

## **BOARD AGENDA ITEM**

**April 22, 2025**

### ***SUBJECT:***

2025 – 2026 Budget – First Reading

### ***BACKGROUND INFORMATION:***

In its 2025 – 2026 budget calendar, the Board scheduled presentations of the First Reading of the budget for April 22, 2025, and the Second & Final Reading for May 27, 2025. A budget hearing is scheduled during the May 13, 2025, Board meeting.

### ***ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION:***

The First Reading of the Superintendent's proposed budget is presented for Board discussion and consideration. Many estimates are based on the House version of the 2025 – 2026 general appropriations bill, the most up-to-date information available from the SC Department of Education. Key components of the General Fund budget proposal include:

- a \$2,500 increase per cell on the teacher pay scale, plus a step,
- the implementation of the salary study proposal at 90%,
- funding a second assistant principal at elementary schools of 500 or more students,
- funding teacher positions at the middle school level to implement expanded learning in an effort to improve math and ELA performance,
- State health premium increases of 4.6%, effective January 1, 2026,
- increased utilities budgets for water, and sewer,
- absorption of CERDEP and literacy/instructional coach State funding shortfalls,
- increased debt service related to the ABM project,
- funding for eight additional MLL teachers,
- a cost-neutral, technology department proposal adding one security administrator and two network administrators, reclassifying 12 computer technician positions to technology specialist, modifications of two coordinators to director level, all in exchange for a reduction in the department's contracted services budget,
- shifting appropriately credentialed athletic directors to a school administrator role, thus eliminating the athletic director supplements at that school,
- modifying three special education coordinator positions to director level,
- hiring and staffing six licensed social workers at high schools (excluding Aiken Scholars) with RSM High and Wagener Salley High sharing staffing,
- funding a webmaster/videographer position for the communications department,
- funding a CTE proposal that would modify the current ACCTC principal/director to CTE executive director, fund a CTE coordinator, and fund a director position while eliminating an assistant principal and a 205-day counselor,

- hiring an additional plumber, HVAC technician, refrigeration technician (funded by the child nutrition program), and modifying one foreman position to supervisor and one manager to coordinator,
- hiring a human resources director,
- hiring a fourth CNP field supervisor (funded by the child nutrition program),
- increasing student information clerks/attendance clerks by five days, from 200 days to 205 days,
- increasing pay for athletics supplements by 10%,
- creating one varsity assistant supplement each for baseball, boys & girls basketball, and softball teams,
- funding athletic supplements for boys & girls lacrosse at Aiken High,
- increasing pay for extracurricular supplements and other supplements/stipends by 3%,
- funding 2025 – 2026 intersession from fund balance with plans to evaluate whether to establish recurring funding in 2026 – 2027,
- increasing State revenue budgets for State Aid to Classrooms, Health Insurance Retiree Insurance, and Tier 3/Act 388,
- increasing local revenue budgets for property tax (through a proposed 20.0 mill tax increase), payments/fees in lieu of tax, and investment earnings, and
- increasing budgets for transfers from other funds reflecting a combination of 2024 – 2025 EIA State Aid to Classrooms carryover and a portion of 2025 – 2026 EIA State Aid to Classrooms.

The proposed budget totals \$289,967,861. 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 2025 – 2026 budget with any changes resulting from Board discussion.

***ATTACHMENTS:***

1. 2025 – 2026 Budget – First Reading (summary)
2. 2025 – 2026 General Fund Expenditures Budget – by object – First Reading
3. 2025 – 2026 General Fund Revenue – First Reading
4. Staffing formulas

***PREPARED BY:***

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