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## County publishes official Education Impact Fee official version published; starts in March



Passed in November by the County Commission, an official version of the Education Impact Fee plan [went up on the county's website \(http://www.williamsoncounty-tn.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15658\)](http://www.williamsoncounty-tn.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15658) this week.

Every new home built in Williamson County starting in March will pay a fee to help finance new schools.

The new Education Impact Fee, which could create more than \$180 million for new school construction over the next six years, will be due when a builder applies for a permit to construct a residential structure on a lot that did not previously have a home on it.

The fee will phase in. Beginning on March 1, permits issued will be assessed 50 percent of the fee. After Sept. 1, the full fee will be charged.

"We all know residential development is not covering the cost of the burden it creates, and with schools it takes most of our budget. It crowds out other needs, like roads, police and fire, and public health, and so we think this is very important," Todd Kaestner, District 9 commissioner, said when the resolution passed. "This really isn't liberal, this isn't conservative, it is just math."

The graduated fee starts at \$3,670 per single-family home and goes up to \$13,566 as square footage increases, under the assumption that a larger home, i.e. more bedrooms, will have more school-age children living there during the lifespan of the house.

Because Franklin Special School District already has a similar fee, it is lower inside FSSD boundaries.

## Fee Schedule

Outside FSSD:

1,799 square feet or less: \$3,711  
1,800 to 2,199 square feet: \$6,551  
2,200 to 2,599 square feet: \$8,778  
2,600 to 2,999 square feet: \$10,639  
3,000 to 3,399 square feet: \$12,182  
3,400 square feet or more: \$13,566

Inside FSSD:

1,799 square feet or less: \$1,687  
1,800 to 2,199 square feet: \$2,820  
2,200 to 2,599 square feet: \$3,688  
2,600 to 2,999 square feet: \$4,411  
3,000 to 3,399 square feet: \$4,989  
3,400 square feet or more: \$5,520

There are some exceptions to the fee:

- Senior housing
- Expansions or remodeling of an existing unit
- Construction of additional buildings that will not have an additional
- Government buildings
- Non-profits and qualified buildings, like those built by Habitat for Humanity

The county can go back and change the rates at any time to adjust, and has to re-approve the fee every three years.

Williamson County Schools projections over the next decade prompted the county commission to create a task force last year to look at impact fees as a source of future funding. The most recent numbers suggest up to 20,000 new students could enter the district, and construction costs are estimated at \$550 million for up to 21 new schools.

The task force commissioned a study, presented over the summer, and since discussed their options in a [number of meetings \(http://franklinhomepage.com/final-task-force-meets-before-vote-on-education-impact-fee/\)](http://franklinhomepage.com/final-task-force-meets-before-vote-on-education-impact-fee/) with the public and with stakeholders.

Two fee options were created. Commissioners chose the option that included the graduated fees. The one not chosen included a flat fee for all single-family homes and another for multi-family homes.

"I think that most people understand and know we are trying to figure out a way that new growth, new folks moving in, will share the burden, and that it is not put on the existing residents," County Mayor Rogers Anderson said at the time of the passage.

If development continues at current rates, the fee could bring in up to \$180 million over the next six years, according to Carson Bise, of TischlerBise.

TischlerBise conducted the study and presented the fee and its effects at various meetings and presentations.

"Unfortunately it is not a panacea, it may just be a band-aid for a bullet wound," District 11 Commissioner Brian Beathard said at the time of the passage. "But I do not want to see that band-aid removed."

While the builders of new construction will pay the fee up front, ultimately it will not come out of their pocket but instead their profit margin.

"Those most affected by the fee will be local, small, high-quality builders," Bise said. "Most likely this cost will be pushed onto the consumer, the home buyer."

