

LANCASTER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Building Lancaster's Future Together

A Strategic Conversation with Our Community

The Challenge We Face Together

Lancaster is one of the fastest-growing communities in South Carolina — but the tools we have to fund our schools have not kept pace.



Growing Enrollment

More students arrive each year, requiring more classrooms, teachers, and services to maintain quality.



Limited Revenue Tools

State law and a local cap on annual millage increases (Bill 4148, 1997) restrict how much local revenue the district can raise.



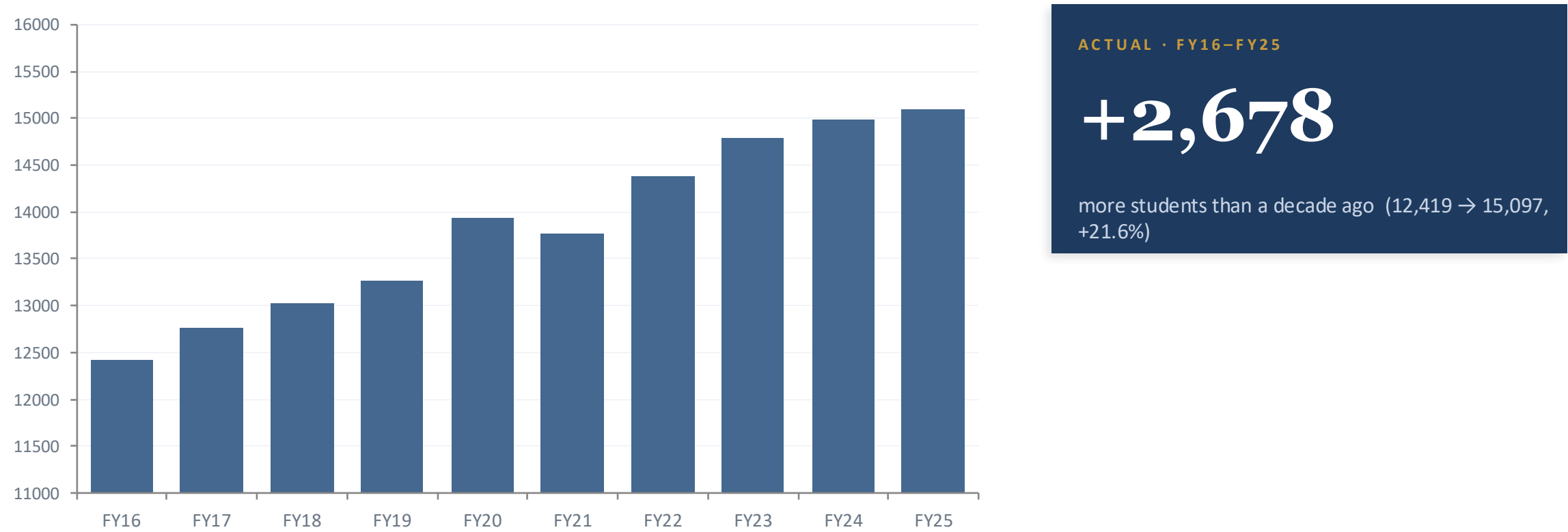
Staying Competitive

We must offer competitive pay to recruit and keep great teachers as neighboring districts compete for the same talent.

WHY NOW

Student Enrollment Is Growing

Enrollment has climbed steadily for a decade — the foundation for every staffing and facility decision ahead.



WHY NOW

Enrollment & Staffing

As enrollment grew, the district added staff to keep pace — and class ratios actually improved. Sustaining that as costs rise is the budget challenge.

STUDENTS

+21.6%

Enrollment growth, FY16–FY25 (12,419 → 15,097)

This information is based on all educators who are paid on a teacher salary schedule but may not have a traditional caseload (School Counselors, Interventionists, Media Specialists, Instructional Coaches). It also includes staffing for two schools Van Wyck Elementary (2018) and Indian Land High School (2021) and increases in bus drivers, technology and maintenance crew.

Teaching positions rose from 806 to 1,148 as enrollment grew. The broader district headcount includes every classification — aides, bus drivers, cafeteria, and support — so for staffing we compare teachers to students, not total FTE. The budget question is keeping instructional staffing competitive and adequate as growth and costs continue.

What This Budget Does



Maintains Our Programs

Keeps current academic programs, services, and class offerings intact for students across the district.



Invests in Our People

Funds step increases and a proposed [\$1,000] salary increase to keep pay competitive.



Absorbs Rising Costs

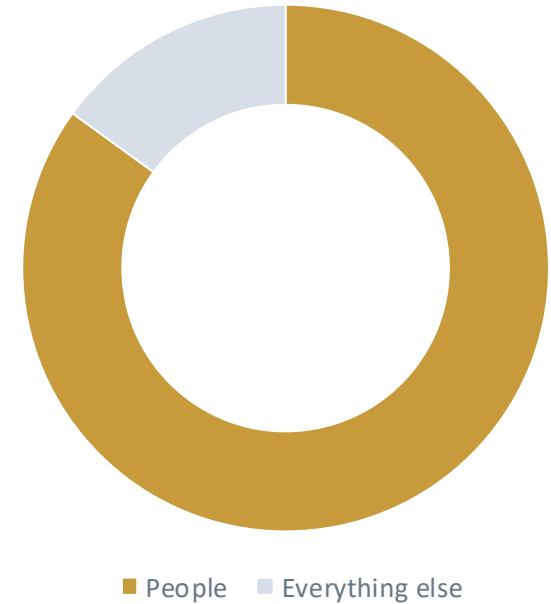
Covers inflation in operations — insurance, utilities, fuel, and contracted services — without cutting the classroom.

Where the Money Goes

The simplest way to understand our budget:

85¢

of every dollar we spend goes to the **people who serve students**
— teachers, aides, bus drivers, counselors, and support staff.



Cost-Saving Measures Already in Place

Before asking for support, the district has already taken concrete steps to stretch every dollar.



Energy management & efficiency upgrades



Transportation route optimization



Refinanced / restructured debt



Strategic position & vacancy management



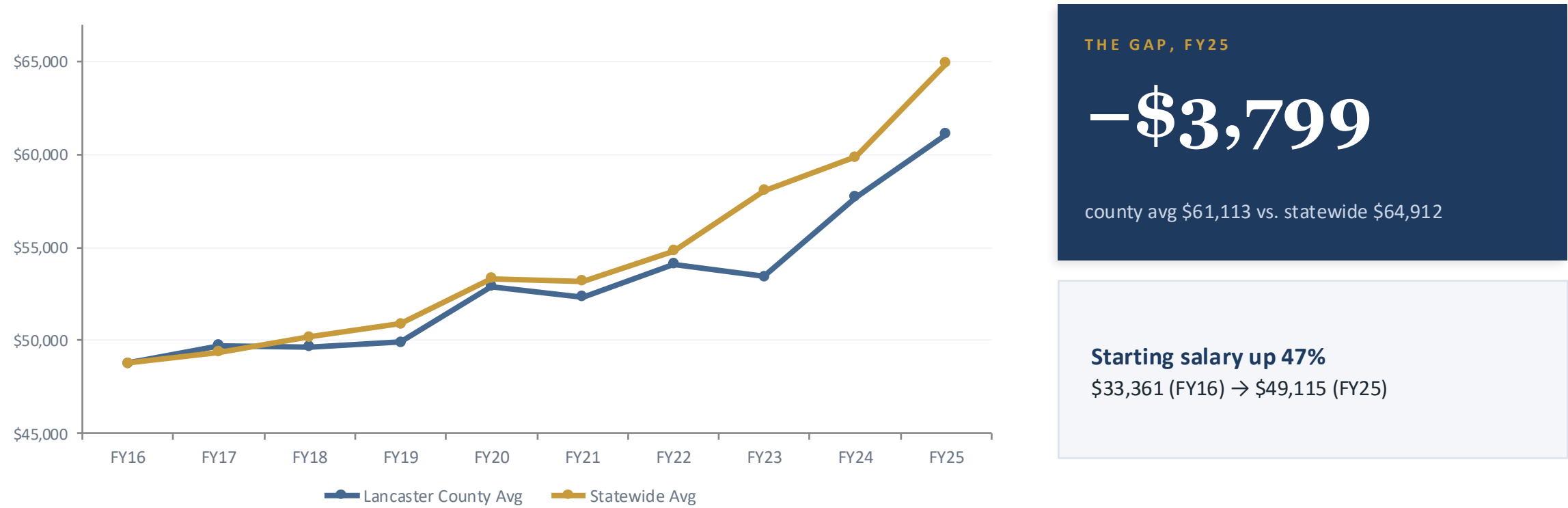
Competitive contracting of services



Technology refresh on a managed cycle

Improving Compensation for Teachers

Lancaster has raised teacher pay every year — but it has slipped below the statewide average, which is exactly the competitive gap this budget addresses.



Source: ACFR Table 17, FY2025. FY26–FY27 increases (incl. proposed \$1,000) to be confirmed with HR/Finance.

Understanding the Millage Cap

South Carolina law limits how much the district can raise local operating revenue each year. The allowable increase is often less than what growth and inflation actually require.

Allowed under the formula (RFA)	[10.4] mills
Annual cap on the increase (Bill 4148, 1997)	5 mills

Under Bill 4148 (enacted June 11, 1997), the district may raise operating millage by no more than 5 mills per year.


~\$1.8M
in local revenue the cap leaves on the table each year

OPERATING MILLAGE			
FY16	FY25	FY26	FY27
149.5	171.0	176.0	181.0
			<i>FY27 proposed</i>

About Rezoning



There are no proposed changes to attendance lines.

Rezoning is not on the table in this budget.

Carefully Considered

We evaluated a range of capacity strategies, including boundary adjustments. That option carried impacts and concerns for students and families that were not optimal.

A Better Path Forward

Future capacity needs will be addressed deliberately through a Capacity Review Committee for each school — planning ahead rather than reacting.

Planning for Future Growth

Our growth planning is grounded in independent analysis and a structured, transparent process.



TischlerBise Study

An independent demographic and facilities study guides our understanding of where and how the district is growing.



Capacity Review Committees

A committee is reviewing school capacity in alignment with the study's recommendations — with a Capacity Review Committee proposed for each school.



Deliberate, Not Reactive

Decisions about facilities and capacity will follow data and community input, on a planned timeline.

What We Need From the Board



1

Adopt the FY2027 budget

Approve a budget that maintains programs and invests in the people who serve students.

2

Support the proposed millage

Endorse the millage needed to fund the budget within what state law allows.

3

Back the advocacy effort

Support engaging legislators on the statutory cap and on growth-funding tools like impact fees.

What We Need From the Community



1

Understand the challenge

Know that growth, state limits, and competition for teachers are real pressures on our schools.

2

Engage with us

Attend the public hearing, ask questions, and share input through the planning process.

3

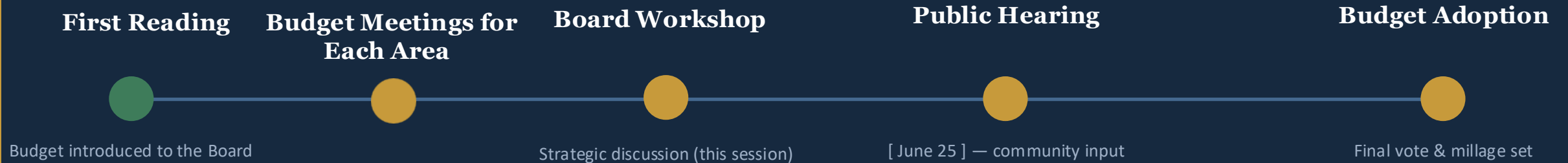
Add your voice on the cap

Help us tell legislators that growing districts need the tools to keep up with growth.

THE PATH FORWARD

Working Together

Strong schools are built by a board, a district, and a community moving in the same direction. Here is how we get there — and when.



Our shared goal: Quality programs for our students, competitive pay for our employees, and a transparent plan for the growth ahead.