

ESPLOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is an EDUCATION SPLOST (ESPLOST)?

An Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (ESPLOST) allows local school districts the option to ask voters to CONTINUE the **one penny sales tax** to help fund school improvements. It can be used to pay for capital projects or to retire debt but cannot be used to pay operating expenses, such as salaries. ESPLOSTs are enacted by a ballot referendum.

2. When is the ESPLOST vote?

The election is Tuesday, March 18, 2025. The polls will be open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

3. Why do we need ESPLOST?

ESPLOST funding is critical for the school district to respond to ongoing facilities, technology, and transportation needs. Pirate Nation has supported education for many years, passing six ESPLOST referendums. Passage of this ESPLOST would be a strong demonstration of the community's continued support for its schoolchildren.

4. Why an ESPLOST?

The education SPLOST is **not** a property tax. It provides a method of funding the cost of educational improvements and retires bond debt to which everyone, not just property owners, contributes. Additionally, the sales tax is paid by everyone who shops or stays in Pike County, including visitors. Remember if you shop in Barnesville, Griffin, McDonough, Newnan, Peachtree City, or Thomaston, you are helping fund their ESPLOST.

5. What would the school system do with the money raised from the SPLOST extension?

ESPLOST #7 will fund several key projects, including traffic modifications, purchasing new buses, upgrading instructional materials, expanding technology, upgrading facilities, and conducting essential building repairs and maintenance.

6. How much money would be raised, and how long would this sales tax be in place?

The ESPLOST extension is for a \$25.4 million limit or 5 years, whichever comes first.

7. Why is the school system proposing to sell bonds in the ESPLOST extension?

By selling bonds, the school system will be able to immediately address facility repairs and renovations. The sale of bonds helps lock out cost inflation.

8. Why isn't the money being used for teacher salaries?

State laws prohibit using ESPLOST proceeds for salaries.

9. Has the current ESPLOST been a success?

YES. ESPLOST funds were used to purchase new computer hardware, campus paving, new HVAC systems at the Middle School, and buses. Renovations were completed for the softball and baseball complexes, auditorium, and high school gym. Construction of the new tennis courts was completed, and land for a future campus was purchased.

10. Why should people who do not have children in school support the ESPLOST extension?

The ESPLOST extension helps take pressure off property taxes. Without ESPLOST, funds would be raised through property taxes to complete the required projects such as heating and cooling systems. Additionally, the children are not the only ones who benefit from good schools. The social and economic strength of a community is influenced by the school system. Good schools mean strong property values, well-prepared citizens, a thriving labor market, and an inviting atmosphere for both living and working. One of the key questions asked by industrial/commercial or residential prospects looking to move into a community is, "What is the quality of the schools?"

11. Will the school system need to continue to renew the ESPLOST in future years?

This will be a decision for the future Board of Education and the voters. However, the passage of previous ESPLOSTs has enabled Pike County to have modern school facilities and equipment without creating a burden on property taxes. For this reason, it would be wise to consider ESPLOST renewal in years to come.

12. What would happen if the ESPLOST did not pass?

Without the extension of the current ESPLOST, most of the proposed projects could not be accomplished without property tax increases. ESPLOST provides funding to support campus and instructional resource improvements, maximizing opportunities for Pike County students.

13. Is the ESPLOST different from the Pike County Commission SPLOST?

YES. The education SPLOST is a special sales tax approved by the citizens for improvements of school facilities, debt reduction, and items such as school buses and technology equipment. The county SPLOST is a special tax designed to fund county projects identified by the county government.