

# The Half-Cent for Schools: Revitalizing Our Community's Schools



Alachua County's schools are in sad shape. Old, outdated classrooms, inadequate science labs, leaking roofs, air conditioners that constantly break down, portables crowding out playgrounds, students eating lunch at 9:30 in the morning—the evidence is everywhere.

Our students need and deserve schools that are safe, comfortable and promote learning. That's why the Half-Cent for Schools will be on the November 2018 ballot. It's a half-cent sales tax that would raise money to revitalize local schools. That means renovating and remodeling class-rooms, science labs, media centers and other spaces; replacing and repairing deteriorating roofs, air conditioners and other items; replacing portables with permanent classrooms; and other improvements to our existing schools.



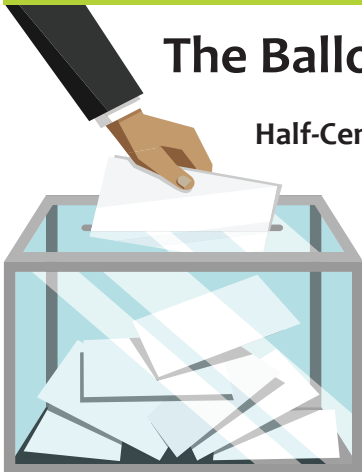
Some of the funding would also be used to create additional space for the new students who are expected to enroll in our schools in the next ten years and beyond and for those who are attending already overcrowded schools.

Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that we have a safe, healthy and high-quality learning environment for all Alachua County Public School students!



## The Ballot Language

### Half-Cent Sales Surtax to Improve School Facilities



Should the School Board of Alachua County levy a half-cent sales surtax to finance safety and security improvements; repair, renovation and remodeling of Board-owned schools, including modernization of classrooms,

science labs and other spaces; technology; elimination of portable classrooms; new construction; land acquisition and improvement; and other school facilities projects; with oversight by an independent citizens' committee? The tax would begin January 1, 2019, and last twelve years.

- \_\_\_\_\_ For the Half-Cent Tax  
\_\_\_\_\_ Against the Half-Cent Tax



## Safety and Security Key Elements of Half-Cent for Schools Initiative

Most of our schools were designed and built long before security became such an important consideration. The district has made many safety-related improvements—fencing, gates, locked doors, cameras and other items. But more needs to be done, including limiting access to our campuses. That will take a lot more resources than we have available, and certainly much more than the state has provided. In fact, Safe Schools funding from the state wasn't even enough to cover the cost of having a full-time school resource officer/deputy in every school! That's why safety and security improvements are at the top of the Half-Cent for Schools ballot language. We want to ensure that teachers and students can focus on their primary mission—teaching and learning!



## Why a Half-Cent Sales Tax?

Decision-makers in Tallahassee have cut facilities funding to local schools by more than \$168 million during the last ten years. No wonder the district hasn't been able to do much more than put a very small bandage on the problem.



The half-cent sales tax is the only option available to Florida school districts for raising the amount of money needed to revitalize existing schools, relieve overcrowding and properly maintain facilities over the long run.

More than twenty Florida districts already have a voter-approved sales tax for facilities. If it's approved here, the half-cent would raise the existing sales tax in Alachua County to 7 cents. That's the same amount currently charged in all nine surrounding counties. Between 25% and 30% of the revenue would be paid by out-of-town visitors who come for Gator games, Gatornationals and other events. It would not be charged on food, medicine and other exempted items, and even for big ticket items like cars, the maximum cost would be \$25.

The half-cent would cost the average Alachua County family about \$5 a month—a small investment for something that will benefit our students, neighborhoods and county for years to come!



## Election Day is November 6

### The Deadline to Register to Vote is October 9<sup>th</sup>

**Local citizens have a number of options when it comes to registering AND voting!**

**To register:** You can register to vote online, or you can download or pick up an application and mail or deliver it back to the office of the Alachua County Supervisor of Elections. You can also register in person at the office, during a voter registration drive or through a designated voter registration agency.

**To vote:** You can vote by mail, take advantage of early voting or vote at your precinct on Election Day.

More information about all your options are available at [votealachua.com](http://votealachua.com).



## Be Heard! Vote!

## A Community Benefit

Good schools are vital to our community's well-being. They attract new residents, businesses and jobs, which all boost the local economy. They also raise local property values.

If the sales tax passes, it will create hundreds of local, private sector jobs. There will be a lot of work for the carpenters, electricians, roofers, plumbers and other professionals who will actually be working on our schools.

Most importantly, high quality schools will prepare Alachua County's young people to be engaged and productive members of our community and society.

For more information, visit <http://bit.ly/2n1sqn> or call the Public Information Office at (352) 955-7545