



Dec. 14, 2017

Media contact: Matt Reed, PIO/Assistant superintendent  
321-633-1000, ext. 796

[Reed.matthew@brevardschools.org](mailto:Reed.matthew@brevardschools.org)

## **Independent watchdog committee: BPS spending sales tax for facilities the way voters mandated**

VIERA, Florida – Brevard Public Schools continues to spend money from a one-half-cent sales surtax for facility renewal and repairs the way voters were promised when they passed the levy in 2014.

That's the main finding by the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee, an 11-member watchdog group from across Brevard County that was established by voters as part of the tax initiative. Committee Chairman Gary Shiffrin called its most recent annual report "good news" for taxpayers.

Overall, 75 out of 83 BPS schools have received some type of facility investment, primarily for failing air-conditioning units and electrical and mechanical systems, says the committee's annual report. The document includes a summary with photos (included below) of major projects completed in the past year.

Where the surtax money has gone:

- 79.28% - Facility renewal
- 12.8% - Education technology
- 2.9% - Security-related building upgrades
- 5.1% - Construction contingency

The sales surtax began January 1, 2015 and continues through December 31, 2021. It was estimated to generate \$198 million in capital funding for a list of specific, critical repairs and replacement projects at schools across the Space Coast. Many of those schools were built during the Apollo era 40-50 years ago.

Small but significant portions of surtax revenue have been spent on security-related improvements and modernizing or replacing technology used in education. Those uses, too, were approved by Brevard County voters in 2014.

Higher-than-estimated revenue from the tax allowed the School Board to accelerate the voter-approved security projects, which were substantially completed by the start of the 2018-2019 school year. Security projects included the installation of high-quality perimeter fencing and gates to create at every school a “single point of access” where remote-locking doors and cameras control and monitor visitor access.

Unfortunately, Shiffrin said, conditions at schools on the voter-approved project list have continued to deteriorate since 2014.

“Facility renewal investment has been largely focused on mechanical and electrical systems, although the need for building envelope and plumbing system improvements is becoming more apparent.”

[Click HERE for the full ICOC report and a list of 2017-2018 surtax-funded major projects.](#)