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BGR Media Release

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BGR Examines Proposed Jefferson Parish School Tax

Today BGR releases *On the Ballot: Jefferson Parish School Tax, November 18, 2017*. On November 18, Jefferson Parish voters will decide whether to authorize a new 8.45-mill property tax for their public schools. The proposed 10-year millage would provide additional funding to increase the pay of teachers and other employees. The parishwide tax would generate approximately \$27.9 million in the initial year. The report and a one-page summary are available on BGR's website, www.bgr.org.

BGR Position

AGAINST. BGR recognizes that attracting and retaining high-quality public school employees is important for Jefferson Parish. However, BGR cannot support the tax because the School Board did not (1) undertake the comprehensive study necessary to justify the proposed pay raises and (2) analyze the pay raises in the context of competing system priorities and revenue demands.

The School Board has rushed into this millage proposition without a comprehensive benchmarking analysis to determine whether the pay increases are fair, reasonable and appropriately scaled to the labor market. Instead, the School Board approved across-the-board, fixed-dollar pay raises that apply categorically, without adjustment for variables such as current salary, job classification, performance or length of service. It has

also shown little evidence of a problem retaining employees other than early-career teachers.

Further, the School Board did not carefully consider the pay raise proposal in the context of other system priorities, including facilities. Before the School Board asks voters for a major tax increase, it should comprehensively examine its funding needs and priorities.

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BGR is a private, nonprofit, independent research organization. Since its founding in 1932, it has been dedicated to informed public policy-making and the effective use of public resources in the Greater New Orleans area. For more information, call 525-4152 or visit BGR's website, www.bgr.org.