

# Butler County School System Ad Valorem Request

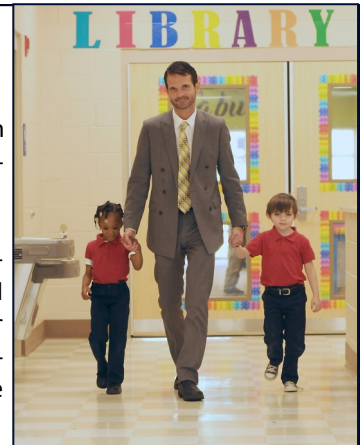
## Commitment

Definition: The state or quality of being dedicated to a cause, activity, etc.

In my nearly 30 years as an educator, I have yet to see such a *disconnect* between intelligent, talented students and low student performance outcomes. Our students are better than their data is showing...much better!

My job as Superintendent is to present to you, my community, options moving forward toward the excellence we seek. The proposed Ad Valorem increase outlined in this handout is an important part of a plan to provide our students the proper resources necessary to meet our educational goals. We seek to have our local funding equal to other Alabama communities at the state average of 18 mills (18.2 state average). Our community millage for education is currently 12 mills.

Please take a moment to read the information on this handout knowing that our school system employees will remain committed to our students regardless of the outcome of the millage proposal. We love our kids like family and that love won't change due to our millage proposal results.



## First Things First

Coming into Butler County last year I had to hit the ground running. I needed to take care of "my house" first before going to the community to ask for money. We are a "D" school system and cannot expect better results without first making some changes in leadership and staff. While change is not always pleasant, we put who we felt were the right people in the right positions.

We also needed to contain our budget. The school system was and is operating in a structural deficit primarily due to high debt; therefore, structural changes needed to be made within our budget to fix our problem. We first looked to Central Office expenditures for cuts. We had to become more efficient with less staff. Therefore, our Central Office team went from 9 staff members to 5.5 staff members saving an

estimated \$213,761 annually. We will continue to look at ways to reduce local spending by becoming more efficient in the future. We look forward to better results while saving money for our taxpayers!

Fair Market Value of Your Home	Taxable Value of Your Home	Millage (6.0 mills) Estimated Annual Increase	Millage (6.0 mills) Estimated Monthly Increase
\$ 25,000	\$ 2,500	\$ 15	\$ 1.25
\$ 50,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 30	\$ 2.50
<b>*\$ 75,000</b>	\$ 7,500	\$ 45	<b>\$ 3.75</b>
\$ 100,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 60	\$ 5.00
\$ 125,000	\$ 12,500	\$ 75	\$ 6.25
\$ 150,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 90	\$ 7.50
\$ 175,000	\$ 17,500	\$ 105	\$ 8.75
\$ 200,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 120	\$ 10.00
\$ 225,000	\$ 22,500	\$ 135	\$ 11.25
\$ 250,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 150	\$ 12.50
\$ 275,000	\$ 27,500	\$ 165	\$ 13.75
\$ 300,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 180	\$ 15.00

\*Average home value in Butler County

## Facts Are Facts

A proposed tax increase is emotional – it is for me too! I implore anyone reading this information to look at the facts. As illustrated, our community ranks toward the bottom of the state with local funding support for schools. In addition to our state rank, Alabama is typically toward the bottom of property tax revenue per capita in the country; therefore, our school tax funding support is toward the bottom of the bottom. We are not complaining, but we are stating the facts.

- ◆ The school system ranks 133 out of 137 school systems in the state in terms of local funding support.
- ◆ The State of Alabama currently ranks 50 out of 50 in the U.S. in terms of property tax revenue per capita according to the 2015 U. S. Census Annual Survey.

◆ The current fund balance is at the "low end of healthy".

◆ The county has a current Ad Valorem school tax rate of 12 mills compared to the State average of 18.2 mills.

◆ The 6 mill tax increase is estimated to be **\$3.75 per month for the average homeowner in the county with a house at Fair Market Value of \$75,000.**

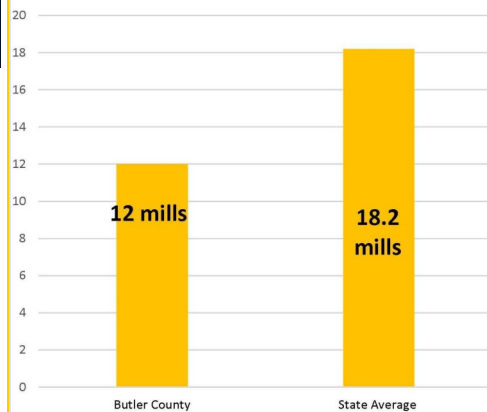
## The End Game (Our Plan)

The plan for our school system is grass roots, conservative and fundamental. Our plan is not some fancy “latest-and-greatest” government program. In fact, The Butler County Commitment is the opposite of a “one-hit-wonder”.

The Butler County Commitment is based on principles that are proven over time - principles based upon hard work, perseverance, grit and strong character.



Butler County Compared to State Average



## Our Plan & Accountability

If our taxpayers approve the plan, our local school tax millage will go from 12 mills to 18 mills. This will cost the taxpayer with an average home in our community (\$75,000 market value), an estimated \$3.75 per month increase...less than a dollar a week. The proposed 6 mill increase will generate approximately \$1.4 million annually in additional revenue. The categories in which the additional revenue would be spent include but are not limited to: Curriculum Resources, The Arts, Athletics, and Extra-Curricular Activities for both elementary and secondary students. The funding would also go toward facilities, technology and current debt.

## The Butler County Commitment

1. An “Old School” approach to education which includes ensuring that students have their basic needs met, that buildings are safe and clean and that students are well-disciplined led by staff who are committed.
2. Teach K-6 students solid leadership skills at the elementary level as part of the elementary school culture.
3. All 7-12 students participate in at least one extracurricular activity each year without having to pay a fee as part of a graduation requirement. When kids connect to something positive on a regular basis, outstanding student performance outcomes will result.



## Next Steps

For now we ask that you sign two **(2) petition forms**. For us to obtain our possible 6 mill increase there are (2) provisions in the Alabama Constitution, each providing three (3) mills for a total increase of six (6) mills – all subject to voter approval. Tentatively, we are looking to propose a Special Election in early 2019 so as to receive the funding during the following fiscal-year. Our County Commission is the governing body to call and conduct the election. We need a minimum of 300 signatures from registered voters for the County Commission to consider an election.

I know that we all care about our community and understand that the future of our community is our children. Certainly, when it comes to a tax increase, opinions vary. I ask that you consider the information presented in this handout and give it thought. I would be happy to meet with you if you would like to discuss the proposal. Again, my love and commitment for our students will not change whether this proposal is approved or not.

Thank you,

**Dr. John Strycker, Superintendent**