



# COLUMBUS CLASSICAL ACADEMY

*A Hillsdale College Curriculum School*



# ANNUAL REPORT 2025



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## MISSION

Columbus Classical Academy inculcates in our students, through a genuine and rigorous classical education in the liberal arts and sciences, the knowledge and virtue upon which independent, responsible, and joyful lives are built, in the firm belief that such lives are the foundation of a free and flourishing republic.

## VIRTUES

*Fortitude • Prudence  
Justice • Temperance  
Faith • Hope • Charity*

# 2024–2025 BOARD of DIRECTORS



Mike Gross, *Chairman*



David Durell, *Secretary*



Andrea Gross



Rebecca Hurd



Thomas King



Chris Lightfoot



David Myhal



Sarah Purdy



Leland Vogel

# MESSAGE FROM *the* HEAD of SCHOOL



Founding a school is hard. Founding a *good* school is both hard and rare. And founding a *good* school *independent* of government funding and control...is nearly impossible—unless God blesses the effort by bringing extraordinary people together to give generously and work tirelessly to bring it about. That is the story of Columbus Classical Academy.

The word “founding” is derived from the Latin *fundus*, which means *bottom* or *base*. What we have done together these last few years is, quite literally, to *found* a very good school—we have established a strong, sound, and firm base upon which to build the future of CCA, and we have done so, thanks to your extraordinary generosity, without a penny of government funding.

As it turns out, that word “funding” also comes from the Latin *fundus*, and means the source or supply of material things. It is, therefore, no coincidence that part of what makes CCA uniquely good is that its *foundation* has been built with *funding* supplied by those

who love the mission, rather than oppose it; by those who love what is true, and good, and beautiful and desire to restore, to preserve, and to share it.

Because of your generosity, we are able to teach our students the Hillsdale K–12 curriculum without distortion or modification from the state; we can hire teachers based on their character, knowledge, and love of children, not a state certificate or license; we are able to embrace a culture of humility and excellence without being forced to measure human formation with the blunt instrument of state testing.

But, of course, these things are just the foundation. There remains much to be built. Like the great cathedrals of Europe, building CCA will be an exercise in perseverance, a long and sustained effort, diligently pursued with an unwavering commitment to the principles that justified its creation and to the students and families that are our *raison d’etre*. Your continued partnership is as essential now as it was in the beginning—and our gratitude is greater today than it has ever been.

As Hillsdale President Larry Arnn recently observed in a *Wall Street Journal* interview, “[t]o have a liberal society, you have to have important things going on outside the government’s grip.” Columbus Classical Academy is an important thing. It is a good thing. And because of your generosity and partnership, it is and will forever go on outside the government’s grip—and will be all the better for it.

With warm regards and genuine gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Daniel C. Gibson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Daniel C. Gibson, Head of School



## WHAT IS CLASSICAL EDUCATION?

Classical education passes on to the next generation the wisdom of the ages, so that students can become knowledgeable, virtuous, self-governing citizens. Rather than tailoring instruction to only what is materially useful or emotionally satisfying, classical schools teach the best of what has been thought and said over the generations in the pursuit of intellectual and moral excellence. Classical schools are part of the long and noble tradition of a rigorous, liberal arts education that seeks the True, Good, and Beautiful, and upon which Western Civilization was founded.

## What Sets CCA Apart from Other Public/Private Schools?

COLUMBUS CLASSICAL ACADEMY	MOST SCHOOLS TODAY
No 1:1 technology; no phones, no screens	Screen & technology dependent
Fixed & integrated liberal arts curriculum	Fragmented curriculum dictated by state
Teacher-led classrooms and instruction	Student-led and student-driven learning
Structured, ordered, & systematic	Fluid, unstructured, & haphazard
Explicit phonics & analytic grammar	“Balanced Literacy” & “functional” grammar
Culture of discipline & decorum built on virtue	Culture of self-care based on emotion
High-character, subject-matter expert faculty	State-licensed and state-trained teachers
Individual responsibility & accountability	Group & project-based performance
Merit grading on a traditional scale	Equitable grading for effort or “fairness”
Prioritizes physical education, art & music	Limited incorporation of “specials”
No state funding or control	State funded and regulated
Read classic literature & primary sources	Rely on excerpts & contemporary works
Transparency and partnership with parents	Management and limitation of parental role
Classical, biblical worldview	Modern, materialist worldview
Appreciation of high culture and the arts	Affinity for and adoption of pop culture norms
Latin required for all students	Latin not required or not offered at all
Knowledge and virtue as the goal	Productivity and self-esteem as the goal

# PORTRAIT *of a* CCA GRADUATE

## Knowledge

### A CCA Graduate...

- **Possesses rich knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences and the fine arts.** By engaging with the curriculum, graduates have encountered great works of literature, history, and philosophy; they have wrestled with profound mathematical, scientific, and political principles; they have cultivated an appreciation for musical and artistic masterpieces.
- **Understands and appreciates the Judeo-Christian tradition.** Through the diligent study of timeless texts as well as historical documents and events, graduates understand the truths and principles which have shaped Western Civilization and recognize the Judeo-Christian tradition's vital role in founding and preserving our nation.
- **Is equipped with the tools of learning.** The acquisition of knowledge is facilitated by the artful practice of the tools of learning, specifically in the areas of grammar, logic, and rhetoric. Graduates have developed their abilities to read, memorize, speak, reason, and write.



## Virtue

### A CCA Graduate...

- **Is formed in the seven classical virtues.** Through the curriculum and culture of the school, graduates have developed habits marked by Fortitude, Justice, Prudence, Temperance, Faith, Hope, and Charity. Graduates' character and conduct reflect these virtues, which are continually strengthened through practice and reflection.
- **Possesses rightly ordered loves.** Moved by the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, graduates recognize the given order in the world; they understand their ordained place within the cosmos; they are able to not only choose what is best, but to prefer it over lesser things.
- **Has formed good habits of mind, spirit, and body.** Graduates understand the nature of a human being and recognize that good habits lead to flourishing. Graduates' minds are well-trained, their spirits are turned towards higher things, and their bodies are stewarded with discipline and grace.

# Citizenship

## A CCA Graduate...

- **Embraces a life of duty and service.** Recognizing man's political nature, graduates understand that a citizen's rights must be balanced by duty. Through service to others, they demonstrate the personal responsibility necessary to sustain civil society.
- **Has developed the capacity for thoughtful and civil disagreement.** Having engaged with ideas of historical significance, graduates are prepared to participate in the Great Conversation. They understand that the ability and willingness to discuss conflicting ideas is necessary within a free republic and is a means by which graduates continue to pursue Truth.
- **Appreciates the blessings of liberty and possesses a love of country.** Graduates have gained a clear understanding of America's historical, political, and philosophical foundations, as well as the changes our nation has undergone since its formation. They recognize and can articulate what is good about our country and the liberty it has provided.



There is discipline and structure, but also kindness, gentleness, and fun. [Our daughter] is thriving. The school leadership has been consistently and diligently communicative with us. We have enjoyed meeting the diverse families at this school; we are not a group of ideologically similar parents, but we share a mutual commitment to the flourishing of our children's hearts and minds."

*Parents of 2nd Grader*



## Reading Highlights

### LOWER SCHOOL

- *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*
- *Aesop's Fables*
- *Anne of Green Gables*
- *Black Beauty*
- *The Count of Monte Cristo*
- *Peter Pan*
- *Winnie-the-Pooh*

### UPPER SCHOOL

- *Crime and Punishment*
- *Fahrenheit 451*
- *The Iliad*
- *The Odyssey*
- *Pride & Prejudice*
- *The Scarlet Letter*
- *To Kill a Mockingbird*



Browse the  
Hillsdale  
Curriculum

# 2023-24 & 2024-25 HIGHLIGHTS



Winter Wonder Etiquette Luncheon



Greek Games



8th & 9th Grade D.C. Trip



Theater Club: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*



Larry Arnn, Speaker Series



Lessons and Carols Christmas Concert



Service Day, Feeding the Homeless



Mom's Night Book Swap

## Other Highlights

- *Speaker Series with Wilfred McClay & Mark Bauerlein*
- *Veterans Day Assembly*
- *Annual Art Show*
- *Run Club*
- *Upper & Lower School Trivia Nights*
- *Annual Family Back to School Picnic*
- *Field Trips to Nutcracker and A Christmas Carol*
- *Parent Fellowship Monthly Coffees & Events*



Read Mr. Gibson's Morning Reflections in *Veritas et Virtus*, the CCA Blog



# MCCURDY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS: Tess & Lena Montgomery



“CCA aligns with our family goals of improving the educational experience for the school age children in Central Ohio.”

*Dave McCurdy*

The **McCurdy Scholarship** is awarded to two Columbus Classical Academy students who: (1) possess talent in academic, athletic, or other areas consistent with the goals of classical education; (2) demonstrate drive, perseverance, and fortitude through sustained effort in pursuit of worthy goals; and (3) have financial need equal to or greater than the scholarship amount. In addition, the family of an award recipient must demonstrate strong commitment to the classical, educational mission of CCA. Recipients of the McCurdy Scholarship who continue to meet the eligibility criteria are awarded the scholarship each year through graduation.

**Tess and Lena Montgomery**, both rising 7th grade students, are the deserving recipients of the inaugural McCurdy Scholarships.

“Simply put, we wouldn’t be here if it weren’t for the generous support of donors. We are beyond grateful that our kids have had the opportunity to go to school here. The fruit of what they are learning every day can somewhat be seen in the day-to-day, but the real fruit is years off. What they are learning is timeless and transcends the here and now, something they can fall back on for the rest of their lives. What a gift! We know that one day our future grandchildren will reap the benefits of the values and knowledge gained from a classical education. We know this was all made possible by the benevolence of others. A thank you will never be enough.”

*Chauncey & Lanie Montgomery*

To read the full interview, visit [columbusclassical.org/mccurdy](https://columbusclassical.org/mccurdy), or scan this QR code.



## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT:

# Dr. Benjamin Patrick Newton

*Upper School History, Civics, Political Philosophy, & Latin*

### ***You were teaching at the collegiate level. Why CCA?***

I chose to pursue a career in academia as I am interested in the perennial questions of the human condition and the answers given over the ages, especially those of the Western tradition. I love studying these fascinating questions and their possible answers, as well as introducing them to others. I taught at colleges and universities, culminating in two tenure-track professorships, one at a small private liberal arts college, another at a large state university. At both I was tasked with creating and directing a legal studies program, while teaching courses in the same. However, problems which had been accruing for decades in higher education climaxed in the inability to truly study these subjects or to truthfully teach them to students. Moreover, the state of higher education had become such that much of a responsible teacher's time was taken with teaching remedial skills, not collegiate subjects.

Columbus Classical Academy stewards our Western tradition. It responsibly teaches this tradition while preparing students in the very skills lacking in our higher institutions. It is a place where the goal of its faculty is still excellence and the eyes of its students still shine with enthusiasm. Who would not want to work here?

### ***What motivated you to begin teaching at a founding school?***

The circumstances which led me to Columbus Classical Academy seem nothing short of providential. As these details are better left unsaid, I can say why I continue to work at a founding school. In nearly every institution at which I have taught, I have observed a sharp disparity between what its administration says and what it does. Not here.

CCA's administration is comprised of people who have made and continue to make sacrifices to build an educational institution whose goals are not only admirable in speech but realized in deed. They are the first to arrive and the last to leave. They place the wellbeing of those under their care above them-

selves. And they inspire others to take similar chances and to make like sacrifices. There are other classical schools at which I could work, but there are no other Gibsons, Blackstones, or Bullers with whom I could work.



### ***What is your favorite subject to teach and why?***

My educational background is in political philosophy, American constitutionalism, American politics, ancient history, Greek, and Latin. Asked to choose one, I choose Latin. As an undergraduate, I took classes in the morning, worked in the afternoon, and studied in the evening. After work I would ensconce myself in a coffee shop for hours studying. I distinctly remember the excitement of reading *Wheelock's Latin* late into the night, an excitement which has never left me. Since then I have published an English translation of Cicero's *On Duties*, and I am currently preparing a new translation of Augustine's Latin magnum opus, *The City of God*.

People give many reasons for studying Latin. But the real reason is the ability to read over two thousand years of the best classical and Christian literature. I love teaching this language and I love introducing students to this literature. With a little luck, I will do so in one capacity or another until they bury me in the school's backyard.



# CCA'S PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS



## \$500,000+

Andy & Beth Biller  
Stuart & Patricia Bishop  
Michael & Andrea Gross  
Dr. J. Louis Kovach

## \$100,000+

Anonymous  
Ric & Marina Dillon  
David & Anne Durell  
Thomas R. Gross Family Foundation  
David & Elisa McCurdy

## \$10,000+

Anonymous  
Don & Elinor Clark  
Daniel & Rachel Gibson  
Matthew & Claire Hamilton  
Rebecca Hurd  
Gordon & Catherine Johnston  
Dan & Pat Jorndt  
Scott & Janine King  
John & Cherie Lucks  
Mike & Fran Meyers  
David & Tera Myhal  
Kent & Nancy Rinker  
Speer Mechanical  
In memory of Justice J. Craig Wright

## \$1,000+

Anonymous  
Elwood & Cathy Chambers  
Dr. Will Clemens  
Sharon DeAscentis  
Jeff & Deborah DeVore  
Jeffrey & Marj DeVore  
Clark Dickerson  
Robert & Stacey Fiske  
Charles & Valerie Gibson  
Dr. Steve Hoagland  
Don Hodgson  
David Houze  
Sam Koon  
Matthew & Jordan Kudija  
David Lambert  
Greg & Joan Linscott  
Evan & Rachel Little  
John & Lynn Matyas  
Tracie McGarity  
The Hon. Bernie & Mrs. Moreno  
Patrick & Andrea Musker  
Robert & Marian Schuda  
David Slates  
Gandherva Guna Thilak  
Leland & Kara Vogel



# FOUNDERS SPOTLIGHT: Mike & Andrea Gross



## *Founders Mike & Andrea Gross reflect on why they choose to found and support CCA*

A solid K-12 education is the foundation of our nation's future. The virtues and knowledge we provide our children today will determine tomorrow's leaders and citizens. We were motivated to invest in founding a classical school because we found ourselves searching for an education for our own children that was not corrupted by the political ideologies and gutted curricula found in many of schools across central Ohio. We wanted to ensure that there was an enduring choice for not only our children's children but also for any family seeking that as well.

We believe in classical education because it focuses on teaching students to think well about the best things, using a pedagogy that has been tried and tested over a long period of time. We especially love the Hillsdale curriculum, in that it is both vertically and horizontally aligned and that it hides nothing, allowing parents, teachers, and students to know what is being taught.

During the first couple of months after the school opened, we were energized and motivated by attending the morning assemblies. Just seeing those smiling students reciting the pledge or a classic work of poetry or literature was a good reminder that we were on the right track. We

continue to be inspired everyday as we walk through the hallways admiring the incredible artwork, being greeted by the students, attending musical performances, or observing the classical dance in gym class. But even more than that, we are inspired by the parents who share with us how their dinner conversations have changed, and their children want to talk about what they learned in school that day.

The overall joy that we can see in the students is the best reason to invest in this mission. True happiness comes from a sense of accomplishment and achievement and our curriculum mixed with a culture that calls students to higher, and sometimes even difficult things, provides the perfect opportunity for our students to find that sense of joy.

As we consider the future, we are encouraged by the undercurrent that has started to build within our parent community and the traction we are finding in seeking new support for our school. We are excited about the future growth of the community, of the expansion of our physical facilities, and about the opportunity for additional offerings, like clubs and athletics, as we build the school to maturity.

Our desire is that CCA will grow to become an exemplar school in Central Ohio that serves families around Columbus for generations, and ultimately that it has a positive impact on education far beyond the four walls of our school. If we are going to succeed in our mission, it is going to take the entire community getting involved. We are excited to partner with any and all who share this important mission and are grateful to have had the opportunity to play the role that we have in bringing it to life.



## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

# Stuart & Patty Bishop

*What was your own educational experience like, and how did that influence your decision to support CCA?*

I (Stuart) attended public schools from kindergarten through ninth grade (1953–1963). My memories are of caring and supportive teachers. When my dad was transferred and my family moved to New Jersey, my parents enrolled me at an all-boys boarding school in Hightstown, N.J. My time there was an exceedingly positive experience. I have always felt that the faculty gave me a solid education and helped develop my character and interpersonal skills. Never can I remember in my time in school—public or private—any political “indoctrination” from any of the faculty. My teachers were all educators who wanted to develop students to have the ability to think on their own.

Looking back at my time at boarding school, the most important thing I learned was that the world owed me nothing. If I was going to succeed, that was my responsibility, not someone else’s. I stayed in touch with the school and many of my

classmates through the years. I donated to their Annual Fund every year, and Patty and I eventually established a scholarship so that other young people could have the same experience I had had.

But sadly, in recent years, it became clear to me that the mission of my alma mater had changed. It became more political than educational, and I realized that a school I truly loved had become something it never was intended to be when founded in 1864. My mission then became to find a school that I could support. A mutual friend of Dan Gibson introduced us, and that is how I found CCA.

I believe there is no greater calling than having the opportunity to have a positive influence on future generations. Our entire society and country depend on that. CCA is impacting young people in the right way and is giving parents the option of sending their children to a school that embraces the educational mission I once supported at my alma mater—what education used to be in America and what it should be again.



“

Education is important.  
The correct education  
is more important.  
That is why Columbus  
Classical Academy is  
important to me.”

*Stuart Bishop*

# CCA *by the* NUMBERS (2023–2025)

## *A Culture of Excellence*



**13**

Faculty/staff with advanced degrees

**9**

Styles of dance learned

**450+**

Poetry recitations by students

## *Physical Fitness*

**15**

Students meeting the Presidential Fitness Standard (85th percentile) in 2023–24 and 2024–25



**16**

Students meeting the National Fitness Standard (50th percentile) in 2023–24 and 2024–25



## *Student Body*



**17**

Different school districts  
represented in years 1 and 2

**130**

Students enrolled '25-'26,  
grades K-10

**87%**

Average re-enrollment  
years 1 and 2

**117%**

Enrollment growth  
years 1 to 2

## *Support & Stewardship*



**150+**

Unique philanthropic  
partners

**\$600,000**

Tuition assistance awarded  
years 1 and 2

**\$6.975M+**

Total gifts and pledges  
received through 6/30/25

**\$0**

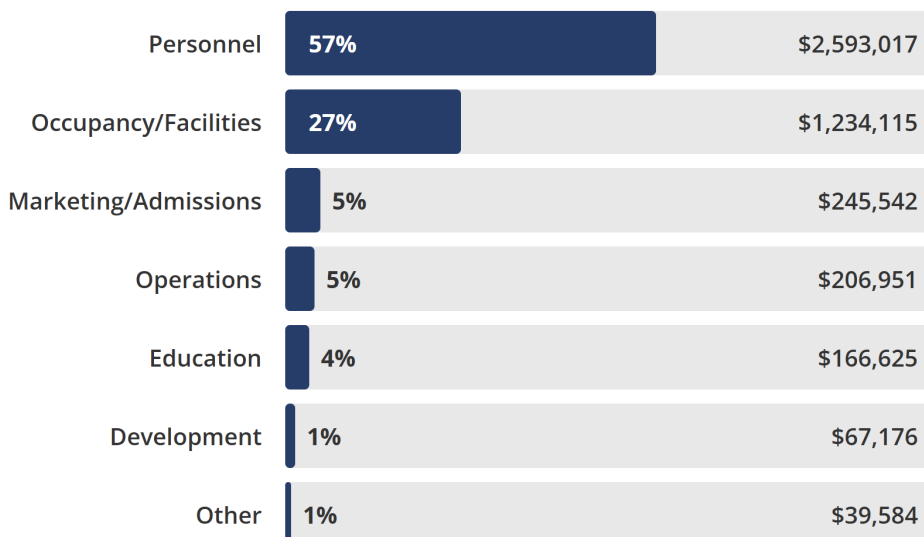
Funding received from  
government sources

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## Enrollment & Tuition: Years 1 & 2 - 2023-2025 -

	2023/24	2024/25
Enrollment	57	87
Enrollment Growth %	n/a	53%
Net Tuition/Fee Revenue	\$483,083	\$770,863
Contributions	\$1,901,782	\$1,431,616
SGO Revenue	\$0	\$65,012
Investment Income	\$12,807	\$31,455
Other Income	\$924	\$67,986
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$2,398,596</b>	<b>\$2,366,932</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$2,176,876</b>	<b>\$2,391,738</b>
<b>NET OPERATING INCOME</b>	<b>\$221,720</b>	<b>-\$24,806</b>

## Expense Allocations: Years 1 & 2 - 2023-2025 -

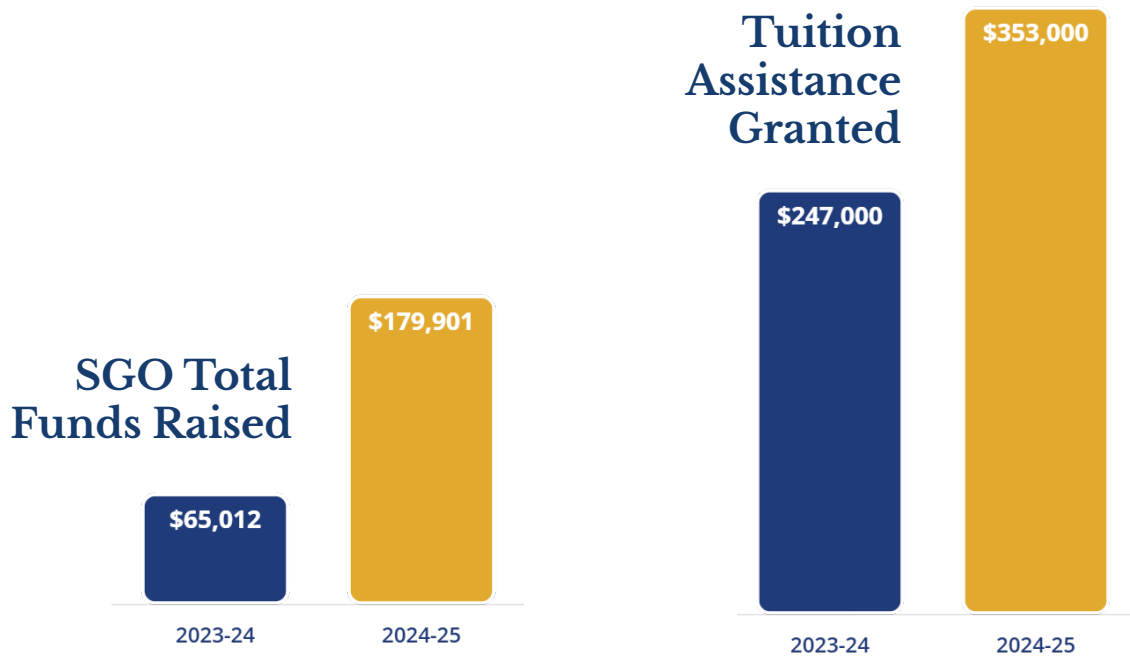
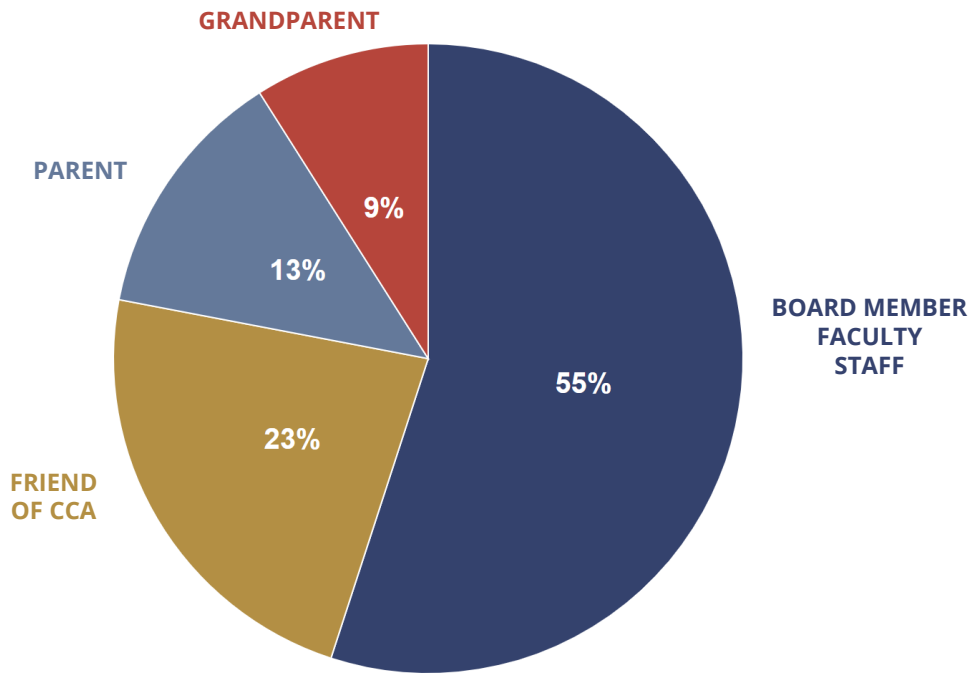


CCA accepts **\$0 in government funding** and maintains total independence from the state, foregoing an estimated **\$3.4 million** through 2030. This allows us to maintain an unwavering commitment to the principles of classical education upon which CCA was founded.

For more information, please visit [columbusclassical.org/independence](https://columbusclassical.org/independence) by scanning the QR code.



## 2023–2025 Giving Source - \$6,976,105 -





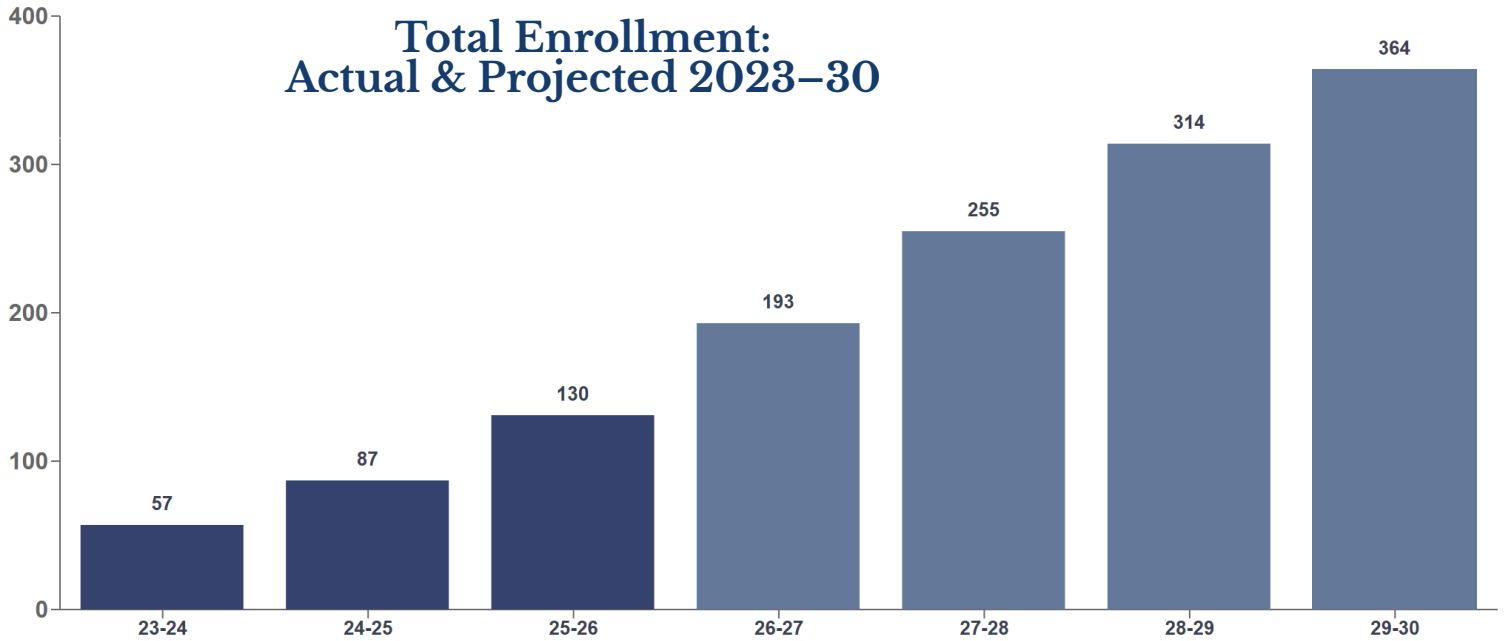
“

CCA starts with the premise that our children are capable of great things and teaches accordingly. The result? Children meet those high expectations. Once you see the contrast in approaches—and the results—you would never choose anything else for your child.”

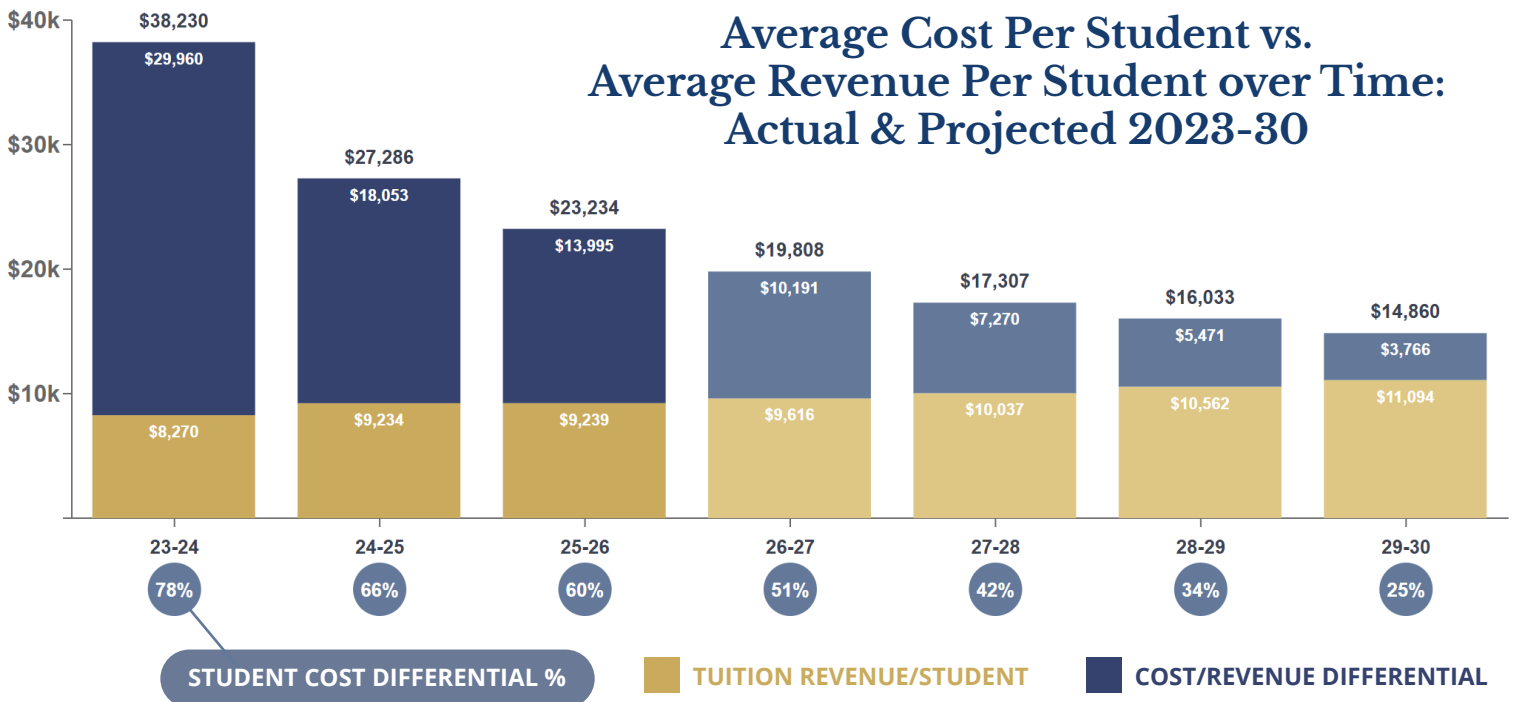
*CCA Family*

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

**Total Enrollment:  
Actual & Projected 2023–30**



**Average Cost Per Student vs.  
Average Revenue Per Student over Time:  
Actual & Projected 2023-30**



# LOOKING AHEAD

## Programming

- Expanding extracurricular offerings, including clubs and athletics
- Implementing annual Curriculum Nights for parents

## Capital Improvements

- Classroom buildout (anticipated by summer 2026)
- Gymnasium (Anticipated by 2027)
- Library (2026)

## Hillsdale Membership Conversion

- CCA's Board and teachers will attend the 2026 Hillsdale Board training & K-12 Summer Conference



Columbus Classical Academy's selection to participate in this inaugural pilot conversion process reflects the admirable success of the school in advancing our shared mission: to cultivate moral and intellectual virtue in the young through a classical education rooted in the liberal arts and sciences and grounded in the principles of moral character and civic virtue. Through its leadership and careful stewardship, Columbus Classical Academy has established itself as a school committed to high principles, with a renewed commitment to policy governance and a culture worthy of the classical tradition."

*Dr. Kathleen O'Toole,  
Associate Vice President for K-12 Education  
Hillsdale College*



### Support Columbus Classical Academy

Thank you for investing in the formation of wise and virtuous American citizens. To give, scan the QR code or visit [columbusclassical.org/giving](https://columbusclassical.org/giving).





“A strong academic program is all for nothing if a school does not attend to the whole child’s development. At CCA, academics are layered upon core values like honesty, fair play, and charity. [In our] experience, CCA does the best job I’ve seen in instilling values based on what is objectively good. You will see that the teachers and students treat each other with respect and kindness. This is no accident; it is because of CCA’s emphasis on virtue.”

*Upper School Family*



COLUMBUS  
CLASSICAL  
ACADEMY

*A Hillsdale College Curriculum School*

