



Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Budget

Bobby A. Smith, Chief Financial Officer

May 12, 2026



MISSION STATEMENT

Empowering Every Learner Every Day.



VISION STATEMENT

To prepare every student to thrive, adapt, and lead in an ever-changing world.

BELIEFS

- Success is attainable for everyone
- All students deserve a quality educational experience
- Education is a shared responsibility
- Transparency is a foundation of trust
- Safety for all is a priority





RICHMOND COUNTY
SCHOOL SYSTEM
**2025-2030
Strategy Map**



**Student
Achievement**

Objective

Empower Every Learner to Take Ownership of their Learning.

Critical Initiatives

- ◀ Provide professional learning in evidence-based teaching methods.
- ◀ Provide all learners with access to engaging learning opportunities in a comprehensive curriculum.
- ◀ Promote student ownership of learning by fostering voice, choice, and accountability.
- ◀ Improve measurable academic outcomes using data-driven decision making.



**Stakeholder
Engagement &
Communication**

Objective

Engage with our Community using a Variety of Consistent Two-Way Communication Tools.

Critical Initiatives

- ◀ Streamline and centralize communications platforms.
- ◀ Develop a district-wide communications plan.
- ◀ Train staff and school district leaders in effective communication strategies.
- ◀ Create systems, processes and opportunities for student and staff achievement stories to be disseminated across multiple platforms.
- ◀ Enhance partnership program to foster community involvement.



**Talent
Development**

Objective

Foster Student and Staff Potential to Embrace Ongoing Growth and Development.

Critical Initiatives

- ◀ Establish a framework for adult-centered professional learning opportunities based on staff input, experiences and roles.
- ◀ Enhance student agency for increased student opportunities for enrollment, enlistment and employment.
- ◀ Refine the comprehensive recruitment and retention plan for students and staff.
- ◀ Leverage technology integration to enhance student and staff performance and productivity.
- ◀ Develop a system for monitoring the implementation of professional learning.



**Safe & Secure
Learning
Environment**

Objective

Provide a Safe and Secure Environment for All.

Critical Initiatives

- ◀ Define and develop a positive system culture.
- ◀ Ensure physical and emotional safety by enhancing security measures and providing emotional support for students and staff.
- ◀ Develop a comprehensive safety training plan.
- ◀ Design fiscally responsible processes and procedures for operational effectiveness.

Expenditures Definitions: Our Employees and How They're Funded



Certified Employees

Educators, counselors, administrators, and other professionals who are trained in education and hold state certification.



Primarily funded by state dollars through the QBE formula.



Classified Employees

Staff that don't require a professional teaching certification, like bus drivers, custodians, nutrition staff, paraprofessionals, clerical support, and more.



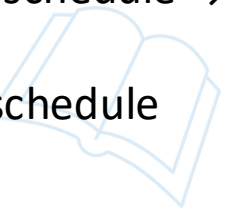
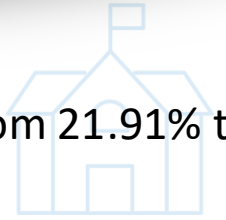
Primarily funded by local dollars from our community tax base.

FY 2027 Budget Highlights



Employee Compensation & Benefits

- **Teacher Retirement System** (TRS) contributions increasing from 21.91% to 22.32% **(+\$790K from last year)**
- **Certified health insurance**: \$22,620 → \$23,220 **(+\$1.1M, State funded)**
- **Classified health insurance**: \$22,620 → \$23,220 **(+\$450K)**
- **Step increase** for eligible employees **(+\$2.9M)**
- **Literacy Coach** added to each Elementary School **(+\$3.3M, State funded)**
- **New Competitive pay scales for non-teachers** Impacted positions will be added to the scale at the amount closest to their current pay rate and ensure their pay does not decrease **(+\$330K)**
- **Move non-teachers to current classroom teachers pay scale** (media specialists, counselors, MTSS facilitators, etc.) - \$3,200 increase **(+\$2.1M)**
- **Paraprofessionals'**: Add 3 workdays for professional learning **(\$73K)**
- **Elementary Assistant Principals**: Moving from 200-day work schedule → 210-day schedule **(+\$165K)**
- **Registrars**: Moving from 210-day work schedule → 235-day schedule **(+\$263K)**



FY 2027 Budget Highlights

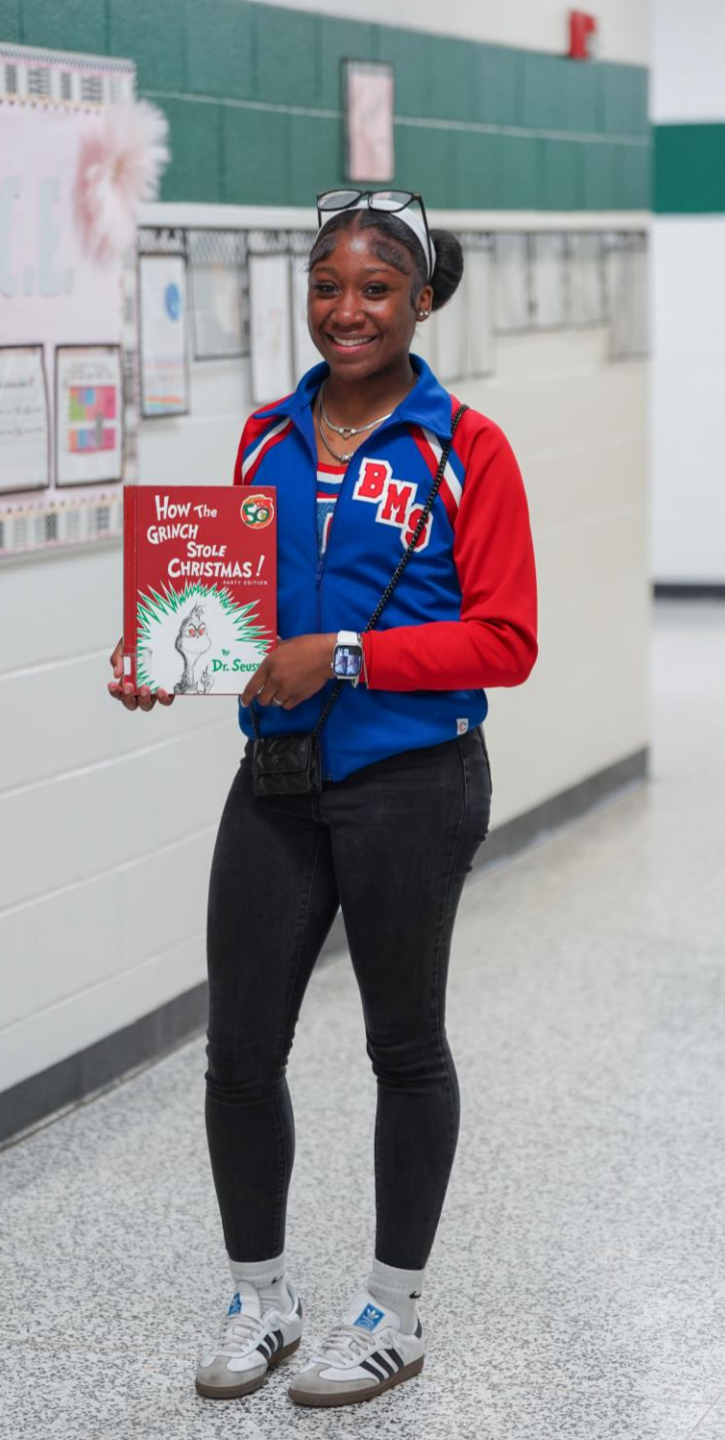


Employee Compensation & Benefits

- **Bus Drivers:** starting pay increasing from \$17.14 to \$19.31 (**+\$870K from last year**)
- **Bus Driver Attendants:** starting pay increasing from \$10.66 to \$12.24 (**+\$100K**)
- **Bus Drivers:** Add 2 workdays to practice routes (**\$67K**)
- **School Resource Officers:** Moving 3 from grant to general fund along with the Emergency Response Team supplement (**+\$307K**)
- **School Nurse:** Added to Early Learning Center (**+\$88K**)
- **Student Advocacy Specialists:** Added 2 partial grant funded specialists (**+\$192K**)
- **Social Worker supplement:** \$1,350 → \$1,900 (**+\$17K**)
- **Supplement:** \$500 to be paid in December 2026 (**+\$2.8M**)



FY 2027 Budget Highlights



Facilities Support & Infrastructure

- Property insurance increase **(+170K from last year)**
- Maintenance repairs budget increase **(+710K)**
- Utilities increase **(+1.6M)**
- Funds allocated to the school for supplies and school administration increased **(+170K)**
- Transportation Special Education students increase **(+100K)**
- Use Title I grant to provide \$300 to each teacher to purchase supplies for their classrooms **(+600K)**



Operational Efficiency & Financial Stewardship

- Maintaining a **healthy fund balance of approximately 14% of total expenses.**
- Reduce Transportation cost by removing 18 bus driver and 2 bus technician positions **(-\$1M)**
- Reduced funding for portable classrooms **(-\$519K)**
- Reduced funding for maintenance capital projects **(-\$855K)**





History of Salary Increases



Step +1% Increase
Eliminated 4 remaining furlough days

Step Increase

FY 2016

FY 2017

FY2019

FY 2020

Step + 4% Increase
\$1/hr Increase: Bus Drivers & Attendants

Step Increase
Certified: \$3,000+ Increase
School Nutrition: 4% Increase
Nurse: \$1,000-\$3,000 Increase
Clerical: New pay scale at 8/hrs a day
Everyone Else: 2% Increase





History of Salary Increases



Step Increase
 CARES Act \$1,000 Supplement

Step Increase
 ARP X2 \$1,000 Supplements
 New Classified Pay Scale
 Certified: \$2,000+ Increase
 Custodian: 1%-6% Increase
 School Nutrition: 1%-5.5% Increase
 ParaPro: 2.6%-8.3% Increase
 Bus Driver: 1%-8% Increase
 Nurse: Approx. \$5,000 Increase
 Asst. Principal: MS and HS APs moved from 200 to 210 workday calendar

FY 2022

FY 2021

FY 2023

Step Increase
 ARP \$2,000 Supplement
 Board: Scale Increase
 Custodian: \$1/hr Increase
 ParaPro: \$1/hr Increase





History of Salary Increases

Step Increase
 ARP X2 \$1,000 Supplements
 Governor's Office ARP Supplement \$1,000
 Change 12/Mo Employees from 248 to 235-day work calendar
 Principals: \$1/FTE Bonus (Now Occurs Annually)
 Certified: \$2,000+ Increase
 School Nutrition Managers & Asst. Managers: 4% Increase
 Bus Drivers: 4% Increase
 Custodian: \$1,000 QBE Bonus (Now Occurs Annually)
 Everyone Else: 2% Increase

Step Increase
 Governor's Office \$2,000 Supplement
 School Nutrition: 10% Increase to Assistants & Asst. Managers; 4% Increase to Managers

FY 2025

FY 2024

FY 2026

Step Increase
 General Fund \$500 Supplement
 Increase PRS annuity match from 3%-6%
 Teachers: New Scale, \$5,700 Increase
 Other Certified: \$2,500+ Increase
 Bus Driver: Starting Pay Increased \$3.08/hr
 ParaPro: Starting Pay Increased Approx. \$2/hr
 Everyone Else: 2% Increase



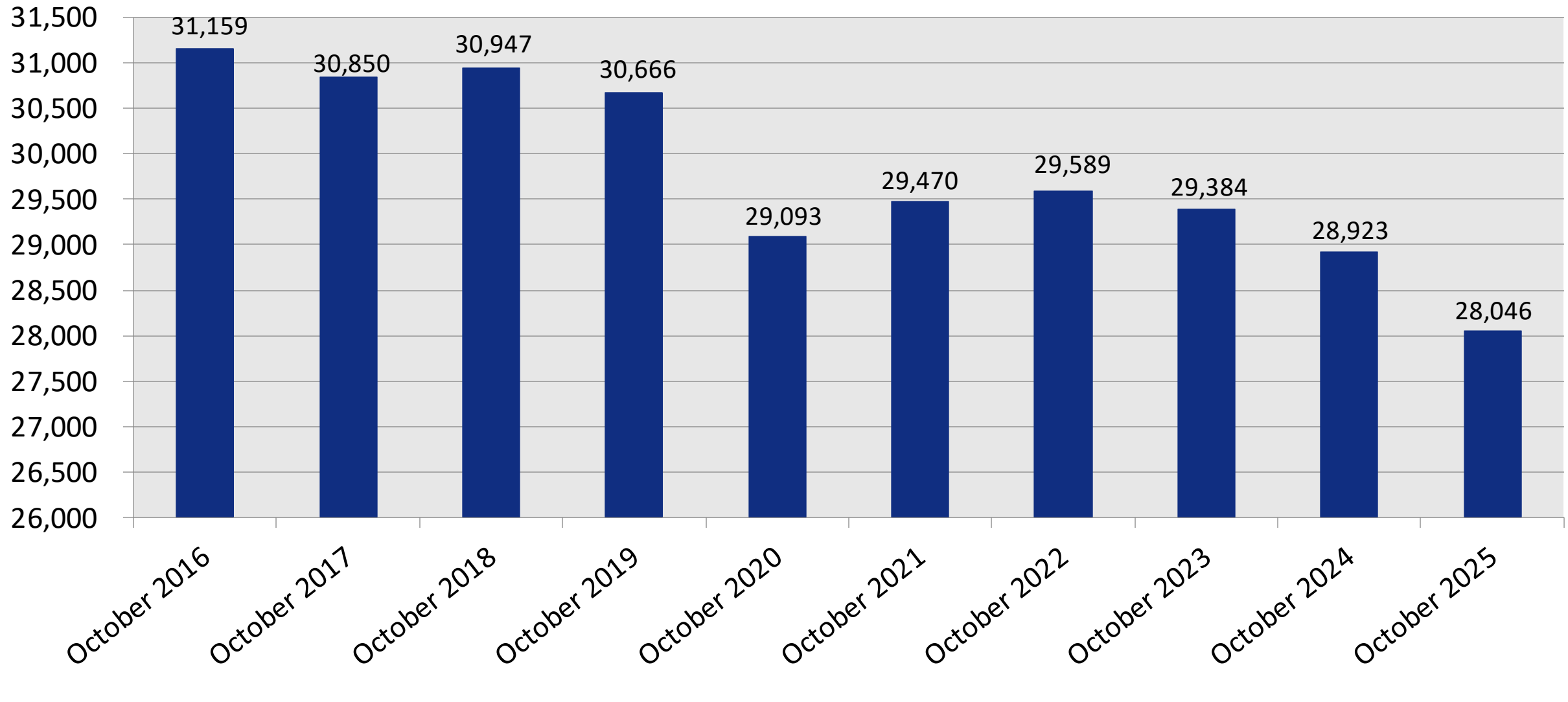


PROPOSED: FY 2027

- Step Increase
- Competitive pay scale for non-teachers
- Move non-teachers (MTSS, Counselors, Librarians, etc.) to teacher scale - \$3,200
- Add 3 days to ParaPro calendar from 183 to 186
- Move ES Assistant Principal from 200 to 210-day calendar
- Move Registrars from 210 to 235-day calendar
- Add 2 days to Bus Driver calendar from 180 to 182
- Increase Bus Driver starting pay \$2.17/hour
- Increase Bus Attendant starting pay \$1.58/hour
- Increase Social Worker supplement from \$1,350 to \$1,900
- \$500 supplement

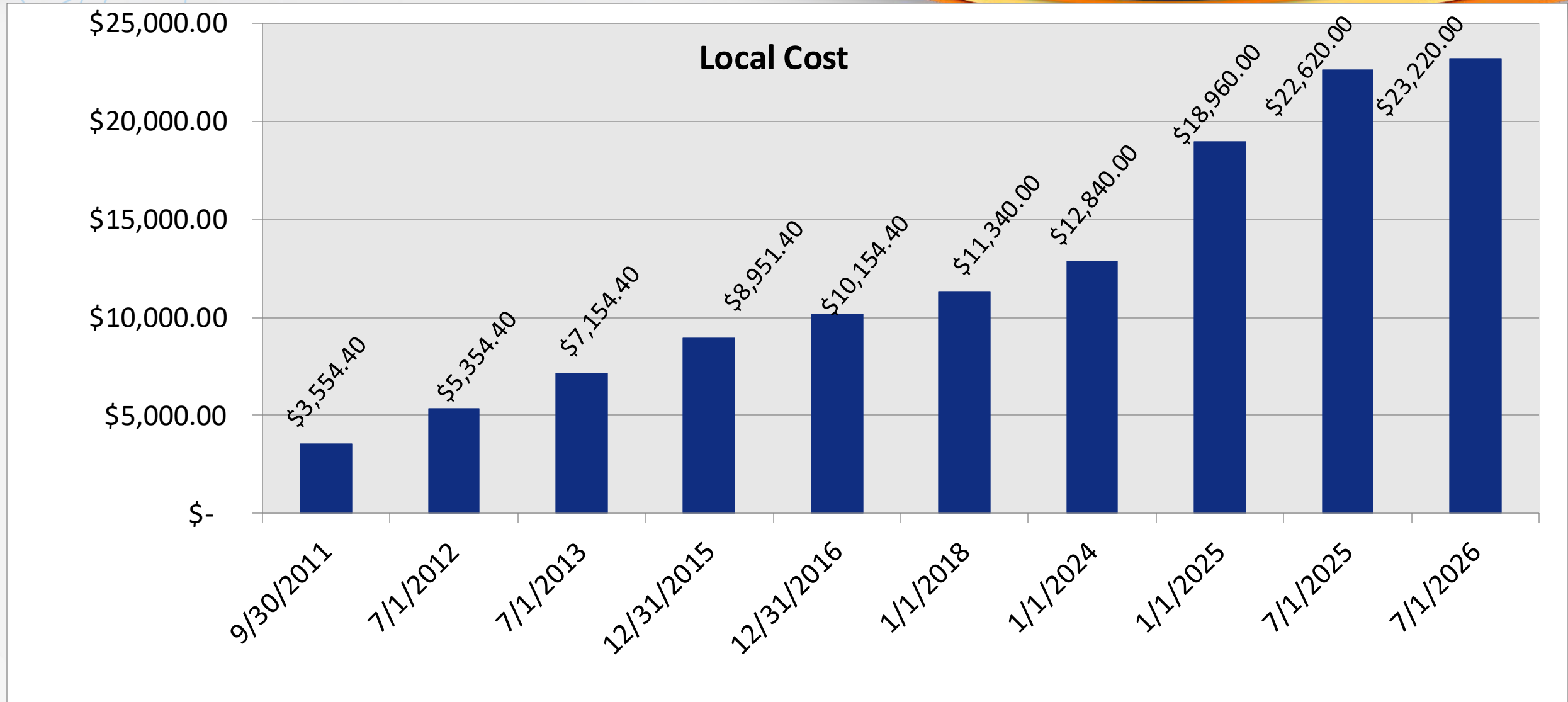


Student Full Time Equivalent (FTE)



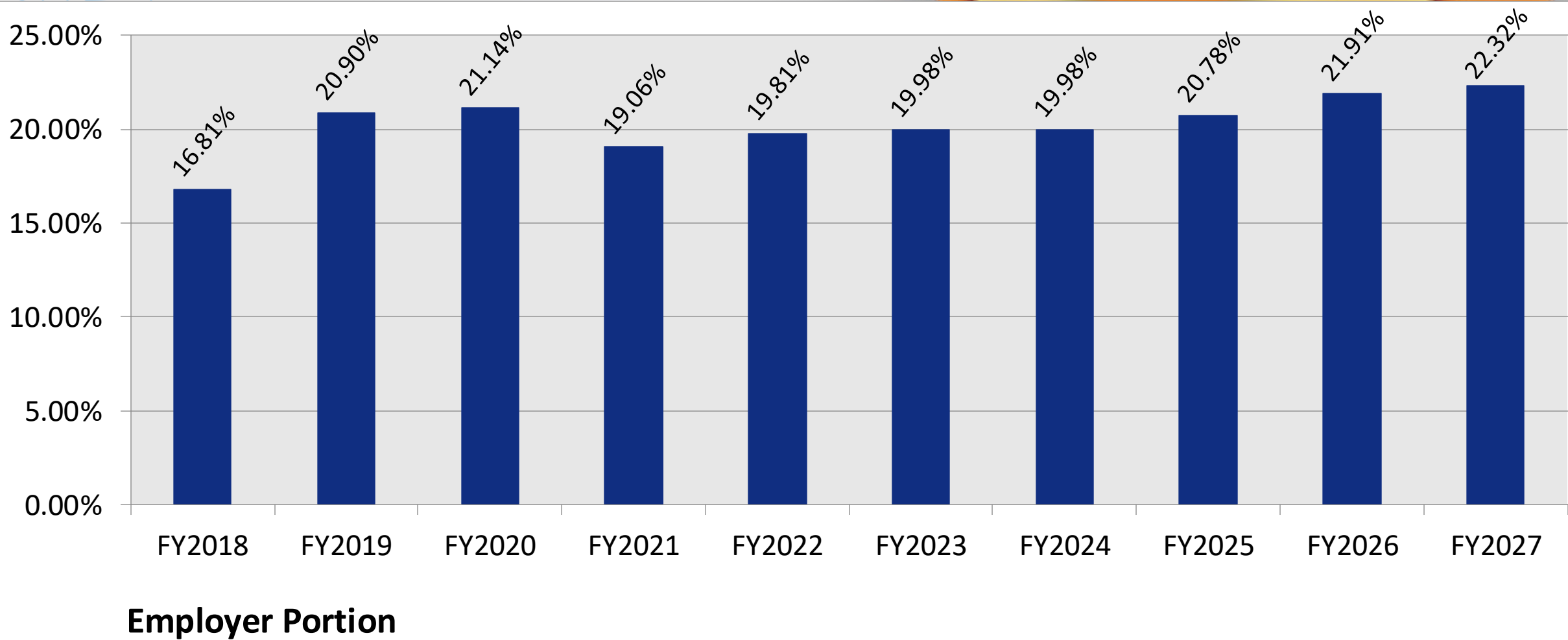


Classified Health Insurance Cost





Teachers Retirement System Contribution Rates





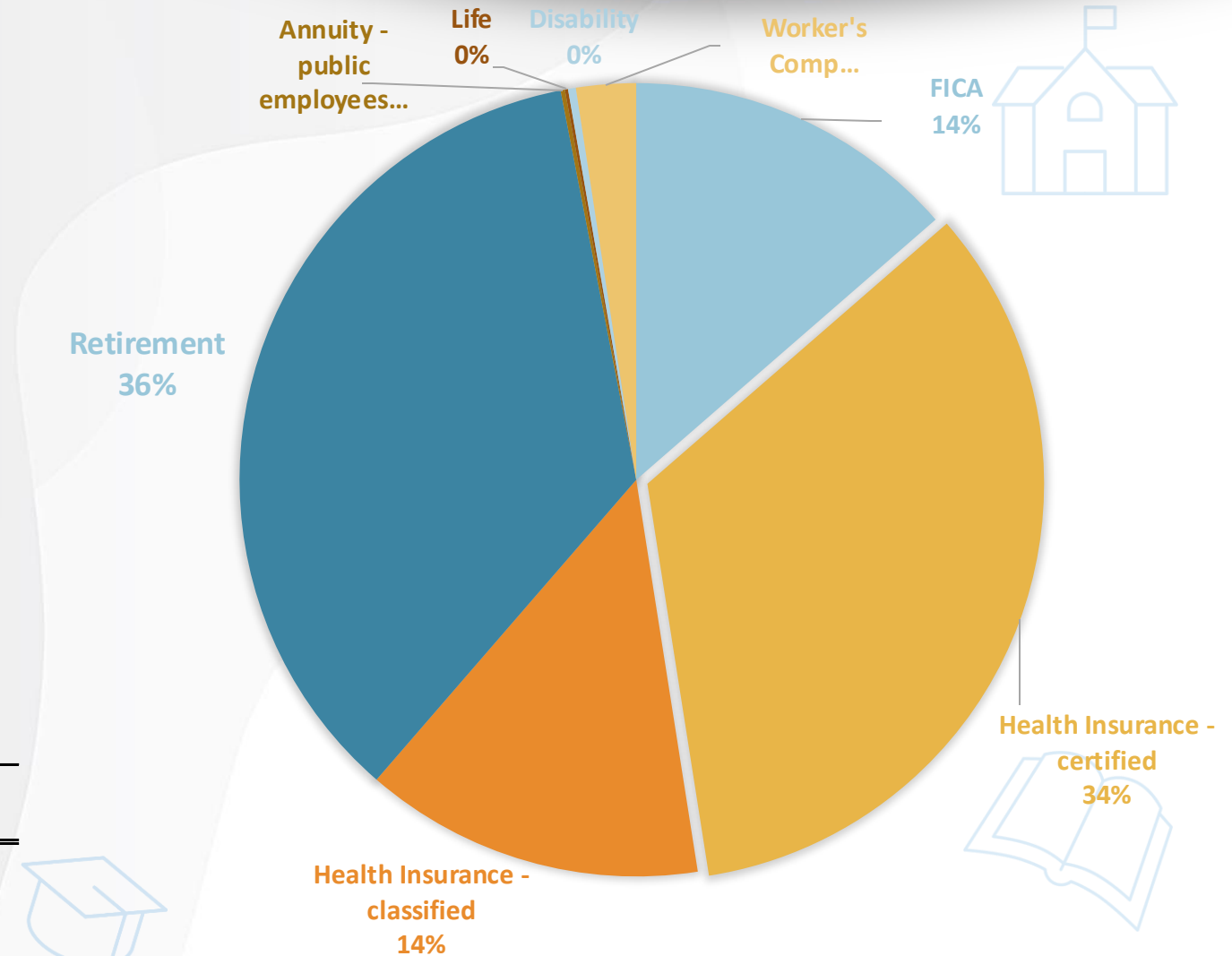
Salaries as a Percentage of Expenses

| | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Salary Expense | 172,683,971 | 181,505,021 | 206,025,798 | 210,630,145 | 216,889,457 |
| Benefits Expense | 75,207,201 | 92,466,814 | 106,059,654 | 115,334,567 | 120,601,835 |
| | 247,891,172 | 273,971,835 | 312,085,452 | 325,964,712 | 337,491,292 |
| Total Expenses | 289,730,134 | 324,158,959 | 367,101,242 | 381,187,483 | 397,106,376 |
| Salary/Benefit Expense Percent | 85.6% | 84.5% | 85.0% | 85.5% | 85.0% |
| School Based Staff | 80% | 79% | 75% | 81% | 80% |
| CO/TR/MA Staff | 20% | 21% | 25% | 19% | 20% |



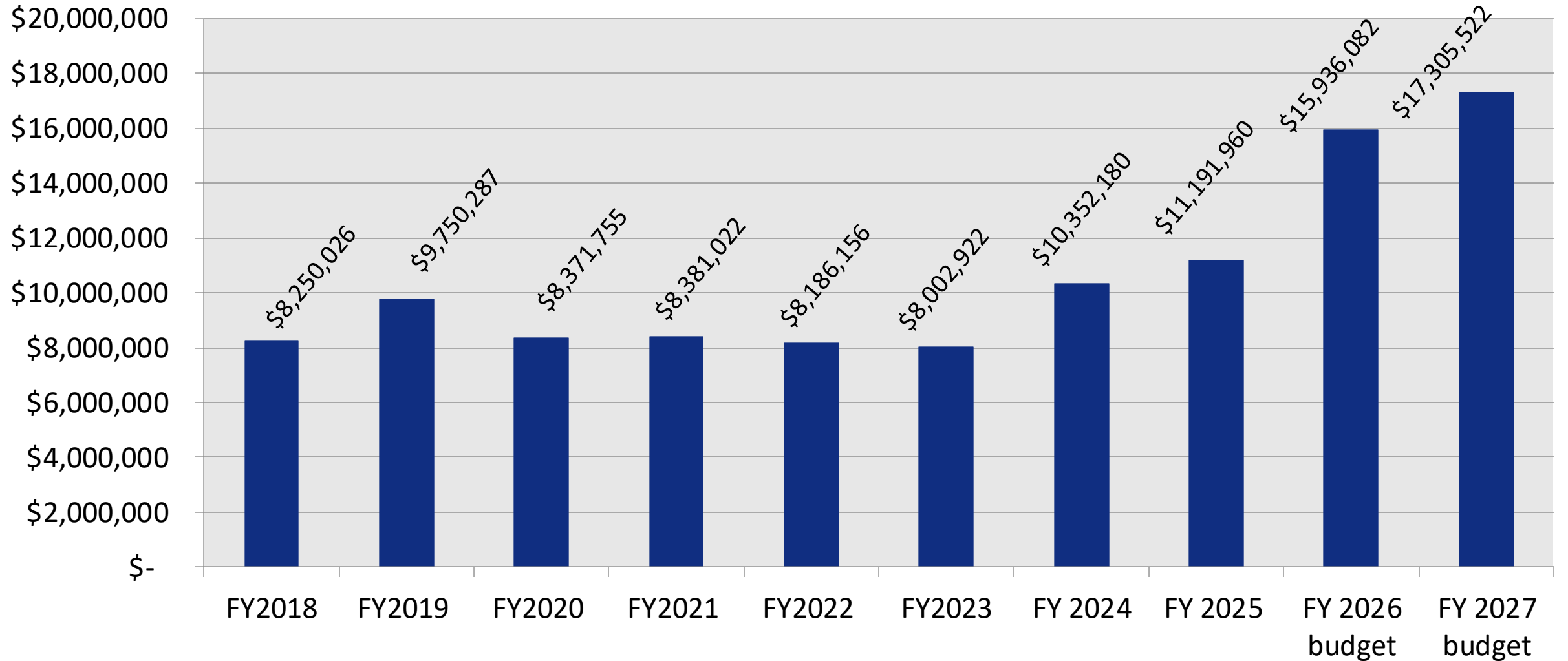
Employer Paid Benefits

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| FICA | \$ 16,293,070 |
| Health Insurance - certified | 41,362,287 |
| Health Insurance - classified | 17,305,521 |
| Retirement | 42,992,903 |
| Other Benefits: | |
| Annuity - public employees | 212,592 |
| Life | 152,651 |
| Disability | 382,811 |
| Worker's Compensation | 1,900,000 |
| | <hr/> <hr/> |
| | \$ 120,601,835 |



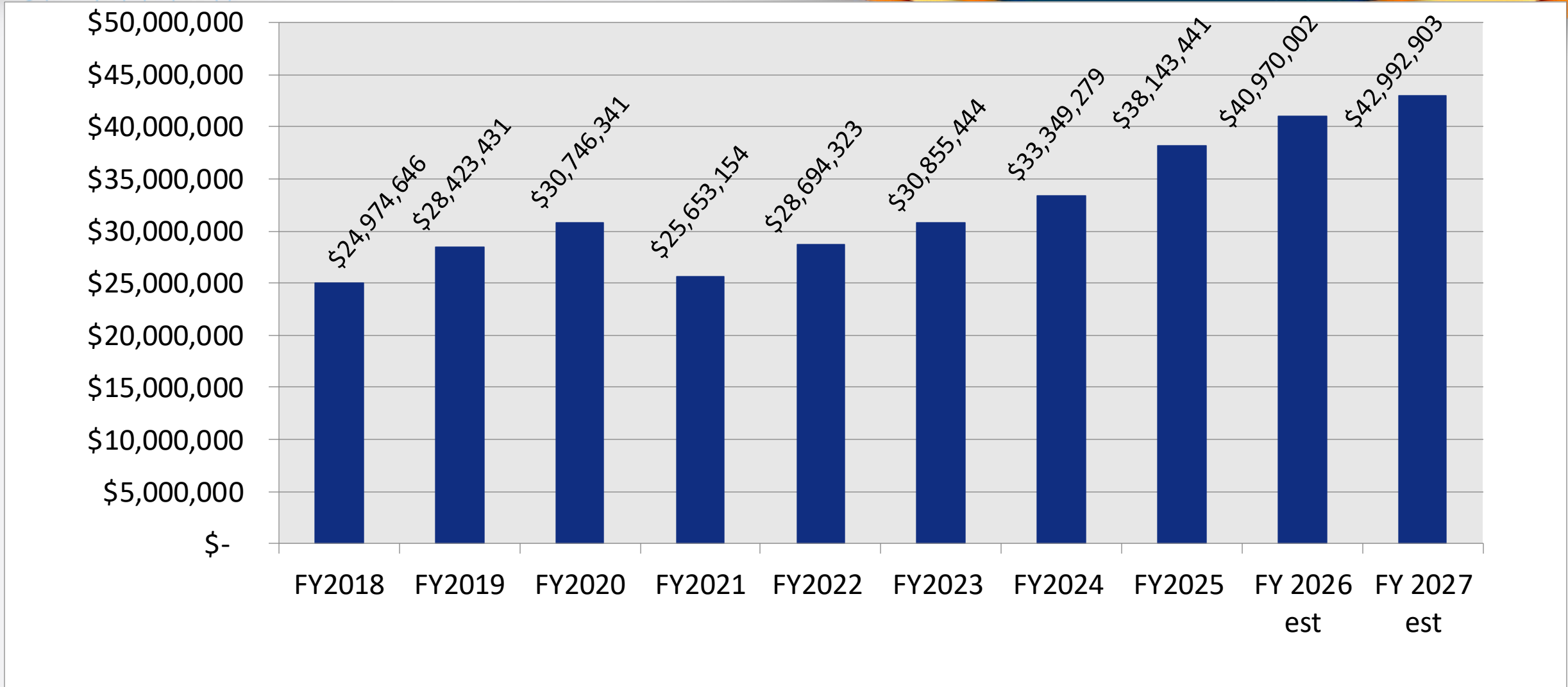


Cost of Classified Health Insurance on General Fund Budget





Cost of Teachers Retirement





Quality Basic Education (QBE) Allotment Sheet



Every year, after the Georgia General Assembly finishes its legislative session, the state sends school districts a funding estimate for the next fiscal year through an allotment sheet. This sheet shows how much money we'll receive through the **QBE formula** for the next fiscal year.

The amount is based on:

- The average **Full Time Equivalent (FTE)** count for the school system
- The cost to educate each student, depending on their needs (program weights)
- Adjustments for teacher experience, training, and school-level costs

This estimate may change later in the year when actual enrollment numbers are updated.





Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

The state uses a weighted count called **FTE** to calculate funding; not just the number of students enrolled.

- A student in grades 9–12 who attends regular classes with no extra services is given a benchmark weight of 1.00 (the base cost to educate).
- Students who need additional services (like special education or gifted programs) are assigned a higher weight, since they cost more to support.

These weights are combined into what's called the **FTE count**. The **FTE count** that is used in the **QBE formula** is usually higher than the actual number of students. The formula also factors in teacher costs, based on the state salary schedule and benefits (excluding Social Security).





Local Five Mill Share

Every school district is required to contribute a portion of funding through local property taxes. This is called the Local Fair Share.

- It's based on the amount of money the district would raise by applying five mills of property tax to its local tax base (called the "equalized digest").
- The state then subtracts this amount from what the district would otherwise receive through **QBE**.

In simple terms: the local five mill share is similar to a statewide tax. It is deducted from the funds "earned" by each school system through the **QBE formula**.





Equalization Grants

Georgia's equalization grant is intended to close the gap between high and low property wealth school systems. Additional funds are provided to school districts with the least taxable property per student to help these districts raise the same amount of money from local taxes as the "average" school system in Georgia.

- The state compares each district to the one at the 50th percentile of local tax wealth (excluding the wealthiest 5% and the poorest 5%) and helps them generate equivalent revenue from the next 15 mills of property tax beyond the first 5 mills.
- The tax digest is "equalized" to ensure that the property in each jurisdiction is assessed on the same basis, and the number of students is adjusted by weighting the students by the relative cost of the programs in which they are enrolled.

Categorical Grants

The state also provides categorical grants for specific needs that aren't based on the number of students. These include things like student transportation and nursing. These grants are earned by the district as a whole rather than a per-student basis.



Quality Basic Education Comparison



| | FTE | QBE EARNINGS | HEALTH INSURANCE | PRINCIPAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT | TOTAL QBE EARNINGS | LOCAL FIVE MILL SHARE | LITERACY COACHES | STATE FUNDS | EQUALIZATION GRANT | NURSING | PUPIL TRANSPORTATION | TOTAL |
|-----------------|--------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|------------|----------------------|----------------|
| FY 2026 Initial | 28,048 | \$ 180,379,327 | \$ 40,987,440 | \$ 18,832 | \$ 221,385,599 | \$ (34,356,244) | | \$ 187,029,355 | \$ 19,933,118 | \$ 697,254 | \$ 5,961,790 | \$ 213,621,517 |
| FY 2027 Initial | 27,137 | \$ 181,390,633 | \$ 41,912,100 | \$ 18,832 | \$ 223,321,565 | \$ (34,019,016) | \$ 1,569,010 | \$ 190,871,559 | \$ 29,302,938 | \$ 696,330 | \$ 6,812,730 | \$ 227,683,557 |
| CHANGE | (911) | \$ 1,011,306 | \$ 924,660 | \$ - | \$ 1,935,966 | \$ 337,228 | \$ 1,569,010 | \$ 3,842,204 | \$ 9,369,820 | \$ (924) | \$ 850,940 | \$ 14,062,040 |

6.18%





FY 2027 Budget Revenue Highlights

| | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| State Allotments | \$ 201,288,848 | \$ 217,694,816 | \$ 246,354,087 | \$ 247,977,761 | \$ 261,702,573 |
| Less: | | | | | |
| Local 5 mills | \$ (28,243,265) | \$ (31,868,763) | \$ (32,281,614) | \$ (34,356,244) | \$ (34,019,016) |
| State Revenue (Adjusted For Cuts) | \$ 173,045,583 | \$ 185,826,053 | \$ 214,072,473 | \$ 213,621,517 | \$ 227,683,557 |
| Increase (Decrease) in State Revenues | \$ (10,742,713) | \$ 12,780,470 | \$ 28,246,420 | \$ (450,956) | \$ 14,062,040 |
| | | | | | |
| Local Taxes | \$ 107,400,000 | \$ 121,400,000 | \$ 138,950,000 | \$ 145,953,966 | \$ 146,475,000 |





FY 2027 Budget Revenue Highlights

- For FY 2027, the projected tax revenue needed to fund the recommended expenditures is \$146.5M. This can be funded with the rollback millage rate.
- This includes a \$500,000 increase in the budget for Title Ad Valorem tax revenue from \$11M to \$11.5M.
- Interest income is increasing from \$2M to \$2.5M
- Medicaid billings is increasing from \$1M to \$1.7M
- Added \$2.8M in other revenue for projected proceeds from sale of surplus property
- Overall revenue is projected to increase \$19.1M
- Recommend using \$1.5M of the FICA Savings fund balance reserve to fund the increase in cost for salaries and benefits.





General Fund Revenues and Expenditures

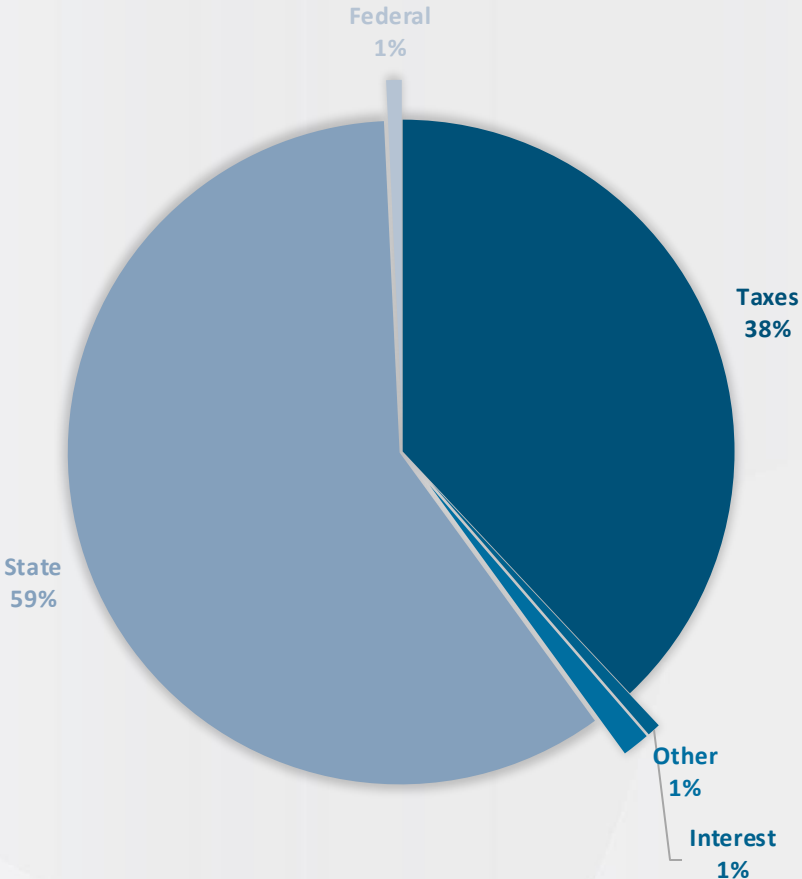
| | <u>Forecasted 2025-26</u> | <u>Estimated 2026-27</u> |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Revenues | | |
| Local | | |
| Taxes | \$ 144,100,000 | \$ 146,475,000 |
| Interest | 2,800,000 | 2,500,000 |
| Other | 2,900,000 | 2,345,000 |
| State | 223,100,000 | 228,466,557 |
| Federal | 3,600,000 | 2,900,000 |
| Other Revenue | - | 2,800,000 |
| Total Revenues | <u>\$ 376,500,000</u> | <u>\$ 385,486,557</u> |
| Expenditures | | |
| Salaries | \$ 216,400,000 | \$ 216,889,457 |
| Benefits | 114,500,000 | 120,601,835 |
| Temp Services | 20,000,000 | 19,014,874 |
| Other Operating | 36,600,000 | 40,600,210 |
| Total Expenditures | <u>\$ 387,500,000</u> | <u>\$ 397,106,376</u> |
| Fund Balance (Used) Surplus | <u>\$ (11,000,000)</u> | <u>\$ (11,619,819)</u> |
| Fund Balance at July 1st | <u>\$ 76,171,248</u> | <u>\$ 65,171,248</u> |
| Estimated Fund Balance At June 30th | <u>\$ 65,171,248</u> | <u>\$ 53,551,429</u> |



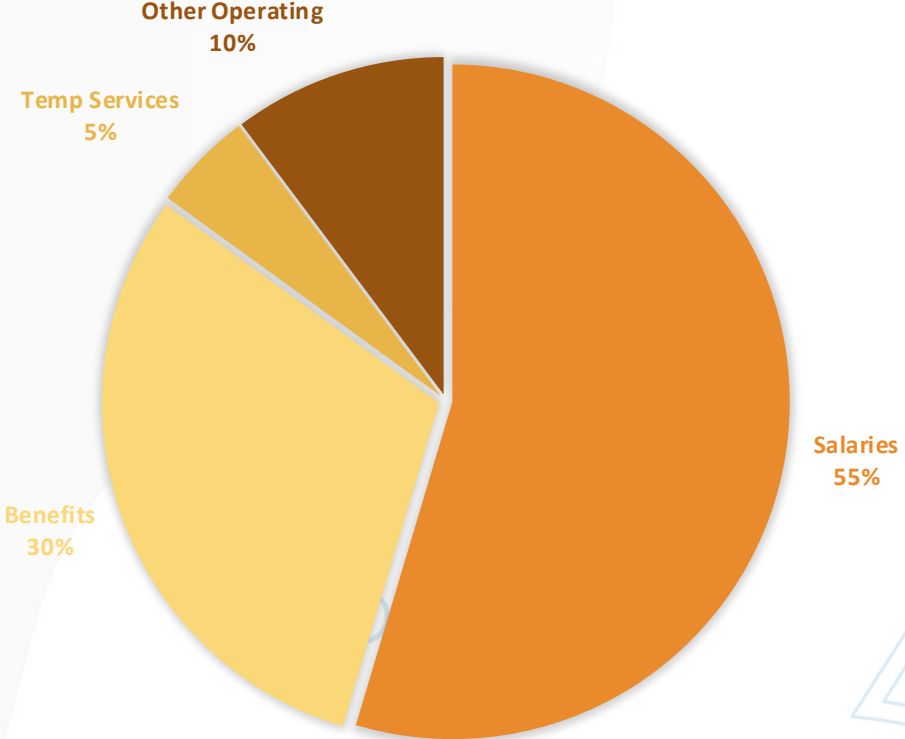


General Fund Estimated 2026-2027

Total Revenues: \$385,486,557



Total Expenditures: \$397,106,376





Budget Details

Other budget details provided include the following:

- Operating budget book detail
- Salary Schedules
- Other programs detail which includes our Title grants, SPED grants, CTAE grants, School Nutrition program, etc.



COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION OF RICHMOND COUNTY

TENTATIVE BUDGETS

GOVERNMENTAL FUND TYPES

July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027

| | General Fund | Debt Service | Capital Projects | Other Programs | Total |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Estimated Revenues | | | | | |
| Local Revenues | \$ 151,320,000 | \$ 40,546,750 | \$ 22,440,750 | \$ 3,368,981 | \$ 217,676,481 |
| State Revenues | 228,466,557 | - | 1,650,735 | 12,901,311 | 243,018,603 |
| Federal Revenues | 2,900,000 | - | - | 56,145,771 | 59,045,771 |
| Other Revenues | 2,800,000 | - | - | - | 2,800,000 |
| Total Estimated Revenues | 385,486,557 | 40,546,750 | 24,091,485 | 72,416,063 | 522,540,855 |
| Estimated Expenditures | | | | | |
| Instruction | 236,909,858 | - | 7,305,062 | 31,757,203 | 275,972,123 |
| Pupil Services | 22,510,521 | - | 155,750 | 2,405,840 | 25,072,111 |
| Improvement of Instruction | 9,370,624 | - | - | 1,781,454 | 11,152,078 |
| Inst. Professional Development | 2,040,514 | - | - | 1,986,427 | 4,026,941 |
| Educational Media Services | 6,442,573 | - | - | - | 6,442,573 |
| Federal Programs Admin | 213,451 | - | - | 2,385,242 | 2,598,693 |
| General Administration | 9,471,534 | - | - | 811,598 | 10,283,132 |
| School Administration | 35,989,625 | - | - | 218,605 | 36,208,230 |
| Support Services Business | 3,737,297 | - | - | - | 3,737,297 |
| Maintenance and Operation | 36,391,860 | - | 1,606,008 | 260,300 | 38,258,168 |
| School Safety and Security | 5,004,121 | - | 271,046 | - | 5,275,167 |
| Student Transportation | 19,882,395 | - | 180,000 | 295,178 | 20,357,573 |
| Support Services Central | 8,992,920 | - | 16,480 | 140,000 | 9,149,400 |
| Other Support Services | 149,083 | - | - | - | 149,083 |
| School Nutrition Program | - | - | 104,836 | 28,146,341 | 28,251,177 |
| Other Outlays | - | - | - | - | - |
| Facilities Acquisition | - | - | 91,985,177 | - | 91,985,177 |
| Debt Service | - | 45,460,125 | - | - | 45,460,125 |
| Total Estimated Expenditures | 397,106,376 | 45,460,125 | 101,624,359 | 70,188,188 | 614,379,048 |
| Net Change in Fund Balances | (11,619,819) | (4,913,375) | (77,532,874) | 2,227,875 | (91,838,193) |
| Estimated Fund Balance, July 1 | 65,171,248 | 42,859,981 | 229,418,888 | 5,784,824 | 343,234,941 |
| Estimated Fund Balance, June 30 | \$ 53,551,429 | \$ 37,946,606 | \$ 151,886,014 | \$ 8,012,699 | \$ 251,396,748 |

These budgets will be considered for final adoption by the Board of Education at the regular board meeting on Tuesday, June 16, 2026 following the committee meeting at 4:00 P.M. at 1324 Laney Walker Blvd, Augusta, Georgia.



All Funds



The local revenues for the Debt Service Fund and Capital Projects Fund are ESPLOST proceeds that can only be used for construction and renovations of buildings, bond payments and pay-as-you-go projects.





Quality Basic Education (QBE) Funding is Increasing

QBE funding is increasing because teacher retirement (TRS) and health insurance increases, funding of new literacy coaches and an increase in the equalization grant.



Operational Efficiency & Financial Stewardship

- We reduced operational cost by **\$2.4 million**.
- We are using **\$11.6 million in reserves** while maintaining a **healthy fund balance of approximately 14% of total expenses**.
- Will use **\$1.5 million in FICA Savings reserves**
- Maintain current property tax revenue to **not require** an increase in the millage rate



State/Grant Funded Items

- Retirement contributions to TRS **increasing to 22.32%**
- Certified health insurance **increasing to \$23,220**
- **Step increase** for certified employees
- **Add** Literacy coaches to Elementary Schools
- **Funds** \$300 per teacher for classroom supplies



Locally Funded Items

- Classified health insurance **increasing to \$23,220**
- **Step increase** for classified employees
- **New competitive pay scale** for non-teaches
- **Move** non-teachers to current classroom teachers pay scale
- **Increase** in pay for bus drivers and bus driver attendants
- **Supplement** of \$500

