# Proposed Budget Includes 2% Raise + Step Increases for Employees

CCSD will continue to offer one of the most competitive compensation packages among Georgia school districts for FY2018. In addition to increasing the starting teacher salary to $42,500 (up from $42,250), a longevity step increase and a 2% cost of living raise will be implemented for all eligible employees— both certified and classified.

As projected shortages in the teaching profession become reality for many school districts, the competition for quality teachers will continue to escalate, especially in the Metro Atlanta area. Attracting and retaining the best employees is a top priority for the Cherokee County Board of Education.

"Providing a competitive benefits package is critical to our success," said Dr. Brian V. Hightower, Superintendent of Schools.

The proposed FY2018 budget will mark the 9th consecutive year that CCSD has implemented step increases and/or raises for all eligible employees. The State allocated funds for the 2% raise on the base compensation for teachers, but CCSD will spend an additional $1.2 Million to match the local supplement so eligible employees will receive a true 2% raise on total salary. This year marks the first time since 2009 that the State had increased the Georgia Teacher Salary Schedule.

**A HISTORY: CCSD RECENT RAISES**

| Year | Furlough Days | Step Raise | Raise |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2009-10 | 5 days | yes | 0% |
| 2010-11 | 4 days | yes | 0% |
| 2011-12 | 4 days | yes | 0% |
| 2012-13 | 8 days | Mid-Year | 0% |
| 2013-14 | 3 days | yes | 0% |
| 2014-15 | 0 days | yes | 1% |
| 2015-16 | 0 days | yes | 0% |
| 2016-17 | 0 days | yes | 1% |
| 2017-18 | 0 days | yes | 2% |

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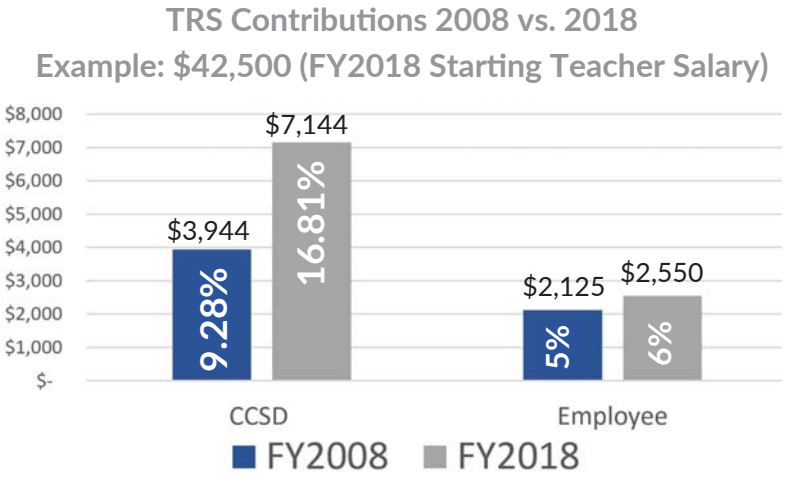
>
> — *Dr. Brian V. Hightower*
> *Superintendent of Schools*

# School Districts Facing Hike in TRS Contributions for 2017-18




CCSD payments to the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) will jump from 14.27% to 16.81% (of employee compensation) for FY2018. The contribution rate has risen steadily over the last 10 years; it was 9.28% in 2009. The increase in TRS contributions next year will have a net effect of $1.1 Million on the CCSD budget and will be paid from local funds.

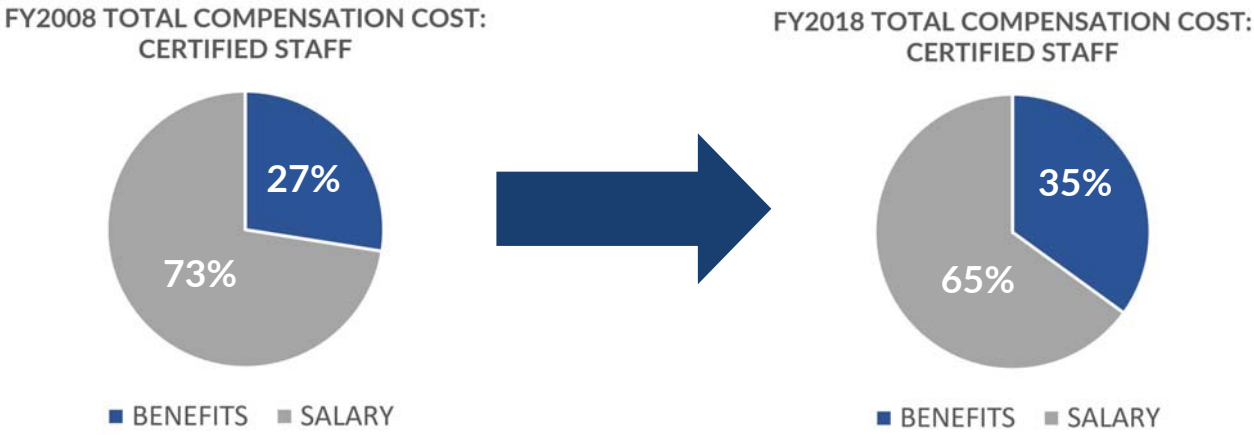
Employees will continue to pay 6% as their personal contribution, which is set by state statute. The State last raised the employee contribution in 2009, when it increased from 5% to 6%.

# Employee Benefit Costs Continue to Escalate For School Districts

The State is continuing to pass along rising healthcare costs associated with the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP), with CCSD facing an increase of $920,000 in employee premiums for non-certified staff in FY2018, which follows a $720,000 increase last year.

The proposed FY2018 budget includes $28.6 Million for insurance premiums for certified employees and $12.4 Million to cover non-certified employees. These amounts are in addition to the substantial premiums that employees pay out of pocket as their share of the SHBP.




# Budget Increases Security at Schools, Adds Cost-Saving Bus Option

CCSD will continue to focus on student security and well-being through expansion of building security measures in FY2018. In addition, a new prototype bus for preschool students with special needs will be added to the transportation fleet as a cost-saving measure.

School access security continues to be expanded on elementary and middle school campuses to include card-swipe access for employees at key areas near playgrounds and mobile classroom entryways. Front hallway security foyers will be added at six additional schools this year and has become a feature in new school construction (such as Dean Rusk Middle School).

For School Year 2017-18, the CCSD Transportation Department will purchase a smaller, more maneuverable "Type A" school bus to be used specifically in the Special Education Preschool program, which serves children as young as age 3 who have been identified for early intervention services. The Type A buses offer a lower cost of ownership when compared to the "Type C" school buses currently used to transport preschool students. A fully equipped Type C Specialized Bus is $97,717 per bus, while a fully equipped Type A Specialized Preschool bus will cost CCSD $60,449 per bus, a savings of $37,268 per bus. Currently, CCSD operates 56 Type C Specialized buses for the general Special Education Program; seven of the Type A buses will be purchased in the proposed FY2018 budget, freeing up seven existing Type C buses for general Special Ed use.

The total savings of $224,876 will allow for the additional purchase of much needed regular education buses, thereby improving the overall bus fleet.