



2024-25 Proposed Budget Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the actual percentage of increase for this upcoming school year? Do you still envision 3.5% and 3.7% as realistic increases in the following two school years?

The tuition increase for the 2024-2025 school year is 7%. Question number 3 has a link with a comparison to the 2023-2024 budget that will also help answer this question. A normal inflationary environment is assumed when a five-year budget projection is written. That has not happened in the past three budget cycles, as the inflationary impact has outpaced historical and predicted increases. We are only now coming into a more normal inflationary period, which we hope will bring more accurate predictability. In addition to inflation, the proposed budget has additional staff positions not built into the strategic roadmap. These are the two primary drivers for a greater-than-anticipated increase in tuition for the 2024-2025 proposed budget.

The board's strategic vision carries a three-fold goal of (1) covering 100% of expenses with direct income (i.e. tuition, rentals, reimbursements for shared employees), (2) properly budgeting for long-term capital repair and replacement, and (3) increasing teacher salaries to align to the market. While we forecast tuition increases over a 5-year period based on then-available data, new information surfaces annually, requiring the board to adjust those forecasts.

2. The strategic roadmap included a spiritual life director. It may not have been called that, but there was a goal that we would hire someone to take on this task specifically. Do I understand correctly that the addition of an Elementary Dean of Discipleship and the change in title for the Middle School Dean position takes the place of that?

Under the faith nurturing impact area of the strategic roadmap, the following strategy is listed, *"Spiritual leadership to provide oversight to and ensure the cohesion of all spiritual growth components at CPCS and provide spiritual care and growth opportunities for faculty and staff."* A job description was developed for a spiritual director with input from the team of parents, staff, and board members who develop the faith-nurturing strategies, outcomes, and success indicators. Once that job description was written, the administrative team reviewed it and recognized that a

number of the responsibilities of this position were already aligned with the Middle School Dean's Job Description (Mrs. Jenny Kuiken). In addition, the academic administrative team identified a need to provide discipleship opportunities to our elementary students. The original job description of a spiritual director was then divided into two positions: an [Elementary Dean of Discipleship](#) and a [Middle School Dean of Discipleship](#). All of the components identified in the spiritual director role were distributed between these two positions. You can view each Dean of Discipleship Job Description by clicking the hyperlinks above.

3. Will we see a comparison of the 23/24 budget to actual results?

The comparison and actual results are scheduled to be released with the announcement of the April 10, 2024 CPCS Association Meeting on March 25. You can view a PDF of the budget summary at the following link: [2024-2025 Budget Summary](#).

4. Have we compared the 4.5% tuition increase projected in the strategic roadmap to the 7% increase for this year?

Two primary drivers for the additional 2.5% tuition increase this year exist. First, we are coming out of a significant inflationary environment, particularly regarding fixed costs and staff salary increases in the market. Inflation should slow down in the coming year, potentially allowing more normal tuition increases in future budgets. The second driver was the addition of the School Resource Officer, Literacy Specialist, and an Elementary STEAM Teacher. A 1% increase in tuition this year provides an additional \$72,000 in income. The additional staffing accounts for greater than a 3% increase in tuition. The administration renegotiated some service contracts, thus reducing fixed costs, to keep that additional increase to a 2.5% increase in tuition.

5. Why is there an increase in staffing?

The short answer is that the CPCS Board is responsible for proposing a budget that adequately meets the school's operational needs. The administrative team annually evaluates staffing to determine what is necessary for the school's operations. A proposal is brought to the finance committee and, ultimately, the board for approval. The board, finance committee, and administrative leadership team believe each position is necessary to adequately meet the school's operational needs.

This budget had already planned to hire a spiritual life position, now the Elementary Dean of Discipleship. Last May, the CPCS Board committed to hiring a School Resource Officer (Sam Jacobs), believing it was necessary for the school's adequate operations. This budget also adds two additional full-time positions and a ½-time library aide position. Hiring these additional staff increased the proposed budget's projected tuition from 4.5% to 7%.

- a. The additional ½ time library aide position has been created for Mrs. Nosich to add classes to her schedule. This position, coupled with the additional full-time 3rd-5th grade STEAM teacher position, provides additional prep time for our elementary staff to have weekly meetings with the elementary principal, director of learning, and student services during the school day.
- b. The Elementary Literacy Coach position is a response to the student needs that we are seeing, particularly in our K-3 student population. Since COVID-19, schools around the country have experienced significantly higher rates of student needs, both academically and socially. Teachers are expected to have a broad understanding of the new research in the science of literacy and a special education background to deal with a broad range of students in their classrooms. Without the necessary support, we cannot expect our staff to take on a full load of teaching responsibilities and meet student needs.

6. You mentioned we are hiring a literacy specialist. CPCS already has special education teachers; why is this not something that they can take on?

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Since the release of the budget explanation video, the Educational Administrative Team decided to change the title of Literacy Specialist to Literacy Coach to differentiate this role from the Special Education positions held by Patti Reilly and Cherilyn Klomp. Essentially, the Literacy Coach position is a teacher-facing position, not a student-facing position. The Literacy Coach position aims to work collaboratively with teachers to support the academic needs of elementary students by providing additional literacy resources and instructional coaching. This position will support our teachers in meeting a broader range of student needs within the classroom setting. The board, finance committee, and administration believe that moving a special education teacher into this position will reduce student support and not adequately meet the school's operational needs.

7. Can the responsibility of the ½ time library aide be shared among student service aides?

The administrative team annually evaluates staffing to determine what is necessary for the school's adequate operations. A proposal is then brought to the finance committee and, ultimately, the board for approval. We believe each position is necessary to adequately meet the school's operational needs.

CPCS's student service team, which includes special education teachers, RTI teachers, and student service aides, supports the academic needs of our students. The purpose of the ½ time library aide is to complete library clerical work for Mrs. Nosich so she can take on additional teaching responsibilities. The board, finance committee, and administration believe that moving a student service aide into this position will reduce student support and not adequately meet the school's operational needs.

8. Why does our staff compensation have to align with the public schools?

Staff compensation is a critical element in any budget. It is of both strategic and tactical importance. Tactically, compensation supports the hiring and retaining of the school's most excellent teachers. Strategically, compensation reflects the moral nature of the budget and the school's obligation to operate in a Christian way.

CPCS's goal is not to align with the local public school. In the Strategic Roadmap, the board committed to aligning the CPCS salary schedule with the market. To accomplish this, the board must select a benchmark to evaluate the market; in this case, the CPCS Board chose to use our local school corporation, Hanover. The goal identified in the Strategic Roadmap is that CPCS's salary schedule is within 90% of the established benchmark. Historically, the school did not have a benchmark and as of four years ago, our salary schedule was 72% of our local public school corporations. In addition, more seasoned staff were paid at 66% of the local market. I doubt anyone in our constituency would consider working at 66-72% of their market value, and we cannot expect this from our staff.

As outlined in the Strategic Roadmap, the CPCS Board is committed to continued moves to align our salary structures to attract, recruit, retain, and develop the best mission-fit staff to deliver our mission to a full complement of mission-fit students and families.

9. I would like to know what each staff member does at CPCS.

Crown Point Christian has job descriptions for all positions at the school that include the purpose, qualifications, responsibilities, and position details. Please contact Karen DeJong at kdejong@crownpoinchristian.org and request the job descriptions you want to view. She will email you PDFs of each position you request.

10. Do Teachers/staff and immediate family of teachers vote on the budget? If they do, how is this not a conflict of interest?

Article 8 of The Crown Point Christian School Constitution states the following regarding voting rights: *"All persons who are active members of a Christian church, committed to the beliefs affirmed in Article IV above, make an annual donation of at*

least two- and one-half percent of the base tuition for one full-time student or who pay tuition at Crown Point Christian school and are approved by the Board are members of the Association. Membership in the Association entitles a person to vote on matters presented to the Association by the Board.” Article 8 of the CPCS Constitution is the only expectation outlined for voting members of the Association. The short answer to your question is yes, they are allowed to vote. As far as a conflict of interest is concerned, this perceived conflict also exists for tuition-paying association members.

11. Due to the voucher program, we have become greedy in the way we run our Christian schools. What happens when the voucher ends?

In the proposed budget, tuition covers 92% of expenses. The remaining 8% comes from other direct income (4%) and philanthropy (4%). Thus, tuition only partially covers the true cost of educating a child at CPCS.

As outlined in CPCS’s Strategic Roadmap, the CPCS Board is committed to (1) direct income covering 100% of expenses, (2) properly budgeting for capital repair and replacement, and (3) increasing teacher salaries to align with the market. These have not been historic commitments, which now require greater than normal increases in tuition for a season. The CPCS Board sees these commitments as a moral obligation and the Association’s next-generation obligation to sustain excellence at Crown Point Christian School.

The state of Indiana has been a leader in school choice for 13 years. Over the past three years, we have seen historic expansion of school choice in Indiana and around the United States. There is a high likelihood that Indiana will see universal vouchers for the 2025-2026 school year. The CPCS Administration has had high-level conversations with the Department of Education. The Department of Education continues to reiterate that Indiana is strongly committed to keeping school choice in place and preventing any legislation requiring a faith-based school to withdraw from the Choice program. The bottom line is that school choice is as safe in Indiana, likely safer, than it is in any other state in the union.

We, however, must be cognizant that the voucher system could disappear or laws could be passed requiring us to step away because it would not align with CPCS's historic mission and vision. The CPCS Board has a contingency plan that is reviewed annually if CPCS would need to step away from the voucher program. Fears of the voucher system going away do not diminish the CPCS Association’s moral responsibility to run the school in a way that can be sustained for the long term.