

## **CROWDFUNDING FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES**

The School Board recognizes that crowdfunding campaigns have become an increasingly popular method for teachers and school-based organizations to raise funds for specific projects or activities. Revenue raised through crowdfunding can provide a significant benefit to the District. The School Board further recognizes, however, that the unregulated use of crowdfunding campaigns may subject the District and District employees to significant legal liability. The purpose of this policy is to effectively regulate and establish guidelines for crowdfunding campaigns initiated by District employees or organizations to raise revenue for any District school, classroom, project, or program. All crowdfunding campaigns initiated by District employees or organizations for the purpose of raising revenue to benefit any school, classroom, project or program must be conducted in accordance with this policy.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Approved Crowdfunding Platform**, for purposes of this policy, is a District-approved Internet website used to solicit funds and/or items to support educational and other school-based programs or activities. The Superintendent or designee shall identify approved crowdfunding sites for use by eligible employees and organizations. Only crowdfunding sites approved by the Superintendent or designee may be used for crowdfunding purposes within the District.

**Campaign**, for purposes of this policy, is a fundraising effort to raise revenue and/or items for an advertised school-related goal or need.

**Crowdfunding**, for purposes of this policy, is defined as an Internet-based request for resources from individuals and organizations to support activities or projects that enhance an educational program.

**Eligible employee**, for purposes of this policy, is any teacher, school-based administrator, coach or activity sponsor that desires to initiate a crowdfunding campaign to support an educational or school-related activity.

**Eligible organizations**, for purposes of this policy, include any school-sponsored student organization that has been formally recognized by the School Board and granted permission to engage in crowdfunding on behalf of the District, subject to the requirements of this policy. District-affiliated organizations including, but not limited to, parent/teacher organizations and booster groups for the District or specific schools within the District are not subject to the requirements of this policy.

## **GUIDELINES FOR CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGNS**

### **1. Crowdfunding Campaigns Must Be Approved In Advance**

District employees, including coaches and activity sponsors, must obtain prior written authorization from their school principal, or immediate supervisor if not a school-based employee, before initiating a crowdfunding campaign on behalf of the District.

Approved crowdfunding campaigns must be conducted in accordance with all applicable laws, School Board policies and administrative guidelines.

Absent prior written approval from the school principal or immediate supervisor, employees and organizations shall not solicit funds or items on behalf of the District/School on a crowdfunding website, give the appearance of soliciting funds or items on behalf of the District/School on a crowdfunding website, use the District/School's name, logo, or other identifying information in a crowdfunding post; or link to, or reference, any of the District/School's websites, social media sites, or other site, platform or account associated with the District or School.

Absent prior written approval of a crowdfunding project in accordance with this policy, employees are prohibited from identifying on a crowdfunding site that they are an employee of the District/School, if such identification may lead a reasonable reader to infer that the funds will be utilized by or within the District/School or for a District/School program. Employees may not use their District email address for any crowdfunding campaigns, unless the campaign has been approved by the appropriate District/School representative.

### **2. PROCEDURES**

**Employees and Eligible Organizations.** Employees and eligible organizations that desire to conduct a crowdfunding campaign for District/School purposes, programs or activities are required to obtain written permission by submitting a pre-approval request form, consistent with the requirements of this policy, to their school principal, or immediate supervisor if not a school-based employee. Written permission must be granted before proceeding with any crowdfunding campaign.

It shall be the responsibility of the principal or immediate supervisor, as applicable, to review and approve all crowdfunding requests. Crowdfunding requests that are incomplete, not submitted in writing, or do not meet the requirements of this policy shall not be considered for approval.

The written request for approval must be provided directly to the school principal or immediate supervisor, as applicable, via the designated approval form and must contain the following:

- a. The name, job title, school, and email address of the requester, or, if the applicant is an eligible organization, the name and contact information for the representative of the organization who will be responsible for the crowdfunding campaign;
- b. The items being requested and/or the funding target for the project;
- c. The classroom, program, or activity to be supported by the campaign;
- d. The exact language that will be included in the post/advertising for the campaign; and
- e. The start and projected end date of the post/advertising.

Crowdfunding campaigns must meet the following requirements in order to be approved:

- a. Crowdfunding campaigns must meet the requirements of this policy, including obtaining prior written approval and posting on a District-approved crowdfunding platform.
- b. Funds obtained through a crowdfunding campaign must be sent to the school principal or immediate supervisor, as applicable, who shall ensure appropriate accounting and maintenance of such funds until the funds are used for their stated purpose;
- c. Where items are received from a crowdfunding project, all items become the property of the District and must be delivered directly to building administration;
- d. All crowdfunding campaigns for classroom materials or resources must be consistent with the District-approved curriculum;
- e. Technology-related items must be approved in advance by the Executive Director of Technology. The District/School may not accept donated technology absent prior written approval of the ED of Technology.
- f. All crowdfunding campaigns must have specific, predetermined beginning and end dates.

- g. All postings must comply with applicable federal and state laws, including FERPA, IDEA and other applicable laws and regulations.

Crowdfunding projects may not:

- a. Disparage the District/School or any of its buildings, programs, students or employees or paint the District/School or any of its employees, students or programs in a negative light;
- b. Include pictures of District students in the crowdfunding post or on the posting individual's home or biography page on the crowdfunding site;
- c. Include identifying information of any District student on the crowdfunding site;
- d. Be used for personal gain of any individual other than the District-related benefits associated with the campaign's purpose;
- e. Cause funds or items to be delivered directly to the individual or organization that initiated the fundraising campaign;
- f. Solicit funds for reasons that are religious or political in nature or that have a religious or political purpose;
- g. Violate Title IX or any other applicable Board policy, state or federal law;
- h. Be contingent on the receipt of additional funding or "matching" funds from the District or another organization;
- i. Request food items that do not meet the "smart snacks" standards of the USDA regulations for school nutrition; or
- j. Contain language that suggests, in any way, that funding or items solicited are needed for students to receive a free and appropriate public education or to achieve students IEP goals.

### **3. PRE-APPROVED CROWDFUNDING SERVICES**

- a. The Superintendent or designee shall identify one or more approved crowdfunding sites for use by eligible staff and organizations;

- b. Eligible staff and organizations may only pursue crowdfunding campaigns on pre-approved crowdfunding sites;
- c. An approved crowdfunding service must:
  - i. Only allow currently employed eligible staff to create projects;
  - ii. Prohibit cash payments to District personnel;
  - iii. Protect the privacy of students in accordance with state and federal law, and District policy;
  - iv. Provide individual unit/item cost and inventory reporting on the materials and supplies shipped to District schools;
  - v. Track the shipment and delivery of materials to verified public schools with notification to the building administration;
  - vi. Require the materials and supplies to become the property of the District or School, in accordance with District policy;
  - vii. Require subsequent documentation of the project's educational benefit; and
  - viii. Provide dedicated reporting for school district officials regarding the status of each request and the materials delivered to verified public schools.

#### **4. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND REGULATIONS**

- a. The District reserves the right to refuse funds that have been raised through an approved crowdfunding campaign if it is determined that the project violated this policy or was in violation of the crowdfunding site's requirements, policies and/or regulations.
- b. The District reserves the right to terminate any pre-approved crowdfunding campaign for any reason or withhold approval for any crowdfunding campaign for any reason.

- c. Funds or items obtained through crowdfunding must be used to fulfill the purpose of the approved crowdfunding campaign.
- d. The Chief Financial Officer shall be promptly notified of any unused funds and determine the appropriate way to expend or return the unused funds.
- e. It shall be the responsibility of the campaign initiator to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and rules, including rules and requirements of the crowdfunding site.
- f. All materials obtained through crowdfunding shall remain the property of the District. An employee leaving the District shall not be entitled to remove any materials or resources obtained through crowdfunding from the worksite. School principal or immediate supervisor, as applicable, shall determine whether an employee may remove materials obtained through crowdfunding to another work site within the District.

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