

PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCING A PROPOSED PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The McIntosh County Board of Education today announces its intention to increase the property taxes it will levy this year by **13.33%** over the rollback millage rate.

Each year, the board of tax assessors is required to review the assessed value for property tax purposes of taxable property in the county. When the trend of prices on properties that have recently sold in the county indicate there has been an increase in the fair market value of any specific property, the board of tax assessors is required by law to re-determine the value of such property and adjust the assessment. This is called a reassessment.

When the total digest of taxable property is prepared, Georgia law requires that a rollback millage rate must be computed that will produce the same total revenue on the current year's digest that last year's millage rate would have produced had no reassessments occurred.

The budget adopted by the McIntosh County Board of Education requires a millage rate higher than the rollback millage rate; therefore, before the district may set the final millage rate higher than the rollback rate, Georgia law requires three public hearings to be held to allow the public an opportunity to express their opinions on the increase.

Many factors influenced the Board's decision to increase the millage. Due to the shutdown in our economy caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the State cut the revenue allotment for the upcoming school year by 11% from the last school year, resulting in a loss of revenue in the amount of nearly \$750,000. In addition, the district experienced a significant reduction in Education Special Local Option Sales Tax (ESPLOST) revenue during this same timeframe causing the district to reallocate costs, an amount in excess of \$100,000 for critical projects, to the general fund. This same decrease in ESPLOST revenue has created a projected shortfall in available funds needed to pay the energy lease payments (over \$1.2 million that will be due in 2024 alone, and increasing each year thereafter for 13 consecutive years). Moreover, with the new school year about to start, the district had to allocate over \$100,000 to provide virtual opportunities for students whose parents determined they could not return to the regular classroom. Unfortunately, the district's fund balance is not sufficient to absorb these major losses of revenue and essential expenses.

All concerned citizens are invited to a public hearing on this tax increase to be held at the McIntosh County Board of Education Central Office Building, 1100B CA DeVillars Road, Darien, Georgia on August 27, 2020 at 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM and on September 3, 2020 at 11:30 AM.