



Press Release

Media Contact:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public & Community Relations

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Leesburg, GA –The Lee County Board of Education published its current and five-year history in today's Lee County Ledger and on its website. The dates for the three required public hearings were also published. The hearing dates will need to be changed to ensure compliance with the required timeline for the public hearing advertisements. The October 1, 2026 hearing will be moved to October 8, 2026 beginning at 6:00 PM. The October 2, 2026 hearing will be moved to October 9, 2026 ,beginning at 11:30 AM. Finally, the October 8, 2026 hearing will be moved to October 15, 2026 ,beginning at 6:00 PM.

Before the external constraints below impacted the school system's financial position, the Lee County Board of Education was fully prepared to continue rolling back the millage rate. Unfortunately, those constraints have caused the proposed and advertised (tentative) millage rate to be 18.96, which is an increase of 3 mills over the amount levied for 2025. There are two primary reasons for this increase:

- **Recovery of Fund Balance** - The refund of \$3,279,925.68 in property taxes due to an error made by the Tax Assessor's office must be recouped. There was no mistake made by the Board of Education in their tax calculations. These funds were originally budgeted for salary and benefit increases in the FY2026 budget and have already been expended. Approximately 2.02 mills of the millage rate increase represents the recovery of these funds.
- **ESPLOST Losses** - The current E-SPLOST is projected to reach its maximum authorized collection amount and end in May or June, 2027. The school system is projected to lose approximately \$4,000,000.00 in E-SPLOST revenue even if the voters approve a new E-SPLOST in November, 2027. The school system is also preparing for a significant - and necessary - project to replace the majority of the HVAC equipment at Lee County High



School. Approximately 2 mills of the proposed increase is associated with this capital need.

Additional factors are the fact that approximately \$500,000, or 0.309 mills, more is needed to offset a federal reduction in special needs funding, as well as a budgetary adjustment for unforeseen increases in diesel fuel costs is necessary (now at \$6.40 per gallon).

Finally, the school system must levy approximately \$748,066.49 (0.462 mills) to pay for the 2.5% collection fee charged by the Lee County Board of Commissioners for the collection of school property taxes.

Examples:

- For a home valued at \$100,000, a 3 mill increase will represent \$120 in additional school property taxes annually, or \$10 per month, before considering applicable exemptions.
- For a home valued at \$300,000, a 3 mill increase will represent \$360 in additional school property taxes annually, or \$30 per month, before considering applicable exemptions.

Once the fund balance has been restored, and if a future ESPLOST is passed (and barring any unforeseen material changes in federal or state funding), the school system should be in a position to consider rolling the millage rate back to 15 mills or less.

Reminder of public hearing dates and times:

- ***October 8, 2026 - 6:00 PM;***
- ***October 9, 2026 - 11:30 AM;***
- ***October 15, 2026 - 6:00 PM.***

LEE COUNTY
SCHOOL SYSTEM

PUBLIC RELATIONS



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.

