



Press Release

Media Contact:

Yolanda Robinson

Public & Community Relations

229.903.2276

robinsonyo@lee.k12.ga.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, January 1, 2025

INTENT TO OPT OUT OF HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION

Leesburg, GA -- The Lee County Board of Education intends to opt out of the statewide adjusted base year ad valorem homestead exemption for Lee County School District. All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearing on this matter to be held at the Lee County Board of Education Office, 126 Starksville Avenue North, Leesburg, Georgia on Monday, January 13, 2025 at 6:30PM. Two additional public hearings on this matter are also scheduled at the same location on Thursday, January 16, 2025 at 6:00PM and Monday, January 27, 2025 at 5:00PM.

The Lee County Board of Education intends to opt out of the provisions of House Bill (HB) 581, a constitutional amendment passed in 2024, and **this has no effect on the existing exemptions available to homeowners through the state of Georgia**. HB 581 provides an adjustment to the homestead exemption in each taxing district to limit the assessed value of homes to an inflation rate, which has yet to be determined by the state.

Concerns of HB 581 by the Lee County Board of Education:



- This constitutional amendment goes into effect 1/1/2025 and allows governments only a one-time chance to opt out of its provisions
- The long-range effect of a floating homestead exemption will shift the burden of property taxes from homeowners to other property owners – investment property, farms, industrial and commercial businesses
- HB 581 provides city and county governments the option to ask for an additional penny sales tax to offset any potential loss from the exemption, but school districts were not given this option under the new law
- Unintended consequences - the floating exemption will significantly reduce two areas of state revenue for the school district, local fair share deduction and equalization grant
- Long-term financial implications of the floating exemption cannot be projected
- Loss of local control: If the base year value (1-1-2025) is set high and property values decrease, taxpayers would be taxed at an artificially high rate
- What metric will be used as the inflation rate? At this time, this has not been determined.
- Potential for decrease of real estate sales - Assessment limits will make it less advantageous for current homeowners to sell their homes and purchase new homes since the assessment limits reset to the new, current market value only upon purchase
- Many other school districts statewide are pursuing the opt out provision of HB 581

###

About Lee County Schools:

The Lee County School System is a GA public Pre-K - 12 school district that fosters relationships through diverse, challenging & quality educational experiences that cultivate successful citizens. For more information about LCSS, go to www.lee.k12.ga.us or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/leecountyschoolsystem or on Twitter at www.twitter.com/leecountyschool or on Instagram at www.instagram.com/leecountyschools.