renamed <i>Dike School of the Arts</i>)
4. Tremont Montessori	→ Waverly building (renamed <i>Waverly Montessori</i>)



K-8 Name Updates or Transfers



8 name
changes
of K-8 schools

Current Name	Future Name
1. Franklin D. Roosevelt (now home to merged FDR and Stephanie Tubbs Jones)	→ Stephanie Tubbs Jones
2. Stephanie Tubbs Jones building (now home to Stonebrook-White Montessori)	→ Michael R. White Montessori
3. Mary McLeod Bethune building (now home to Kenneth Clement BLA)	→ Kenneth Clement BLA
4. Waverly building (now home to Tremont Montessori)	→ Waverly Montessori
5. Wilbur Wright (now home to West Side arts specialty school)	→ Wilbur Wright School of the Arts
6. Mound (now home to merged Mound and Dike School of the Arts)	→ Mound School of the Arts
7. Warner Girls' Leadership Academy	→ Mary B. Martin Girls' Leadership Academy
8. Douglas MacArthur Girls' Leadership Academy	→ Mary McLeod Bethune Girls' Leadership Academy



Building Brighter Futures System-wide Benefits

Summary of improved experience for students in impacted schools



Of students in schools directly impacted by changes...

Better schools for all students



100%

will have equal or expanded **academic and extracurricular opportunities and student supports**



96%

will attend a welcoming school with an **equal or higher star rating**



95%

will attend a welcoming school with an **equal or better condition building**

Changes will save an estimated \$30 million every year

Creating more regional balance in access to neighborhood K8s



	K8 School count (SY 25-26)	Total K-8 enrollment (SY 24-25)	K8 School Count (BBF SY 26-27)
East side	34	9,944	23
West side	27	10,726	22
CMSD total	61	20,670	45

There are **currently seven more K-8 schools on the East side than the West side.**

Enrollment data shows a **mismatch between student population and # of schools.**

Consolidations propose operating **roughly the same number of K8s on the East and West side.**

Average distance to the nearest CMSD school for K-8 students will remain well under 1 mile for both sides of the city even after BBF recommendations.

We are planning for a *Brighter Future for all students*



100% of
High Schools offer

**COLLEGE
CREDIT**

100% of
High Schools offer

**CAREER
PATHWAYS**

**HEALTHY
ENROLLMENT**

Improve teacher &
student experiences

100%
of students in
**UPGRADED
BUILDINGS**

100%
of K-8s offer options

**BEYOND
ART, MUSIC & PE**

Phase 3

December 2025 – Fall 2026

Implementing transformative system changes on a fixed, compressed timeline.



Choice | Enrollment



Choice Data as of February 3, 2026

- 3,802 students have made a choice.
- More than 35% of CMSD 8th graders have made a high school choice.
- More than 40% of preschool families have made a Kindergarten choice for next school year.
- 33 School Choice Navigators are assigned to the schools that are impacted by BBF. Their role is to support families in making a choice by the February 27 deadline.
- The goal of the Navigators is to attempt at least 3 outreach efforts to each family making a school choice by February 27.

Applications for school choice are significantly up over last year.

It is especially encouraging to see an increase in the number of new families submitting a school choice application for next year.

Choice | Enrollment Outreach and Marketing

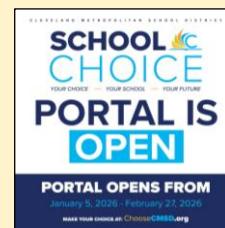


Marketing Plan

Dec 10, 2025 – February 27, 2026

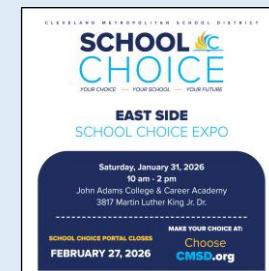
School Choice Toolkits

- City Comms Dept
- City Council
- CMSD Principals



Social

- ✓ Posting 3x/wk
- ✓ Dec. 10 – Feb. 27
- ✓ CMSD 360 Each Monday



Paid Content

Boosted Social Media for Expos

- ✓ 18,000 Views
- ✓ 116 click to Choice webpage



Media

- ✓ News Outlets Published Stories
- ✓ Radio Ads and Social on Radio One

IVRs/Emails/Texts to Families Each Monday

Transportation

Transportation Commitments



- **We know the critical importance of providing safe and reliable transportation for students**
- **Building Brighter Futures will allow us to continue our current district transportation practices**, including:
 - ✓ CMSD currently transports most students who live 1–3 miles from their school and will continue to do so
 - ✓ Specialty schools that already offer district-wide transportation will continue to do so
 - ✓ High schoolers who live more than 1 mile from their high school will continue to receive RTA transportation (with Safe Passages support)
 - ✓ All students with transportation-related accommodations on their IEP will continue to receive transportation, regardless of where they live

Special transportation allowances will be made for current students in grades K-7 who attend a school that is merging or changing location because of Building Brighter Futures

The background of the slide features a subtle, abstract design. It consists of several overlapping circles in a light, semi-transparent style. The colors used are a warm orange, a bright yellow, and a cool teal. These circles are positioned in the upper left quadrant of the slide, creating a sense of depth and motion.

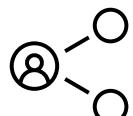
Safety



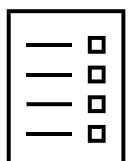
BBF will ensure improvements for the safety and security of students, staff, and the community, by committing to:



Maintaining or increasing the number of security guards at every school



Improving allocation of safety and security resources



Strengthening safety and security plans for each school

Additionally, **through continued collaboration with the City of Cleveland and community partners**, we will **build connections across neighborhood lines and ensure safe passage to and from school**

Transition Supports

Transition Supports



Supports over the remainder of this school year will include:

- ***Social-Emotional Supports:*** Formal and informal opportunities to ask questions and process the impact of change together
- ***Welcoming School & Choice Navigation Supports:*** Open houses and school tours at the welcoming campus, personalized outreach from School Choice Navigators, and virtual resources like a School Finder tool to help families understand their options and make a proactive choice
- ***Community Building:*** Student/family meet & greets, field days, and other relationship-building opportunities to begin to cultivate a unified school community
- ***Strengthening Professional Collaboration:*** Aligning teams early to co-plan, share practices, & build trust, as well as to clarify expectations and create community together
- ***Honoring Legacy:*** Events to honor the legacy of the transitioning school

Staffing

Key Dates for School Staffing



December 2025

2026-27 Principal Named for All Schools

January 2026

2026-27 Assistant Principal(s) Named for All Schools

February 2026

Student Enrollment Window Closes

Important milestone as enrollment is a key driver of staffing levels for each campus!

April 2026

Teaching Hiring Process Completed

Central Office Budgeting Process



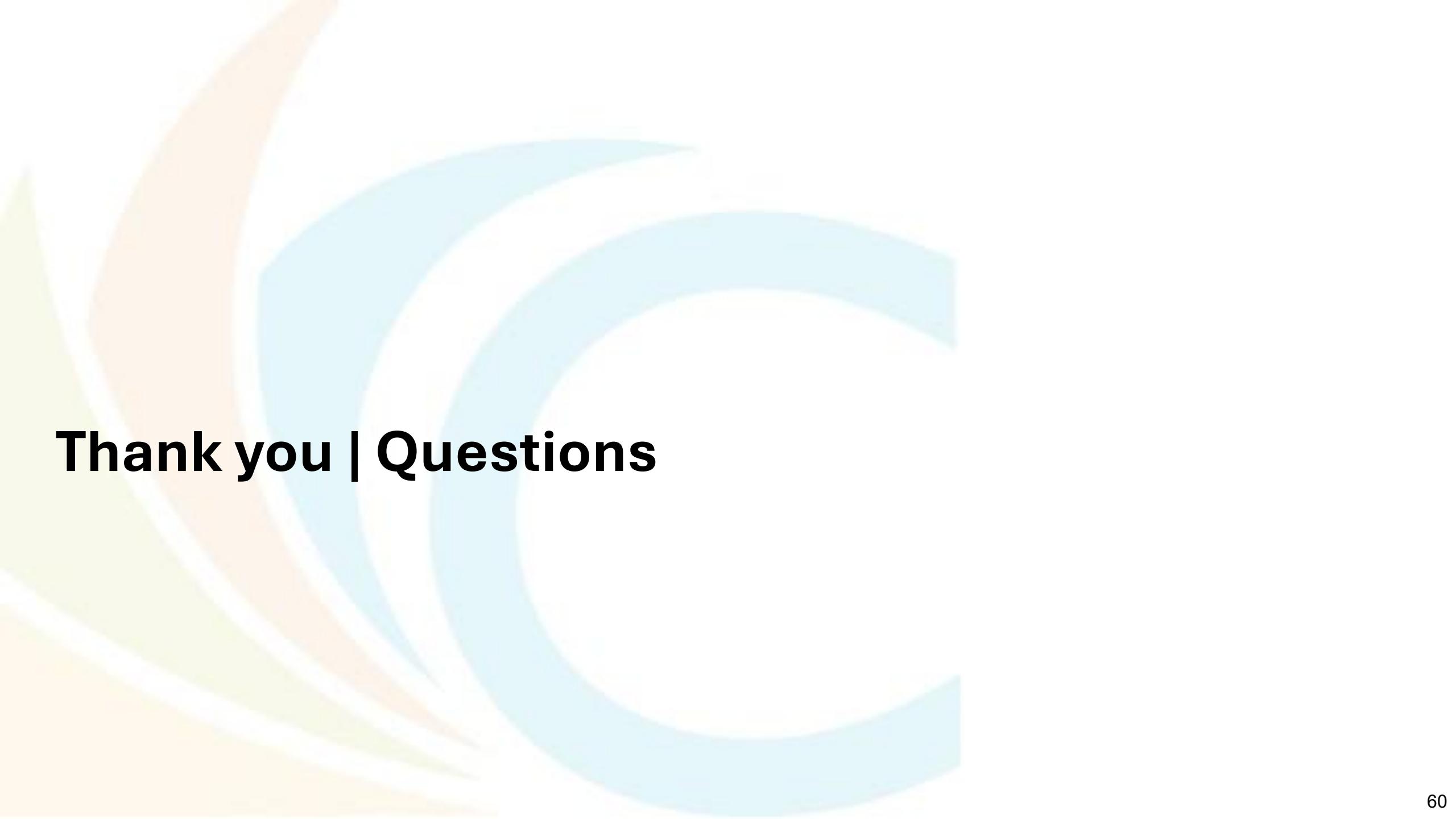
Improving financial sustainability

In September, the Board instructed the CEO to identify \$5M current year savings and \$30M in FY27 savings to approve a 4 year forecast



Category	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
Revenue	\$737.4	\$709.8	\$714.6	\$720.2	\$723.2
Expenditures	\$741.5	\$748.4	\$778.9	\$800.2	\$820.4
Savings Target	\$0.0	\$5.0	\$35.0	\$35.0	\$35.0
Adjusted Expenditures	\$741.5	\$743.4	\$743.9	\$765.2	\$785.4
Net Revenues Excess (Deficit)	\$4.1	\$33.6	\$29.3	\$45.0	\$62.2
Ending Fund Cash Balance	\$136.7	\$103.0	\$73.7	\$28.8	\$33.5
Encumbrances	\$23.0	\$25.0	\$25.0	\$25.0	\$25.0
Unencumbered Cash Balance	\$113.7	\$78.0	\$48.7	\$3.8	\$58.5

CMSD will save at least \$30 million annually beginning next year (FY 2027). This is necessary to improve our fiscal outlook and prevent state fiscal intervention.



Thank you | Questions