Q: What is an E-SPLOST for education?
A: An Education Special Local Option Sales Tax is a one-cent sales tax on all retail sales in Bulloch County.

Q: Who pays the one-cent tax?
A: Anyone who makes a purchase in Bulloch County pays the one-cent tax. This includes all local residents and any visitors to our community. In fact it’s estimated that nearly 40 percent of ESPLOST revenue comes from people visiting Bulloch County.

Q: Is this an additional sales tax?
A: No. The E-SPLOST already exists in Bulloch County and will continue through December 2018. The referendum calls for voters to consider continuing the one-cent sales tax through 2023.

Q: Does and E-SPLOST eliminate the need for additional property taxes for education?
A: An E-SPLOST does not eliminate property taxes or property tax increases, but it may reduce the need or extent property taxes of future millage rate increase. An E-SPLOST also causes the tax burden to be shared more fairly among property and non-property owners alike.

The ad valorem tax rate of Bulloch County Schools is the lowest in this area. Also, since a sales tax is tied directly to spending, everyone contributes proportionately. Without an E-SPLOST, the burden of funding capital projects would come from property tax increases. An E-SPLOST generates the equivalent of more than seven mils of property tax annually.

Q: How will E-SPLOST revenue be used?
A: By law, E-SPLOST revenue can be used only for certain capital projects like buildings, furnishings, buses, safety and security equipment, and computers. It cannot be used for salaries or for the day-to-day operational expenses of the school system. If approved, no E-SPLOST IV revenue will be used to retire outstanding capital project debt from previous E-SPLOSTs. Revenue would be used 100 percent for approved projects from those recommended.

Q: Why is the school system not proposing to build new schools with this E-SPLOST Referendum?
A: With the exception of Stilson Elementary School, the Bulloch County Board of Education has replaced all of its aging schools with E-SPLOST I, II, and III funds. Some schools like Brooklet, Stilson and Nevils have received expansions or renovations.

Every five years the school system takes an inventory of every room within each school building to determine its capacity and any new construction and/or renovation needs. According to the most recent inventory, all of the school system’s current facilities are under capacity. The State of Georgia will not provide new construction grants if campuses are under capacity, and needs cannot be based on facility age or capacity projections.
The school system did qualify for renovation funds from the state. These funds were used for roof, HVAC and building upgrades at Nevils and Stilson Elementary Schools during the 2016-17 school year.

Q: How will this benefit me? I don’t have a child in the public school system.
A: The entire community benefits from a quality school system with modern facilities, appropriate technology and enhanced safety equipment. The social and economic strength a community are greatly influenced by its public school system. Also, having a quality K-12 school system is a key factor in Bulloch County’s ability to attract new business, industry and residents.

Q: How can I register to vote in Bulloch County?
A: Visit the Bulloch County Board of Elections which is located in the County Annex at 113 N. Main St, Ste. 201 or visit their website and register online. For online registration, allow up to four weeks for processing. To vote in the November 7, 2017 election which features the E-SPLOST referendum, you must be registered to vote by October 10, 2017.

Q: What types of projects will be funded if voters approve a continuation of the one-cent sales tax?
A: A fourth E-SPLOST is expected to generate approximately $50-$55 million. These are examples of the types of projects that are being recommended for approval to the Board of Education by the Facilities Committee, the E-SPLOST Committee and district administrators:

- Provide safety & security upgrades to schools (improve outdoor security lighting and security cameras, security badges and entry identification for employees, update safety radios from analog to digital to match Bulloch County’s upcoming E-911 system upgrade)
- Improve classroom technology resources and tools for students and teachers
- Improve classroom furnishings and learning spaces; STEM Lab tools & supplies
- Support classroom technology use with upgrades to technology infrastructure (network switches, firewalls, web filters, wireless access points, servers and storage equipment, backup generation for data centers, and refresh of telecommunications equipment)
- Renovate existing school cafeterias, gymnasiums, campus sidewalks, bathrooms, parking
- Develop new and renovate existing high school athletic tracks
- Develop athletic complexes for middle schools
- Upgrade playground equipment district wide
- New school buses