



NEWS RELEASE

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Public hearings scheduled on millage rate adoption— Rate to decrease slightly, however, tax increase announced due to increased revenue

As required by law, the Gwinnett County Board of Education (GCBOE) will hold three public hearings as part of its process for setting the millage rate. The first hearing will be held on July 9 at 7 p.m. The second and third public hearings will take place on July 16 at 11:45 a.m. and 7 p.m. All of the public hearings are scheduled to take place in the Board Room at the J. Alvin Wilbanks Instructional Support Center, located at 437 Old Peachtree Road NW in Suwanee.

The school system's Fiscal Year 2019 (FY2019) budget was adopted May 17, 2018. In setting the millage rate to support the FY2019 budget, the School Board is looking to slightly lower the current total school millage rate of 21.85 to 21.75.

The budget provides resources—both financial and human—to help the school system accommodate its growing student population. Gwinnett County Public Schools' enrollment is expected to grow by over 1,000 students, bringing the total projected enrollment for next school year to more than 180,300 students.

Total state revenue in FY2019 will increase due to student growth, increases in teacher benefit costs, and the elimination of the QBE austerity funding reductions. These reductions to the QBE earnings formula were in place from 2003 through the current 2018 budget and totaled just under \$900 million for Gwinnett County Public Schools.

Local revenue also is budgeted to increase due to a projected net growth of 3.1% in the property tax digest. With the projected increase, the school district's tax digest, net of motor vehicles, is projected to slightly increase over that of FY2009.

All of the additional state and local revenue projected for FY2019 is needed to fund the projected student enrollment growth, provide a salary increase for teachers and other school system employees, and pay for the increased employee benefit costs. All employees will see a 2.25% cost-of-living increase and, for those eligible, a salary-step increase.

In order to keep the local tax digest current, the Gwinnett County Tax Assessor's Office conducts annual property value updates (reassessments) on a rotating basis. By state law, local taxing authorities, such as GCBOE, must either keep their tax collections

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revenue-neutral (by decreasing the millage rate to offset the gained taxes from the property value updates) or announce a tax increase (even though the actual millage rate is not increasing). The Board is considering adopting a combined millage rate of 21.75, slightly lower than last year's rate due to a .10 decrease in the debt service millage. The slightly lower total millage will still generate more revenue for FY2019, requiring the announcement of a proposed property tax increase. However, taxpayers whose property values have not increased due to reassessment will see a slight reduction in their school tax bill.

The total school millage rate is made up of two portions—the maintenance and operations (M&O) millage and the debt-service millage. Funds generated by the M&O millage pay for the day-to-day operations of the school system, including employee salaries, instructional materials, student transportation, and school utility costs. The debt-service millage is used to pay down the School Board's long-term debt from bond referenda passed over the years to pay for school construction.

The M&O millage is recommended to remain at 19.80 mills and the debt-service rate is recommended to be lowered from 2.05 mills to 1.95. This will result in a total recommended millage rate of 21.75 mills.

Citizens may address the Gwinnett County Board of Education at any of the three public hearings. A sign-up sheet will be available at the hearings for those wishing to speak. There is no need to sign up in advance of the meeting date.

A copy of the adopted budget is available for public review on the school system's website at www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us or through the school system's Budget Department. For information, call 678-301-6200.

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