

BRYAN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Monthly Newsletter of Bryan County School Board

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD:

Greetings,

We hope our students and families enjoy their final days of summer break. This month, the Board of Education remained focused on preparations for the upcoming school year. Of note, on July 1, Mr. Bivins Miller became Bryan County Schools new Superintendent. We are excited about his leadership and confident in his ability to lead Bryan County Schools to continued success.

On July 23rd, 120 new employees were welcomed into the Bryan County Schools' family at ONE (Orientation for New Employees). All Bryan County Schools employees were welcomed back to the 2026-2027 school year on Tuesday, July 28th. The board remains incredibly grateful to all our teachers and staff and recognize the important role each person plays in the success of our students.

On August 5th, everyone will be excited to welcome students to the start of a new year! Additional back to school information can be found on our website at: <https://www.bryan.k12.ga.us/page/back-to-school>.

As Bryan County continues to rapidly grow and with over 20,000 new lots currently approved, the board understands the importance of planning for our students' future needs. This month the board was updated on plans to apply for state funding to help offset the local costs of a second middle school in South Bryan County (approximately \$6.1 million in state funds) and for the future renovation of Richmond Hill Primary School (approximately \$1.7 million in state funds). More information about future capital projects plans can be found here: <https://www.bryan.k12.ga.us/page/project-timelines-draft-projected-projects>

This month the board also continued work on the FY27 budget. As we await the final tax digest information from the Tax Assessor's Office, Bryan County Schools has built the FY27 budget based on the exact same rate as last year's millage rate of 14.663. As a reminder, last year the board lowered the millage rate from 15.075 to the rollback rate of 14.663. Due to the digest growth in Bryan County significantly outpacing the state average, Bryan County schools lost approximately \$6 million in state equalization funding for FY27.

One way the board has built our budget on the same millage rate as FY26, is through reducing the staffing budget for the upcoming school year, but solely through attrition. We continue to monitor our staffing needs as we grow in student population.

While we are maintaining our lowest millage rate in over a decade, the FY27 budget will legally be required to be advertised as a "tax increase." This language is a state legal requirement as the millage rate, while unchanged, brings in additional funds due to growth and increases in property values. As a reminder, there is a law in place which caps homestead reassessments, allowing the taxable value of a home to only increase at the rate of inflation each year (helping stabilize home tax values even as property values go up.) Current increases in our tax digest are due to new growth and reassessments of commercial property.

As additional reminders, we maintain one of the lowest school millage rates in the region while our academic achievement ranks us as a top performer in the state. Bryan County Schools was recently noted to be the third most financially efficient school district in the state, according to GOSA. We remain committed to financial efficiency while supporting the needs of our students and staff.

We hope you will make plans to attend our Public Hearings about the millage rate and learn more about the FY27 budget. Two public hearings will be held August 20, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. and a third hearing will be held on August 27, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. All public hearings will be held at the Bryan County School Board of Education office in Black Creek.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Bryan County Schools. We wish everyone an amazing 2026-2027 school year and hope it's the best one yet!"



*Bryan County
Board of Education*

BOARD WORK SESSION - JULY 16, 2026

SUPERINTENDENT UPDATES

- Mr. Miller shared upcoming important dates with the board:
 - 7/23/26 - #ONE – Orientation of New Employees at Richmond Hill High School
 - 7/28/26 – Convocation to welcome back all staff
 - 8/14/26 – State of the Community breakfast from 8-10 a.m. Ms. Snider will send out a poll to find out who would like to attend.
 - 12/2-12/4 – GSBA Winter Conference in Atlanta, GA. The workshops will be held on December 2nd, followed by the conference on the 3rd and 4th.
- Mr. Miller thanked the board for the time they've put into helping him as he transitions into his new role.
- Mr. Polk, the new principal at Bryan County Middle High School met with Mayor Tiffany Ziegler and City Administrator, Chris Benson to introduce himself and begin building a relationship with them.
- High School graduations will be changing this year. The high schools will hold their graduations at different times to allow the board to attend both ceremonies. The tentative dates will be May 13th at 7:30 p.m. for Bryan County High School and May 14th at 7:30 p.m. for Richmond Hill High School. The inclement weather date will be May 15th at 9 a.m. Communication will be sent right away to notify families of these changes.
- The finance department is still waiting on the final tax digest from the tax assessor's office. Bryan County Schools will be holding public hearings for the millage rate on 8/20 at 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. and on 8/27 at 5:30 p.m.
- A 10-day count will be shared once school begins.

DIVISION OF OPERATIONS UPDATES

Mr. Jeff Hodges, Assistant Superintendent of Operations, presented the following updates:

- Mr. Hodges continues to work with the state facilities representative regarding conditional use permits for the new Bryan County High School. Information has been sent to the Planning and Zoning Committee for review and then will be sent to the City of Pembroke. Bryan County Schools will have an opportunity to share more information on the fees tied to water usage.
- There is a request for proposal for the energy provider for Bryan County High School. After review of the proposals, the information will be brought to the board for future action.
- Mr. Hodges met with the landowners of the property behind Bryan County High School site regarding their right of way and changing the placement of the road.
- A traffic analysis will for the new Bryan County High School site will be completed after school has been in session for a month.
- There is a company interested in purchasing three portables at the old Richmond Hill High School location.
- The architect is developing a demolition plan for the west campus of the old Richmond Hill High School. Design planning continues for the new middle school in South Bryan to be built on that location.
- All design work is completed for the addition at McAllister Elementary School. The architect is submitting the design plan to the state and once approved, it will go to the county to be approved.

- Mr. Hodges met with the Assistant City Manager of Richmond Hill, the fire chief, and the district's construction manager regarding renovations for the future early learning center. The building will require a change of occupancy, sprinklers, and ADA compliance updates. Bryan County Schools construction manager is working on estimated costs for the renovations.
- Punch items are continuing at Richmond Hill High School which include A/C repairs, paint touch ups and landscaping.
- The state facilities representative with the Department of Education recommends phasing out building 5020 which is 24 classrooms on Bryan County Middle High School's campus. It would give Bryan County Schools about 3.3 million dollars from the state to help toward building costs of the new high school. Bryan County Schools will ask for board approval at the next board meeting to phase out building 5020.
- Operations will also be asking for board approval to submit a state capital funding application for the new middle school in South Bryan and Richmond Hill Primary School renovations.
- Bryan County Schools will apply for state funding next year for the new Bryan County High School. This will have no impact on the timeline.

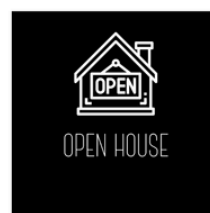
DIVISION OF BUSINESS SERVICES UPDATES

Ms. Debi McNeal, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services, presented the following updates:

- House Bill 1193 requires the change of ages for Pre-K and Kindergarten as part of the early literacy bill.
- There are only 8 vacancies left to fill for the new school year.
- Orientation of New Employees (ONE) will be held July 23rd at Richmond Hill High School with approximately 100 new staff members attending.
- The Back-to-School website is up and running. It includes open house dates. Transportation is currently working on bus routes, and these will be added soon.
- Copies of August menus were shared with the board, and new icons have been added on the calendars that show Georgia grown and locally grown items. This year, Bryan County Schools will introduce many options for our students.
- The quarterly donations report was presented.
- Millage rate information was shared, and Ms. Habets, Finance Director, shared impacts of taking the rollback rate. The digest is still preliminary, and final numbers will not be in until July 31st. This year as part of the digest, Hyundai's value has been included. This will negatively impact our equalization in the future. Bryan County Schools millage rate continues to be one of the lowest millage rates in comparison to other districts in Georgia.
- The board conducted a second review of Policy BCBI.

2026-2027 BACK-TO-SCHOOL INFORMATION

Please note: This information is for planning purposes and more specific information will be provided by each school.



DIVISION OF STUDENT SERVICES UPDATES

Dr. Denise Scott, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, presented the following updates:

- House Bill 340 impacts cell phone usage for students. This year, Bryan County Schools will be implementing guidelines for K-12.
- The Division of Student Services is finalizing the student handbook after input from principals. A final review will take place prior to sending out.
- House Bill 268 introduces a mandated safety plan. Tip 411 will now be implemented at the elementary school level and will be included as part of the safety training.
- Centegix has made updates and all staff will receive updated badges.
- 911 alert testing will be held on July 29th to make sure Bryan County Schools calls are connecting to the 911 center.
- Bryan County Schools joint residency affidavit (JRA) process has been updated this year. Student Services continues to work on completing all JRAs.
- Community Education Summer Camps finish tomorrow and 81 classes were offered over the summer. Registration has opened for before and after school programs and for enrichment classes for the upcoming school year. This year to grow the North Bryan offerings, transportation will be offered on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from Bryan County Elementary School to Community Education.
- Community Education is offering classes at Del Webb and will try to offer 2-3 classes a month.
- Bryan County Schools and Community Education will be participating in National Night Out on July 23rd from 6-8 p.m. at Bryan County Elementary School.

DIVISION OF CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION UPDATES

Dr. Elizabeth Bennett, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction, presented the following updates:

- The District Teacher of the Year will be announced at Convocation this year.
- Save the Date for the Teacher of the Year banquet that will be held in September.
- Dr. Bennett will share the curriculum nights schedule when it is finalized.
- The Bryan County Middle High School's hydrogen car team traveled to Switzerland for competition. The girls team took 7th place in the world and Bryan County Middle School took 2nd in the world overall at the middle school level. **Congratulations, Redskins!**

BOARD OF EDUCATION UPDATES

- The board reviewed Sections H and I of the Board Norms and Protocols. Possible revisions to section I were discussed.
- The board noted a request regarding roads will be discussed at the July 21st City of Richmond Hill meeting.
- The board discussed tentative board retreat dates and the importance of this retreat as we welcome new board members in January.

BOARD MEETING - JULY 23, 2026

SUPERINTENDENT UPDATES

- #ONE – Orientation of New Employees kicked off today 7/23 where we welcomed 120 new employees
- Thank you to the Curriculum and Instruction team for their work on coordinating Convocation that will take place on 7/28 at Richmond Hill High School.
- Mr. Miller shared upcoming open house dates with the board:
 - July 30th: RHPS, Carver/RHES, MES, FMES
 - July 31st: RHMS
 - August 3rd: BCES, BCMHS, RHHS
- Mr. Miller had the opportunity to present to local community members at the Exchange Club meeting on 7/22

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

ACTION ITEMS:

The following items were approved at the July 23, 2026 meeting:

- The 2026 Preliminary June Financial Report
- Approval for the board chair and superintendent to sign the resolution to phase out building 5020 of facility 1604-Bryan County High School
- Approval of authorization for the board chair and superintendent to sign and submit Georgia Department of Education Capital Outlay funding applications for the construction of a second middle school in Richmond Hill (eligible for up to \$6,101,704 in State funds) and the renovation of Richmond Hill Primary School (eligible for up to \$1,764,671 in State funds).
- Field trip approval for Community Education

