

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

Huggins recommends weighted student funding model, increased pay for employees, cuts to administration

Office of Communications

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Funding model that targets student groups would be first of its kind in SC

Charleston, SC - Charleston County School District (CCSD) Superintendent of Schools Anita Huggins and district staff members presented a new budget model designed to provide more resources to schools. Huggins also proposed an increase in pay for teachers and all staff while making cuts to the district administration and non-school-based administrative costs for the Fiscal Year 2025 budget. The budget proposal was presented to the CCSD Board of Trustees Monday afternoon.

The groundbreaking model described below establishes a new weighted student-based funding formula rooted in the belief that CCSD *must* provide schools and their students with the fiscal support necessary to ensure all students in CCSD read on grade level in the 5th grade, that middle school students are Algebra I ready and successful, and that all students exit its system college/career ready. It is grounded in the principle that CCSD must responsibly resource schools to allow for school autonomy coupled with accountability for positive student outcomes.

The proposals included a weighted student-based funding (WSF) model to provide additional resources in all schools. Huggins' budget also proposed an increase in pay for employees throughout the CCSD and recommended \$8 million in budget cuts to non-school-based administrative positions and costs.

Weighted student-based funding model

Huggins and district staff members are asking the Board of Trustees to consider a WSF model that would provide more support to schools in order to sustain [the positive momentum related to student outcomes](#) in CCSD. The formula would be determined by the number of pupils in poverty, students receiving special education services, and multilingual learners. The desired impact of this formula would allow the district to maintain effective

programs and positions previously funded by ESSER, to increase support for all students, and to increase school autonomy.

The initial projected increase to the district's General Operating Fund for FY 2025, related to ESSER sustainability and WSF considerations, is \$30.2 million, only 12% of the nearly \$250 million dollars received through ESSER.

"I believe this funding model will be a game-changer for student outcomes in CCSD," Huggins explained. "I am excited to work alongside our Board members to resource schools differently, in outside-of-the-box ways, empowering principals and teachers to believe they can make the most difference for our diverse groups of students. A focus on children and their needs will be paramount as we collaborate not only around the FY25 budget but also around a three-year sustainable budget model."

Increased pay for CCSD staff

The presentation to the Board of Trustees included increases in the district's teacher salary schedule based on the possible increments listed below up to 40 years of experience (known as a STEP), as well as a STEP increase for teachers, cost of living adjustments for non-teachers, and step increases for non-teachers as outlined below.

The following three increases to the teacher salary schedule, which now goes to Step 40, were provided to the Board for consideration:

- \$5,000 plus fringe benefits (would cost \$24.1 million) - would increase beginning teacher pay to \$53,146.60.
- \$4,500 plus fringe benefits (would cost \$21.7 million) - would increase beginning teacher pay to \$52,646.60.
- \$2,500 plus fringe benefits (would cost \$12.05 million) - would increase beginning teacher pay to \$50,646.60.

The information also included the following proposals to raise pay for non-teachers in the district, ranging from cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) to Step increases:

- 5.0 percent COLA (would cost \$10.45 million)
- 4.0 percent COLA (would cost \$8.3 million)
- 3.0 percent COLA (would cost \$6.3 million)
- 1.9 percent COLA (would cost \$2.7 million)
- Increasing the salary schedule to Step 32 (would cost \$727K)
- Increasing the salary schedule to Step 33 (would cost \$1.5 million)
- Upgrades for school-based classified positions (would cost \$5 million)

"The requests we are making, coupled with financial projections, are preliminary," added Huggins. "Numbers are a starting point in a continuous conversation with our Board, our staff, and the public we serve. We want to be transparent

throughout the budget cycle, so sharing these early numbers is critical for taxpayer transparency and to the budget process.”

The Board will continue to receive updates, recommendations, and presentations through the spring, including Board Workshops on April 15 and May 13 and the first reading of the FY 2025 budget on May 20.

The discussion about the budget, including the proposals for the WSF and teacher salary increases, starts at the [1:42 mark of the meeting video](#) on the CCSD YouTube channel.

For additional information, contact the Office of Communications at (843) 937-6303.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 50,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military.