



Position Paper: FUNDRAISING AND THE PTA

The primary function of PTA is child advocacy. PTA is not a fundraising organization. National PTA's fundraising policy states "When planning the year's activities PTAs need to use the 3 to 1 rule: that there should be at least three non-fundraising projects aimed at helping parents and children or advocacy for every one fundraising event." Units and councils must recognize that the time and energy of its members are limited. This time and energy must be used effectively to promote PTA programs and projects. There are other organizations which exist primarily for the purpose of raising funds for the needs of children and youth.

In every area of children's well-being, including parent education and community betterment, PTAs have carried out successful programs of service and action on modest budgets. While every association needs some funds to carry on its program, large amounts of money are not essential to effective PTA work.

Use of Funds

It is imperative that current PTA leadership encourage and support activities that will ensure the future of PTA. With effective fundraising comes the responsibility for the judicious and appropriate use of such funds.

There must be active affiliation with the National and State PTAs through attendance at workshops, conferences, and conventions and through the use of national and state publications. PTA funds are expected to be used to strengthen the PTA network.

Funds used wisely and only to advance the purposes and goals of PTA will be funds well spent.

A PTA unit or council should first establish its programs and projects for the year. The budget, which reflects the financial needs of these programs and projects, is then adopted by the membership. The fundraising committee should plan to raise the difference between the income from the local portion of membership dues and the proposed expenditures. The committee's plan of work must be approved by the executive board.

For many PTAs, the best solution is a single annual fundraising project. One well-planned event will usually raise the necessary funds to finance the year's activities. If the project is to reflect the high principles of the organization, it will be educational, social, or recreational. Often a project that seems to be simply for entertainment can serve an educational purpose by raising the standard of entertainment in the community or by giving the community a concept of the constructive use of leisure time.

The following questions may be used as guidelines in selecting and planning a money-raising project that will be both successful and worthy of the PTA:

1. Can the fundraiser be justified by the Purposes of PTA?

If the reason for the fundraiser can not be easily justified by one of the Purposes of PTA, it should not be considered.

2. Does it conform to the basic policies stated in your bylaws?

The basic policies require that PTA be noncommercial, nonsectarian, and nonpartisan.

Though PTA may never endorse a product or person, it may deal with commercial firms to plan fundraising events. (refer to *National PTA's online resources at www.pta.org*)

3. Will it create good will for the PTA, enlisting the participation of many persons and creating a spirit of comradeship?

A fundraising event can be a means of creating a sense of community and of attracting advocates for children.

4. *If children take part in the project, have their welfare and safety been considered with utmost care?*

A fundraising event should not take advantage of children's willingness and inexperience and should avoid pressuring them. Great care and caution must be exercised when children are asked to participate. When children take part in projects, their share should be either a natural outgrowth of regular school work or a constructive leisure time activity. ***PTA must not exploit children.***

5. *Is it an activity that serves as an example for children and youth and reinforces their pride in their parents and teachers?*

Fundraising events should be selected with care, reflecting the moral sense and attitudes in the community.

6. *Are school regulations with regard to fire laws and safety precautions strictly observed when the project is held in a school building?*

Prior to the event all safety factors such as maximum capacity, fire exits, accessibility for the handicapped, etc., should be reviewed with the appropriate authorities. Fundraising events held elsewhere should be held to the same scrutiny.

7. *Do local, state, or federal laws, State Education Department regulations, and New York State Constitution apply?*

Care must be taken to see that no law is violated. The project must have the approval and support of school authorities. There are many local, state, and federal laws and tax regulations that must be considered in relation to fundraising activities. Since the problems vary so much from community to community and are so dependent on the type of activity involved, it might be well for a PTA to discuss the proposed fundraising project with appropriate PTA region board members and local officials. Some fundraising events may be questionable. *It is highly recommended that the approval and support of school authorities who are knowledgeable of education law be obtained when a school building is to be used.*

8. *Can a unit, council, or Region accept sponsorship as a source of raising funds?*

Sponsorship must be aligned with the purposes of PTA. Companies that provide goods or services in conflict with PTA purposes, resolutions or positions should not be accepted.

9. *May an individual PTA member accept gifts or incentives in consideration for partnering with a company?*

Gifts and/or incentives are not appropriate. PTA fundraising activities should not be a source of personal gain for any child or adult.

PTA should not attempt to abrogate the legal functions of other educational entities. Under no conditions should long-term programs of support ever be initiated or offered by a PTA. Working to secure adequate funding for programs has a more enduring benefit than purchasing items of equipment. The purchasing of school equipment and the payment of school staff salaries are the responsibility of school administration and school boards. In only the most severe and extenuating circumstances should exceptions be made, and then to be restricted to the crisis of the moment.

PTA energies should be used to encourage the school board and administration to evaluate the need for a pilot program or the purchase of equipment, with possible input from the PTA, and then to include the cost of this equipment or material in its budget. PTA may at times find it necessary to initiate a pilot project to demonstrate the value of a program or purchase equipment that entails fundraising.

Before the PTA takes any action to provide a pilot project, the PTA should carefully evaluate the project with guidance from its PTA Region. A thorough investigation of all the ramifications of the project should be made in conjunction with the administration (refer to *Education Law*) to determine that the pilot project is supportive of the school's program and that it will be an integral part of the curriculum.

PTA representatives should be actively involved in the design, review, and passage of a school budget. This kind of activity opens two-way lines of communication, breeds a community climate of understanding and commonality of purpose, and ensures that earmarked funding will be allocated in the appropriate budget. *PTAs should not be expected to fill the gaps in school budgets.*

Surplus Funds

If the proceeds from a PTA fundraiser are more than were anticipated, the PTA should:

- Postpone further fundraising for the current year
- Put the money into a savings account
- Avoid scheduling fundraisers for the next year if the account has sufficient money to cover the year's planned programs and projects.

Remember that your PTA must have a general membership vote on how to spend funds that are in excess of the anticipated amount.

Adopted 11/84
Reaffirmed 11/90
Reaffirmed 8/98
Reaffirmed 8/06