

In its 2024 ±2025 budget calendar, the Board scheduled presentations of the First Reading of the budget for April 23, 2024, and the Second & Final Reading for May 28, 2024. A budget hearing is scheduled during the May 14, 2024, Board meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION:

The First Reading of the 6 X S H U L Q W r b O e H Q G t f s V presented for Board discussion and consideration. Many estimates are based on the House Senate version of the 2024 ±2025 general appropriations bill, the most up-to-date information available from the SC Department of Education. Key components of the General Fund budget include:

- step increase for all eligible employees,
- a teacher scale COLA with teacher cell amounts varying by degree: \$3,250 for Bachelors, \$2,500 for Bachelors + 18, \$2,250 for Masters, \$2,000 for Masters + 30, and \$1,750 for Doctorate. Teacher-like positions COLA is based on the Masters amount in proportion to 190 days for the full amount,
- bus driver pay scale increases in accordance with State requirements for 2024 ±2025,
- State health and retirement increases,
- increased utilities budgets for energy, water, and sewer,
- increased budget for school resource officers,
- increased budget for custodial supplies,
- budget increase for the new website,
- absorption of CERDEP and literacy/instructional coach funding shortfalls,
- the shift of 9 ESSER-funded positions,
- funding for the SOAR program,
- increased debt service related to the ABM project,
- funds to hire an in-house attorney,
- the shift of Areas 1 and 3 lawn maintenance from a contracted service to newly-employed lawn crew in the maintenance department,
- no COLA for non-teachers at this time,
- no bonus to offset the lack of a non-teacher COLA (an option shared during the work study) at this time,
- no funding for 2024 ±2025 intersession at this time,
- no additional step on the teacher scale at this time,

- many school/department/program budget requests are unfulfilled at this time,
- increased State revenue for State Aid to Classrooms, Retiree Insurance, and Tier 3/Act 388, and
- increased property tax revenue results from growth only with no tax increase.

[NOTE: The employment of athletic trainers was included in the draft budget shared during the April 16, 2024, work study with a companion agenda item recommending the creation of those positions. Because the Board did not approve the recommendation and voted to defer a decision pending additional information, I pulled the employment of athletic trainers from the First Reading of the budget. Those can be easily added back to the budget if the decision is made to create and employ.]

The proposed budget totals \$260,769,930. Budgets for the Special Revenue Fund, EIA Fund, Debt Service Fund, and Capital Projects Fund are also presented for Board review.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the First Reading of the 2024 ±2025 budget with any changes resulting from Board discussion.

ATTACHMENT S:

1. 2024 ±2025 Budget ±First Reading (summary)
2. 2024 ±2025 General Fund Expenditures Budget ±by object ±First Reading
3. 2024 ±2025 General Fund Revenue ±First Reading
4. Staffing formulas

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Note: Upon discussion, the Board gave First Reading approval to a one-time bonus for non-teachers, due to the lack of a COLA. Bonus equals \$1000 for employees paid < \$50,000, 2% for employees paid > \$50,000.