2022 National School Public Relations Association

• **Gold Medallion Entry** – Bond/Finance Campaign

• **Mansfield Independent School District** – Mansfield, TX
  PreK-12 School District | 35,000+ Students
ABOUT MANSFIELD INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mansfield Independent School District (MISD) is a premier school district located in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. The district encompasses more than 94 square miles serving more than 35,000 students in 49 schools. MISD has been an A-rated school district by the Texas Education Agency for two consecutive years. The district’s scores also continuously surpass regional and state averages.

MISD PENNY SWAP

MISD reached a crucial point in which its school financing had to be restructured. The 86th Texas Legislature passed comprehensive school finance and property tax reform legislation, which reduced school property tax rates and applied a compression mechanism that would reduce rates over time. This leaves districts with very little growth in revenue because state aid is funded based on property tax revenues and enrollment.

In Texas, school district budgets are funded by two different tax rates: a maintenance and operations (M&O) rate which essentially funds all operating expenses, including instruction, salaries, maintaining school buildings, student programs and schools of choice; and an interest and sinking (I&S) rate which funds bond debt.

A Voter-Approval Tax Rate Election (VATRE), or Penny Swap, would allow MISD to increase its M&O tax rate by 13 cents while lowering the I&S rate by the same 1 cents, which would not increase the total tax rate but would generate $24.7 million annually in additional revenue.

A Penny Swap is something that the district has been considering since 2017 in order to maximize state funding. District leadership discussed the possibilities of a Penny Swap back in 2017, but the focus turned to the passing of the 2017 bond in order to alleviate crowding in schools. Leadership revisited the topic in 2019, but then the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and the district was focused on providing quality education and services in a unique way.

As MISD stays focused on quality instruction and programming, including school of choice options, families are provided more educational opportunities. Thus, district administration felt that the 2021-2022 school year was the best time to approach the topic again and work to truly maximize state funding.
• After researching other options to bring in more revenue, such as open enrollment and dipping into “rainy day” funds, the Mansfield ISD School Board called for a Penny Swap. Election Day was set to be Nov. 2.

• Early polls stated that November 2020 was set to be a historic turnout due to the presidential election.

• Presidential elections are traditionally more polarizing, so the district had to contend against voters who were more contentious than usual.

• Nationally, trust in public education has dropped. An October 2021 Ipsos survey found American public trust in teachers has declined by 6 percentage points since 2019. Overall, teachers are the fourth most trusted profession in the U.S., but public trust in teachers has dipped from 63% in 2019 to 57% in 2021. This could all play into voter approval of the Penny Swap.

• The November 2020 election occurred during heightened tensions because of COVID-19 protocol disagreements and other social tensions in the community.

• According to the U.S. Census, a higher share of women turn out to vote versus men. Also, voter turnout is historically highest among those ages 65 to 74—a population that is not usually as engaged in district news and operations.

• A voter analysis was conducted for the Mansfield ISD community to see who historically votes and where there may be opportunities of improvement to increase turnout in certain areas.

• According to the latest Mansfield ISD parent survey, parents rate the district favorably across a variety of measures.

• Even though direct email is reported to be the top source in which parents get district information, parents rely on principal newsletters and social media as well.
Before the Penny Swap was called by the MISD School Board meeting in August, planning for how that would look began in June 2021.

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUPS

Planning consisted of community focus group meetings so that there could be feedback and buy-in about the proposed plan. Parents, community members, business leaders, volunteers and other stakeholders were part of the group. The meetings provided a gauge of community sentiments, which points needed to be explained more, what the community currently likes about the district and more.

From the feedback received, the message was paired down into five main points:

1. **Maintain Quality Instruction, Student Programs & Choice**
   MISD believes in the Power of Choice and has created opportunities for parents and students to choose the educational pathway and offerings that is the best fit for them. Additional state revenue from the Penny Swap would allow MISD to continue offering specialized programs and academies.

2. **Retain Quality Teachers**
   MISD is committed to hiring and maintaining a diverse, highly-qualified staff. Funds from the Penny Swap can be used for teacher and staff salaries, allowing the district to maintain competitive salaries, benefits, and professional development opportunities designed to retain the best staff to teach our students.

3. **Uphold Safety & Security Standards**
   The safety and well-being of MISD students and staff members is the district’s top priority. The Penny Swap would allow the district to maintain an MISD officer on every campus, support the MISD Police Department and effectively manage threats.

4. **Penny Swap Does Not Increase Overall Tax Rate**
   With voter approval, MISD can swap 12 pennies from the I&S rate to the M&O rate, with no increase to the overall tax rate. With the Penny Swap, the MISD total tax rate will remain at $1.4183.

5. **Generate $24.7 Million Additional Revenue**
   By restructuring the district’s tax rate – swapping 13 pennies from I&S to M&O – MISD could receive an additional $24.7 million to use on daily student operations, at no additional cost to taxpayers.

VOTER ANALYSIS

After a voter analysis of which groups historically vote in high numbers and which communities we can better educate about the upcoming election, there were also several brainstorming meetings in July 2021 to develop campaign messages, marketing materials, a website, etc. A comprehensive calendar of events, which can be viewed here, was also created to unify the communications team about what would be strategically promoted and when.

The execution of the campaign consisted of two separate but aligned efforts: education and advocacy.
BRANDING AND PRE-LAUNCH
The Mansfield ISD Communications Department handled the voter education piece of the campaign. The MISD Penny Swap logo was created, and it was used to brand all of the messaging that was sent out to the community about the upcoming election. The colors aligned with the district's logo, and the word “Swap” was made to be in red letters to remind voters that pennies were swapping, not increasing.

A designated website (www.MISDPennySwap.org) was also created in anticipation of the school board calling for the Penny Swap Election to house information about what it is, how it can help the district and provide ways for the community to get their questions answered.

With the information in place, the Mansfield ISD Communications Department was ready to implement its communication plan and start educating the public on the facts in a variety of physical and digital ways. The implementation was intentional, strategic and targeted to ensure that all voting populations were aware of the upcoming election and the implications that a vote would have.
IMPLEMENTATION

The Mansfield ISD School Board called for the Penny Swap Election on Tuesday, Aug. 10. The very next day, an email and text message was sent to all Mansfield ISD parents, staff members and community subscribers explaining what the election is and how all information can be found on the designated Penny Swap website. In addition, a news release was sent to the local media to inform them about the election.

Throughout the months leading up to the Nov. 2 Election Day, the following strategies were implemented.

PRINT MATERIALS

- Brochures/flyers distributed during meetings and placed around the district (also in Spanish)
- Targeted voter mailers/postcards to parents, historical voters and over 65 voters
- Advertisements in local publications
- Fact sheets and display boards
COMMUNITY MEETINGS
MISD administrators conducted more than 100 presentations to different schools, departments and community groups to get in front of constituents and inform them about how the Penny Swap could help Mansfield ISD. The groups presented to include:

- Every campus for staff and parents
- Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), Booster clubs and other parent groups
- Civic organizations
- Community groups
- Churches
- Homeowner Associations (HOAs)
- Community informational meetings open to the public

DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS
- News postings and icon on the district’s homepage
- Several emails, texts and app notifications to parents and staff about the Penny Swap, including specific voting information (also included in principal newsletters)
- Marketing graphics for all the district’s TV monitors (located at every campus and department)
- Marketing graphics for scoreboards to be displayed at football and basketball games
- Marketing graphics for our large marquee at the community performing arts center.
- Educational and frequently asked questions (FAQ) videos
- Various social media posts

![Mansfield Independent School District, Texas](image)
VIDEOS

Informational videos were housed on the Penny Swap website and posted periodically on social media, according to the comprehensive communications plan.

The video topics included: a Penny Swap overview, ballot language information, how a Penny Swap works, and frequently asked questions (FAQ) that were answered by the MISD superintendent. The videos can be viewed here and here. In total, 12 videos were created and released.
SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT

Social media played a major role in how the district spread its message about the Penny Swap. With the FAQ videos alone that were released from Aug. 19 through Nov. 2, the following analytics were collected from Facebook, Twitter and YouTube:

- **35,000+ reach** (resulted from someone sharing, liking, etc.)
- **750 engagements** (likes, comments, clicks, etc.)
- **13,000+ video views**
COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

As mentioned before, a community advocacy group was created — apart from the district’s educational efforts — that included some of the same strategies.

The Political Action Committee formed organically from the community focus groups in the planning stage to carry the “Vote Yes” message/campaign. The group sought membership from key areas of the district, fundraised locally to support their efforts and met weekly to organize and implement their efforts in the community.
EVALUATION

Mansfield ISD was successful in passing the Penny Swap. A tragic school shooting occurred in October 2021, which shifted the district’s focus for some weeks, but the MISD Communications Department was able to gently implement the communications plan when the community was further along in its healing process.

A total of 7,728 voters voted in the Penny Swap election. Despite the presidential elections being polarizing, **56% of the voters voted in favor** of the Penny Swap.

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<tr>
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<td>3,372</td>
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4,356 FOR 56.4%
3,372 AGAINST 43.6%
7,728

The district is now able to keep the five foundations of the Penny Swap alive with the tax restructuring: maintaining quality instruction, student programs and choice; retaining quality teachers; upholding safety and security standards; not increasing the overall tax rate and generating an additional $24.7 in annual revenue.

Thank you,
MANSFIELD ISD COMMUNITY

MISD Penny Swap For Passing the Penny Swap!

www.MISDPennySwap.org
APPENDIX

Apart from the materials shown above, a closer look at the marketing materials used can be found below.

HANDOUTS / FLYERS / BROCHURES

**ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?**

*How do I know if I’m already a registered voter?*

If you regularly vote – and you haven’t moved recently – you’re eligible to vote in the MISD Penny Swap!

If you’re not sure, you can check at votetexas.gov.

*What if I’ve moved recently or need to register for the first time?*

If you’ve moved, be sure to update your address with the local county voter registrar! Only registered voters who reside within Mansfield ISD’s boundaries are eligible to vote in this important election.

You can pick up a voter application card at many MISD schools, public libraries, and government offices. You can also start the application at votetexas.gov and then print and mail your information.

*Is there a deadline?*

Yes, 30 days before an election. If you wish to vote in the November 2 election, and you’re not already a registered voter, you must register by Monday, October 4, 2021.

**WHAT IS THE MISD PENNY SWAP?**

The MISD Penny Swap is a proposal that asks citizens to consider allowing MISD to restructure the school district tax rate. The Penny Swap would move 13 cents from the district’s debt side of the tax rate to the maintenance and operations side, keeping the total tax rate the same.

With voter approval, this swap would generate approximately $24.7 million annually in additional revenue for MISD, which would be used to help maintain student programs and schools of choice.

LEARN MORE!

www.MISDPennySwap.org

**EARLY VOTING: OCT. 18 – OCT. 29   ELECTION DAY: TUESDAY, NOV. 2**
LEARN MORE ABOUT THE MISD PENNY SWAP AT AN UPCOMING MEETING!

COMMUNITY MEETINGS
MISD is hosting several informational presentations to share facts about the Penny Swap with residents who live in the school district. Please join MISD officials at one of the following community meetings to learn more:

SEPTEMBER 14 AT 6 PM
Summit High School (Performing Arts Center)

SEPTEMBER 21 AT 6 PM
Charlene McKinzezy Middle School (Cafeteria)

OCTOBER 12 AT 6 PM
Danny Jones Middle School (Cafeteria)

FACEBOOK LIVE
Join MISD Superintendent Dr. Kimberley Cantu for a Facebook Live presentation to learn more.

OCTOBER 5 AT 6 PM
Facebook Live

Learn more at www.MISDPennySwap.org

EARLY VOTING: OCT. 18 – OCT. 29   ELECTION DAY: TUESDAY, NOV. 2

Mansfield Independent School District, Texas
5 REASONS to consider a Penny Swap for MISD

1. MAINTAIN QUALITY INSTRUCTION, STUDENT PROGRAMS & CHOICE
   MISD believes in the Power of Choice and has created opportunities for parents and students to choose the educational pathway and offerings that is the best fit for them. Additional state revenue from the Penny Swap would allow MISD to continue offering specialized programs and academies while maintaining high-quality instruction across all classrooms.

2. RETAIN QUALITY TEACHERS
   MISD is committed to hiring and maintaining a diverse, highly-qualified staff. Funds from the Penny Swap can be used for teacher and staff salaries, allowing the district to maintain competitive salaries, benefits, and professional development opportunities designed to retain the best staff to teach our students.

3. UPHOLD SAFETY & SECURITY STANDARDS
   The safety and well-being of MISD students and staff members is the district's top priority. The Penny Swap would allow the district to maintain an MISD officer on every campus, support the MISD Police Department and effectively manage threats.

4. PENNY SWAP DOES NOT INCREASE OVERALL TAX RATE
   With the Penny Swap, the MISD total tax rate will not increase. With voter approval, MISD can swap 13 pennies from the I&S rate to the M&O rate, keeping the total tax rate at $1.4183.

5. GENERATE $24.7 MILLION ADDITIONAL REVENUE
   By restructuring the district's tax rate – swapping 13 pennies from I&S to M&O – MISD will receive an additional $24.7 million to use on daily student operations at no additional cost to taxpayers.

EARLY VOTING: OCT. 18 – OCT. 29  ELECTION DAY: TUESDAY, NOV. 2
POSTCARDS AND POCKET GUIDES

Mansfield Independent School District, Texas

Have You Heard
ABOUT THE MANSFIELD ISD PENNY SWAP?

When you go to vote in the November 2 election, you’ll see the Mansfield ISD Penny Swap on your ballot. The proposal asks citizens who live in Mansfield ISD to consider allowing MISD to restructure the school district tax rates. The Penny Swap would move 15 cents from the district’s debt side of the tax rate to the maintenance and operations side, keeping the total tax rate the same. In fact, the 2021 local tax rate is approximately 3 cents lower than last year. With voter approval, this swap would generate approximately $247 million annually in additional revenue for MISD, which would be used to help maintain student programs and schools of choice.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

MISD has hosted several informational presentations to share facts about the Penny Swap with residents who live in the school district. Two additional opportunities to hear from MISD officials are listed below:

- OCTOBER 5 – 6 PM – Facebook Live (Facebook.com/MansfieldISD)
- OCTOBER 12 – 6 PM – Danny Jones Middle School (cafeteria)

ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?

Visit VoteTexas.gov to verify your voter registration or to start your application. Anyone who resides in Mansfield ISD – and is registered to vote by October 4 – is eligible to vote in the MISD Penny Swap.

LEARN MORE AT
www.MISDPennySwap.org

5 REASONS to consider a Penny Swap for MISD

1. Maintain Quality Instruction, Student Programs & Choice
2. Retain Quality Teachers
3. Uphold Safety & Security Standards
4. Penny Swap Does Not Increase Overall Tax Rate
5. Generate $247 Million Additional Revenue

MISD PENNY SWAP
NOVEMBER 2, 2021

605 E Broad Street
Mansfield, TX 76063

5 REASONS to consider a Penny Swap for MISD

1. MAINTAIN QUALITY INSTRUCTION, STUDENT PROGRAMS & CHOICE
2. RETAIN QUALITY TEACHERS
3. UPHOLD SAFETY & SECURITY STANDARDS
4. PENNY SWAP DOES NOT INCREASE OVERALL TAX RATE
5. GENERATE $247 MILLION ADDITIONAL REVENUE

MISD PENNY SWAP
NOVEMBER 2, 2021

605 E Broad Street
Mansfield, TX 76063

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MISD PENNY SWAP
NOVEMBER 2, 2021

605 E Broad Street
Mansfield, TX 76063
THE MISD SCHOOL BOARD HAS CALLED FOR A PENNY SWAP, OR VOTER-APPROVAL TAX RATE ELECTION, WHICH WOULD:

- Provide $24.7 million more a year to pay for teachers, staff, programs and other items that help educate students
- Restructure the district’s tax rate by swapping 1.7 pennies from I&S rate to M&O rate
- Not increase the overall tax rate

5 REASONS to consider a Penny Swap for MISD

1. MAINTAIN QUALITY INSTRUCTION, STUDENT PROGRAMS & CHOICE
   - STEM Academies
   - Early College High School
   - Fine Arts Academies

2. RETAIN QUALITY TEACHERS

3. UPHOLD SAFETY & SECURITY STANDARDS

4. PENNY SWAP DOES NOT INCREASE OVERALL TAX RATE

5. GENERATE $24.7 MILLION ADDITIONAL REVENUE
2. RETAIN QUALITY TEACHERS

- Competitive Teacher Pay
- Raises for Staff
- Competitive Benefits Package
- Meaningful Professional Development

3. UPHOLD SAFETY & SECURITY STANDARDS

- Counseling/Mental Health Resources
- MISD Police Officer at Every Campus
- Training and Prevention Programs
- Maintain Smaller Class Sizes

4. PENNY SWAP DOES NOT INCREASE OVERALL TAX RATE

- Prior to calling the election, the total tax rate was $1.4183
- If voters approve the Penny Swap, the total tax rate will remain $1.4183
- By moving 13 pennies from I&S to M&O, the total tax rate remains the same, which is nearly 3 cents lower than 2020-2021

5. GENERATE $24.7 MILLION ADDITIONAL REVENUE

- Having the additional 13 pennies on the M&O side will generate additional revenue that MISD can use on daily operations and student learning.
- The Penny Swap allows MISD to maximize state funding.