

## The Basics of Fundraising

The funding of student council projects is an important concern for students, administrators, and board of education members. Resources must be developed to underwrite cocurricular activities if they are to survive.

It is important, however, to look at more than simply the quantity and distribution of funds. Student monies are an important trust and must be held in high regard. The making and spending of money is of central significance to our culture, to our schools, and to the lives of individuals within our culture.

### Some Thoughts about Student Council Money

- Money is not the root of all evil (the love of money is that). Meanwhile, having money is a whole lot better than poverty.
- Student money is precious stuff and should be highly respected.
- Student money should be treated officially/responsibly/respectfully. Official district forms must be used and *several* people should have the responsibility for following the money in its travels from collection to deposit to being spent for the well-being of students. (Avoid burdening only one student.)
- All money developed by students of the school (as students of the school) legally belongs to the school, and becomes the responsibility of the administrative staff.
- Students must ask for help: from the school treasurer, the principal, the adviser, members of the business department staff, and anyone else who might be of help.

- Student leaders must review district, state, county, and city policies regarding public money, its development, care, and distribution.
- Money is raised in three basic ways:
  1. By selling products (pickles, candy, candles, lightbulbs, pillows, etc.)
  2. By selling services (shows, washes, dinners, clean-up, talent, time, etc.)
  3. By taxing people (class dues, licenses, activities cards, Halloween insurance, etc.)
- Many community resources and ideas are available: Kiwanis, Rotary, Jaycees, Professional Business Women, Adult Education Association, local newspapers, churches, etc.
- Corporations, banks, and large business operations have "charities" or "development" funds available. Sometimes these are gift accounts, shared funds, or matching funds. It pays to find out about these and ask to use them.
- Don't demand that students beg from people. *Do* allow students to ask for help.
- Fundraising must be done with clear purposes, needs, objectives. All goals must be recognized, understood, and even shared where possible.
- New ideas are best. Excitement sells. Use the *urgent* principle: (This is the last one—there will be no more—now is the time—deadline today, etc.)
- Create ideas, fads—and let them become "uniforms" because they soon become "costumes"—and then they become "antiques"—and become valuable again. ('70s

material, clothing, and records have experienced a popular comeback.)

- Plan. Set deadlines. Be organized. Stick with the goals. Achieve them.
- Charity drives need guidelines and consideration: administrative costs of the agency; numbers of people served; scope of service; crucial needs of humans, etc. (Don't allow students to get ripped-off by promoters of any kind.)
- Insist that the school handle only quality products. When purchasers are cheated by "the school" they seldom forgive, and it is very bad public relations.
- Don't exploit student time/talent/ideas/resources, etc. Thirty students working all day for \$10 profit is a misuse of student talent and time.
- People buy: power/prestige/pleasure/performance/products/possession/fulfillment/spirit/success/survival/security/promise and probably a number of other things. We should sell services and products that meet human needs and wants. Today's necessity may be tomorrow's luxury—but the reverse might also be true, depending on the financial-social atmosphere. It is appropriate for a student council to handle the "conventional necessity" as well.
- The way in which people perceive a product is what helps it to sell to the purchaser. Image and promotion are legitimate concerns for student councils.
- Other people basically want what I want and need. Let's depend on our own gut-level reactions as to whether a product will sell. Instincts of student leaders are highly dependable when people are honestly communicating.

- Let's not be stupid. Let's think/reflect/hope/trust/reflect/learn and assume responsibility.
- Fundraising experiences should be simple and direct. Each student council activity should be intended to be a positive event in human lives.
- Have fun. Let others have fun, too.
- Don't do the work of the board of education, which is responsible for providing textbooks, movie projectors, teaching equipment, and other materials. It is not the work of student council to fulfill the responsibilities of the board of education.
- Student council is also not responsible for providing couches in the faculty room, or paying the janitors' salaries, or fulfilling other responsibilities that rest with taxpayers.
- Money developed this year ought to be used on student needs this year. Our projects ought to support themselves—or fundraising projects ought to support activities that have no financial support but are in the best educational interests of students in our school.
- Avoid approaching the same contributors repeatedly. (Teachers for jog-a-thons, parents for monthly events, merchants for advertisements in publications, etc.) Think of new ways for reaching new groups: nonparents, older citizens, federal grants, neighboring schools, elementary school students, banks, etc.

**A Few Guidelines**

- Plan ahead—don't wait until disaster looms to choose a project and date. Avoid conflicts with other groups and



other activities. Set dates early. List them on the master schedule.

- Designate a definite goal and time frame—People are much more likely to help if they recognize a definite goal and set completion date (e.g., "We need \$400 for a leadership workshop by the end of this month"). Develop a progress chart. Post it. Keep it current. Publicize it.
- Brainstorm as many ideas from as many students, teachers, administrators, and parents as you can. Check all files and records of past projects, vendors, sponsors, etc. Use the Yellow Pages and every other resource you can think of.
- Select a fundraising committee and chairperson. Responsibilities will probably include: publicity/finance/budget/distribution/project follow-up/clean-up. Write down job assignments. Reach agreement with the participants. Be certain of mutual understanding of the job, its limitations, and its deadlines.
- Be certain to involve the school treasurer, the student council treasurer, and the adviser. Money must be collected according to schedule and deposited through official channels.
- Keep checklists and weekly reports accurate and current.
- Profits from sales can be divided a number of ways. Here are three possibilities:
  1. Every deposit is made to one lump sum for a special project such as a scoreboard. Every person involved contributes to a master fund. This method is best for group needs: equipment, transportation, registration, etc.
  2. Individual members maintain separate accounts within the

general account for a particular project (e.g., when a council member sells 100 candles with a 25 percent profit margin for a total of \$25 this amount would be credited to the member's account, but held in the general fund). Members who leave the group before the project completion commit their profits to the general fund. This method is often used for a council trip to a workshop or national conference.

3. 50/50 (a combination of 1 and 2 above). The first \$10 profit is deposited to the general fund, with any additional profit credited to the individual account. As in possibility 2, \$10 goes to the general fund, and \$15 goes to the individual account and the member's credit. This is often used for group projects with the additional profits used to defray individual costs.

- Always get proposals and ideas approved by the adviser and the responsible administrator.

### Some Considerations

- Is this project fun?
- Is it exciting?
- Does it involve other people?
- Does it serve to promote our goals?
- Has it worked before?
- Are we all behind the idea?
- Will we accomplish it?

### A Sample Fundraiser Checklist

- Develop the plan and choose specific goals.

- Organize committees: choose chairpeople and members. Set the job.
- Brainstorm projects and dates.
- Make recommendations. Get full administrative approval.
- Check on availability of facilities, equipment, and council members.
- Finalize dates/places/times/plans.
- Set up collection and finance plans.
- Reserve space, order products, do whatever else is necessary to begin.
- Make a list of needed materials (and sources).
- Delegate responsibilities (get agreements from people).
- Create charts and signs.
- Evaluate progress; adjust plans.
- Clean and return equipment.
- Evaluate everything.
- Develop and submit final reports.
- Send thank-you letters and deliver incentive awards.
- File complete notes and records with recommendations for next time.

### **Progress Chart (Sales Project)**

#### **Week 1**

- Choose the project.
- Select the chairpeople.
- Establish the committees.
- Write out the assignments, the jobs, and the deadlines.

#### **Week 2**

- Begin promotion with newspapers (school and local), posters, bulletins, etc.
- Print tickets; arrange for facility or distribution point.
- Purchase supplies (food, paper goods); order consignments to sell.
- Assign workers by area.

#### **Week 3**

- Distribute materials to workers.
- Train your people with the materials in hand.
- Sponsor a kick-off promotion; announce incentive awards.

BUDGET  
REQUEST FORM

Source: Middle Level Student  
Councils - A Guide for Students  
and Advisors, NASSP, 1995

NAME OF SCHOOL

Budget Request Form

Submitted  
to  
Student Council

Budget Request for:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Approximate Cost: \_\_\_\_\_

Suggested Vendor — Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Person making request: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by student council in minutes of: \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting.

DATE

SIGNATURE OF PRESIDENT

DATE

SIGNATURE OF ADVISER

DATE

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL

DATE