

It shall be the policy of the Cook County Board of Education that all gifts or donations presented to an individual school and/or the total school system that would obligate the school system to future operating or upkeep costs must be approved by the Board of Education. All other gifts and donations may be approved in accordance with the following provisions:

Other than gifts or donations as mentioned above, the school principal is authorized to accept or deny gifts or donations made to the individual school from any source, ~~including booster clubs~~. The Superintendent is authorized to accept or deny donations made to the total school system.

In accepting any donations of items or services to the athletic programs of the school or school system, the principal or Superintendent shall establish a valuation of the donation and may request from the donor a valuation or an accounting of actual costs incurred regarding the donation. The principal or Superintendent also may set a valuation for donations to other programs as appropriate or required for accounting purposes.

Crowdfunding Projects:

~~Inasmuch as desired enhancements to educational programming have always and will always exceed school resources, school employees may at times choose to seek private funds for school improvements. One modern manifestation of this is commonly referred to as 'crowdfunding,' or the placement of needs on various websites in order to secure donations to meet those needs. Two popular sites of this sort include GoFundMe and Donors Choose. Such fundraising methods are permissible within the Cook County School District and the Board commends school employees for their efforts to secure outside funding to better serve the needs of their students. It is the preference of the Cook County Board of Education that employees utilize sites funding supplies or equipment rather than monetary donations. District employees wishing to secure crowdfunding should keep the following requirements in mind:~~

- ~~1. Any person or entity acting on behalf of the district and wishing to conduct an online fundraising/donation campaign for the benefit of the district shall begin the process by seeking prior approval from the building administrator. Pre-approval for technology or non-technology equipment must also be obtained from the technology department or maintenance department. Pre-approval for monetary donations must be obtained from the Finance Director at the Central Office.~~
- ~~2. All monetary donations should be recorded by the school bookkeeper in the School Funds accounting system at each school. A new fund will be created for each new project. Please note, no school banking information should ever be given out. A check should be requested to be mailed to the school in the name of the school, **not to an individual person**. If after purchases are made any funds remain, they will be held at the school in that fund for similar projects for that classroom/program/grade level. If there are not enough funds to cover the purchase, due to price changes, shipping, etc., the shortage will be the responsibility of the employee.~~
- ~~3. All items received/purchased through crowdfunding projects are the property of Cook County Schools and all inventory procedures apply. It is the intention of the District to ensure that items purchased through such fundraising endeavors remain with the~~

~~teacher/employee, unless the teacher/employee leaves the district, school, grade level, or the program for which the items were purchased. Should the employee leave the district, school, grade level, or program the building administrator will disperse the equipment or funds based on similar needs reflected in the original project.~~

- ~~4. A file is to be maintained at the school for any crowdfunding request. This file should include: the Crowdfunding Fundraising Project form and any documentation (receipts, packing slips, e-mails, invoices, etc) pertinent to the project.~~
- ~~5. Employees should be aware that some sites are tax deductible and some are not. It is the employee and donor's responsibility to determine if the donation is tax deductible. Cook County Board of Education will **not** provide a Form 990 for these donations.~~

~~When making requests for crowdfunding support, teachers/employees must comply with student privacy and other requirements set out in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Thus, student images, names, and descriptions which would cause students to be identifiable or would allow logical deductions about disabilities or other factors deemed to be within the student sphere or privacy must not be used on such websites or elsewhere, unless written, parental permission is secured in advance.~~

~~Recognizing that the desire to improve educational and extracurricular programs often exceeds available resources, the Cook County School District supports responsible crowdfunding efforts to secure additional funding for the benefit of students.~~

The Cook County Board of Education recognizes the importance of providing high-quality educational and extracurricular opportunities for all students. Given that the desire for program enhancements often exceeds the resources available within district budgets, the Board supports the responsible use of crowdfunding as a means to secure supplemental resources that directly benefit students and instructional programs.

Employees, clubs, and athletic organizations may engage in crowdfunding efforts through approved online platforms to raise funds for instructional materials, classroom resources, equipment, and other school-related needs. These efforts must align with the mission, values, and policies of the Cook County School District and must support equitable access to educational and extracurricular opportunities.

All crowdfunding activities must receive appropriate administrative and Board approvals and comply with applicable district policies, financial procedures, and legal requirements, including those related to student privacy and the ethical use of public resources. The Cook County School District maintains ownership of all items acquired through crowdfunding campaigns and reserves the right to oversee the use, allocation, and reassignment of such resources. Non-compliance with this policy may result in the revocation of crowdfunding privileges and may lead to disciplinary action, as deemed appropriate by the district.

The Board commends employees and organizations that take initiative to support and enhance student learning through innovative funding efforts, while also upholding the integrity, transparency, and accountability standards expected within public education.