

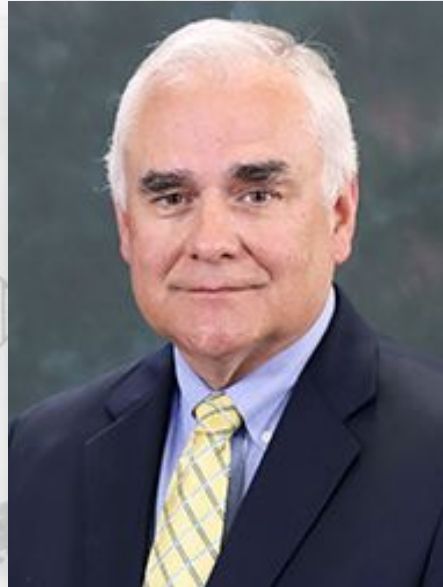
Presented by: Horry County Schools
SCSBA Annual Conference
February 15-18, 2024

Strategies for a FINANCIAL REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN

Horry County Schools



David Cox
Board Chair



Neil James
Board Vice-Chair



Kenny Generette
Staff Attorney



Lisa Bourcier
*Director of Strategic
Communications*

Purpose

To share useful strategies to get your voters to approve financial referendums

- All districts, no matter what the size
- Any type of financial referendum
 - Bond referendum
 - Capital Improvement Sales and Use Tax



Background

November 2008 - Horry County voters approved the Education Capital Improvement Sales and Use Sales Tax (“Penny Sales Tax”)

- Reduced the millage levied on behalf of the school district for debt service
- Provided a revenue stream to help pay for growth
- Funded capital improvements for public schools and the county’s two institutions of higher education
- Collected over \$900 million, with 80% of that amount going to Horry County Schools.
- Would sunset in March 2024



Background continued

Horry County Board of Education ordered a referendum in the November 2022 elections to reimpose the tax for an additional 15 years.

- Expected to generate over \$1.9 billion in revenue over its 15 years
- Horry County Schools would receive roughly \$1.55 billion







Legal Requirements

- South Carolina Code § 8-13-1346(C) - prohibits the use of public resources to influence the outcome of an election or ballot measure; informational materials concerning a ballot measure.

Legal Requirements continued

Under state law, school district employees and elected officials can only educate the voters on a ballot question and cannot advocate one way or the other.

Information provided must not be an attempt to convince voters to take a particular action, but rather it must be a balanced presentation of the facts such as the publication's style, tenor, and timing.

|   |   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continues the revenue source for debt service.• Allows the school district to keep the current debt service millage on all property, including houses, businesses, vehicles, land, and personal property.• Generates over \$1.9 billion for school facilities and capital improvement needs for Horry County Schools and the county's two post-secondary schools.• Broadens the tax base by allowing everyone, including non-residents, to help pay for school facilities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Returns the millage for debt service on taxes for houses, businesses, vehicles, land, and personal property. At this time, the school district cannot predict what the increase in debt service millage will be, but without access to the 1% sales tax revenues, the school district will need to fund capital projects using general obligation bonds, which will require an increase in the millage levied for debt service. (Coastal Carolina University and Horry-Georgetown Technical College do not levy taxes for debt service).• Continues funding current and future school buildings and capital improvements for the school district by property taxes. |

So now what?

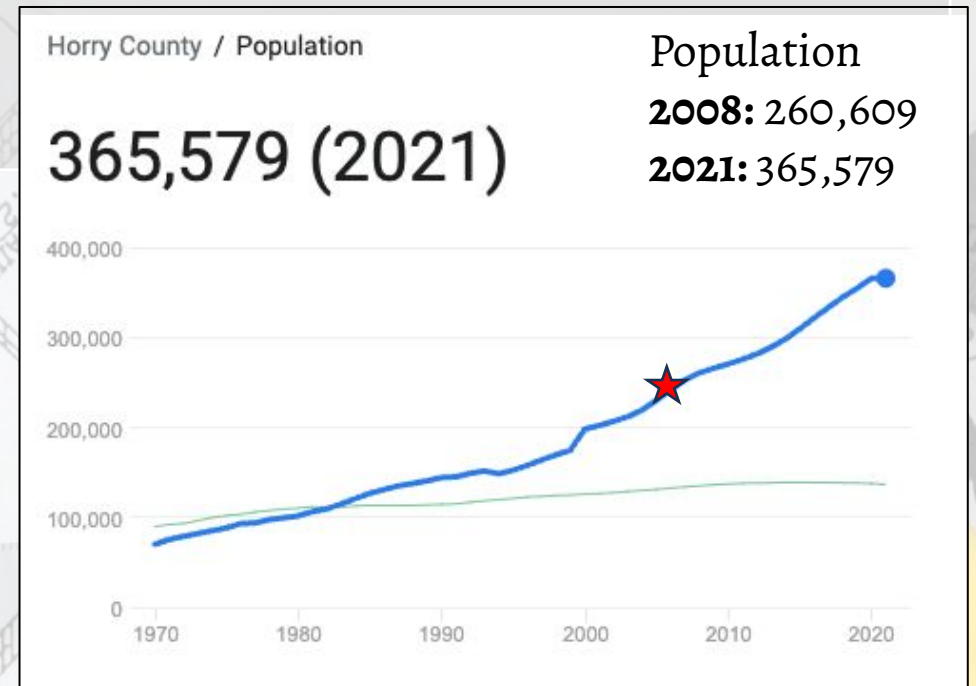
1. Who was our target audience?
2. How could we campaign while following the law?
3. Who did we need to collaborate with?
4. What information did our audience need?
5. How were we going to get our information out?

Who was our target audience?

Horry County voters

Challenge:

- The influx of new residents since the original passage in 2008
- Need to explain to new residents that if this was passed again, nothing would change -- it would just maintain what is already in place
- Prove to be good steward of tax dollars



How could we campaign while following the law?

Met with outside legal counsel to make sure we were following the law



Who did we need to collaborate with?

Board of Education
Superintendent
Superintendent's Cabinet

We wanted to ensure our campaign met all expectations and remained within legal parameters



Who did we need to collaborate with?



Coastal Carolina University

Horry Georgetown Technical College

We wanted to ensure our messaging was similar and cohesive so as not to confuse voters.

We wanted to ensure that voters knew it was one tax and not multiple taxes from multiple educational institutions.

What information did our audience need?

- FAQ in layperson's terms
- Pictures and budgets of past capital projects that the tax allowed HCS to complete

Capital Projects Completed Since 2008

Click on the icons below to see a listing of capital projects and facilities that have been completed since the passing of the 1% sales tax in 2008. Projects completed as of June 30, 2022.



New Schools
Built (\$350.9
million)



Additions
and/or
Renovations
(\$98.5 million)



Loop Roads,
Fire Lanes &
Paving (\$19.9
million)



HVAC Projects
(\$31.7 million)



Roofing
Projects (\$7.4
million)



Canopy
Projects (\$5.8
million)



Playground/Outside
Improvements
(\$2.9 million)



Interior
Finishes and
Furniture
(\$12.5 million)



Athletic
Improvements
(\$35.2 million)



Technology
(\$95 million)



Fire Alarms
and Security
(\$8.5 million)



Drainage and
Irrigation
(\$11.9 million)

HELPFUL LINKS

2022 Penny Sales Tax Informational Flyer

Article 4, Section 4-10-410 Education Capital Improvements Sales and Use Tax

HCS Student Population Historical Data

Horry County Board of Education Resolution and Referendum Question

November 8, 2022 Ballot Referendum Question

1% Sales Tax FAQs

[Expand All](#)

What is the Educational Capital Improvements Sales and Use Sales Tax Act (the "Sales Tax Act")?

The Sales Tax Act became law on June 12, 2008, to provide an additional option for funding capital projects of South Carolina school districts with certain restrictions. The Sales Tax Act authorizes the school district and other qualifying South Carolina school districts to impose the sales tax if approved by the voters. The 1% sales tax has been imposed in several other qualifying South Carolina school districts.

How did Horry County Schools fund capital projects before the imposition of the 1% sales tax was approved by the voters in 2008?

South Carolina's Constitution authorizes school districts to issue bonds to fund capital projects (construction of new schools and improvements to existing schools) but limits those bonds to 8% of the total assessed property values within the school district. The debt service on these bonds is paid from property taxes. In 2008, Horry County Schools' debt service millage was 28 mills. Today it is 10 mills.

How would the renewal of the 1% sales tax work?

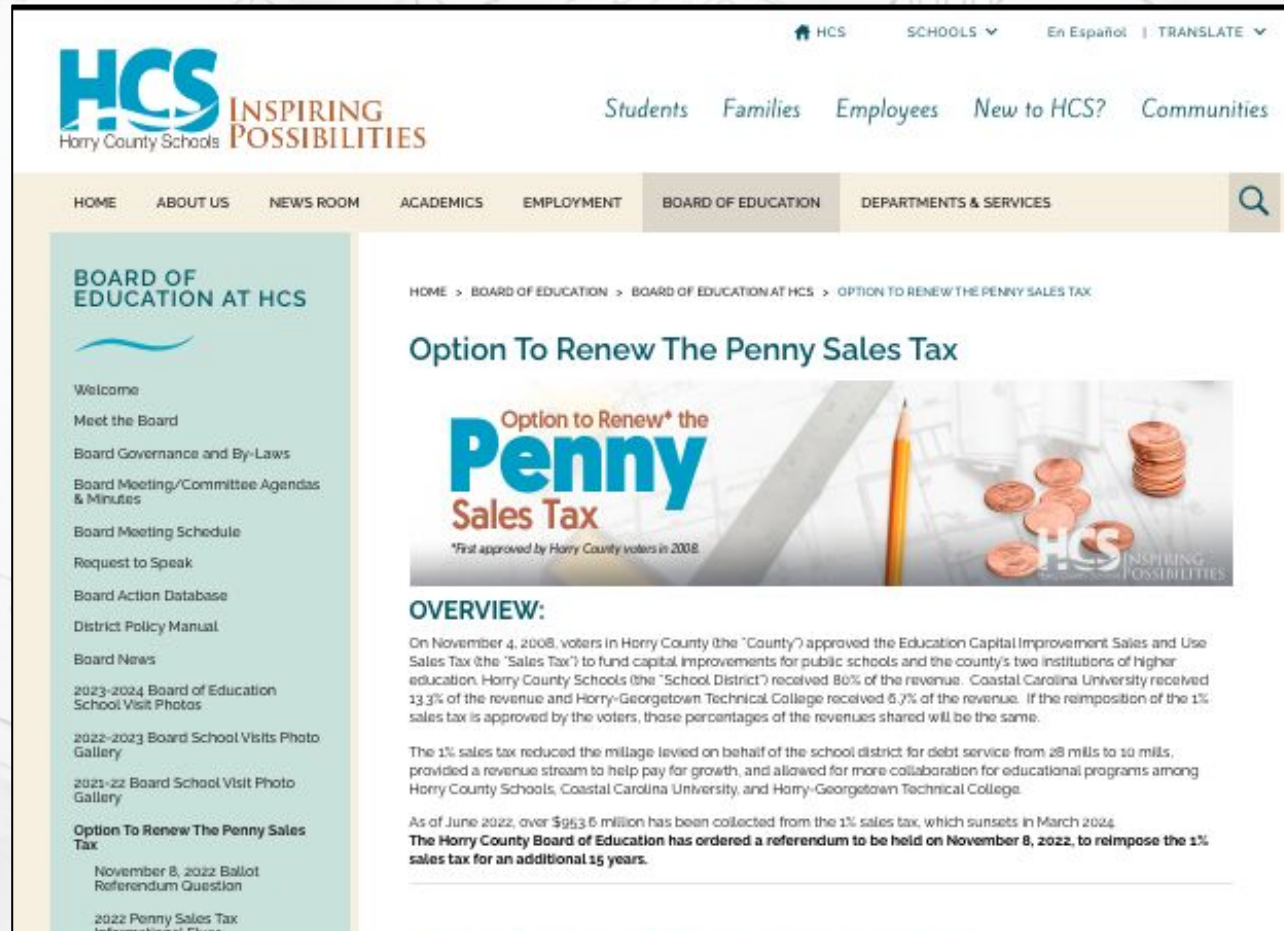
How long would the renewal of the 1% sales tax last?

How would the 1% sales tax be used?

Can the 1% sales tax be spent to hire teachers or used for other operational costs?

How were we going to get our information out?

Website



Capital Projects Completed Since 2008

Click on the icons below to see a listing of capital projects and facilities that have been completed since the passing of the 1% sales tax in 2008. Projects completed as of June 30, 2022.



New Schools Built (\$350.9 million)



Additions and/or Renovations (\$98.5 million)



Loop Roads, Fire Lanes & Paving (\$19.9 million)



HVAC Projects (\$31.7 million)



Roofing Projects (\$7.4 million)



Canopy Projects (\$5.8 million)



Playground/Outside Improvements (\$2.9 million)



Interior Finishes and Furniture (\$12.5 million)



Athletic



Technology



Fire Alarms




Drainage and

How were we going to get our information out?

ABOUT THE PENNY SALES TAX



On November 8, 2022, voters in Horry County will decide by referendum how to fund the future building needs and capital improvements of public schools and the county's two schools of higher education. The current 1% Education Capital Improvement Sales and Use Tax (approved in 2008) sunsets in March 2024, and the reauthorization of the 1% sales tax will impose the sales tax for an additional 15 years. The 1% sales tax provides a revenue stream to help pay for growth, and it allows for more collaboration for educational programs among Horry County Schools, Coastal Carolina University, and Horry-Georgetown Technical College.

In 2008, the 1% sales tax passage reduced the millage levied on behalf of Horry County Schools for debt service from 28 mills to 10 mills. While the value of a mill changes annually, the reduction by 18 mills is currently equivalent to about \$48.6 million. If approved, the 1% sales tax allows debt service millage to remain as it is today at 10 mills.



SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE INFORMATION


Visit horrycountyschools.net/penny for more information on the 1% sales tax and to review the Nov. 8, 2022, Ballot Referendum Question.



Option to Renew* the Penny Sales Tax

Information on the 1% sales tax to fund capital improvements/facilities for education.

*First approved by Horry County voters in 2008.




HCS


Horry County Schools

INSPIRING
POSSIBILITIES

P.O. Box 26005 • 335 Four Mile Rd. • Conway, SC 29526
843.488.6700 • horrycountyschools.net



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Tri-fold flyers:

All schools' front lobbies

District office front lobby

Board of Education meetings

Speaking engagements

Chamber meetings

Commerce Legislative Luncheon

How were we going to get our information out?



Option to Renew* the

Penny

Sales Tax

**First approved by Horry County voters in 2008.*

HCS INSPIRING
Horry County Schools POSSIBILITIES



Business Cards

How were we going to get our information out?

Emails to stakeholders

HCS Information - October 14, 2022

This message has completed. Blackboard will no longer attempt to deliver it.


Progress Content Details

HCS Information - October

Languages

English (87%)

Email



Option to Renew* the Penny Sales Tax

*First approved by Horry County voters in 2008.

On November 8, 2022, Horry County Schools will have a referendum question on the election ballot regarding the option to renew a penny sales tax (1%) which was originally approved by the voters in 2008 for capital improvements.

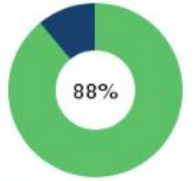
For more information on the upcoming penny sales tax vote, please visit <https://www.horrycountyschools.net/penny>

HCS Information - October 14, 2022

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Progress Content Details

Delivered



88%

Delivered: 54232
Undelivered: 6730

HCS Updates - October 14, 2022

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Progress Content Details

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| Message | HCS Updates - October 14, 2022 |
| Category | Miscellaneous |
| Status | Complete |
| Sender | HCS School District (HORRY COUNTY SCHOOLS) |
| Recipients | Faith Based Cabinet 22-23 at HORRY COUNTY SCHOOLS Top 65 Oct 2022 at HORRY COUNTY SCHOOLS Business Cabinet 2022 at HORRY COUNTY SCHOOLS View recipients |

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|------------|---|
| Sender | HCS School District (HORRY COUNTY SCHOOLS) |
| Recipients | Preferred Language Not English at HORRY COUNTY SCHOOLS View recipients |
| Created | Oct 14, 2022 02:13 PM EDT |
| Start time | Oct 14, 2022 04:02 PM EDT |



How were we going to get our information out?

Interviews and
press releases

Presentations to
local county groups



Lisa Bourcier

From: Lusk, Holly M. <HLusk@bellamy.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2022 2:23 PM
To: Lisa Bourcier
Subject: RE: Speaking Opportunity - Chicora Rotary

*** NON-HCS EMAIL ADDRESS *** This email originated from outside of the school district. Do not click links, open attachments or provide personal information unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Afternoon, Lisa:

I'm glad we could fit you into the schedule! I definitely think our members will appreciate having an opportunity to learn more about the penny tax prior to seeing it on the ballot. I have you down on our schedule for Friday, 11/4, at 12:30 PM. The Dunes Club provides us with a projector or a TV that allows us to connect a laptop for powerpoint presentations so as long as you have your computer with the powerpoint, we should be able to hook that up for you to use. I think the only thing I will need from you is a short bio or description of your presentation by Monday or Tuesday of the week of 11/4. We always send out an email about our program each week, which includes the bio/description.

Otherwise, if you have any questions, just let me know!

Sincerely,

Holly

From: Lisa Bourcier [mailto:LBourcier@horrycountyschools.net]
Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2022 1:28 PM
To: Lusk, Holly M. <HLusk@bellamy.com>
Subject: FW: Speaking Opportunity - Chicora Rotary

Holly, thank you so much for replying back to Ashley regarding this opportunity. Yes, November 4, at 12:30 p.m. would be just perfect. Likely I will be the one coming to speak with your group on behalf of Horry County Schools. Please let me know if you need anything additional from me and also if by chance we plan to do a PowerPoint, will there be equipment available at the Dunes Club? Thanks again for this opportunity.

Lisa H. Bourcier

Director of Strategic Communications & Community Engagement
335 Four Mile Road | Conway, SC 29526
Tel 843.488.6836 | lbourcier@horrycountyschools.net

HCS representatives
spoke at 23 local civic
organizations and events
in the month preceding
the vote

The results!

HORRY COUNTY - 1% SALES TAX FOR EDUCATION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT

| | Votes | Percent |
|--------------|--------|--------------|
| YES ✓ | 80,102 | 68.3% |
| NO | 37,182 | 31.7% |

Updated: 1 year ago

100% reporting

Questions?

