INTENT TO OPT OUT OF HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION

The Baldwin County Board of Education intends to opt out of the statewide adjusted base year ad valorem homestead exemption for the Baldwin County School District. All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearing on this matter to be held at Baldwin County Board of Education, 110 N. ABC Street, Milledgeville, GA 31061, on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, at 6:00 P.M. Times and places of additional public hearings on this matter are at the Baldwin County Board of Education on Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at 6:00 P.M. and Tuesday, February 4, 2025, at 6:00 P.M.

The Baldwin County Board of Education is seeking community input as it considers opting out of Georgia House Bill 581, a new law set to take effect on January 1, 2025. HB 581 introduces a statewide homestead exemption that caps the annual increase in property values for tax purposes, limiting growth based on the previous year's inflation rate. While the measure provides property tax relief for homeowners, it may significantly impact public school funding, which relies heavily on local property taxes. The Baldwin County Board of Education is concerned that the cap could reduce revenue, making it more challenging to maintain current programs and resources for students.

School funding reductions could directly affect the quality of education in Baldwin County. Examples of potential impacts include limited funding for instructional materials and technology upgrades; budget cuts to programs such as athletics, fine arts, and after school; reduced availability of counseling, mental health programs, and interventions for struggling learners; larger class sizes due to staffing constraints; and delays in essential school repairs and bus replacements.

It is important to note that this decision to opt-out will not affect any existing exemptions for Baldwin County residents. The Board of Education encourages all Baldwin County residents to participate in these critical discussions to help shape the future of education in our community.