

MODEL CROWDFUNDING POLICY

This is a model crowdfunding policy and regulations for K-12 education. The model is not static. It evolves with industry best-practices, DonorsChoose experiences and insights, and recommendations and input from stakeholders such as AASA, NSBA, CCSSO, ASBO, school administrators, state auditors, and other critical partners.

There are two sections to the document. Part A provides a condensed crowdfunding school board policy. Part B offers an extended school board policy with more explicit guidance. Many school boards may consider Part B more appropriate for regulations.

Part B is made of four sections. Section 1 defines crowdfunding. Section 2 identifies cross-cutting responsibilities of eligible staff. Section 3 identifies the criteria required for eligible district-approved crowdfunding services. A district-approved crowdfunding service allows teachers to use the service without prior approval for each classroom project. Section 4 lists approval requirements for staff seeking to use a service that is not on the pre-approved list.

A. Condensed School Board Policy

This policy defines “crowdfunding” as an Internet-based request for resources from individuals and organizations to support activities or projects that enhance an educational program.

Teachers may only use crowdfunding services that have at least a three-star rating on Charity Navigator. All crowdfunding classroom-projects must: support the school’s priorities as established by the principal; align with the district’s technology plan and requirements (as applicable); not receive cash payments to district personnel, exempting reimbursement to teachers for verified reasonable project costs; comply with applicable federal and state student privacy laws; provide status reports to the school’s principal upon commencement and delivery of materials and resources to the school site; and materials and supplies must become the property of the school.

Employees that launch crowdfunding campaigns in violation of this policy do so at their own risk and may not act-on-behalf or hold themselves out as acting-on-behalf of their school or the district.

B. Expanded School Board Policy or Regulations

SECTION 1. Crowdfunding Definition.

This policy defines “crowdfunding” as an Internet-based request for resources from individuals and organizations to support activities or projects that enhance an educational program.

SECTION 2. Crowdfunding Responsibilities of Eligible Staff.

1. Eligible staff are teachers and front-line educators currently employed by the public school district.
2. The purpose of this crowdfunding policy is to support a teacher’s efforts to enhance the district or school’s educational programming. Postings that describe the purpose and rationale for conducting the crowdfunding campaign may not negatively reflect upon the District, its programs and services, its staff, or its students.
3. All posting must comply with applicable federal and state student privacy laws, including the FERPA, IDEA, and applicable laws and regulations.
4. Postings may not include identifiable student images without prior parental permission.
5. Eligible staff posting projects must consult with appropriate district personnel to ensure desired technologies align with the district or school’s technology plan and requirements.
6. The school principal or district administrators ARE NOT REQUIRED to pre-approve classroom projects posted by eligible staff to approved sites meeting the requirements of Section 3 (VALIDATE CROSS-REFERENCE).
7. The school principal or designated district administrators ARE REQUIRED to pre-approve classroom projects posted by eligible staff to non-approved sites in accordance with Section 4 (VALIDATE CROSS-REFERENCE).

SECTION 3. Pre-Approved Crowdfunding Services.

1. The Superintendent or designee shall identify approved crowdfunding sites for use by eligible staff.
2. Eligible staff may pursue crowdfunding classroom projects using approved sites/services without pre-approval for each project.
3. An approved crowdfunding services must:
 - a. Only allow currently employed eligible staff to create projects;
 - b. Have at least a three-star rating on Charity Navigator;

- c. Prohibit cash payments to district personnel, exempting reimbursement to teachers for reasonable project costs verified by receipt submission to the crowdfunding service;
- d. Protect the privacy of students in accordance with state and federal law, and district policy;
- e. Provide individual unit/item cost and inventory reporting on the materials and supplies shipped to schools;
- f. Track the shipment and delivery of materials to verified public schools with notification to the school principal;
- g. Require the materials and supplies to become the property of the district or school, in accordance with district policy;
- h. Require subsequent documentation of the project's educational benefit; and
- i. Provide dedicated reporting for school district officials regarding the status of each request and the materials delivered to verified public schools.

Section 4. Non-Approved Crowdfunding Services.

1. Staff must seek prior approval from the Superintendent, Superintendent's designee, or the responsible school principal for each classroom project using a non-approved crowdfunding service.
2. Non-approved crowdfunding services must contain terms and conditions that are acceptable to the Board and consistent with Board policy and applicable laws and regulations.