

The first reading of the General Fund Budget for the upcoming 2023–24 Fiscal Year was presented by CFO Jennifer Miller at the April 25, 2023 board meeting.

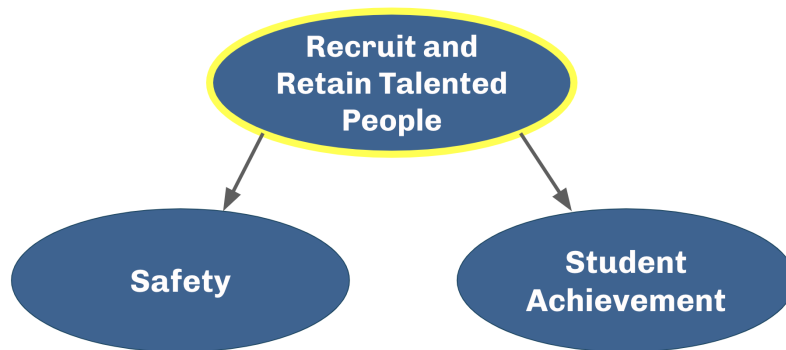
Leading up to this important step in the budget process, the Board of Trustees and district administrators spent months developing a budget plan. This included two budget workshops, one in January and one in March.

Before the board takes a vote on the budget, a second reading will take place at the board meeting on May 16, 2023. The third reading and public hearing will take place at the meeting on June 13, 2023.

Here are three important highlights from the budget based on the first reading.

Top Priorities guiding budgetary decisions:

Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Priorities



Lexington One district leaders identified three critical priorities for guiding the development of the proposed 2023–24 General Fund budget. At the top of our list is employee recruitment and retention. The other two priorities, safety and student achievement, hinge on our ability to retain the talented employees we have and recruit new employees to fill vacant positions.

Funding these priorities continues to be a challenge in the face of unprecedented inflation and employee shortages. However, our Board of Trustees and district leaders are determined to send a strong message of support to our employees by including step increases (year of service) in addition to salary increases in the proposed budget.

Draft salary schedule for certified staff available

Historically, salary schedules for the new fiscal year are not published until the Lexington One board approves a budget in June after the S.C. General

Assembly passes the state budget. So in April when school districts are required to issue contracts, they don't have final figures on state revenue or salary mandates. It also means that teachers have to make decisions about their contracts before this information is available, as they have to accept contracts before May 11 according to state law. A bill is currently being considered by the state legislature that would address this misalignment between two very important processes for teachers and public school districts.

While this bill is not yet law, Lexington One administrators recognize the concerns teachers may have regarding signing a contract without having some idea of what their salary will be for the coming school year.

Lexington One Board of Trustees supported the request from district administrators to share a [draft 2023–24 salary schedule](#) for certified teachers after the first reading of the budget. The vice chair of the board expressed the support of the Board following a brief executive session during which the board received information on specific personnel matters related to salaries.

When asked about the importance of providing salary increases to teachers by the Lexington County Chronicle, Dr. Gerritta Postlewait said, "The leadership of Lexington One is committed to doing all we can to elevate our teachers so that they know and others affirm the critical importance they play in the future of our district, state and country."

While there is still work to do on the budget and the salary schedule posted is a draft, the Board and district leaders hope this unprecedented action demonstrates a strong commitment to our teachers.

Based on projected figures available at the time of First Reading, new expenditures that the district must budget for in the coming year outpace the projected revenue from the state and other sources. The graphic below illustrates the challenges the Board and district face as a result of record level of inflation, changes in the state funding formula, and a looming ESSER funding cliff.

