

STEPSTONE ACADEMY CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

SINGLE AUDIT

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED
JUNE 30, 2024



Rea & associates

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Board of Directors
Stepstone Academy
1030 North Main Street
North Canton, OH 44720

We have reviewed the *Independent Auditor's Report* of the Stepstone Academy, Cuyahoga County, prepared by Rea & Associates, Inc., for the audit period July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. Based upon this review, we have accepted these reports in lieu of the audit required by Section 117.11, Revised Code. The Auditor of State did not audit the accompanying financial statements and, accordingly, we are unable to express, and do not express an opinion on them.

Our review was made in reference to the applicable sections of legislative criteria, as reflected by the Ohio Constitution, and the Revised Code, policies, procedures and guidelines of the Auditor of State, regulations and grant requirements. The Stepstone Academy is responsible for compliance with these laws and regulations.

Keith Faber
Auditor of State
Columbus, Ohio

March 11, 2025

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**STEPSTONE ACADEMY
CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO**

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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Directors
Stepstone Academy
2121 East 32nd Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44115

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Stepstone Academy, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, (the "School"), as of and for the year ended June 30, 2024, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the School's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Stepstone Academy, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, as of June 30, 2024, and the changes in its financial position and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS) and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States (*Government Auditing Standards*). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the School and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Substantial Doubt About the School's Ability to Continue as a Going Concern

The accompanying financial statements have been prepared assuming that the School will continue as a going concern. As discussed in Note 15 to the financial statements, the School has suffered recurring losses from operations, has a net position deficit, and has stated that substantial doubt exists about the School's ability to continue as a going concern. Management's evaluation of the events and conditions and management's plans regarding these matters are also described in Note 15. The financial statements do not include any adjustments that might result from the outcome of this uncertainty. Our opinion is not modified with respect to this matter.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the School's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards*, we

- exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the School's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the School's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control—related matters that we identified during the audit.

Required Supplementary Information

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the Management's Discussion and Analysis and Pension and Other Post-Employment Benefit Schedules, as listed in the table of contents, be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with GAAS, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

Supplementary Information

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements that collectively comprise the School's basic financial statements. The Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards, as required by *Title 2 U.S. Code of Federal Regulations Part 200*, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements or to the basic financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with GAAS. In our opinion, the Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards is fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the basic financial statements as a whole.

Other Reporting Required by Government Auditing Standards

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated December 30, 2024 on our consideration of the School's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the School's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the School's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Rea & Associates, Inc.

Rea & Associates, Inc.
Medina, Ohio
December 30, 2024

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024 (UNAUDITED)

The discussion and analysis of the Stepstone Academy (the School) financial performance provides an overall review of the School's financial activities for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024. The intent of this discussion and analysis is to look at the School's financial performance as a whole; readers should also review the basic financial statements and notes to the basic financial statements to enhance their understanding of the School's financial performance.

The Management's Discussion and Analysis (the MD&A) is an element of the reporting model adopted by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) in their Statement No. 34 Basic Financial Statements – and Management's Discussion and Analysis – for State and Local Governments. Certain comparative information between the current fiscal year and the prior fiscal year is required to be presented in the MD&A.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Key Financial Highlights for the School for the 2023-24 school year are as follows:

- Total assets and deferred outflows of resources decreased by \$101,870.
- Total liabilities and deferred inflows of resources decreased by \$1,140,004.
- Total net position increased by \$1,038,134.
- Total operating and non-operating revenues were \$3,824,051. Total operating and non-operating expenses were \$2,785,917.

USING THIS ANNUAL REPORT

This report consists of three parts: the required supplementary information, the basic financial statements, and notes to those statements. The basic financial statements include a Statement of Net Position, a Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Change in Net Position, and a Statement of Cash Flows.

The Statement of Net Position and Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Change in Net Position reflect how the School did financially during fiscal year 2024. These statements include all assets and deferred outflows of resources and liabilities and deferred inflows of resources using the accrual basis of accounting similar to the accounting used by most private-sector companies. This basis of accounting includes all of the current year revenues and expenses regardless of when cash is received or paid.

These statements report the School's net position and changes in Net Position. This change in net position is important because it tells the reader whether the financial position of the School has improved or diminished. The causes of this change may be the result of many factors, some financial, some not. Non-financial factors include the School's student enrollment, per-pupil funding as determined by the State of Ohio, change in technology, required educational programs and other factors. The School uses enterprise presentation for all of its activities.

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024 (UNAUDITED)

Statement of Net Position - The Statement of Net Position answers the question of how the School did financially during 2024. This statement includes all assets, deferred outflows of resources, liabilities, and deferred inflows of resources, both financial and capital, and short-term and long-term using the accrual basis of accounting and economic resource focus, which is similar to the accounting used by most private-sector companies. This basis of accounting takes into account all revenues and expenses during the year, regardless of when the cash is received or paid.

Table 1 provides a summary of the School's Net Position for fiscal years 2024 and 2023.

Table 1 Statement of Net Position		
	2024	2023
Assets		
Current Assets	\$ 1,017,426	\$ 927,759
Non Current Assets	1,083,243	1,237,518
Total Assets	2,100,669	2,165,277
Deferred Outflows of Resources	603,478	640,740
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities	1,073,794	1,186,508
Non-Current Liabilities	2,615,017	3,276,602
Total Liabilities	3,688,811	4,463,110
Deferred Inflows of Resources	550,213	915,918
Net Position		
Net Investment in Capital Assets	225,391	88,322
Restricted for OPEB	117,666	-
Unrestricted	(1,877,934)	(2,661,333)
Total Net Position	\$ (1,534,877)	\$ (2,573,011)

Current assets represent cash and cash equivalents, grant receivables, intergovernmental receivables, other receivables, and other assets. Current liabilities represent accounts payable, accrued expenses, advances payable to the management company, current portion of long-term obligations at fiscal year-end.

Total assets decreased \$64,608 from the prior fiscal year due to decreases in cash from operations and capital assets offset by an increase in grants receivable. Total liabilities decreased \$774,299 as a result of decreases in net pension liability, lease obligations, notes payable, loan payables, and advances payable offset by increases accrued expenses.

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024 (UNAUDITED)

The School has adopted GASB Statement 68, "Accounting and Financial Reporting for Pensions—an Amendment of GASB Statement 27," and GASB Statement 75, "Accounting and Financial Reporting for Postemployment Benefits Other Than Pensions," which significantly revises accounting for costs and liabilities related to other postemployment benefits (OPEB). For reasons discussed below, many end users of this financial statement will gain a clearer understanding of the School's actual financial condition by adding deferred inflows related to pension and OPEB, the net pension liability and the net OPEB asset/liability to the reported net position and subtracting deferred outflows related to pension and OPEB and net OPEB asset.

Governmental Accounting Standards Board standards are national and apply to all government financial reports prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. Prior accounting for pensions (GASB 27) and postemployment benefits (GASB 45) focused on a funding approach. This approach limited pension and OPEB costs to contributions annually required by law, which may or may not be sufficient to fully fund each plan's *net pension liability* or *net OPEB asset/liability*. GASB 68 and GASB 75 take an earnings approach to pension and OPEB accounting; however, the nature of Ohio's statewide pension/OPEB plans and state law governing those systems requires additional explanation in order to properly understand the information presented in these statements.

GASB 68 and GASB 75 require the net pension liability and the net OPEB asset/liability to equal the School's proportionate share of each plan's collective:

1. Present value of estimated future pension/OPEB benefits attributable to active and inactive employees' past service
2. Minus plan assets available to pay these benefits

GASB notes that pension and OPEB obligations, whether funded or unfunded, are part of the "employment exchange" – that is, the employee is trading his or her labor in exchange for wages, benefits, and the promise of a future pension and other postemployment benefits. GASB noted that the unfunded portion of this promise is a present obligation of the government, part of a bargained-for benefit to the employee, and should accordingly be reported by the government as a liability since they received the benefit of the exchange. However, the School is not responsible for certain key factors affecting the balance of these liabilities. In Ohio, the employee shares the obligation of funding pension benefits with the employer. Both employer and employee contribution rates are capped by State statute. A change in these caps requires action of both Houses of the General Assembly and approval of the Governor. Benefit provisions are also determined by State statute. The Ohio revised Code permits, but does not require the retirement systems to provide healthcare to eligible benefit recipients. The retirement systems may allocate a portion of the employer contributions to provide for these OPEB benefits.

The employee enters the employment exchange with the knowledge that the employer's promise is limited not by contract but by law. The employer enters the exchange also knowing that there is a specific, legal limit to its contribution to the retirement system. In Ohio, there is no legal means to enforce the unfunded liability of the pension/OPEB plan *as against the public employer*. State law operates to mitigate/lessen the moral obligation of the public employer to the employee, because all parties enter the employment exchange with notice as to the law. The retirement system is responsible for the administration of the pension and OPEB plans.

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

**MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024 (UNAUDITED)**

Most long-term liabilities have set repayment schedules or, in the case of compensated absences (i.e. sick and vacation leave), are satisfied through paid time-off or termination payments. There is no repayment schedule for the net pension liability or the net OPEB asset/liability. As explained above, changes in benefits, contribution rates, and return on investments affect the balance of these liabilities, but are outside the control of the local government. In the event that contributions, investment returns, and other changes are insufficient to keep up with required payments, State statute does not assign/identify the responsible party for the unfunded portion. Due to the unique nature of how the net pension liability and the net OPEB asset/liability are satisfied, these liabilities are separately identified within the long-term liability section of the statement of net position.

In accordance with GASB 68 and GASB 75, the School's statements prepared on an accrual basis of accounting include an annual pension expense and an annual OPEB expense for their proportionate share of each plan's *change* in net pension liability and net OPEB liability, respectively, not accounted for as deferred inflows/outflows.

There was a significant change in net Pension/OPEB liability/asset for the School. These fluctuations are due to changes in the actuarial liabilities/assets and related accruals that are passed through to the School's basic Financial Statements. All components of Pension and OPEB accruals contribute to the fluctuations in deferred outflows/inflows and NPL/NOL/NOA and are described in more detail in their respective notes.

Over time, net position can serve as a useful indicator of a governments financial position. At June 30, 2024, the School's net position deficit totaled \$1,534,877.

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STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024 (UNAUDITED)

Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Change in Net Position - Table 2 shows the change in net position for fiscal years 2024 and 2023, as well as a listing of revenues and expenses. This change in net position is important because it tells the reader that, for the School as a whole, the financial position of the School has improved or diminished. The cause of this may be the result of many factors, some financial, some not. Non-financial factors include the current laws in Ohio restricting revenue growth, facility conditions, required educational programs and other factors.

Table 2
Change in Net Position

	2024	2023
Operating Revenues		
State Aid	\$ 1,681,376	\$ 1,698,222
Intergovernmental Revenue	12,593	12,984
Total Operating Revenues	<u>1,693,969</u>	<u>1,711,206</u>
Operating Expenses		
Purchased Services	2,538,270	2,252,695
Pension/OPEB Expense	(120,806)	19,642
Other Expenses	-	5,869
Depreciation	336,336	386,980
Total Operating Expenses	<u>2,753,800</u>	<u>2,665,186</u>
Operating Income (Loss)	(1,059,831)	(953,980)
Non-Operating Revenues/ (Expenses)		
Federal and State Restricted Grants	1,672,299	1,294,118
Other Intergovernmental Revenue	349,544	341,478
Fundraising Revenue	108,239	238,790
Note Interest Expense	(29,194)	(44,564)
Lease Interest Expense	(2,923)	(8,209)
Net Non-Operating Revenues/ (Expenses)	<u>2,097,965</u>	<u>1,821,613</u>
Change in Net Position	<u>\$ 1,038,134</u>	<u>\$ 867,633</u>

State Aid remained consistent with the prior year even though there was a slight decline in enrollment due the increase in the per pupil allocation funding. Retirement expense decreased due to changes in Pension/OPEB accruals.

Federal and state grants increased primarily due to increases in Federal funding in response to COVID 19. Fundraising revenue decreased due reduced contributions received by the school.

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024 (UNAUDITED)

BUDGET

Unlike other public schools located in the State of Ohio, community schools are not required to follow budgetary provisions set forth in Ohio Rev. Code Chapter 5705 (with the exception section 5705.391 – Five Year Forecasts), unless specifically provided in the community school's contract with its Sponsor.

The contract between the School and its Sponsor does prescribe a budgetary process. The School must prepare and submit a detail budget for every fiscal year to the Board of Directors and its Sponsor. The five-year forecast is also submitted to the Ohio Department of Education, annually.

CAPITAL ASSETS

At fiscal year end, the School's net capital asset balance was \$965,577 including accumulated depreciation of \$2,106,537. For more information on capital assets, see Note 5 of the Basic Financial Statements.

DEBT

At fiscal year end, the School's building lease obligations balance was \$90,431, with \$90,431 due within one year. In addition the School had \$649,755 outstanding in leasehold improvement loans, with \$147,806 due within one year. Additionally, the School has an outstanding Note Payable of \$886,101 with \$460,833 due within one year. For more information on lease obligations, notes payable, and leasehold improvement loans, see Note 6 and Note 7 of the Basic Financial Statements.

CURRENT FINANCIAL ISSUES

The School is a community school and is funded through the State of Ohio Foundation Program. The School relies on this, as well as, State and Federal funds as its primary source of revenue. The School continually evaluates the extent of the impact that changes in State funding will have on current year operations.

The full-time equivalent enrollment of the School for the years ended June 30, 2024 and 2023 was 185 and 200, respectively.

Overall, the School will continue to provide learning opportunities and apply resources to best meet the needs of students.

CONTACTING THE SCHOOL'S FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This financial report is designed to provide our citizen's, taxpayers, investors and creditors with a general overview of the School's finances and to demonstrate accountability for the money it receives. If you have questions about this report or need additional information contact C. David Massa, CPA, of Massa Financial Solutions, LLC, 2121 East 32nd Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44115 or e-mail at dave@massasolutionsllc.com

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO
Statement of Net Position
June 30, 2024

Assets:

Current Assets:

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 692,112
Intergovernmental Receivable	11,295
Grants Receivable	286,385
Other Receivable	24,699
Other Assets	2,935
Total Current Assets	<u>1,017,426</u>

Noncurrent Assets:

Net OPEB Asset	117,666
Non-Depreciable Capital Asset	39,750
Capital Assets, net of Accumulated Depreciation	925,827
Total Non-Current Assets	<u>1,083,243</u>

Total Assets	2,100,669
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Deferred Outflows of Resources:

Pension (STRS & SERS) Outflows	509,064
OPEB (STRS & SERS) Outflows	94,414
Total Deferred Outflows of Resources	<u>603,478</u>

Liabilities:

Current Liabilities:

Accounts Payable	2,830
Accrued Expenses	162,227
Advance Payable	209,667
Current Portion of Note Payable	460,833
Current Portion of Lease Improvement Loan	147,806
Current Portion of Lease Obligations	90,431
Total Current Liabilities	<u>1,073,794</u>

Noncurrent Liabilities:

Non-Current Portion of Note Payable	425,268
Non-Current Portion of Lease Improvement Loan	501,949
Net Pension Liability	1,598,767
Net OPEB Liability	89,033
Total Noncurrent Liabilities	<u>2,615,017</u>

Total Liabilities	3,688,811
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Deferred Inflows of Resources:

Deferred Fundraising Revenue	120,320
Pension (STRS & SERS)	196,358
OPEB (STRS & SERS)	233,535
Total Deferred Inflows of Resources	<u>550,213</u>

Net Position:

Net Investment in Capital Assets	225,391
Restricted Net Position - OPEB	117,666
Unrestricted Net Position	(1,877,934)
Total Net Position	<u>\$ (1,534,877)</u>

See Accompanying Notes to the Basic Financial Statements

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO
Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Position
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2024

Operating Revenues:	
State Aid	\$ 1,681,376
Other Revenue	12,593
Total Operating Revenues	<u>1,693,969</u>
Operating Expenses:	
Purchased Services	2,538,270
Pension/OPEB Expense	(120,806)
Depreciation	336,336
Total Operating Expenses	<u>2,753,800</u>
Operating Income (Loss)	(1,059,831)
Non-Operating Revenues and (Expenses):	
Federal and State Restricted Grants	1,672,299
Other Intergovernmental Revenue	349,544
Fundraising Revenue	108,239
Interest Expense	(29,194)
Lease Interest Expense	(2,923)
Net Non-Operating Revenues and (Expenses)	<u>2,097,965</u>
Change in Net Position	1,038,134
Net Position - Beginning of Year	<u>(2,573,011)</u>
Net Position - End of Year	<u>\$ (1,534,877)</u>

See Accompanying Notes to the Basic Financial Statements

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO
Statement of Cash Flows
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2024

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

Cash Received from State of Ohio	\$ 1,720,313
Other Receipts	12,593
Cash Payments to Suppliers for Goods and Services	<u>(2,813,185)</u>
Net Cash Provided By (Used For) Operating Activities	<u>(1,080,279)</u>

CASH FLOWS FROM NONCAPITAL FINANCING ACTIVITIES

Cash Received from Federal Grant	1,521,938
Cash Received from Fundraising	108,239
Cash Received from Cleveland Municipal School District	349,544
Interest on Note Payable	(29,194)
Principal Payments on Note Payable	<u>(473,609)</u>
Net Cash Provided By Noncapital Financing Activities	<u>1,476,918</u>

CASH FLOWS FROM CAPITAL & RELATED FINANCING ACTIVITIES

Purchase of Assets	(146,529)
Lease Loan Principal Payments	(147,806)
Lease Interest Payments	(2,923)
Lease Principal Payments	<u>(179,069)</u>
Net Cash Provided By (Used For) Capital and Related Financing Activities	<u>(476,327)</u>

Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents	(79,688)
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Cash and Cash Equivalents - Beginning of the Year	<u>771,800</u>
Cash and Cash Equivalents - Ending of the Year	<u><u>\$ 692,112</u></u>

Non Cash Transaction: The School remeasured the building lease and has increased the intangible right to use asset building in the amount of \$90,431 during fiscal year 2024.

See Accompanying Notes to the Basic Financial Statements

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO
Statement of Cash Flows
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2024
(Continued)

Reconciliation of Operating Income (Loss) to Net Cash Provided By (Used For) Operating Activities	
Operating Income (Loss)	\$ (1,059,831)
Adjustments to Reconcile Operating Income (Loss) to Net Cash Provided By (Used For) Operating Activities:	
Depreciation	336,336
Changes in Assets, Liabilities, and Deferred Inflows and Outflows:	
(Increase)/ Decrease in Intergovernmental Receivable	(11,788)
(Increase)/ Decrease in Other Assets	(368)
(Increase)/ Decrease in Other Receivables	(15,963)
(Increase)/ Decrease in Net OPEB Asset	54,900
(Increase)/ Decrease in Deferred Outflows Pension/OPEB	37,262
Increase/(Decrease) in Accounts Payable	(1,498)
Increase/(Decrease) in Accrued Expenses	58,577
Increase/(Decrease) in Intergovernmental Payable	8,633
Increase/(Decrease) in Advances Payable	(67,886)
Increase/(Decrease) in Deferred Revenue	(28,321)
Increase/ (Decrease) in Net Pension/OPEB Liability	(52,946)
Increase/ (Decrease) in Deferred Inflows Pension/OPEB	(337,386)
Net Cash Provided By (Used For) Operating Activities	<u><u>\$ (1,080,279)</u></u>

See Accompanying Notes to the Basic Financial Statements

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

NOTE 1 - DESCRIPTION OF THE ENTITY

Stepstone Academy, (the School) is a nonprofit corporation established pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Chapters 3314 and 1702. The School's mission is to provide an orderly and supportive environment whereby students experience preparations for college, career and life. The School operates on a foundation, which fosters character building for all students, parents and staff members. The School, which is part of the State's education program, is independent of any school district and is nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations. The School may acquire facilities as needed and contract for any services necessary for the operation of the School.

The School was approved for operation under a contract with Ohio Council of Community Schools, ("OCCS") (the Sponsor) for a five-year period commencing on July 1, 2012. The Sponsor renewed the contract for an additional five-year period beginning July 1, 2017. The Sponsor is responsible for evaluating the performance of the School and has the authority to deny renewal of the contract at its expiration or terminate the contract prior to its expiration. Effective July 1, 2022 the School agreed to a five year agreement with St. Aloysius Orphanage to sponsor the school.

The School operates under the direction of a Board of Directors (the Board). The Board is responsible for carrying out the provisions of the contract which include, but are not limited to, state mandated provisions regarding student populations, curriculum, academic goals, performance standards, admissions standards, and qualifications of teachers. The Board controls the School's instructional and administrative staff. The School contracts with Ohio Guidestone, a local not for profit, as a management company to provide daily operations of the School (See Note 12).

NOTE 2 - SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The basic financial statements of the School have been prepared in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) as applied to governmental nonprofit organizations. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) is the accepted standard-setting body for establishing governmental accounting and financial reporting principles. The more significant of the School's accounting policies are described below.

Basis of Presentation - The School's basic financial statements consist of a Statement of Net Position, a Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Change in Net Position, and a Statement of Cash Flows. Enterprise fund reporting focuses on the determination of the changes net position, financial position and cash flows.

The Government Accounting Standards Board identifies the presentation of all financial activity to be reported within one enterprise fund for year-ending reporting purposes. Enterprise accounting is used to account for operations that are financed and operated in a manner similar to private business enterprise where the intent is that the cost (expense) of providing goods and services to the general public on a continuing basis be financed or recovered primarily through user charges.

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Measurement Focus and Basis of Accounting - The accounting and financial reporting treatment is determined by measurement focus. Enterprise accounting uses a flow of economic resources method. Under this measurement focus, all assets and deferred outflows of resources and all liabilities and deferred inflows of resources are included on the balance sheet. The operating statement presents increases (e.g., revenues) and decreases (e.g., expenses) in net position.

Basis of accounting refers to when revenues and expenses are recognized in the accounts and reported in the financial statements. The accrual basis of accounting is used for reporting purposes. Revenues are recognized when they are earned, and expenses are recognized when they are incurred.

Budgetary Process – Community Schools are statutorily required to adopt a budget by ORC 3314.032(c). However, unlike other public schools located in the state of Ohio, community schools are not required to follow budgetary provisions set forth in the Ohio Revised Code Chapter 5705 (with exceptions section 570.391- Five Year Forecasts), unless specifically provided for in the School's sponsorship agreement. The contract between the School and Sponsor does not require the School to follow the provisions of ORC 5705; therefore, no budgetary information is presented in the basic financial statements.

Cash and Cash Equivalents - All cash received by the School is maintained in a demand deposit account. The School did not have any investments during the period ended June 30, 2024.

Estimates - The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported in the financial statements and accompanying notes. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Capital Assets and Depreciation/Amortization - Capital assets are capitalized at cost. Donated capital assets are recorded at their acquisition values as of the date received. The costs of additions are capitalized and expenditures for repairs and maintenance are expensed when incurred. When property is sold or retired, the related costs and accumulated depreciation/amortization are removed from the financial records and any gain or loss is included in additions to or deductions from net position. Capital assets were \$965,577 as of June 30, 2024, net of accumulated depreciation/amortization. Depreciation/amortization of capital assets, except for land and construction in progress, is calculated utilizing the straight-line method over the estimated useful lives of the assets which are as follows:

<u>Asset Class</u>	<u>Useful Life</u>
Computers & Technology Assets	3 years
Leasehold Improvements	5 years
Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment	5 years
Textbooks	3 years
Building	40 years or lessor of lease term

The School's policy for asset capitalization threshold is \$5,000. Assets or certain asset groups not meeting the capitalization threshold are not capitalized and are not included in the assets represented in the accompany statement of net position.

The School is reporting an intangible right to use assets related to leased buildings, structures, and improvements. These intangible assets are being amortized in a systematic and rational manner over the shorter of the lease term or the useful life of the underlying asset.

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Intergovernmental Revenues - The School currently participates in the State Foundation Program. Revenues received from this program are recognized as operating revenues in the accounting period in which all eligibility requirements have been met.

Grants and entitlements are recognized as non-operating revenues in the accounting period in which eligibility requirements have been met.

Eligibility requirements include timing requirements, which specify the year when the resources are required to be used or the fiscal year when use is first permitted, matching requirements, in which the School must provide local resources to be used for a specified purpose, and expenditure requirements, in which the resources are provided to the School on a reimbursement basis.

The School also participates in various federal programs passed through the Ohio Department of Education.

Also, during the fiscal year, the School received prorated shares of property tax distributions from the Cleveland Municipal School District (CMSD) as part of a partnership agreement executed between the School and CMSD.

Under the above programs the School recorded \$1,681,376 this fiscal year from the State Foundation Program, \$1,672,299 from Federal and State Grants, and \$349,544 from CMSD property taxes distributions.

Compensated Absences - Vacation is taken in a manner which corresponds with the school calendar; therefore, the School does not accrue vacation time as a liability.

Sick/personal leave benefits are earned by full-time employees at the rate of eight days per year and cannot be carried into the subsequent years. No accrual for sick time is made since unused time is not paid to employees upon employment termination.

Accrued Liabilities - Obligations incurred but unpaid at June 30 are reported as accrued liabilities in the accompanying financial statements.

Exchange and Non-Exchange Transactions - Revenue resulting from exchange transactions, in which each party gives and receives essentially equal value, is recorded on the accrual basis when the exchange takes place. Non-exchange transactions, in which the School receives value without directly giving equal value in return, include grants, entitlements and donations. Revenue from grants, entitlements and donations is recognized in the fiscal year in which all eligibility requirements have been satisfied. Eligibility requirements include timing requirements, which specify the year when the resources are required to be used or the fiscal year when use is first permitted, matching requirements, in which the School must provide local resources to be used for a specified purpose, and expenditures requirements, in which the resources are provided to the School on a reimbursement basis.

Net Position - Net position represents the difference between assets, deferred outflows of resources, liabilities, and deferred inflows of resources. Net position is reported as restricted when there are limitations imposed on their use through external restriction imposed by creditors, grantors, or laws and regulations of other governments. The School applies restricted resources when an expense is incurred

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

for purposes for which both restricted and unrestricted net position is available. Net position invested in capital assets consist of capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation, reduced by the outstanding balances of any borrowings used for the acquisition, construction, or improvement of those assets.

Operating Revenues and Expenses - Operating revenues are those revenues that are generated directly from the primary activities of the School. For the School, these revenues are primarily the State Foundation program. Operating expenses are necessary costs incurred to provide the good or service that is the primary activity of the School. All revenues and expenses not meeting this definition are reported as non-operating.

Pensions and Other Postemployment Benefits (OPEB) - For purposes of measuring the net pension/OPEB liability, net OPEB asset, deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions/OPEB, and pension/OPEB expense, information about the fiduciary net position of the pension/OPEB plans and additions to/deductions from their fiduciary net position have been determined on the same basis as they are reported by the pension/OPEB plan. For this purpose, benefit payments (including refunds of employee contributions) are recognized when due and payable in accordance with the benefit terms. The pension/OPEB plans report investments at fair value.

Deferred Outflows/Inflows of Resources - In addition to assets, the statements of financial position will sometimes report a separate section for deferred outflows of resources. Deferred outflows of resources represent a consumption of net position that applies to a future period and will not be recognized as an outflow of resources (expense/expenditure) until then. For the School, deferred outflows of resources are reported on the statement of net position for pension and OPEB. The deferred outflows of resources related to pension and OPEB are explained in Notes 9 and 10.

In addition to liabilities, the statements of financial position report a separate section for deferred inflows of resources. Deferred inflows of resources represent an acquisition of net position that applies to a future period and will not be recognized until that time. For the School, deferred inflows of resources include pension and OPEB. These amounts are deferred and recognized as an inflow of resources in the period the amounts become available. Deferred inflows of resources related to pension and OPEB plans are reported on the statement of net position. (See Note 9 and 10)

Implementation of New Accounting Principles – For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024, the School has implemented Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement No. 100, *Accounting Changes for Error Corrections*. The implementation of GASB Statements No. 100 did not have an effect on the financial statements of the School.

Deferred Fundraising Revenue – Deferred revenue results from various fundraising activities. It represents amounts received from various sponsors, donors, vendors received in advance. Deferred revenue is recognized as revenue in the period that the fundraising activity actually occurs.

NOTE 3 - CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

The following information classifies deposits by category of risk as defined in GASB Statement No.3 “Deposits with Financial Institutions, Investments (including Repurchase Agreements) and Reverse Repurchase Agreements,” as amended by GASB Statement No.40, “Deposit, and Investment Risk Disclosures”.

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

The School maintains its cash balances at one financial institution, Key Bank, located in Ohio. The balances are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) up to \$250,000, per qualifying account. At June 30, 2024, the book amount of the School's deposits was \$692,112 and the bank balance was \$692,112 of which \$442,112 was not insured at June 30, 2024 and exposed to custodial credit risk, while \$250,000 was covered by FDIC.

NOTE 4 - RECEIVABLES

Intergovernmental Receivable - The School has intergovernmental receivables of \$11,295 at June 30, 2024. These receivables represented monies earned, but not received as of June 30, 2024.

Grant Receivable - The School has grant receivables of \$286,385 at June 30, 2024. These receivables represented monies earned, but not received as of June 30, 2024.

Other Receivable - The School has other receivables of \$24,699 at June 30, 2024. These receivables represented monies earned, but not received as of June 30, 2024.

NOTE 5 - CAPITAL ASSETS

For the period ending June 30, 2024, the School's capital assets consisted of the following:

	Balance 06/30/23	Additions	Deletions	Balance 06/30/24
Non Depreciable Capital Assets:				
Construction in Progress	\$ -	\$ 39,750	\$ -	\$ 39,750
Capital Assets:				
Leasehold Improvements	1,271,463	78,289	-	1,349,752
Computers & Technology Assets	482,145	-	-	482,145
Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment	546,638	28,490	-	575,128
Intangible Right to Use Asset - Building	522,809	90,431	-	613,240
Textbooks	12,099	-	-	12,099
Total Capital Assets	2,835,154	197,210	-	3,032,364
Less Accumulated Depreciation:				
Leasehold Improvements	(421,141)	(131,859)	-	(553,000)
Computers & Technology Assets	(445,077)	(26,921)	-	(471,998)
Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment	(543,345)	(3,286)	-	(546,631)
Intangible Right to Use Asset - Building	(348,539)	(174,270)	-	(522,809)
Textbooks	(12,099)	-	-	(12,099)
Total Accumulated Depreciation	(1,770,201)	(336,336)	-	(2,106,537)
Net Depreciable Capital Assets	1,064,953	(336,336)	-	925,827
Total Capital Assets, Net	\$ 1,064,953	\$ (296,586)	\$ -	\$ 965,577

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

NOTE 6 – LEASE AND LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENT OBLIGATIONS

On July 1, 2020, the School entered into a sublease with OhioGuidestone for 36,400 square feet of space located at 3328 Carnegie Avenue Cleveland, Ohio 44115. The term of the lease is for a period of four years with the option to renew for three additional terms of five years each, pending the approval of the primelease between OhioGuidestone and the landlord. Base rent will be \$15,166 with a common area charge of \$3,000. The incremental borrowing rate on the lease is 8%. At year end, accumulated depreciation on the leased buildings totaled \$522,809, with a net book value of \$90,431.

The School has outstanding agreements to a lease building. Due to the implementation of GASB Statement 87, these lease has met the criteria of leases thus requiring them to be recorded by the School. The future lease payments were discounted based on the interest rate implicit in the lease or using the School's incremental borrowing rate. This discount is being amortized over the life of the lease.

In addition to the lease, the School also entered into a leasehold loan for improvements to the gym, and additional classroom renovations on the premises with OhioGuidestone effective July 1, 2020. There is no interest due on the loan. A monthly payment of \$12,318 is due with the monthly rent for these improvements through June 30, 2027, and then the payment will be reduced to \$5,439 through December 31, 2029.

The table below discloses the current year activity on the School's lease payable and leasehold improvement loan.

	Balance 6/30/23	Additions	Reductions	Balance 6/30/2024	Due Within One Year
Building Lease Payable	\$ 179,069	\$ 90,431	\$ (179,069)	\$ 90,431	\$ 90,431
Leasehold Improvement Loan	797,561	-	(147,806)	649,754	147,806
Total Long-Term Obligations	<u>\$ 976,630</u>	<u>\$ 90,431</u>	<u>\$ (326,875)</u>	<u>\$ 740,185</u>	<u>\$ 238,237</u>

Future minimum payments for principal and interest on the building lease are as follows:

Year	Principal	Interest	Total
2025	\$ 90,431	\$ 565	\$ 90,996
Total	<u>\$ 90,431</u>	<u>\$ 565</u>	<u>\$ 90,996</u>

Future minimum payments for principal on the leasehold improvement loan are as follows:

Year	Principal
2025	\$ 147,806
2026	147,806
2027	147,806
2028	147,806
2029	58,531
Total	<u>\$ 649,755</u>

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO**NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024****NOTE 7 - NOTE PAYABLE**

On July 1 2021, the School signed a 10 year promissory note agreement with Ohio Guidestone in the amount of \$2,100,000 for outstanding advances payable owed to Ohio Guidestone. Terms of the note provide for semi-annual installment payments of \$60,000 in January and July commencing on January 1, 2022, at an interest rate of 3.0% until said principal balance is paid in full. Additionally, any excess cash above \$50,000 at June 30 each year is to be remitted to Guidestone and applied against the remaining note balance. A final installment for any remaining balance is due on July 1, 2031. The table below discloses the current year activity on the School's note payable.

	Balance 6/30/2023	Additions	Reductions	Balance 6/30/2024	Due with in One Year
Direct Borrowing:					
Ohio Guidestone	\$ 1,359,710	\$ -	\$ (473,609)	\$ 886,101	\$ 460,833
	<u>\$ 1,359,710</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ (473,609)</u>	<u>\$ 886,101</u>	<u>\$ 460,833</u>

Future minimum payments for principal and interest on the note are as follows:

Year	Principal	Interest	Total
2025	\$ 460,833	24,589	\$ 485,422
2026	96,839	21,709	118,548
2027	99,762	18,742	118,504
2028	102,773	15,685	118,458
2029	105,875	12,583	118,458
2030	20,019	9,596	29,615
Total	<u>\$ 886,101</u>	<u>\$ 102,904</u>	<u>\$ 989,005</u>

NOTE 8 – RISK MANAGEMENT

Property & Liability - The School is exposed to various risks of loss related to torts; theft of, damage to, and destruction of assets; errors and omissions; injuries to employees; and natural disasters. During the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, the School contracted with The Cincinnati Insurance Company for nonprofits and maintained general liability insurance with a \$1,000,000 single occurrence limit and \$2,000,000 annual aggregate and a combined policy aggregate coverage for various liability coverage in the amount of \$10,000,000.

There were no settlements in excess of the insurance coverages over the past three years, nor has there been a significant reduction in coverage from the prior year.

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

NOTE 9 - DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION PLANS

The Statewide retirement systems provide both pension benefits and other postemployment benefits (OPEB).

Net Pension Liability/Net OPEB Liability (Asset)

Pensions and OPEB are a component of exchange transactions—between an employer and its employees—of salaries and benefits for employee services. Pensions/OPEB are provided to an employee—on a deferred-payment basis—as part of the total compensation package offered by an employer for employee services each financial period.

The net pension/OPEB liability (asset) represents the School's proportionate share of each pension/OPEB plan's collective actuarial present value of projected benefit payments attributable to past periods of service, net of each pension plan's fiduciary net position. The net pension/OPEB liability (asset) calculation is dependent on critical long-term variables, including estimated average life expectancies, earnings on investments, cost of living adjustments and others. While these estimates use the best information available, unknowable future events require adjusting this estimate annually.

The Ohio Revised Code limits the School's obligation for this liability to annually required payments. The School cannot control benefit terms or the manner in which pensions/OPEB are financed; however, the School does receive the benefit of employees' services in exchange for compensation including pension and OPEB.

GASB 68/75 assumes the liability is solely the obligation of the employer, because (1) they benefit from employee services; and (2) State statute requires funding to come from these employers. All pension contributions to date have come solely from these employers (which also includes pension costs paid in the form of withholdings from employees). The retirement systems may allocate a portion of the employer contributions to provide for these OPEB benefits. In addition, health care plan enrollees pay a portion of the health care costs in the form of a monthly premium. State statute requires the retirement systems to amortize unfunded pension liabilities within 30 years. If the pension amortization period exceeds 30 years, each retirement system's board must propose corrective action to the State legislature. Any resulting legislative change to benefits or funding could significantly affect the net pension/OPEB liability (asset). Resulting adjustments to the net pension/OPEB liability (asset) would be effective when the changes are legally enforceable. The Ohio Revised Code permits but does not require the retirement systems to provide healthcare to eligible benefit recipients.

The proportionate share of each plan's unfunded benefits is presented as a long-term *net pension/OPEB liability (asset)*. Any liability for the contractually required pension contribution outstanding at the end of the year is included in *accrued expenses*.

The remainder of this note includes the required pension disclosures. See Note 10 for the required OPEB disclosures.

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Plan Description - School Employees Retirement System (SERS)

Plan Description – School non-teaching employees participate in SERS, a statewide, cost-sharing multiple-employer defined benefit pension plan administered by SERS. SERS provides retirement, disability, and survivor benefits, to plan members and beneficiaries. Authority to establish and amend benefits is provided by Ohio Revised Code Chapter 3309. SERS issues a publicly available, stand-alone financial report that includes financial statements, required supplementary information and detailed information about SERS' fiduciary net position. That report can be obtained by visiting the SERS website at www.ohsers.org under Employers/Audit Resources.

Age and service requirements for retirement are as follows:

	Eligible to Retire on or before August 1, 2017 *	Eligible to Retire after August 1, 2017
Full Benefits	Any age with 30 years of service credit	Age 67 with 10 years of service credit; or Age 57 with 30 years of service credit
Actuarially Reduced Benefits	Age 60 with 5 years of service credit Age 55 with 25 years of service credit	Age 62 with 10 years of service credit; or Age 60 with 25 years of service credit

* Members with 25 years of service credit as of August 1, 2017, may be included in this plan.

Annual retirement benefits are calculated based on final average salary multiplied by a percentage that varies based on year of service; 2.2 percent for the first 30 years of service and 2.5 percent for years of service credit over 30. Final average salary is the average of the highest three years of salary.

An individual whose benefit effective date is before April 1, 2018, is eligible for a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) on the first anniversary date of the benefit. New benefit recipients must wait until the fourth anniversary of their benefit for COLA eligibility. The COLA is added each year to the base benefit amount on the anniversary date of the benefit. The COLA is indexed to the percentage increase in the CPI-W, not to exceed 2.5 percent and with a floor of 0 percent. A three-year COLA suspension was in effect for all benefit recipients for the years 2018, 2019, and 2020. The Retirement Board approved a 2.5 percent COLA for calendar year 2023.

Funding Policy – Plan members are required to contribute 10 percent of their annual covered salary and the School is required to contribute 14 percent of annual covered payroll. The contribution requirements of plan members and employers are established and may be amended by the SERS' Retirement Board up to statutory maximum amounts of 10 percent for plan members and 14 percent for employers. The Retirement Board, acting with the advice of the actuary, allocates the employer contribution rate among four of the System's funds (Pension Trust Fund, Death Benefit Fund, Medicare B Fund, and Health Care Fund). For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024, the allocation to pension, death benefits, and Medicare B was 14.0 percent. For fiscal year 2024, the Retirement Board did not allocate any employer contribution to the Health Care Fund.

The School's contractually required contribution to SERS was \$27,693 for fiscal year 2024.

Plan Description - State Teachers Retirement System (STRS)

Plan Description – School licensed teachers and other faculty members participate in STRS Ohio, a cost-sharing multiple employer public employee system administered by STRS. STRS provides retirement and disability benefits to members and death and survivor benefits to beneficiaries. STRS issues a stand-alone

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

financial report that includes financial statements, required supplementary information, and detailed information about STRS' fiduciary net position. That report can be obtained by writing to STRS, 275 E. Broad St., Columbus, OH 43215-3771, by calling (888) 227-7877, or by visiting the STRS Web site at www.strsoh.org.

New members have a choice of three retirement plans: a Defined Benefit (DB) Plan, a Defined Contribution (DC) Plan, and a Combined Plan. Benefits are established by Ohio Revised Code Chapter 3307.

The DB Plan offers an annual retirement allowance based on final average salary multiplied by a percentage that varies based on years of service. Effective August 1, 2015, the calculation is 2.2 percent of final average salary for the five highest years of earnings multiplied by all years of service. In April 2017, the Retirement Board made the decision to reduce COLA granted on or after July 1, 2017, to 0 percent upon a determination by its actuary that it was necessary to preserve the fiscal integrity of the retirement system. Benefit recipients' base benefit and past cost-of living increases are not affected by this change. Effective July 1, 2022, a one-time ad-hoc COLA of 3 percent of the base benefit was granted to eligible benefit recipients to begin on the anniversary of their retirement benefit in fiscal year 2023 as long as they retired prior to July 1, 2018. Effective July 1, 2023, a one-time ad-hoc COLA of 1 percent of the base benefit was granted to eligible benefit recipients to begin on the anniversary of their retirement benefit in fiscal year 2024 as long as they retired prior to July 1, 2019. Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 3307.67(E) the STRS Ohio Retirement Board may adjust the COLA upon a determination by the board's actuary that a change will not materially impair the fiscal integrity of the system or is necessary to preserve the fiscal integrity of the system. Eligibility charges will be phased in until August 1, 2023, when retirement eligibility for unreduced benefits will be five years of service credit and age 65, or 34 years of service credit at any age.

Eligibility changes for DB Plan members who retire with actuarially reduced benefits will be phased in until August 1, 2023, when retirement eligibility will be five years of qualifying service credit and age 60, or 30 years of service credit regardless of age.

The DC Plan allows members to place all their member contributions and 11.09 percent of the 14 percent employer contributions into an investment account. The member determines how to allocate the member and employer money among various investment choices offered by STRS. The remaining 2.91 percent of the 14 percent employer rate is allocated to the defined benefit unfunded liability. A member is eligible to receive a retirement benefit at age 50 and termination of employment. The member may elect to receive a lifetime monthly annuity or a lump sum withdrawal.

The Combined plan offers features of both the DB Plan and the DC Plan. In the Combined plan, 12 percent of the 14 percent member rate is deposited into the member's DC account and the remaining 2 percent is applied to the DB Plan. Member contributions to the DC Plan are allocated among investment choices by the member, and contributions to the DB Plan from the employer and the member are used to fund the defined benefit payment at a reduced level from the regular DB Plan. The defined benefit portion of the Combined plan payment is payable to a member on or after age 60 with five years of service. The defined contribution portion of the account may be taken as a lump sum payment or converted to a lifetime monthly annuity at age 50 and after termination of employment.

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

New members who choose the DC Plan or Combined Plan will have another opportunity to reselect a permanent plan during their fifth year of membership. Members may remain in the same plan or transfer to another STRS plan. The optional annuitization of a member's defined contribution account or the defined contribution portion of a member's Combined Plan account to a lifetime benefit results in STRS bearing the risk of investment gain or loss on the account. STRS has therefore included all three plan options as one defined benefit plan for GASB 68 reporting purposes.

A DB or Combined Plan member with five or more years of credited service who is determined to be disabled may qualify for a disability benefit. New members on or after July 1, 2013, must have at least ten years of qualifying service credit to apply for disability benefits. Members in the DC plan who become disabled are entitled only to their account balance. Eligible survivors of members who die before service retirement may qualify for monthly benefits. If a member of the DC plan dies before retirement benefits begin, the member's designated beneficiary is entitled to receive the member's account balance.

Funding Policy – Employer and member contribution rates are established by the State Teachers Retirement Board and limited by Chapter 3307 of the Ohio Revised Code. The 2024 employer and employee contribution rate of 14 percent was equal to the statutory maximum rates. For 2024, the full employer contribution was allocated to pension.

The School's contractually required contribution to STRS was \$124,302 for fiscal year 2024.

Pension Liabilities, Pension Expense, and Deferred Outflows/Inflows of Resources Related to Pensions

The net pension liability was measured as of June 30, 2023, and the total pension liability used to calculate the net pension liability was determined by an independent actuarial valuation as of that date. The School's proportion of the net pension liability was based on the employer's share of employer contributions in the pension plan relative to the total employer contributions of all participating employers. Following is information related to the proportionate share and pension expense:

	SERS	STRS	Total
Proportion of the Net Pension Liability:			
Current Measurement Date	0.0053549%	0.00605008%	
Prior Measurement Date	0.0037896%	0.00666446%	
Change in Proportionate Share	0.0015653%	-0.00061438%	
Proportionate Share of the Net			
Pension Liability	\$ 295,885	\$ 1,302,882	\$ 1,598,767
Pension Expense	\$ 28,366	\$ (148,478)	\$ (120,112)

Other than contributions made subsequent to the measurement date and differences between projected and actual earnings on investments; deferred inflows/outflows of resources are recognized in pension expense beginning in the current period, using a straight-line method over a closed period equal to the average of the expected remaining services lives of all employees that are provided with pensions, determined as of the beginning of the measurement period. Net deferred inflows/outflows of resources pertaining to the differences between projected and actual investment earnings are similarly recognized over a closed five-year period.

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

At June 30, 2024, the School reported deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions from the following sources:

	SERS	STRS	Total
Deferred Outflows of Resources			
Differences between Expected and Actual Experience	\$ 12,717	\$ 47,502	\$ 60,219
Changes of Assumptions	2,096	107,298	109,394
Changes in Proportion and Differences between School Contributions and Proportionate Share of Contributions	64,341	123,115	187,456
School Contributions Subsequent to the Measurement Date	27,693	124,302	151,995
Total Deferred Outflows of Resources	<u>\$ 106,847</u>	<u>\$ 402,217</u>	<u>\$ 509,064</u>
Deferred Inflows of Resources			
Differences between Expected and Actual Experience	\$ -	\$ 2,891	\$ 2,891
Net Difference between Projected and Actual Earnings on Pension Plan Investments	4,158	3,907	8,065
Changes of Assumptions	-	80,765	80,765
Changes in Proportion and Differences between School Contributions and Proportionate Share of Contributions	-	104,637	104,637
Total Deferred Inflows of Resources	<u>\$ 4,158</u>	<u>\$ 192,200</u>	<u>\$ 196,358</u>

\$151,995 reported as deferred outflows of resources related to pension resulting from School contributions subsequent to the measurement date will be recognized as a reduction of the net pension liability in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. Other amounts reported as deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pension will be recognized in pension expense as follows:

Fiscal Year Ending June 30:	SERS	STRS	Total
2025	\$ 28,181	\$ 23,960	\$ 52,141
2026	11,545	(8,356)	3,189
2027	35,048	103,254	138,302
2028	222	(33,143)	(32,921)
Total	<u>\$ 74,996</u>	<u>\$ 85,715</u>	<u>\$ 160,711</u>

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Actuarial Assumptions - SERS

SERS' total pension liability was determined by their actuaries in accordance with GASB Statement No. 67, as part of their annual actuarial valuation for each defined benefit retirement plan. Actuarial valuations of an ongoing plan involve estimates of the value of reported amounts (e.g., salaries, credited service) and assumptions about the probability of occurrence of events far into the future (e.g., mortality, disabilities, retirements, employment termination). Actuarially determined amounts are subject to continual review and potential modifications, as actual results are compared with past expectations and new estimates are made about the future.

Projections of benefits for financial reporting purposes are based on the substantive plan (the plan as understood by the employers and plan members) and include the types of benefits provided at the time of each valuation and the historical pattern of sharing benefit costs between the employers and plan members to that point. The projection of benefits for financial reporting purposes does not explicitly incorporate the potential effects of legal or contractual funding limitations. Future benefits for all current plan members were projected through 2137.

Actuarial calculations reflect a long-term perspective. For a newly hired employee, actuarial calculations will take into account the employee's entire career with the employer and also take into consideration the benefits, if any, paid to the employee after termination of employment until the death of the employee and any applicable contingent annuitant. In many cases actuarial calculations reflect several decades of service with the employer and the payment of benefits after termination.

Key methods and assumptions used in calculating the total pension liability in the latest actuarial valuation, prepared as of June 30, 2023, and 2022 are presented below:

Inflation	2.40 percent
Future Salary Increases, including inflation	3.25 percent to 13.58 percent
Investment Rate of Return	7.00 percent net of System expenses
Actuarial Cost Method	Entry Age Normal (Level Percent of Payroll)
COLA or Ad Hoc COLA	2.0 percent, on or after April 1, 2018, COLAs for future retirees will be delayed for three years following commencement

Mortality rates were based on the PUB-2010 General Employee Amount Weight Below Median Healthy Retiree mortality table projected to 2017 with ages set forward 1 year and adjusted 94.20 percent for males and set forward two years and adjusted 81.35 percent for females. Mortality among disabled members were based upon the PUB-2010 General Disabled Retiree mortality table projected to 2017 with ages set forward five years and adjusted 103.3 percent for males and set forward three years and adjusted 106.8 percent for females. Future improvement in mortality rates is reflected by applying the MP-2020 projection scale generationally.

The most recent experience study was completed for the five-year period ended June 30, 2020.

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

The long-term return expectation for the Pension Plan Investments has been determined by using a building-block approach and assumes a time horizon, as defined in SERS' Statement of Investment Policy. A forecasted rate of inflation serves as the baseline for the return expectation. Various real return premiums over the baseline inflation rate have been established for each asset class. The long-term expected nominal rate of return has been determined by calculating an arithmetic weighted average of the expected real return premiums for each asset class, adding the projected inflation rate, and adding the expected return from rebalancing uncorrelated asset classes. As of June 30, 2023:

Asset Class	Target Allocation	Long-Term Expected Real Rate of Return
Cash	2.00 %	0.75 %
US Equity	24.75	4.82
Non-US Equity Developed	13.50	5.19
Non-US Equity Emerging	6.75	5.98
Fixed Income/Global Bonds	19.00	2.24
Private Equity	12.00	7.49
Real Estate/Real Assets	17.00	3.70
Private Debt/Private Credit	5.00	5.64
Total	100.00 %	

Discount Rate The total pension liability for 2023 was calculated using the discount rate of 7.00 percent. The discount rate did not use a municipal bond rate. The projection of cash flows used to determine the discount rate assumed employers would contribute the actuarially determined contribution rate of projected compensation over the remaining 21-year amortization period of the unfunded actuarial accrued liability. The actuarially determined contribution rate of fiscal year 2023 was 14.00 percent. Projected inflows from investment earnings were calculated using the long term assumed investment rate of return, 7.00 percent. Based on those assumptions, the plan's fiduciary net position was projected to be available to make all future benefit payments of current plan members. Therefore, the long-term expected rate of return on pension plan investments was applied to all periods of projected benefits to determine the total pension liability. The annual money weighted rate of return, calculated as the internal rate of return on pension plan investments, for fiscal year 2023 was 6.90 percent.

Sensitivity of the School's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability to Changes in the Discount Rate Net pension liability is sensitive to changes in the discount rate, and to illustrate the potential impact the following table presents the School's proportionate share of the net pension liability calculated using the discount rate of 7.00 percent, as well as what the School's net pension liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is one percentage point lower (6.00 percent), or one percentage point higher (8.00 percent) than the current rate.

	1% Decrease	Current Discount Rate	1% Increase
School's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability	\$ 436,712	\$ 295,885	\$ 177,266

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Actuarial Assumptions - STRS

Key methods and assumptions used in the latest actuarial valuation, reflecting experience study results used in the June 30, 2023, and 2022, actuarial valuation, are presented below:

Inflation	2.50 percent
Salary Increases	From 2.5 percent to 8.5 percent, based on service
Investment Rate of Return	7.00 percent, net of investment expenses, including inflation
Discount Rate of Return	7.00 percent
Payroll Increases	3.00 percent
Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA)	0.00 percent, effective July 1, 2017

Post-retirement mortality rates for healthy retirees are based on the Pub-2010 Teachers Healthy Annuitant Mortality Table, adjusted 110 percent for males, projected forward generationally using mortality improvement scale MP-2020. Pre-retirement mortality rates are based on Pub-2010 Teachers Employee Table adjusted 95 percent for females, projected forward generationally using mortality improvement scale MP-2020. Post-retirement disabled mortality rates are based on Pub-2010 Teachers Disable Annuitant Table projected forward generationally using mortality improvement scale MP-2020.

Actuarial assumptions used in the June 30, 2023, valuation, were based on the results of the latest available actuarial experience study, which is for the period July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2021. An actuarial experience study is done on a quinquennial basis.

STRS' investment consultant develops an estimate range for the investment return assumption based on the target allocation adopted by the Retirement Board. The target allocation and long-term expected rate of return for each major asset class are summarized as follows:

Asset Class	Target Allocation*	Long-Term Expected Rate of Return**
Domestic Equity	26.00 %	6.60 %
International Equity	22.00	6.80
Alternatives	19.00	7.38
Fixed Income	22.00	1.75
Real Estate	10.00	5.75
Liquidity Reserves	1.00	1.00
Total	100.00 %	

*Final target weights reflected at October 1, 2022.

**10-Year annualized geometric nominal returns, which include the real rate of return and inflation of 2.25 percent and is net of investment expenses. Over a 30-year period, STRS investment consultant indicates that the above target allocations should generate a return above the actuarial rate of return, without net value added by management.

Discount Rate. The discount rate used to measure the total pension liability was 7.00 percent as of June 30, 2023. The projection of cash flows used to determine the discount rate assumes that member and employer contributions will be made at the statutory contribution rates in accordance with rate increases described above. For this purpose, only employer contributions that are intended to fund benefits of current plan members and their beneficiaries are included. Based on those assumptions, STRS' fiduciary

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

net position was projected to be available to make all projected future benefit payments to current plan members as of June 30, 2023. Therefore, the long-term expected rate of return on pension plan investments of 7.00 percent was applied to all periods of projected benefit payment to determine the total pension liability as of June 30, 2023.

Sensitivity of the School's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability to Changes in the Discount Rate The following table presents the School's proportionate share of the net pension liability calculated using the current period discount rate assumption of 7.00 percent, as well as what the School's proportionate share of the net pension liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is one-percentage-point lower (6.00 percent) or one-percentage-point higher (8.00 percent) than the current rate:

	<u>1% Decrease</u>	<u>Current Discount Rate</u>	<u>1% Increase</u>
School's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability	\$ 2,003,543	\$ 1,302,882	\$ 710,313

Assumption and Benefit Changes Since the Prior Measurement Date The discount rate remained at 7.00 percent for June 30, 2023, valuation. Demographic assumptions were changed based on the actuarial experience study for the period July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2021.

NOTE 10 - DEFINED BENEFIT OPEB PLANS

See Note 9 for a description of the net OPEB liability (asset).

Plan Description - School Employees Retirement System (SERS)

Health Care Plan Description - The School contributes to the SERS Health Care Fund, administered by SERS for non-certificated retirees and their beneficiaries. For GASB 75 purposes, this plan is considered a cost-sharing other postemployment benefit (OPEB) plan. SERS' Health Care Plan provides healthcare benefits to eligible individuals receiving retirement, disability, and survivor benefits, and to their eligible dependents. Members who retire after June 1, 1986, need 10 years of service credit, exclusive of most types of purchased credit, to qualify to participate in SERS' health care coverage. The following types of credit purchased after January 29, 1981, do not count toward health care coverage eligibility: military, federal, out-of-state, municipal, private school, exempted, and early retirement incentive credit. In addition to age and service retirees, disability benefit recipients and beneficiaries who are receiving monthly benefits due to the death of a member or retiree, are eligible for SERS' health care coverage. Most retirees and dependents choosing SERS' health care coverage are over the age of 65 and therefore enrolled in a fully insured Medicare Advantage plan; however, SERS maintains a traditional, self-insured preferred provider organization for its non-Medicare retiree population. For both groups, SERS offers a self-insured prescription drug program. Health care is a benefit that is permitted, not mandated, by statute. The financial report of the Plan is included in the SERS Annual Comprehensive Financial Report which can be obtained on SERS' website at www.ohsers.org under Employers/Audit Resources.

The Health Care program is financed through a combination of employer contributions, recipient premiums, investment returns, and any funds received on behalf of SERS' participation in Medicare programs. The System's goal is to maintain a health care reserve account with a 20-year solvency period in order to ensure that fluctuations in the cost of health care do not cause an interruption in the program.

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

However, during any period in which the 20-year solvency period is not achieved, the System shall manage the Health Care Fund on a pay-as-you-go basis.

Access to health care for retirees and beneficiaries is permitted in accordance with Section 3309 of the Ohio Revised Code. The Health Care Fund was established and is administered in accordance with Internal Revenue Code Section 105(e). SERS' Retirement Board reserves the right to change or discontinue any health plan or program. Active employee members do not contribute to the Health Care Plan. The SERS Retirement Board established the rules for the premiums paid by the retirees for health care coverage for themselves and their dependents or for their surviving beneficiaries. Premiums vary depending on the plan selected, qualified years of service, Medicare eligibility, and retirement status.

Funding Policy - State statute permits SERS to fund the health care benefits through employer contributions. Each year, after the allocation for statutorily required pensions and benefits, the Retirement Board may allocate the remainder of the employer contribution of 14 percent of covered payroll to the Health Care Fund in accordance with the funding policy. For fiscal year 2024, no allocation was made to health care. An additional health care surcharge on employers is collected for employees earning less than an actuarially determined minimum compensation amount, pro-rated if less than a full year of service credit was earned. For fiscal year 2024, this amount was \$25,000. Statutes provide that no employer shall pay a health care surcharge greater than 2.00 percent of that employer's SERS-covered payroll; nor may SERS collect in aggregate more than 1.50 percent of the total statewide SERS-covered payroll for the health care surcharge. For fiscal year 2024, the School's surcharge obligation was \$2,528. The surcharge, added to the allocated portion of the 14 percent employer contribution rate is the total amount assigned to the Health Care Fund. The School's contractually required contribution to SERS was equal to its surcharge obligation for fiscal year 2024.

Plan Description - State Teachers Retirement System (STRS)

Plan Description – The State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio (STRS) administers a cost-sharing Health Plan administered for eligible retirees who participated in the defined benefit or combined pension plans offered by STRS. Ohio law authorizes STRS to offer this plan. Benefits include hospitalization, physicians' fees, prescription drugs and partial reimbursement of monthly Medicare Part B premiums. Health care premiums were reduced by a Medicare Part B premium credit beginning in 2023. The Plan is included in the report of STRS which can be obtained by visiting www.strsoh.org or by calling (888) 227-7877.

Funding Policy – Ohio Revised Code Chapter 3307 authorizes STRS to offer the Plan and gives the Retirement Board discretionary authority over how much, if any, of the health care costs will be absorbed by STRS. Active employee members do not contribute to the Health Care Plan. Nearly all health care plan enrollees, for the most recent year, pay a portion of the health care costs in the form of a monthly premium. Under Ohio law, funding for post-employment health care may be deducted from employer contributions, currently 14 percent of covered payroll. For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024, STRS did not allocate any employer contributions to post-employment health care.

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NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

OPEB Liability (Asset), OPEB Expense, and Deferred Outflows/Inflows of Resources Related to OPEB

The net OPEB liability (asset) was measured as of June 30, 2023, and the total OPEB liability used to calculate the net OPEB liability (asset) was determined by an actuarial valuation as of that date. The School's proportion of the net OPEB liability (asset) was based on the School's share of contributions to the respective retirement systems relative to the contributions of all participating entities. Following is information related to the proportionate share and OPEB expense:

	SERS	STRS	Total
Proportion of the Net OPEB Liability (Asset):			
Current Measurement Date	0.0054043%	0.00605008%	
Prior Measurement Date	0.0038646%	0.00666446%	
Change in Proportionate Share	0.0015397%	-0.00061438%	
Proportionate Share of the Net			
OPEB Liability (Asset)	\$ 89,033	\$ (117,666)	
OPEB Expense	\$ (18,763)	\$ (4,772)	\$ (23,535)

Other than contributions made subsequent to the measurement date and differences between projected and actual earnings on investments; deferred inflows/outflows of resources are recognized in OPEB expense beginning in the current period, using a straight-line method over a closed period equal to the average of the expected remaining services lives of all employees that are provided with pensions, determined as of the beginning of the measurement period. Net deferred inflows/outflows of resources pertaining to the differences between projected and actual investment earnings are similarly recognized over a closed five-year period.

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NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

At June 30, 2024, the School reported deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to OPEB from the following sources:

	SERS	STRS	Total
Deferred Outflows of Resources			
Differences between Expected and Actual Experience	\$ 188	\$ 184	\$ 372
Net Difference between Projected and Actual Earnings on OPEB Plan Investments	687	211	898
Changes of Assumptions	30,106	17,334	47,440
Changes in Proportion and Differences between School Contributions and Proportionate Share of Contributions	39,930	3,246	43,176
School Contributions Subsequent to the Measurement Date	2,528	-	2,528
Total Deferred Outflows of Resources	<u>\$ 73,439</u>	<u>\$ 20,975</u>	<u>\$ 94,414</u>

Deferred Inflows of Resources			
Differences between Expected and Actual Experience	\$ 45,919	\$ 17,947	\$ 63,866
Changes of Assumptions	25,284	77,634	102,918
Changes in Proportion and Differences between School Contributions and Proportionate Share of Contributions	46,420	20,331	66,751
Total Deferred Inflows of Resources	<u>\$ 117,623</u>	<u>\$ 115,912</u>	<u>\$ 233,535</u>

\$2,528 reported as deferred outflows of resources related to OPEB resulting from School contributions subsequent to the measurement date will be recognized as a reduction/addition to the net OPEB liability/asset in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. Other amounts reported as deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to OPEB will be recognized in OPEB expense as follows:

Fiscal Year Ending June 30:	SERS	STRS	Total
2025	\$ (28,554)	\$ (46,653)	\$ (75,207)
2026	(21,157)	(22,781)	(43,938)
2027	(10,952)	(5,618)	(16,570)
2028	(3,417)	(7,780)	(11,197)
2029	1,857	(7,151)	(5,294)
Thereafter	15,511	(4,954)	10,557
Total	<u>\$ (46,712)</u>	<u>\$ (94,937)</u>	<u>\$ (141,649)</u>

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Actuarial Assumptions - SERS

The total OPEB liability is determined by SERS' actuaries in accordance with GASB Statement No. 74, as part of their annual actuarial valuation for each retirement plan. Actuarial valuations of an ongoing plan involve estimates of the value of reported amounts (e.g., salaries, credited service) and assumptions about the probability of occurrence of events far into the future (e.g., mortality, disabilities, retirements, employment terminations). Actuarially determined amounts are subject to continual review and potential modifications, as actual results are compared with past expectations and new estimates are made about the future.

Projections of benefits for financial reporting purposes are based on the substantive plan (the plan as understood by the employers and plan members) and include the types of benefits provided at the time of each valuation and the historical pattern of sharing benefit costs between the employers and plan members to that point. The projection of benefits for financial reporting purposes does not explicitly incorporate the potential effects of legal or contractual funding limitations.

Actuarial calculations reflect a long-term perspective. For a newly hired employee, actuarial calculations will take into account the employee's entire career with the employer and also take into consideration the benefits, if any, paid to the employee after termination of employment until the death of the employee and any applicable contingent annuitant. In many cases, actuarial calculations reflect several decades of service with the employer and the payment of benefits after termination.

Key methods and assumptions used in calculating the total OPEB liability in the latest actuarial valuation date of June 30, 2023, are presented below:

	June 30, 2023
Inflation	2.40 percent
Future Salary Increases, including Inflation	3.25 percent to 13.58 percent
Investment Rate of Return	7.00 percent net of investment expense
Actuarial Cost Method	Entry Age Normal (Level Percent of Payroll)
Fiduciary Net Position is Projected to be Depleted	2048
Municipal Bond Index Rate	
Measurement Date	3.86 percent
Prior Measurement Date	3.69 percent
Single Equivalent Interest Rate	
Measurement Date	4.27 percent
Prior Measurement Date	4.08 percent
Health Care Cost Trend Rate	
Medicare	5.125 to 4.40 percent
Pre-Medicare	6.75 to 4.40 percent
Medical Trend Assumption	
Measurement Date	6.75 to 4.40 percent
Prior Measurement Date	7.00 to 4.40 percent

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Mortality rates among healthy retirees were based on the PUB-2010 General Employee Amount Weighted Below Median Healthy Retiree mortality table projected to 2017 with ages set forward 1 year and adjusted 94.20 percent for males and set forward 2 years and adjusted 81.35 percent for females. Mortality among disabled members were based upon the PUB-2010 General Disabled Retiree mortality table projected to 2017 with ages set forward 5 years and adjusted 103.3 percent for males and set forward 3 years and adjusted 106.8 percent for females. Mortality rates for contingent survivors were based on PUB-2010 General Amount Weighted Below Median Contingent Survivor mortality table projected to 2017 with ages set forward 1 year and adjusted 105.5 percent for males and adjusted 122.5 percent for females. Mortality rates for actives is based on PUB-2010 General Amount Weighted Below Median Employee mortality table. Mortality rates are projected using a fully generational projection with Scale MP-2020.

The most recent experience study was completed for the five-year period ended June 30, 2020.

The long-term expected rate of return on plan assets is reviewed as part of the actuarial five-year experience study. The most recent study covers fiscal years 2016 through 2020 and was adopted by the Board on April 15, 2021. Several factors are considered in evaluating the long-term rate of return assumption including long-term historical data, estimates inherent in current market data, and a long-normal distribution analysis in which best-estimate ranges of expected future real rates of return (expected return, net of investment expense and inflation) were developed by the investment consultant for each major asset class. These ranges were combined to produce the long-term expected rate of return, 7.00 percent, by weighting the expected future real rates of return by the target asset allocation percentage and then adding expected inflation. The capital market assumptions developed by the investment consultant are intended for use over a 10-year horizon and may not be useful in setting the long-term rate of return for funding pension plans which covers a longer timeframe. The assumption is intended to be a long-term assumption and is not expected to change absent a significant change in the asset allocation, a change in the inflation assumption, or a fundamental change in the market that alters expected returns in future years.

The target asset allocation and best estimates of arithmetic real rates of return for each major asset class, as used in the June 30, 2020, five-year experience study, are summarized as follows:

<u>Asset Class</u>	<u>Target Allocation</u>	<u>Long-Term Expected Real Rate of Return</u>
Cash	2.00 %	0.75 %
US Equity	24.75	4.82
Non-US Equity Developed	13.50	5.19
Non-US Equity Emerging	6.75	5.98
Fixed Income/Global Bonds	19.00	2.24
Private Equity	12.00	7.49
Real Estate/Real Assets	17.00	3.70
Private Debt/Private Credit	5.00	5.64
Total	<u>100.00 %</u>	

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

**NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024**

Discount Rate The discount rate used to measure the total OPEB liability at June 30, 2023, was 4.27 percent. The discount rate used to measure total OPEB liability prior to June 30, 2023, was 4.08 percent. The projection of cash flows used to determine the discount rate assumed that contributions will be made from members and the plan at the contribution rate of 1.50 percent of projected covered payroll each year, which includes a 1.50 percent payroll surcharge and no contributions from the basic benefits plan. Based on these assumptions, the OPEB plan's fiduciary net position was projected to be depleted in 2048 by SERS' actuaries. The Fidelity General Obligation 20-year Municipal Bond Index Rate was used in the determination of the single equivalent interest rate for both the June 30, 2022, and the June 30, 2023, total OPEB liability. The Municipal Bond Index rate is the single rate that will generate a present value of benefit payments equal to the sum of the present value determined by the long-term expected rate of return, and the present value determined by discounting those benefits after the date of depletion. The Municipal Bond Index Rate is 3.86 percent at June 30, 2023, and 3.69 percent at June 30, 2022.

Sensitivity of the School's Proportionate Share of the Net OPEB Liability to Changes in the Discount Rate and Changes in the Health Care Cost Trend Rates The net OPEB liability is sensitive to changes in the discount rate and the health care cost trend rate. The following table presents the net OPEB liability and what the net OPEB liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is one percentage point lower (3.27 percent) and higher (5.27 percent) than the current discount rate (4.27 percent). Also shown is what the net OPEB liability would be based on health care cost trend rates that are one percentage point lower (5.75 percent decreasing to 3.40 percent) and higher (7.75 percent decreasing to 5.40 percent) than the current rate (6.75 percent decreasing to 4.40 percent).

	<u>1% Decrease</u>	<u>Current Discount Rate</u>	<u>1% Increase</u>
School's Proportionate Share of the Net OPEB Liability	\$ 113,809	\$ 89,033	\$ 69,496
	<u>1% Decrease</u>	<u>Current Trend Rate</u>	<u>1% Increase</u>
School's Proportionate Share of the Net OPEB Liability	\$ 65,409	\$ 89,033	\$ 120,337

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Actuarial Assumptions – STRS

Key methods and assumptions used in the latest actuarial valuation, reflecting experience study results used in the June 30, 2023, and 2022, actuarial valuation are presented below:

	June 30, 2023	June 30, 2022
Projected Salary Increases	Varies by service from 2.5 percent to 8.5 percent	Varies by service from 2.5 percent to 8.5 percent
Investment Rate of Return	7.00 percent, net of investment expenses, including inflation	7.00 percent, net of investment expenses, including inflation
Payroll Increases	3 percent	3 percent
Discount Rate of Return	7.00 percent	7.00 percent
Health Care Cost Trends		
Medical		
Pre-Medicare	7.50 percent initial 4.14 percent ultimate	7.50 percent initial 3.94 percent ultimate
Medicare	-10.94 percent initial 4.14 percent ultimate	-68.78 percent initial 3.94 percent ultimate
Prescription Drug		
Pre-Medicare	-11.95 percent initial 4.14 percent ultimate	9.00 percent initial 3.94 percent ultimate
Medicare	1.33 percent initial 4.14 percent ultimate	-5.47 percent initial 3.94 percent ultimate

Projections of benefits include the historical pattern of sharing benefit costs between the employers and retired plan members.

Healthy retirees post-retirement mortality rates are based on the Pub-2010 Teachers Healthy Annuitant Mortality Table, adjusted 110 percent for males, projected forward generationally using mortality improvement scale MP-2020; pre-retirement mortality rates are based on Pub-2010 Teachers Employee Table adjusted 95 percent for females, projected forward generationally using mortality improvement scale MP-2020. For disabled retirees, mortality rates are based on the Pub-2010 Teachers Disabled Annuitant Table projected forward generationally using mortality improvement scale MP-2020.

Actuarial assumptions used in the June 30, 2023, valuation is based on the results of an actuarial experience study for the period July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2021. An actuarial experience study is done on a quinquennial basis.

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

STRS' investment consultant develops an estimate range for the investment return assumption based on the target allocation adopted by the Retirement Board. The target allocation and long-term expected rate of return for each major asset class are summarized as follows:

Asset Class	Target Allocation*	Long-Term Expected Rate of Return**
Domestic Equity	26.00 %	6.60 %
International Equity	22.00	6.80
Alternatives	19.00	7.38
Fixed Income	22.00	1.75
Real Estate	10.00	5.75
Liquidity Reserves	1.00	1.00
Total	100.00 %	

*Final target weights reflected at October 1, 2022.

**10-Year annualized geometric nominal returns, which include the real rate of return and inflation of 2.25 percent and is net of investment expenses. Over a 30-year period, STRS investment consultant indicates that the above target allocations should generate a return above the actuarial rate of return, without net value added by management.

Discount Rate The discount rate used to measure the total OPEB liability was 7.00 percent as of June 30, 2023. The projection of cash flows used to determine the discount rate assumed STRS continues to allocate no employer contributions to the health care fund. Based on these assumptions, the OPEB plan's fiduciary net position was projected to be available to make all projected future benefit payments to current plan members as of June 30, 2023. Therefore, the long-term expected rate of return on health care plan investments of 7.00 percent was applied to all periods of projected health care costs to determine the total OPEB liability as of June 30, 2023.

Sensitivity of the School's Proportionate Share of the Net OPEB Asset to Changes in the Discount Rate and Health Care Cost Trend Rate The following table represents the net OPEB asset as of June 30, 2023, calculated using the current period discount rate assumption of 7.00 percent, as well as what the net OPEB asset would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is one percentage point lower (6.00 percent) or one percentage point higher (8.00 percent) than the current assumption. Also shown is the net OPEB asset as if it were calculated using health care cost trend rates that are one percentage point lower or one percentage point higher than the current health care cost trend rates.

	1% Decrease	Current Discount Rate	1% Increase
School's Proportionate Share of the Net OPEB (Asset)	\$ (99,589)	\$ (117,666)	\$ (133,409)
	1% Decrease	Current Trend Rate	1% Increase
School's Proportionate Share of the Net OPEB (Asset)	\$ (134,139)	\$ (117,666)	\$ (97,823)

Assumption Changes Since the Prior Measurement Date The discount rate remained unchanged at 7.00 percent for the June 30, 2023, valuation.

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024

Benefit Term Changes Since the Prior Measurement Date Healthcare trends were updated to reflect emerging claims and recoveries experiences as well as benefit changes effective January 1, 2024.

NOTE 11 - CONTINGENCIES

Grants - The School received financial assistance from federal and state agencies in the form of grants. Amounts received from grantor agencies are subject to audit and adjustment by the grantor. Any disallowed costs may require refunding to the grantor. Amounts which may be disallowed, if any, are not presently determinable. However, in the opinion of the School, any such adjustments will not have a material adverse effect on the financial position of the School.

Litigation - There are currently no matters in litigation with the School as defendant.

NOTE 12 - SPONSOR AND MANAGEMENT CONTRACTS

Sponsor - The School contracted with St. Aloysius Orphanage as its sponsor and oversight services as required by law effective July 1, 2022 for a three year agreement. Sponsorship fees are calculated as a three percent of state funds received by the School from the State of Ohio. For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024, the total sponsorship fees paid totaled \$52,258.

Management Company - The School entered into an agreement with Ohio Guidestone, a local nonprofit management company, to provide legal, financial, and other management support services for fiscal year 2012. The agreement was for a period of five years beginning July 1, 2012. The agreement renewed for an additional one-year period ending on June 30, 2019 and renewed for an additional year through 2020. The Management fee is ten percent of state aid. In June 2020, the School and Ohio Guidestone agreed to a five year management agreement beginning July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2025. The management fee will be 10 percent of state and federal foundation funding. At June 30, 2024 the School had outstanding payables to the management company of \$209,667 and paid \$195,032 in management fees during the year.

NOTE 13 - PURCHASED SERVICES

For the period of July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024, the School made the following purchased services expenses.

<u>Purchased Services</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Salaries and Benefits	\$1,518,363
Facility Costs	221,712
Professional Fees	438,660
Marketing	6,325
Insurance	21,209
Office Expenses	149,310
Student Support	182,691
Total	<u><u>\$2,538,270</u></u>

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO**NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024****NOTE 14 – MANAGEMENT COMPANY EXPENSES**

As of June 30, 2024 (the most recent available), Guidestone and its affiliates incurred the following expenses on behalf of the School:

Stepstone Academy	Regular Instruction (1100 Function codes)	Special Instruction (1200 Function codes)	Support Services (2000 Function Codes)	Non-Instructional (3000 through 7000 Function Codes)	Total
<i>Direct expenses:</i>					
Salaries & wages (100 object codes)	\$ 1,014,934	\$ 113,393	\$ 174,586	\$ -	\$ 1,302,913
Employees' benefits (200 object codes)	51,036	14,359	29,250	-	94,645
Professional & technical services (410 object codes)	19,299	-	422,081	-	441,380
Property services (420 object codes)	-	-	157,587	-	157,587
Utilities (450 object codes)	-	-	61,405	-	61,405
Contracted craft or trade services (460 object codes)	-	-	32,560	179,850	212,410
Supplies (500 object codes)	76,396	-	26,921	-	103,317
Other direct costs (All other object codes)	2,840	-	40,967	368,453	412,260
Overhead	-	-	417,888	-	417,888
Total expenses	\$ 1,164,505	\$ 127,752	\$ 1,363,245	\$ 548,303	\$ 3,203,805

Guidestone allocates indirect cost (overhead) based on a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement based on 20% of base expenditures as defined in the agreement. These charges represent the indirect cost of services provided in the operation of the School. Such services include, but are not limited to facilities management, equipment, operational support services, management and management consulting, board relations, human resources management, training and orientation, financial reporting and compliance, purchasing and procurement, education services, technology support, marketing and communications.

NOTE 15 - FISCAL DISTRESS

The School has significant liabilities at June 30, 2024 which has resulted in a deficit net position of (\$1,534,877). Overcoming this deficit may be difficult without significant increases to revenues in order to reduce outstanding liabilities and cover ongoing operating costs. During the fiscal year, cash balances decreased from operations, in addition as of December 2024 enrollment has increased to 190 students.

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

Required Supplementary Information
Schedule of the School's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability
School Employees Retirement System of Ohio
Last Ten Fiscal Years

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
School's Proportion of the Net Pension Liability	0.0053549%	0.0037896%	0.0036154%	0.0054340%	0.0060459%	0.0076075%	0.0079896%	0.0088949%	0.005624%	0.005732%
School's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability	\$ 295,885	\$ 204,970	\$ 133,398	\$ 359,178	\$ 361,737	\$ 435,695	\$ 477,361	\$ 651,025	\$ 320,888	\$ 290,093
School's Covered Payroll	\$ 212,443	\$ 141,564	\$ 124,793	\$ 190,379	\$ 207,407	\$ 274,237	\$ 238,464	\$ 369,621	\$ 169,302	\$ 166,566
School's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability as a Percentage of its Covered Payroll	139.28%	144.79%	106.90%	188.67%	174.41%	158.88%	200.18%	176.13%	189.54%	174.16%
Plan Fiduciary Net Position as a Percentage of the Total Pension Liability	76.06%	75.82%	82.86%	68.55%	70.85%	71.36%	69.50%	62.98%	69.16%	71.70%

Amounts presented as of the School's measurement date
which is the prior fiscal period end.

See accompanying notes to the required supplementary information

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

Required Supplementary Information
Schedule of the School's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability
State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio
Last Ten Fiscal Years

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
School's Proportion of the Net Pension Liability	0.00605008%	0.00666446%	0.00606835%	0.00533271%	0.00532713%	0.01298366%	0.01386411%	0.01209857%	0.01103313%	0.00787955%
School's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability	\$ 1,302,882	\$ 1,481,517	\$ 775,893	\$ 1,290,011	\$ 1,178,062	\$ 2,854,816	\$ 3,293,450	\$ 4,049,756	\$ 3,049,234	\$ 1,916,579
School's Covered Payroll	\$ 817,171	\$ 866,414	\$ 748,793	\$ 643,414	\$ 625,429	\$ 1,476,021	\$ 1,524,186	\$ 1,237,836	\$ 1,151,121	\$ 867,000
School's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability as a Percentage of its Covered Payroll	159.44%	170.99%	103.62%	200.49%	188.36%	193.41%	216.08%	327.16%	264.89%	221.06%
Plan Fiduciary Net Position as a Percentage of the Total Pension Liability	80.02%	78.90%	87.80%	75.50%	77.40%	77.31%	75.29%	66.80%	72.10%	74.70%

Amounts presented as of the School's measurement date
which is the prior fiscal period end.

See accompanying notes to the required supplementary information

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

Required Supplementary Information
Schedule of School Contributions - Pension
School Employees Retirement System of Ohio
Last Ten Fiscal Years

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Contractually Required Contribution	\$ 27,693	\$ 29,742	\$ 19,819	\$ 17,471	\$ 26,653	\$ 28,000	\$ 37,022	\$ 33,385	\$ 51,747	\$ 22,314
Contributions in Relation to the Contractually Required Contribution	<u>(27,693)</u>	<u>(29,742)</u>	<u>(19,819)</u>	<u>(17,471)</u>	<u>(26,653)</u>	<u>(28,000)</u>	<u>(37,022)</u>	<u>(33,385)</u>	<u>(51,747)</u>	<u>(22,314)</u>
Contribution Deficiency (Excess)	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
School Covered Payroll	\$ 197,807	\$ 212,443	\$ 141,564	\$ 124,793	\$ 190,379	\$ 207,407	\$ 274,237	\$ 238,464	\$ 369,621	\$ 169,302
Contributions as a Percentage of Covered Payroll	14.00%	14.00%	14.00%	14.00%	14.00%	13.50%	13.50%	14.00%	14.00%	13.18%

See accompanying notes to the required supplementary information

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

Required Supplementary Information
Schedule of School Contributions - Pension
State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio
Last Ten Fiscal Years

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Contractually Required Contribution	\$ 124,302	\$ 114,404	\$ 121,298	\$ 104,831	\$ 90,078	\$ 87,560	\$ 206,643	\$ 213,386	\$ 173,297	\$ 161,157
Contributions in Relation to the Contractually Required Contribution	<u>(124,302)</u>	<u>(114,404)</u>	<u>(121,298)</u>	<u>(104,831)</u>	<u>(90,078)</u>	<u>(87,560)</u>	<u>(206,643)</u>	<u>(213,386)</u>	<u>(173,297)</u>	<u>(161,157)</u>
Contribution Deficiency (Excess)	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
School Covered Payroll	\$ 887,871	\$ 817,171	\$ 866,414	\$ 748,793	\$ 643,414	\$ 625,429	\$ 1,476,021	\$ 1,524,186	\$ 1,237,836	\$ 1,151,121
Contributions as a Percentage of Covered Payroll	14.00%	14.00%	14.00%	14.00%	14.00%	14.00%	14.00%	14.00%	14.00%	14.00%

See accompanying notes to the required supplementary information

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

Required Supplementary Information Schedule of the School's Proportionate Share of the Net OPEB Liability School Employees Retirement System of Ohio Last Eight Fiscal Years (1)

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
School's Proportion of the Net OPEB Liability	0.0054043%	0.0038646%	0.0035569%	0.0051733%	0.0057233%	0.0075547%	0.0081407%	0.0090334%
School's Proportionate Share of the Net OPEB Liability	\$ 89,033	\$ 54,259	\$ 67,317	\$ 112,432	\$ 143,929	\$ 209,588	\$ 218,474	\$ 257,485
School's Covered Payroll	\$ 212,443	\$ 141,564	\$ 124,793	\$ 190,379	\$ 207,407	\$ 274,237	\$ 238,464	\$ 369,621
School's Proportionate Share of the Net OPEB Liability as a Percentage of its Covered Payroll	41.91%	38.33%	53.94%	59.06%	69.39%	76.43%	91.62%	69.66%
Plan Fiduciary Net Position as a Percentage of the Total OPEB Liability	30.02%	30.34%	24.08%	18.17%	15.57%	13.57%	12.46%	11.49%

(1) Information prior to 2017 is not available. Schedule is intended to show ten years of information, and additional information will be displayed as it becomes available.

Amounts presented as of the School's measurement date, which is the prior fiscal year end.

See accompanying notes to the required supplementary information

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

Required Supplementary Information
Schedule of the School's Proportionate Share of the Net OPEB Liability/(Asset)
State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio
Last Eight Fiscal Years (1)

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
School's Proportion of the Net OPEB Liability/Asset	0.00605008%	0.00666446%	0.00606835%	0.00533141%	0.00532713%	0.01298366%	0.01386411%	0.01209857%
School's Proportionate Share of the Net OPEB Liability/(Asset)	\$ (117,666)	\$ (172,566)	\$ (127,945)	\$ (93,699)	\$ (88,230)	\$ (208,634)	\$ 540,926	\$ 647,035
School's Covered Payroll	\$ 817,171	\$ 866,414	\$ 748,793	\$ 643,414	\$ 625,429	\$ 1,476,021	\$ 1,524,186	\$ 1,237,836
School's Proportionate Share of the Net OPEB Liability/Asset as a Percentage of its Covered Payroll	-14.40%	-19.92%	-17.09%	-14.56%	-14.11%	-14.13%	35.49%	52.27%
Plan Fiduciary Net Position as a Percentage of the Total OPEB Liability/Asset	168.52%	174.73%	174.73%	182.13%	174.74%	176.00%	47.11%	37.30%

(1) Information prior to 2017 is not available. Schedule is intended to show ten years of information, and additional information will be displayed as it becomes available.

Amounts presented as of the School's measurement date, which is the prior fiscal year end.

See accompanying notes to the required supplementary information

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

Required Supplementary Information
Schedule of School Contributions - OPEB
School Employees Retirement System of Ohio
Last Ten Fiscal Years

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Contractually Required Contribution (1)	\$ 2,528	\$ 3,379	\$ 2,471	\$ 1,496	\$ 1,139	\$ 2,316	\$ 4,728	\$ 5,293	\$ 4,654	\$ 1,388
Contributions in Relation to the Contractually Required Contribution	<u>(2,528)</u>	<u>(3,379)</u>	<u>(2,471)</u>	<u>(1,496)</u>	<u>(1,139)</u>	<u>(2,316)</u>	<u>(4,728)</u>	<u>(5,293)</u>	<u>(4,654)</u>	<u>(1,388)</u>
Contribution Deficiency (Excess)	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
School Covered Payroll	\$ 197,807	\$ 212,443	\$ 141,564	\$ 124,793	\$ 190,379	\$ 207,407	\$ 274,237	\$ 238,464	\$ 369,621	\$ 166,566
OPEB Contributions as a Percentage of Covered Payroll (1)	1.28%	1.59%	1.75%	1.20%	0.60%	1.12%	1.72%	2.22%	1.26%	0.83%

(1) Includes Surcharge

See accompanying notes to the required supplementary information

STEPSTONE ACADEMY - CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO

Required Supplementary Information
Schedule of School Contributions - OPEB
State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio
Last Ten Fiscal Years

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Contractually Required Contribution	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Contributions in Relation to the Contractually Required Contribution	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Contribution Deficiency (Excess)	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
School Covered Payroll	\$ 887,871	\$ 817,171	\$ 866,414	\$ 748,793	\$ 643,414	\$ 625,429	\$ 1,476,021	\$ 1,524,186	\$ 1,237,836	\$ 1,151,121
Contributions as a Percentage of Covered Payroll	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

See accompanying notes to the required supplementary information

**STEPSTONE ACADEMY
CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO
NOTES TO THE REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024**

NOTE 1 - NET PENSION LIABILITY

There were no changes in assumptions or benefit terms for the fiscal years reported unless otherwise stated below:

Changes in Assumptions - SERS

Amounts reported in 2022 incorporate changes in assumptions used by SERS in calculating the total pension liability in the latest actuarial valuation. These assumptions compared with those used in prior years are presented as follows:

	<u>Fiscal Year 2022</u>	<u>Fiscal Years 2021-2017</u>	<u>Fiscal Years 2016 and Prior</u>
Wage Inflation	2.40%	3.00%	3.25%
Future Salary Increases, including inflation	3.25% to 13.58%	3.50% to 18.20%	4.00% to 22.00%
Investment Rate of Return	7.00% net of system expenses	7.50% net of investment expenses, including inflation	7.75% net of investment expenses, including inflation

Beginning in 2022, amounts reported use mortality rates based on the PUB-2010 General Employee Amount Weighted Below Median Healthy Retiree mortality table projected to 2017 with ages set forward 1 year and adjusted 94.20 percent for males and set forward 2 years and adjusted 81.35 percent for females. Mortality among disabled members were based upon the PUB-2010 General Disabled Retiree mortality table projected to 2017 with ages set forward 5 years and adjusted 103.3 percent for males and set forward 3 years and adjusted 106.8 percent for females. Future improvement in mortality rates is reflected by applying the MP2020 projection scale generationally.

Beginning in fiscal year 2018, on each anniversary of the initial retirement, the allowance of all retirees and survivors may be increased by the annual rate of increase in the CPI-W measured as of the June preceding the beginning of the applicable calendar year. The annual rate of increase shall not be less than 0 percent nor greater than 2.5 percent.

Amounts report for 2017 through 2021 use mortality rates that are based on the RP-2014 Blue Collar Mortality Table with fully generational projection and a five-year age set-back for both males and females. Amounts reported for fiscal year 2016 and prior, use mortality assumptions that are based on the 1994 Group Annuity Mortality Table set back one year for both men and women. Special mortality tables were used for the period after disability retirement.

Changes in Benefit Terms - SERS

For fiscal year 2022, COLA were increased from 2.00 percent to 2.50 percent.

For fiscal year 2021, COLA were reduced from 2.50 percent to 2.00 percent.

For fiscal year 2018, the cost-of-living adjustment was changed from a fixed 3.00 percent to a cost-of-living adjustment that is indexed to CPI-W not greater than 2.50 percent with a floor of zero percent

**STEPSTONE ACADEMY
CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO
NOTES TO THE REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024**

beginning January 1, 2018. In addition, with the authority granted the Board under HB 49, the Board has enacted a three-year COLA suspension for benefit recipients in calendar years 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Changes in Assumptions – STRS

Beginning with fiscal year 2022, amounts reported incorporate changes in assumptions and changes in benefit terms used by STRS in calculating the total pension liability in the latest actuarial valuation. These new assumptions compared with those used in fiscal years 2018-2021 and fiscal year 2017 and prior are presented as follows:

	<u>Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023</u>	<u>Fiscal Years 2021-2018</u>	<u>Fiscal Years 2017 and Prior</u>
Inflation	2.50%	2.50%	2.75%
Projected Salary Increases	From 2.50% to 12.50% based on age	From 12.50% at age 20 to 2.50% at age 65	From 12.25% at age 20 to 2.75% at age 70
Investment Rate of Return, net of investment expenses, including inflation	7.00%	7.45%	7.75%
Payroll Increases	3.00%	3.00%	3.50%

Beginning with fiscal year 2022, post-retirement mortality rates are based on the Pub-2010 Teachers Healthy Annuitant Mortality Table, adjusted 110 percent for males, projected forward generationally using mortality improvement scale MP-2020. Pre-retirement mortality rates are based on Pub-2010 Teachers Employee Table adjusted 95 percent for females, projected forward generationally using mortality improvement scale MP-2020. Post-retirement disabled mortality rates are based on Pub-2010 Teachers Disabled Annuitant Table projected forward generationally using mortality improvement scale MP-2020.

Beginning with fiscal year 2018, post-retirement mortality rates for healthy retirees were based on the RP2014 Annuitant Mortality Table with 50 percent of rates through age 69, 70 percent of rates between ages 70 and 79, 90 percent of rates between ages 80 and 84, and 100 percent of rates thereafter, projected forward generationally using mortality improvement scale MP-2016. Post-retirement disabled mortality rates are based on the RP-2014 Disabled Mortality Table with 90 percent of rates for males and 100 percent of rates for females, projected forward generationally using mortality improvement scale MP-2016. Pre-retirement mortality rates are based on RP-2014 Employee Mortality Table, projected forward generationally using mortality improvement scale MP-2016.

For fiscal year 2017 and prior actuarial valuation, mortality rates were based on the RP-2000 Combined Mortality Table (Projection 2022—Scale AA) for Males and Females. Males' ages are set-back two years through age 89 and no set back for age 90 and above. Females younger than age 80 are set back four years, one year set back from age 80 through 89, and no set back from age 90 and above.

Changes in Benefit Terms - STRS

For fiscal year 2023, the Board approved a one-time 3 percent COLA effective on the anniversary of a benefit recipient's retirement date for those eligible during fiscal year 2023 and eliminated the age 60 requirement to receive unreduced retirement that was scheduled to go into effect August 1, 2026.

**STEPSTONE ACADEMY
CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO
NOTES TO THE REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024**

For fiscal year 2018, the COLA was reduced to zero.

Fiscal year 2017 and prior, COLA was 2 percent simple applied as follows: for members retiring before August 1, 2013, 2 percent per year; for members retiring August 1, 2013 or later, 2 percent COLA commences on fifth anniversary of retirement date.

NOTE 2 - NET OPEB LIABILITY (ASSET)

Changes in Assumptions – SERS

Amounts reported incorporate changes in assumptions and changes in benefit terms used by SERS in calculating the total OPEB liability in the latest actuarial valuation. These new assumptions compared with those used in fiscal year 2021 and prior are presented below:

	<u>Fiscal Years 2023 and 2022</u>	<u>Fiscal Years 2021-2017</u>
Inflation	2.40%	3.00%
Future Salary Increases, including inflation	3.25% to 13.58%	3.50% to 18.20%
Investment Rate of Return, net of investment expenses, including inflation	7.00%	7.50%

Amounts reported incorporate changes in key methods and assumptions used in calculating the total OPEB liability as presented as follows:

	<u>Fiscal Year</u>							
<u>Assumption</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>
Municipal Bond Index Rate	3.86%	3.69%	1.92%	2.45%	3.13%	3.62%	3.56%	2.92%
Single Equivalent Interest Rate, net of plan investment expense, including price inflation	4.27%	4.08%	2.27%	2.63%	3.22%	3.70%	3.63%	2.98%

Changes in Assumptions – STRS

For fiscal year 2023, the projected salary increases were changed from age based (2.5 percent to 12.50 percent) to service based (2.5 percent to 8.5 percent).

For fiscal year 2022, the discount rate was decreased from 7.45 percent to the long-term expected rate of return of 7.00.

For fiscal year 2019, the discount rate was increased from the blended rate of 4.13 percent to the long-term expected rate of return of 7.45.

For fiscal year 2018, the blended discount rate was increased from 3.26 percent to 4.13 percent. Valuation year per capita health care costs were updated, and the salary scale was modified. The percentage of future retirees electing each option was updated based on current data and the percentage of future

**STEPSTONE ACADEMY
CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO
NOTES TO THE REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024**

disabled retirees and terminated vested participants electing health coverage were decreased. The assumed mortality, disability, retirement, withdrawal and future health care cost trend rates were modified along with the portion of rebated prescription drug costs.

Changes in Benefit Terms – STRS

Effective January 1, 2024, Healthcare trends were updated to reflect emerging claims and recoveries experience as well as benefit changes.

For fiscal year 2023, health care trends were updated to reflect emerging claims and recoveries experience.

For fiscal year 2022, there was no change to the claims costs process. Claim curves were updated to reflect the projected fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, premium based on June 30, 2021, enrollment distribution. The non-Medicare subsidy percentage was increased effective January 1, 2022, from 2.055 percent to 2.1 percent per year of service. The non-Medicare frozen subsidy base premium was increased effective January 1, 2022. The Medicare Part D Subsidy was updated to reflect it is expected to be negative in calendar year 2022. The Part B monthly reimbursement elimination date was postponed indefinitely.

For fiscal year 2021, there were no changes to the claims costs process. Claim curves were updated to reflect the projected fiscal year 2021 premium based on June 30, 2020 enrollment distribution. The non-Medicare subsidy percentage was increased effective January 1, 2021 from 1.984 percent to 2.055 percent per year of service. The non-Medicare frozen subsidy base premium was increased effective January 1, 2021. The Medicare subsidy percentages were adjusted effective January 1, 2021 to .1 percent for the AMA Medicare plan. The Medicare Part B monthly reimbursement elimination date was postponed indefinitely.

For fiscal year 2020, there was no change to the claims costs process. Claim curves were trended to the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020 to reflect the current price renewals. The non-Medicare subsidy percentage was increased effective January 1, 2020 from 1.944 percent to 1.984 percent per year of service. The non-Medicare frozen subsidy base premium was increased effective January 1, 2020. The Medicare subsidy percentages were adjusted effective January 1, 2021 to 2.1 percent for the Medicare plan. The Medicare Part B monthly reimbursement elimination date was postponed to January 1, 2021.

For fiscal year 2019, the subsidy multiplier for non-Medicare benefit recipients was increased from 1.9 percent to 1.944 percent per year of service effective January 1, 2019. The non-Medicare frozen subsidy base premium was increased effective January 1, 2019 and all remaining Medicare Part B premium reimbursements will be discontinued beginning January 1, 2020.

For fiscal year 2018, the subsidy multiplier for non-Medicare benefit recipients was reduced from 2.1 percent to 1.9 percent per year of service. Medicare Part B premium reimbursements were discontinued for certain survivors and beneficiaries and all remaining Medicare Part B premium reimbursements will be discontinued beginning January 2019. This was subsequently extended, see above paragraph.

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER
FINANCIAL REPORTING AND ON COMPLIANCE AND OTHER MATTERS
BASED ON AN AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS PERFORMED
IN ACCORDANCE WITH *GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS***

To the Board of Directors
Stepstone Academy
2121 East 32nd Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44115

We have audited, in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States (*Government Auditing Standards*), the financial statements of Stepstone Academy, Cuyahoga County, Ohio (the "School"), as of and for the year ended June 30, 2024, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the School's basic financial statements, and have issued our report thereon dated December 30, 2024, in which we noted the Academy has recurring losses from operations and a net position deficit that raise substantial doubt about its ability to continue as a going concern.

Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered the School's internal control over financial reporting (internal control) as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the School's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the School's internal control.

A *deficiency in internal control* exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements on a timely basis. A *material weakness* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. A *significant deficiency* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. Given these limitations, during our audit we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses. However, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified.

Report on Compliance and Other Matters

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the School's financial statements are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the School's internal control or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the School's internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose.

Rea & Associates, Inc.

Rea & Associates, Inc.
Medina, Ohio
December 30, 2024

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON COMPLIANCE FOR EACH MAJOR FEDERAL
PROGRAM AND REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER COMPLIANCE
REQUIRED BY THE UNIFORM GUIDANCE**

To the Board of Directors
Stepstone Academy
2121 East 32nd Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44115

Report on Compliance for Each Major Federal Program

Opinion on Each Major Federal Program

We have audited the Stepstone Academy's, Cuyahoga County, Ohio (the "School") compliance with the types of compliance requirements identified as subject to audit in the OMB *Compliance Supplement* that could have a direct and material effect on each of the School's major federal programs for the year ended June 30, 2024. The School's major federal programs are identified in the summary of auditor's results section of the accompanying schedule of findings and questioned costs.

In our opinion, the School complied, in all material respects, with the compliance requirements referred to above that could have a direct and material effect on each of its major federal programs for the year ended June 30, 2024.

Basis for Opinion on Each Major Federal Program

We conducted our audit of compliance in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS); the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States (*Government Auditing Standards*); and the audit requirements of Title 2 U.S. *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance). Our responsibilities under those standards and the Uniform Guidance are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of Compliance section of our report.

We are required to be independent of the School and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion on compliance for each major federal program. Our audit does not provide a legal determination of the School's compliance with the compliance requirements referred to above.

Responsibilities of Management for Compliance

Management is responsible for compliance with the requirements referred to above and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of effective internal control over compliance with the requirements of laws, statutes, regulations, rules and provisions of contracts or grant agreements applicable to the School's federal programs.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of Compliance

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether material noncompliance with the compliance requirements referred to above occurred, whether due to fraud or error, and express an opinion on the School's compliance based on our audit. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS, *Government Auditing Standards*, and the Uniform Guidance will always detect material noncompliance when it exists. The risk of not detecting material noncompliance resulting from fraud is higher than for that resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Noncompliance with the compliance requirements referred to above is considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, it would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user of the report on compliance about the School's compliance with the requirements of each major federal program as a whole.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, *Government Auditing Standards*, and the Uniform Guidance, we

- exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- identify and assess the risks of material noncompliance, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the School's compliance with the compliance requirements referred to above and performing such other procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.
- obtain an understanding of the School's internal control over compliance relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances and to test and report on internal control over compliance in accordance with the Uniform Guidance, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the School's internal control over compliance. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and any significant deficiencies and material weaknesses in internal control over compliance that we identified during the audit.

Other Matters

The results of our auditing procedures disclosed instances of noncompliance which are required to be reported in accordance with the Uniform Guidance and which are described in the accompanying schedule of findings and questioned costs as item 2024-001. Our opinion on each major federal program is not modified with respect to this matter.

Government Auditing Standards requires the auditor to perform limited procedures on the School's response to the noncompliance findings identified in our compliance audit described in the accompanying schedule of findings and questioned costs. The School's response was not subjected to the other auditing procedures applied in the audit of compliance and, accordingly, we express no opinion on the response.

Report on Internal Control over Compliance

Our consideration of internal control over compliance was for the limited purpose described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of Compliance section above and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control over compliance that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in internal control over compliance and therefore, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified. We did not identify any deficiencies in internal control over compliance that we consider to be material weaknesses. However, as discussed below, we did identify certain deficiencies in internal control over compliance that we consider to be significant deficiencies.

A deficiency in internal control over compliance exists when the design or operation of a control over compliance does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, noncompliance with a type of compliance requirement of a federal program on a timely basis. *A material weakness in internal control over compliance* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control over compliance, such that there is a reasonable possibility that material noncompliance with a type of compliance requirement of a federal program will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. *A significant deficiency in internal control over compliance* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control over compliance with a type of compliance requirement of a federal program that is less severe than a material weakness in internal control over compliance, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance. We consider the deficiency in internal control over compliance described in the accompanying schedule of findings and questioned costs as item 2024-001 to be a significant deficiency.

Our audit was not designed for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control over compliance. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.

Government Auditing Standards requires the auditor to perform limited procedures on the School's response to the internal control over compliance findings identified in our compliance audit described in the accompanying schedule of findings and questioned costs. The School's response was not subjected to the other auditing procedures applied in the audit of compliance and, accordingly, we express no opinion on the response.

The purpose of this report on internal control over compliance is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over compliance and the results of that testing based on the requirements of the Uniform Guidance. Accordingly, this report is not suitable for any other purpose.

Rea & Associates, Inc.

Rea & Associates, Inc.
Medina, Ohio
December 30, 2024

**STEPSTONE ACADEMY
CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO
SCHEDULE OF EXPENDITURES OF FEDERAL AWARDS
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024**

Federal Grantor/ Pass-Through Grantor/ Program Title	Assistance Listing Number	Grant Year	Expenses	Total Provided to Subrecipients
U. S. Department of Education				
<i>Passed Through Ohio Department of Education and Workforce:</i>				
Title I	84.010A	2024	\$ 208,384	\$ -
Title I - Expanding Opportunities for Each Child	84.010A	2024	48,068	-
Title I - School Quality Improvement	84.010A	2024	64,884	-
<i>Total Title I</i>			321,336	-
<i>Special Education Cluster:</i>				
IDEA Part B - Special Education	84.027A	2024	63,253	-
IDEA Part B - Early Childhood Special Education	84.173A	2024	1,717	-
<i>Total Special Education Cluster</i>			64,970	-
Title IV-A Student Support and Academic Enrichment	84.424A	2024	19,299	-
COVID-19: ARP Education Stabilization Fund	84.425U	2024	946,149	-
Title II-A Improving Teacher Quality	84.367A	2024	26,096	-
<i>Total U.S. Department of Education</i>			1,377,850	-
U. S. Department of the Treasury				
<i>Passed Through the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission:</i>				
COVID-19: State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (School Safety Grants)	21.027	2024	41,162	-
<i>Total U.S. Department of the Treasury</i>			41,162	-
U. S. Department of Agriculture				
<i>Passed Through the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce:</i>				
<i>Child Nutrition Cluster:</i>				
<i>Cash Assistance:</i>				
School Breakfast Program	10.553	2024	54,344	-
COVID-19 National School Lunch Program	10.555	2024	10,027	-
National School Lunch Program	10.555	2024	115,480	-
<i>Total Child Nutrition Cluster</i>			179,851	-
<i>Total U.S. Department of Agriculture</i>			179,851	-
TOTAL FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE			<u>\$ 1,598,863</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this schedule.

**STEPSTONE ACADEMY
CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO
NOTES TO THE SCHEDULE OF EXPENDITURES OF FEDERAL AWARDS
2 CFR 200.510(B)(6)
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2024**

NOTE A - BASIS OF PRESENTATION

The accompanying Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards (the Schedule) includes the federal award activity of Stepstone Academy, Cuyahoga County, Ohio (the School) under programs of the federal government for the year ended June 30, 2024. The information on this Schedule is prepared in accordance with the requirements of Title 2 U.S. Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance). Because the Schedule presents only a selected portion of the operations of the School, it is not intended to and does not present the financial position, changes in net position, or cash flows of the School.

NOTE B - SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Expenditures reported on the Schedule are reported on the accrual basis of accounting. Such expenditures are recognized following the cost principles contained in the Uniform Guidance, wherein certain types of expenditures may or may not be allowable or may be limited as to reimbursement. The School has elected not to use the 10-percent de minimus indirect cost rate as allowed under the Uniform Guidance.

NOTE C - CHILD NUTRITION CLUSTER

The School commingles cash receipts from the U.S. Department of Agriculture with similar State Grants. When reporting expenditures on this Schedule, the School assumes it expends federal monies first.

NOTE D - TRANSFERS

The School generally must spend Federal assistance within 15 months of receipt. However, with Ohio Department of Education and Workforce(ODE) approval, an School can transfer (carryover) unspent Federal assistance to the succeeding year, thus allowing the School a total of 27 months to spend the assistance. During fiscal year 2024, the ODE authorized the following transfers:

AL Number / Grant Title	Grant Year	Transfer Out	Transfer In
84.027A IDEA Part B	2023	\$ 10,172	
84.027A IDEA Part B	2024		\$ 10,172
84.367A Title II-A Improving Teacher Quality	2023	6,387	
84.367A Title II-A Improving Teacher Quality	2024		6,387
84.173A IDEA Part B - Early Childhood Special Education	2023	1,613	
84.173A IDEA Part B - Early Childhood Special Education	2024		1,613
		<u>\$ 18,172</u>	<u>\$ 18,172</u>

**STEPSTONE ACADEMY
CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO
SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND QUESTIONED COSTS
2 CFR §200.515
JUNE 30, 2024**

1. SUMMARY OF AUDITOR'S RESULTS

(d) (1) (i)	Type of Financial Statement Opinion	Unmodified
(d) (1) (ii)	Were there any material weaknesses in internal control reported at the financial statement level (GAGAS)?	No
(d) (1) (ii)	Were there any significant deficiencies in internal control reported at the financial statement level (GAGAS)?	None Reported
(d) (1) (iii)	Was there any reported material noncompliance at the financial statement level (GAGAS)?	No
(d) (1) (iv)	Were there any material weaknesses in internal control reported for major federal programs?	No
(d) (1) (iv)	Were there any significant deficiencies in internal control reported for major federal programs?	Yes
(d) (1) (v)	Type of Major Programs' Compliance Opinion	Unmodified
(d) (1) (vi)	Are there any reportable findings under 2 CFR § 200.516(a)?	Yes
(d) (1) (vii)	Major Programs (list): COVID-19: American Rescue Plan Education Stabilization Fund	ALN # 84.425U
(d) (1) (viii)	Dollar Threshold: Type A/B Programs	Type A: > \$750,000 Type B: All others
(d) (1) (ix)	Low Risk Auditee under 2 CFR §200.520?	No

**2. FINDINGS RELATED TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
REQUIRED TO BE REPORTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GAGAS**

None were noted.

**STEPSTONE ACADEMY
CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO
SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND QUESTIONED COSTS
2 CFR §200.515
JUNE 30, 2024
(Continued)**

3. FINDINGS AND QUESTIONED COSTS FOR FEDERAL AWARDS
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Finding Number: 2024-001

Federal Program: COVID-19 ARP – Education Stabilization Fund

Federal Award Identification Number and Year: N/A

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): 84.425U

Federal Awarding Agency: U.S. Department of Education

Compliance Requirement: Special Tests and Provisions – Wage Rate Requirements

Pass-through Entity: Ohio Department of Education and Workforce

Repeat Finding: No

Significant Deficiency and Material Noncompliance – Wage Rate Requirements

Criteria: All prime construction contracts in excess of \$2,000 awarded by non-Federal entities must include a provision for compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. 3141-3144, and 3146-3148) as supplemented by Department of Labor regulations (29 CFR Part 5, “Labor Standards Provisions Applicable to Contracts Covering Federally Financed and Assisted Construction”). In accordance with the statute, contractors must be required to pay wages to laborers and mechanics at a rate not less than the prevailing wages specified in a wage determination made by the Secretary of Labor.

In addition, contractors must be required to pay wages not less than once a week. The non-Federal entity must place a copy of the current prevailing wage determination issued by the Department of Labor in each solicitation. The decision to award a contract or subcontract must be conditioned upon the acceptance of the wage determination. (2 CFR 200 Appendix II (d)).

Condition: There was no documentation to support compliance with wage rate requirements or documentation showing that the Academy required contractors to comply with prevailing wage requirements for any of the construction work. Total costs for various building improvements, renovations & repairs were \$102,681 during fiscal year 2024.

Questioned Costs: None.

Identification of How Questioned Costs Were Computed: N/A

Context: The Academy provided assurances to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce's Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP) that it would comply with wage rate requirements when it communicated its plan to use federal ESSER funds for improvements to its building.

Cause and Effect: The Academy did not comply with the special test of wage rate requirements on the various renovation, repair and improvement projects to its building that were funded with federal grants.

**STEPSTONE ACADEMY
CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO
SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND QUESTIONED COSTS
2 CFR §200.515
JUNE 30, 2024
(Continued)**

Recommendation: The Academy should implement processes to review federal grant compliance requirements and implement procedures to help ensure the Academy complies with applicable requirements.

Views of Responsible Officials and Corrective Action Plan: See Corrective Action Plan.



**STEPSTONE ACADEMY
CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO
CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN
2 CFR §200.511 (C)
JUNE 30, 2024**

Finding Number: 2024-001: ARP Education Stabilization Fund – Wage Rate Requirements

Planned Corrective Action: Summary of corrective action to be taken

Anticipated Completion Date: December 31, 2024

Responsible Contact Person: Dave Massa, Treasurer

As recommended, the Academy will perform existing controls and establish new controls to ensure that contractors and subcontractors are in compliance with all labor standards by conducting on-site inspections and collecting the required certified payroll documentation in a timely manner. Specifically, the Academy will add an Affidavit of Compliance Form to the contracts that will be required to be submitted by the grantee before closing. A project will not be considered closed until the Academy has received an executed copy of the form. Upon notification of construction commencement, the Academy will immediately begin monitoring for Wage Rate Requirements in the form of both on-site inspections and review and approval of certified payroll reports.

OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE KEITH FABER



STEPSTONE ACADEMY

CUYAHOGA COUNTY

AUDITOR OF STATE OF OHIO CERTIFICATION

This is a true and correct copy of the report, which is required to be filed pursuant to Section 117.26, Revised Code, and which is filed in the Office of the Ohio Auditor of State in Columbus, Ohio.



Certified for Release 3/25/2025

65 East State Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: 614-466-4514 or 800-282-0370

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at
www.ohioauditor.gov