

# School Millage Rate...from Page 1A

In order to balance the budget, the board office will be using reserve funds of \$1,351,274, leaving a projected ending fund balance of \$7,519,900.

Superintendent John Hill reviewed the budget for the board, going over the roughly \$1.5 million in state funding cuts, which are being offset by CARES Act monies, staff attrition and fund reserves.

Key increases in the budget include about \$900,000 for COVID-19 mitigation efforts; \$300,000 to cover salary increases for advanced degrees obtained by 42 employees; and \$100,000 in costs budgeted for substitute teachers due to anticipated coronavirus quarantine requirements.

The board voted to accept the tentative FY21 budget, and it is now being advertised. The budget is expected to be adopted in the upcoming Sept. 22 regular school board meeting, after which it will be transmitted to the state for approval on Sept. 30.

Hill said the annual budget is usually presented in May, adopted in June and submitted to the state in July, but due to COVID-19, state allotments for local school districts were late, so the Georgia Department of Education extended budget transmission deadlines through October.

As usual, the schools posted a COVID-19 update to the Union County Schools Facebook page on Friday, and the numbers were up a bit compared to the previous two updates, with eight positive students and eight positive staff, and 108 students and 29 teachers quarantined for possible exposure.

"These numbers will ebb and flow each week, as they only indicate the present counts and are not cumulative in nature," the post said. "Additionally, we are monitoring the numbers daily for both students and staff by school and department."

"We will continue to be transparent if we see the numbers spiking in any location. Unfortunately, any information at the school level may create a situation where student or staff privacy is compromised with a system the size of ours. Thank you."

Also in the Aug. 26 budget meeting, Hill welcomed the district's Special Education



School Special Education Services Director Tiffany Setzer showing the school board one of the program's clear "Smile Masks" that make it easier to communicate with students.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard



Technology Director Bill Driskell demonstrated new touchscreen hardware for the board in the Aug. 26 called meeting.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Services Director Tiffany Setzer and Technology Director Bill Driskell to give presentations to the board.

Setzer said everything was going exceedingly well with special education in Union County, and that the system was currently educating 456 students. The program features roughly 25% online-only learners, which is in line with the rest of the school system.

Driskell showed off some new technologies, including cutting edge hardware the

system hopes to roll out in the near future to replace all the old interactive white boards, as well as some online software that will help teachers and students stay on the same page with classwork this year.

In other business, the board voted to extend Superintendent Hill's contract through the 2022-23 school year following his positive superintendent evaluation from earlier in the month.

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