

Considerations for Fundraising by Parent Groups to Support District Activities

1. Why can't the district ask parents to pay for extracurricular activities like sports and musicals?

School districts are prohibited from fundraising under education law. School districts may accept donations of funds from individuals or from organizations, but the district itself cannot create organizations to raise money. Such organizations must be independent from the district.

Thus, teachers and other district employees are prohibited from raising funds for district events or the district budget. There are situations, however, when teachers can assist student groups in their fund raising efforts. Teachers and other employees also can volunteer their own time to assist with activities such as PTA fundraisers.

2. Can I make a donation to the district to support a particular activity?

- Donations can be earmarked for a particular purpose. Please indicate the purpose on the "memo" line of the check.
- If many checks will be collected for a particular purpose, it would be most helpful if the checks were delivered to the district in batches, with a letter explaining the purpose of the checks.
- Checks can be delivered in person or mailed to:

Mamaroneck U.F.S.D.
Attn: Business Office
1000 W. Boston Post Rd.
Mamaroneck, N.Y. 10543

- If the checks are delivered before July 1 but intended for the following school year, the accompanying letter should so state.

3. Must the district accept all donations?

No. Gifts must be accepted by the board of education at a board meeting. The board of education must determine if accepting a gift would be in the best interest of the district. If you have questions about whether the district might be amenable to a particular gift, you can contact Joanne Rice in the Superintendent's Office (220-3007).

Be sure to consider the timing of the program you want to support. Funding needs to be in hand before the district can commit to have a program. In general, the school board should be presented the opportunity to accept a particular gift at least one month before the event or activity that requires money to be expended.

4. Will I get a receipt/letter acknowledging my gift from the district so I can take a tax deduction?

Yes. The district acknowledges all donations with a letter, regardless of the amount. It is helpful to include your address in your cover letter, especially if the address is not on your check.

Also, parent groups coordinating multiple donations for a particular purpose can facilitate the acceptance of donations and sending of acknowledgments by including an Excel spread sheet describing the donations. The spreadsheet should indicate the purpose of the donations and include the following: name of donor, address of donor, amount of donation and check number.

In addition to providing a hard copy with the donations, emailing the spread sheet to mrubinstein@mamkschools.org would be appreciated.

5. Will the district pursue matching funds if my employer has such a program?

Yes. Although the district is precluded by law from engaging in fundraising activities, the district can accept matching funds from your employer or other organizations. Please contact your employer's benefits department for additional information.

6. If contributions exceed (or fall short) of the amount needed for an activity to occur, what would happen?

As already noted, the district cannot commit to engage in a particular event or activity until that event or activity has been fully funded. For this reason, parent groups working together to fund a particular program might choose to have one parent collect the checks, forwarding them to the district once the fundraising target has been reached.

If the district receives more money than required for a particular program, monies can be rolled over to the next year. Donors can also specify an alternative use when making their donations.

7. Can I donate tangible goods to the district?

Yes, outside groups may donate tangible goods to the district. As with monetary donations, however, gifts of tangible goods must be accepted by the board of education at a board meeting after the board determines that accepting the gift would be in the best interest of the district. If you have questions about whether the district might be amenable to a particular gift, you can contact Joanne Rice in the Superintendent's Office (220-3007).

8. Can I donate labor to the district?

There are many opportunities for individuals to volunteer within our schools, but there are legal limits to the services that volunteers can provide. Volunteers may not, by New York State law, replace union workers who currently perform those duties. For example, teacher aides could not be replaced by volunteers; similarly, club advisor or coaching positions currently filled by teachers could not be replaced by volunteers.

In addition, the district is required to pay the "prevailing wage" for the labor it employs. Therefore, the district cannot accept offers from community members to supply services (for example, landscaping, construction, painting, etc.) at below market rates.