

## School board OKs \$163M budget

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### Content

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The Lancaster County School Board officially approved the district's \$163 million budget for fiscal year 2023-24 at its June 13 meeting.

No changes were made since the first reading, and the second reading passed unanimously. Board member Melvin Stroble was absent for the vote.

This year's \$163,274,426 budget will not raise tax millage, which District Chief Financial Officer Jatana Norris said was the most important factor during its creation.

The largest expense for the district is salaries and employee benefits, which make up 85% of the budget, which is the norm.

The new budget is 11.4% more than last year's budget.

Teachers are getting a 9% step increase, and starting salaries for teachers are increasing from \$42,940 to \$45,940. The new starting salary is 8.1% above the state minimum.

Bus drivers are also seeing a salary increase to \$17.13 an hour, due to a 25% increase by state mandate.

"We're already probably the tightest budget we've been in quite a while, with the greatest increase in salaries that we have had, without a millage increase," said Superintendent Dr. Jonathan Phipps at the July 11 board meeting.

With Lancaster County undergoing extreme growth, the district and board agreed that prioritizing recruitment and retention for new and existing staff was necessary to manage growth adequately.