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Nebraska Budget Bill Advances

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) - Nebraska lawmakers have given initial approval to an \$8.6 billion budget, with new spending for property tax reductions, education and a controversial dental-school project in Omaha.

The first-round vote Thursday on this year's budget bills came after lawmakers learned that they will likely have more money at their disposal than expected.

The two-year budget would increase annual state spending by an average of 3.1 percent. That's one of the lowest rates in three decades, but the percentage could increase if other spending bills pass.

Lawmakers gave the main budget bill first-round approval on Thursday but continued to debate individual spending items into the evening.

Associate Press