

June 3, 2022 Update

Superintendent Dr. Jeff Bearden is pleased to announce a change to the [FY 23 tentative budget](#) that will provide all employees paid on the teacher salary schedule an additional \$2,000 increase in addition to the \$2,000 increase presented to the Board of Education in May. This combined \$4,000 increase will be for the 22-23 school year. Employees eligible for a step increase will also receive an additional increase as well. All other employees (certified and classified) will receive, at minimum, a \$2,000 increase, plus a 1% COLA.

“If passed by the Board of Education as presented, a beginning teacher with a bachelor’s degree would start at \$50,746,” shared Dr. Bearden. “This is a HUGE step forward for us. FCS is the 5th largest district in Georgia and continues to lead the state in academic performance. We must remain competitive with surrounding school districts in terms of salaries and benefits to not only recruit the best but also to keep the best.”

Forsyth County Schools is the largest employer in Forsyth County, with close to 90% of the budget being spent on salaries and benefits. For the last eight years, the district has maintained the same operational millage rate (17.3). The proposed budget included a decrease in the debt services (bond) millage rate - from 2.418 to 1.418. This one mill reduction for taxpayers brings the debt services millage rate back to its 2010 rate.

“For those of you who live in Forsyth County like me, you have likely seen an increase in your projected property taxes,” shared Dr. Bearden. “Why? The market has driven property values to historic levels. The increase is not a result of the school district. However, we understand the challenges of our economy, and have lowered the debt services millage rate to ease the burden for taxpayers.”

FY23 (2022-23) Operational Budget

Posted May 11, 2022

The Forsyth County Board of Education was presented the proposed FY23 operational budget at their meeting on May 10. The budget was built to serve a projected 54,061 students and to accommodate the opening of the county’s 42nd school, New Hope Elementary. In 2021-22, Forsyth County Schools moved to the 5th largest of 180 school districts in Georgia.

“As stated in our newly adopted Strategic Plan, Forsyth County Schools is committed to providing an unparalleled education for our students,” shared FCS Superintendent Dr. Jeff Bearden. “Our FY23 budget proposal includes a competitive salary and benefits package for our employees while remaining fiscally responsible to our citizens.”

Highlights from the proposed budget include:

- Step increase for eligible staff

- All salary bands adjusted - including:
 - Minimum \$2,650 increase for all certified staff (includes \$2,000 from the Governor and 1% COLA)
 - Minimum of \$15 per hour for all hourly employees and all steps on these bands; new starting hourly rates include:
 - Bus monitors: \$15.15
 - Custodians: \$15.15
 - School nutrition: \$15.15
 - Bus drivers: \$18.02
 - Additional salary adjustments for school nurses, secretaries, paraprofessionals, and all steps on these bands; new starting hourly rates include:
 - Paraprofessionals: \$16.09
 - Administrative support: \$16.37
 - Certified paraprofessionals: \$17.95
 - 1% COLA for all classified staff
 - Increases for substitute teacher daily rates: noncertified: \$120, certified: \$145
(Prior pay: \$85) NOTE: Updated 5/13/22

If approved on June 21, 2022, the changes above will go into effect July 1, 2022. 2022-23 employee pay bands will be shared with staff after approval.

“This budget invests in resources for students and staff that align with our Strategic Plan,” shared FCS Superintendent Dr. Jeff Bearden. “It ensures that all full-time employees earn, at a minimum, \$15 an hour with a very competitive benefits package. This budget also honors step increases for eligible employees and includes the state’s \$2,000 pay increase for teachers. For Forsyth County taxpayers, this budget also decreases the debt service millage rate from 2.418 to 1.418 and maintains the current operating millage rate at 17.3 mills for the 8th straight year. I want to thank all of our principals and department heads for their hard work on this budget proposal.”

The budget is 46% state-funded and 54% local-funded. It is important to note that local revenue has increased based on inflation (i.e., nationwide increases in property values and goods) and low inventory. State revenue also increased for FY23; we appreciate the Governor providing \$2,000 bonuses for teachers and issuing no austerity cuts to local school districts.

With this proposed budget, the operating millage rate will remain at 17.3 mills for the 8th straight year. The debt services (bond) millage rate will be lowered from 2.418 to 1.418. This one mill reduction for taxpayers brings the debt services millage rate back to its 2010 rate.

88% of the operating budget is spent on salaries and benefits, with 72% of expenditures going directly to instruction. FCS is the largest employer in Forsyth County. According to the Georgia Department of Education, for FY21 FCS had the lowest per-pupil expenditures out of the 12 largest school districts in the state.