

Media Release

100 Tarrar Springs Road • P.O. Box 1869 • Lexington, SC 29071-1869 • www.Lexington1.net
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MEDIA CONTACT

Mary Beth Hill, Chief Communications Officer
Telephone (803) 821-1152; Mobile (803) 609-1955

NEWS RELEASE — FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, June 22, 2021

Lexington District One approves 2021–2022 budget

LEXINGTON, S.C. — On Tuesday, June 22, 2021, after a public hearing and meeting of the Lexington County School District One Board of Trustees, the board approved a 2021–2022 general fund operating budget of \$304,035,616.

The estimated \$304,035,616 general fund operating budget for 2021–2022 represents about a 2.25% and \$6,702,363 increase over last year’s \$297,333,253 general fund operating budget.

It consists of about 88.30% salaries and related costs, 7.11% for programs and services, and 4.59% for utilities and maintenance.

The district anticipates a 2% student increase of 515 students, 73.27 certified and licensed professional FTE, and 10.0 support and administrator additions.

The state allows districts to increase millage by the Act 388 formula (the percent of the growth in school district population and the CPI). However, at the third reading, Lexington District One administrators currently recommend a budget that includes no mill increase.

The district’s 2021–2022 general fund operating budget is supported, in part, by revenue generated from school operating millage (shown on tax bills as “School 1 Operation”). However, homeowners do not pay taxes for school operating millage on their homes due to a law called Act 388, passed in 2006.

Act 388 eliminated school operations property taxes in their entirety for all owner-occupied residential property. Since then, revenue from one cent of the sales tax reimburses school districts for the remaining property tax relief (shown on tax bills as “School Tax Credit”).

In this budget, the district does not request an increase in operating millage for fiscal year 2021–2022. Therefore, the operating millage will remain at 308.86 mills and bring in an estimated \$93,400,000.

(MORE)

The district also does not request an increase in debt service millage (shown on tax bills as “School 1 Bonds”). Debt service millage will remain 90.00 mills. Because of the one-cent sales tax generated by the Lexington County School District Property Tax Relief Act, a portion of that 90 mills for school bonds is also offset by a tax credit, meaning that no Lexington District One taxpayer pays the entire 90 mills. For instance, a Lexington District One resident with an owner-occupied home valued at \$100,000 will pay about \$216 a year in school taxes on that home after applying the tax credit.

The 2021–2022 general fund operating budget prioritizes the retaining and recruitment of employees by:

- state-mandated employer health and retirement increases (about \$2.6 million).
- funding to meet state and federal requirements.
- providing a step increase for all employees (about \$3.7 million).
- providing a \$1,000 salary increase per step for salaried employees. (The Senate version of the Appropriations Bill only includes the increase for teachers and certain other employees. The district decided to give it to all employees.)
- increasing bus driver pay by 5% in addition to the \$1 per hour increase presented in the first reading of the budget.
- increasing support staff pay by \$1 per hour. (A \$1 per hour x 6 hours x 180 days would be a \$1,080 increase.)
- increasing the years of experience steps on all salary schedules to 40 years.
- modifying all salary schedules by providing a retention incentive every five years by providing pay at an additional step one year earlier. For instance, once an employee reaches five years of experience, that employee would receive year six pay both in the fifth and sixth years.
- paying new teachers with less than three years of experience step two salary on the teacher salary schedule until they acquire three years of experience.
- aligning the salary schedules for nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, career specialists, and board-certified behavior analysts to recognize their educational degrees.
- increasing substitute pay.

The proposed general fund budget also continues these recruitment and retention strategies:

- funds a local national board stipend of \$3,000 regardless of whether the teacher receives the state-funded \$5,000 stipend currently in the Senate version of the Appropriations Bill.
- provides opportunities for reduced-cost graduate-level courses.
- provides professional texts for graduate courses at no cost.
- pays (in whole or part) for a variety of other professional development opportunities.
- provides opportunities for teachers to earn additional pay for curriculum writing and working summer instructional camps and after-school programs.
- provides stipends/supplements for department heads, lead teachers, club and yearbook sponsors, athletics coaching, etc.