



FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS PROPERTY TAX RELIEF INFORMATION

Forsyth County voters approved House Bill 717 in the 2024 election, placing a cap on reassessed property values to limit increases in the taxable value of homestead properties. Under the new measure, the annual taxable increase cannot exceed 4% until the property is sold. This cap was unanimously self-imposed by the Board of Education (BOE) in February 2023, unanimously adopted by the Forsyth County Legislative Delegation, and authorized a referendum which ultimately passed. The measure took effect on January 1, 2025.

Addressing Rising Property Assessments

HB 717 was developed in response to the significant rise in homestead property values between 2022 and 2024. Forsyth County's local state delegation collaborated with the Forsyth County Schools (FCS) Board of Education to ensure the measure balanced homeowner relief with the financial needs of local schools and students. Alongside the county's existing property tax exemption for residents ages 65 and older, the cap reflects responsible financial stewardship of the citizen's resources.

Statewide & Local Legislation Impact

During the 2024 legislative session, the Georgia General Assembly passed House Bill 581, legislation aimed at imposing a statewide cap on reassessed property values for homesteads. The measure was in part a response to trends in the state resulting in large tax increases in areas where steps were *not* taken to implement homestead exemptions. Forsyth County Schools, however, did self-impose such a measure. Unlike Forsyth County's newly implemented 4% cap, HB 581 ties annual reassessment limits to inflation indicators, as determined by the Georgia Department of Revenue. Additionally, Forsyth County's local cap is set to expire in 2035, giving leaders an opportunity to assess the impact of the cap and make adjustments based on local needs, if necessary, including extending the measure or making it permanent. HB 581 has no expiration date, making it permanent with a one-time only opt out opportunity. That opt out process, however, must be completed by March 1, 2025.

FCS BOE leaders have raised concerns about the unpredictability and volatility of HB 581's inflation-based cap, which could make long-term budget planning for schools more challenging. In contrast, Forsyth County's consistent 4% cap provides homeowner relief while maintaining a more stable funding and budget framework for meeting students' needs. Both measures provide significant tax relief to property owners and eliminate large swings in tax bills due to assessed values, however HB 717 provides significant stability which is vital to mitigate the risk of unintended consequences to the financial health of the school system.

Local Control and Community Hearings

Committed to maintaining **local control** over financial resources, the FCS Board of Education intends to honor its collaboration with the Forsyth County Legislative Delegation on HB 717. In doing so, they have expressed their intent to opt-out of HB 581. Before making a final decision, the Board of Education has scheduled public hearings to provide Forsyth citizens a deeper understanding of the legislation and to gather feedback.

Hearings will be held at the Forsyth County Board of Education located at 1120 Dahlonega Highway in Cumming, Georgia 30040 on the following dates and times:

Hearing 1	January 28, 2025 6:00 PM
Hearing 2	February 4, 2025 6:00 PM
Hearing 3	February 11, 2025 4:00 PM