

During its June 9 work session, the Fulton County School Board received a status update on Capital Plan 2022, the five-year plan that sets scheduling and budgeting priorities for school construction, building additions and renovations, technology innovations and device upgrades, as well as transportation and safety improvements. Capital Plan 2022 is funded primarily by SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax), the one-penny sales tax for education.

Chief Financial Officer Marvin Dereef and Chief Operations Officer Patrick Burke shared that the School Board's conservative budgeting, constant oversight of revenue and expenditures, and strategic use of capital reserve funds has kept the school system's capital program well positioned to weather the economic downturn caused by COVID-19.

Because of this, the school district can celebrate these activities:

- Construction continues at the new STEM-focused magnet schools – Innovation Academy and Global Impact Academy – as well as the replacement Crabapple Middle School, the final phase of Riverwood High School and the new Transportation/Maintenance facility in Fairburn.
- Major renovation is in progress at Campbell Elementary School, Seaborn Lee Elementary School, State Bridge Crossing Elementary School, Stonewall Tell Elementary School and Chattahoochee High School.
- Media center renovations are being completed this summer at Bear Creek, Elkins Pointe, Haynes Bridge, Sandy Springs, and Woodland middle schools.
- New roofs are being installed at Hopewell Middle School and Summit Hill Elementary School.
- Fire alarm and other safety improvements are being made at North Springs High School.
- Artificial turf is being replaced at Langston Hughes High School.
- Surveillance camera systems are being upgraded at 15 elementary schools.
- Forty-one propane-powered school buses with seat belts are being added to the fleet, bringing the total number of alternative fuel buses to 422.
- Students in grades 3-5 will receive personal learning devices, such as a tablet or laptop, whereas they previously shared classroom sets while middle and high school students were issued individual take-home devices.
- The second phase of the district's new student information system, Infinite Campus, will provide information management modules for Exceptional Education, 504, and RTI (Response to Intervention) students.
- Additional schools have transitioned to the new Blackboard platform and are launching improved websites.
- Migration to a new enterprise resource planning tool (Atlas) continues to progress.
- Computers for staff, including 4,000 laptops for new and existing teachers, have been deployed.
- Network equipment is being refreshed in all schools and in the primary data center.
- By January 2021, the district will be debt-free, as SPLOST is funding the pay-off for general obligation bonds.

While those projects continue without major impact, there has been a significant decline in SPLOST collections due to conditions created by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, measures are being taken to protect the district's financial position, requiring a closer look at some Capital Plan 2022 project schedules and budgets.

Construction projects currently in progress will move ahead as planned. However, before awarding any new construction contracts, the district must ensure that adequate funds are available. Projects in the design phase will continue, and the School Board will begin approving new construction contracts as early as September once the district has additional revenue data to show there is funding available.

The technology program is adopting a similar conservative approach by focusing on cost saving opportunities. For example, the district is adding less expensive options to its student device inventory and saving \$750,000 in the process. Other savings will be realized by slowing the rate in which computers and networks are refreshed.

Moving forward, the School Board will review capital budgets on a regular basis throughout the year as contracts are awarded. Updated SPLOST revenue projections are expected in September, giving the School Board an opportunity to gauge its fiscal ability to approve the next series of construction contracts.