Bibb County School District

FY27 Budget Reduction Strategy & Financial Stabilization Framework

Introduction

The Bibb County School District is currently navigating one of the most challenging financial planning cycles in recent years. Like school districts across Georgia and the nation, the district continues to experience the combined impact of:

- Unfunded state expenditures including increase in State Health Insurance, Teacher Retirement, and additional literacy coaches in elementary schools
- Inflationary pressures
- Rising operational and staffing costs
- Enrollment-related funding challenges (declining enrollment and low census at schools)
- Increased student support demands
- And continued pressure on local and state educational resources.

As part of the FY27 budget development process, the district has been tasked with identifying approximately $20 million in expenditure reductions and operational efficiencies to ensure long-term financial stability and sustainability.

This work is not simply a budget-cutting exercise. The district has approached this process strategically, with the primary goal of protecting students, classrooms, and core educational services while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Guiding Principles

The district's work has been guided by several key principles:

1. Prioritize students and classrooms whenever possible.
2. Protect critical instructional and safety functions.
3. Utilize attrition and vacancy elimination before reducing filled positions.
4. Evaluate operational efficiencies districtwide.
5. Ensure shared sacrifices across the organization.
6. Maintain transparency and accountability throughout the process.
7. Align staffing and operational structures with enrollment realities and long-term sustainability.

District leadership recognizes that reductions of this magnitude are significant and difficult. Every expenditure within a school district supports people, programs, operations, or services that matter to students and families.

Potential Reduction Strategies

The district has currently identified approximately $11.4 million in potential expenditure reductions.

Potential Reduction	Amount	Threat Level / Operational Impact
Elimination of Vacancies	$1,250,000	Moderate operational adjustment; increased workload for existing teams
Central Office Furloughs (200-day staff and above)	$1,400,000	Moderate operational threat; potential impact to school support services, morale, and workload
Freeze Salary Step Increases	$2,000,000	Moderate morale and retention concerns
Implement Class Size Waiver	$3,800,000	Manageable operational threat; increased class sizes
Outsource New Paraprofessional Positions (80)	$2,300,000	Minimal direct classroom disruption if implemented strategically
Department Budget Reductions	$675,500	Manageable operational adjustments
Total Potential Reductions	$11,425,000	

Revenue Improvements and Updated Financial Outlook

In addition to expenditure reductions, the district recently received updated revenue information following the release of the official FY27 QBE allotment on May 15, 2026.

Revenue Changes

Revenue Change	Amount	Description
Increase in QBE Revenue	$1,241,174	Includes Transportation Funding increase of $1,434,517 offset by Local Five Mill Share and Nursing adjustments
GNETS Allocation Improvement	~ $500,000	Reduces General Fund support needed to cover the GNETS deficit
Total Revenue Increase	**$1,741,174**	

Combined Budget Solution Identified

Category	Amount
Total Potential Expense Reductions	$11,425,000
Total Additional Revenue Identified	$1,741,174
Combined Budget Solution	**$13,166,174**

While this represents significant progress toward the district's larger FY27 reduction target, additional strategic planning and recommendations may still be required.

Strategic Analysis and Board Considerations

1. Focus on Minimizing Direct Classroom Impact

The current framework intentionally prioritizes operational efficiencies, vacancies, and structural adjustments before deeper instructional reductions.

Several of the identified savings strategies are designed to minimize immediate student disruption, including:

- Elimination of currently vacant positions
- Operational and departmental efficiencies
- Outsourcing future paraprofessional positions rather than reducing existing classroom staff
- And strategic staffing alignment efforts

This approach reflects the district's commitment to protecting direct instruction and student services whenever possible.

2. Vacancy Elimination Represents a Lower-Risk Starting Point

The elimination of vacant positions is one of the largest immediate opportunities identified.

Because many of these positions are already unfilled, the district can reduce expenditures while limiting immediate disruption to students and employees. Each vacancy is being individually reviewed to ensure critical instructional, safety, and compliance functions remain protected.

3. Class Size Waivers Create the Largest Single Savings Opportunity

At approximately $3.8 million, class size flexibility represents the largest single reduction strategy currently identified.

While this approach may preserve more employee positions districtwide compared to direct staffing reductions, the Board should carefully weigh:

- Potential increases in student-to-teacher ratios
- Teacher workload concerns
- Scheduling flexibility
- And community perception

District leadership believes this option may provide a more sustainable alternative to larger-scale reductions in personnel.

4. Employee Morale and Retention Risks

Several proposals directly affect employee compensation or work conditions, including:

- Central office furloughs
- And freezing salary step increases.

Together, these strategies generate approximately $3.4 million in savings but may create morale and retention concerns in an already competitive labor environment.

District leadership believes it is important for administrative and central office functions to participate in shared sacrifice before deeper school-based reductions are considered.

5. Operational Efficiency Reviews Continue

The district is also aggressively reviewing non-personnel expenditures and operational practices, including:

- Contracts,
- Software platforms,
- Travel,
- Overtime,
- Utilities,
- Department spending,
- And organizational structures.

While operational efficiencies alone will not resolve a budget gap of this size, leadership believes every dollar matters, and every department must contribute to the solution.

Threat-Level Evaluation Framework

To support transparency and strategic decision-making, each reduction strategy is being evaluated through a threat-level framework.

This process allows district leadership and the Board to better understand:

- Operational impact,
- Student impact,
- Staffing implications,
- Service reductions,
- And long-term sustainability considerations.

The goal is not simply to identify reductions, but to prioritize responsibly and strategically.

Priorities the District Is Working to Protect

Even amid financial challenges, the district remains committed to protecting:

- Core classroom instruction
- Literacy initiatives
- Student attendance support
- Special education compliance
- School safety
- Whole child supports
- And strategic priorities aligned to the district improvement plan

These areas remain central to the district's mission and long-term success.

Commitment to Transparency and Community Trust

District leadership recognizes that conversations regarding reductions are emotional and difficult for employees, families, and the community.

At this stage, the information presented represents an initial framework for discussion and planning rather than finalized decisions.

The district remains committed to:

- Engaging the Board throughout the process
- Communicating openly and transparently
- Evaluating the impact of each recommendation carefully
- And ensuring students remain at the center of every decision

In Summary

The responsibility before the district is twofold:

1. Remain fiscally responsible and sustainable
2. While remaining relentlessly student-centered

Those responsibilities must coexist.

The district recognizes the seriousness of these decisions and remains committed to approaching this work thoughtfully, strategically, and transparently.

Although difficult decisions may be necessary, the focus remains clear:

Protect students, preserve educational opportunities, and ensure the long-term financial stability of Bibb County School District.