



Clayton County Public Schools

Building A Better Tomorrow, Today!

1058 Fifth Avenue, Jonesboro, GA, 30236 | Tel: 770-473-2700 | Web: www.clayton.k12.ga.us

ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Division of Communications, Public Relations, Marketing & Strategic Improvement

January 15, 2025

Clayton County BOE Considers Opting Out of HB 581: Public Hearings Scheduled for *January 27, 2025 and February 3, 2025*

JONESBORO - Clayton County Public Schools (CCPS) is considering exercising the option provided within the law to opt out of the new statewide homestead exemption to ensure that required funding for instructional programs, staff, and general operations is not potentially jeopardized due to this new legislation. Please note that the 100% homestead exemption from school taxes for Senior Citizens age 65 and older is not impacted.

While the intent of House Bill 581 is to offer property tax relief to homeowners, it could have unintended consequences for school systems like Clayton County Public Schools, which already receives less funding compared to other large metro Atlanta districts. In fact, out of eight neighboring or metro Atlanta districts, Clayton County has the second-lowest property values assessment. A further reduction in property tax revenue could severely impact our ability to maintain essential programs, services, and support staff - putting students' access to a continuously thriving educational experience at risk.

Like all public schools in Georgia, Clayton County Public Schools' primary source of revenue is in the form of property taxes, which provide the staff, instructional resources, and opportunities necessary for students to thrive. These funds are the basis for the district's overall operations, including teacher compensation, instructional materials - such as textbooks, academic and extracurricular programming, utilities, facilities maintenance, and safe learning environments. Furthermore, these funds enable the school system to keep pace with the growing educational needs of our school and community.

To illustrate this point, if this exemption had been in place during the last four years, the revenue loss to Clayton County Schools would have been an estimated \$35 million. This decrease in revenue would have severely impacted our students, staff, community, and general school operations by leading to a significant reduction in programs and services currently provided to our students as well as increased class sizes and a reduction in staff.

It is important to note that the increased property assessment values we witnessed in 2022 and 2023 were out of trend for Clayton County Public Schools. Prior to 2022, the tax digest grew by an average of 8-10% annually, with significant increases of 24-25% in 2022 and 2023, before returning to 7.9% in 2024.

-An official document from the Clayton County Public School System-

About Clayton County Public Schools: Clayton County Public Schools (CCPS) is fully accredited by Cognia. The district offers a focused world-class program based on a challenging curriculum which is taught from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Serving over 50,000 students, Clayton County Public Schools is ranked among the 100 largest school districts in the U.S. and is the sixth-largest school system in Georgia.

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Clayton County Public Schools constantly explores other tax-based exemptions to support our community. However, the district cannot afford the financial uncertainty and potential revenue losses that House Bill 581 could bring. The opt-out provision included in the law is a critical safeguard for school systems to protect educational funding. Public education is the foundation of a safe and flourishing community and economy. Let's ensure our 70 school locations and 50,000+ students have the instructional resources and educational opportunities to succeed.

Public Hearings Notice:

Prior to determining its final decision to opt-out, the Clayton County Board of Education solicits community input. Citizens are invited to the upcoming public hearings on the following dates and times:

- January 27, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. and at 6:00 p.m.
- February 3, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Public Hearing Location: Central Office Complex, 1058 Fifth Avenue, Jonesboro, GA, 30236

Please see the following website for more information regarding Georgia House Bill 581.

<https://www.accg.org/page.php?ID=2202>

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