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# Tax breaks cost schools \$84M

CCS board has OK'd budget cuts of more than \$50M

**Cole Behrens**  
Columbus Dispatch  
USA TODAY NETWORK

A day after Columbus City Schools cut over \$50 million from its budget to manage a deficit, the Franklin County auditor released a report showing the district lost over \$84 million this year because of tax breaks given to developments.

According to Franklin County's Tax Incentive Review Council Report for 2025, CCS did not receive more than

\$84 million this year, due to tax abatements at the local and state levels.

On Dec. 2, the CCS board voted to make sweeping cuts to district employees and programs, close four buildings and remove transportation to around 2,000 students.

The district faces strong financial headwinds. According to financial projections, the district was on track to run out of money by fiscal year 2029 before the board voted on cuts. Presently, the district has more than \$300 million in reserve cash. The cuts come amid a va-

riety of pressures on the district, including less-than-expected funding from the state, federal funding uncertainty and inflation.

John Coneglio, president of the Columbus Education Association, which represents teachers and other educational staff, said that the city was "prioritizing developers and corporations over students in Columbus."

"Budgets are a show of your priorities," Coneglio said. "And they've shown that they would rather help out the wealthy. There's money for them, not money for kids."

Coneglio said that amid the district

financial crisis and a lack of funding from the state, the district "needs every penny possible."

"This is the future of Columbus and we want to be able to offer them a world class education," Coneglio said. "They're not prioritizing the schools, and you reap what you sow."

In a statement, the Columbus Department of Development spokesperson said that the city's abatement program has "safeguards in place to protect the schools" because CCS continues to receive the taxable value of the property

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Amya Frazier, 11, poses for a photo with a snowman. She was fatally shot by her 14-year-old cousin on Dec. 5.

PROVIDED BY AMY ZAHrani

# 'My niece got killed right there in my front room'

Man admits he left gun used in shooting unattended

**Bailey Gallion**  
Columbus Dispatch  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The father of a 14-year-old boy arrested in the accidental shooting death of an 11-year-old relative told the Dispatch he left the gun out and is prepared to face the consequences.

Amya Frazier died at Nationwide Children's Hospital Dec. 8, days after the Dec. 5 fatal shooting at a home on the 200 block of S. Wheatland Avenue. Columbus police responded to a shooting there at 6:26 p.m.

Columbus police took the teen boy

into custody the evening of Dec. 10. He is charged with reckless homicide, Columbus police said. Officials have not said whether anyone else will face charges.

Hours before his son's arrest, Matthew Seymour spoke with the Dispatch. He said that at about 3 a.m. the morning prior to the shooting, his dogs were barking and running from window to window. He got his gun from the safe, thinking someone might be outside, he said.

"Like a dumbass, instead of putting it back in my lockbox, I set it on top of my

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**"The only thing that matters to me is that (Amya's mother) knows that it was truly an accident. There's nothing that me nor my son can do to make this go away. Her baby's life got taken away from her."**

**Matthew Seymour**  
Father of 14-year-old who was arrested

# City alters policy on fire truck U-turns

**Jordan Laird**  
Columbus Dispatch  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Columbus Public Safety Director Kate Pishotti directed Columbus Fire Chief Jeffrey Happ to change Division of Fire policy at the same time the city announced Happ would face discipline over how he handled a deadly 2023 fire engine collision.

Pischotti issued the memo on Dec. 8 and directed Happ to ban non-emergency U-turns by fire apparatus and curtail the powers of the Fleet Accident Review Committee.

The policy changes come more than two years after firefighter Tyler Conners, then 25 and driving a fire engine, attempted to make a U-turn in an emergency vehicle turnaround without flashing lights on. He was driving on Interstate 270 in Gahanna and still

**See FIRE TRUCKS, Page 4A**

# Health care costs to rise for millions

**Zachary Schermele**  
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – The Senate on Dec. 11 rejected advancing a bill to prevent health care premiums from spiking in 2026 for millions of federal health care enrollees.

The failed vote leaves lawmakers virtually no time before their holiday break to soften the approaching financial blow for many Americans. Federal subsidies relied on by millions who have health insurance plans through the Affordable Care Act exchange will expire come January. In many cases, people's premiums will double or even triple.

**See HEALTH CARE, Page 7A**

