COMMERCE CITY SCHOOLS

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Commerce City Schools Board of Education announces a full roll-back of taxes for the FY 2026 General Fund Budget

COMMERCE, GA — Commerce City Schools is proud to announce that the FY 2026 General Fund Budget includes a full rollback of local property taxes for the residents in the city of Commerce. The Commerce City Schools Board of Education has voted to reduce the millage rate from **14.554** to **13.933** at the August meeting, continuing its commitment to lowering the tax burden on homeowners.

The FY 2026 budget, approved by the Board of Education in June, anticipates expenditures exceeding revenues by $4.4 million. However, the district begins the fiscal year with a projected fund balance of more than $5 million, an amount that does not include any PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) payments from the SK Battery plant. The separate SK Battery fund balance stands at approximately $30 million.Over the last several years, Commerce City Schools' state revenues have declined as the district's tax digest has increased partially due to the SK Battery plant. The school

system has lost state funding of $2 million plus dollars and our local fair share has risen by over $1 million with the addition of the SK Battery Plant to our local tax digest. While this shift means the state provides less funding, the district remains committed to being responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars. Despite basic inflationary day to day costs, increases to the Teachers Retirement System contributions, and increased state health benefit contributions from the state that are unfunded by QBE, our board of education remains committed to lessening the burden locally to the citizens of our community. In the future, the SK Battery PILOT payments will be used strategically to help maintain lower property taxes for Commerce residents. “When a community experiences economic growth with local industries, the tax digest naturally increases and the school system's ability to lower the local tax burden on property owners also increases,” said Mr. Billy Kirk, Superintendent of Commerce City Schools. “That’s exactly what we are trying to do here.”

Currently, Commerce City Schools is engaged in a legal dispute with Jackson County Schools over the allocation of SK Battery property tax revenues as part of the tax sharing agreement in 1994. The litigation was initiated by the Jackson County School System several years ago prior to the current administration of the Jackson County School System. While the lawsuit is pending, the district will, if necessary, use portions of the SK Battery funds to cover budget shortfalls, always prioritizing the needs of students and the community with the PILOT payments received.

“Our students and teachers deserve a strong, well-supported education system, and our community deserves responsible financial leadership,” said Kirk. “This budget reflects both of those commitments.”

About Commerce City Schools:
Commerce City Schools is dedicated to providing high-quality education that prepares students for lifelong success. Through strong partnerships with families, businesses, and the community, the district strives to ensure every student has the resources and opportunities to reach their full potential.