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53 Proven School Fundraising Ideas – Raise Money for Your School

October 28, 2020 by Ilma Ibrisevic



Although they often do, schools should not underestimate the value of fundraising. Fundraising can help schools offer scholarships and new programs, maintain academic excellence, and complete major projects.

Having a well-planned and well-executed fundraising strategy can make all the difference between thriving and simply surviving for most schools.

Fundraising might allow your school to offer daycare, more extracurricular activities, after-school clubs, and educational programs.

There are many benefits to fundraising. Students gain valuable leadership skills and confidence. Fundraisers require students to work with each other, as well as their parents and teachers in order to meet their overall goal, and this teaches them teamwork. Students are also taught the importance of community, creativity, caring about others, and improving the common environment.

Fundraising also allows parents to get involved and play a more active role in their children's lives. Finally, the additional funds allow schools to improve their facilities and programs. It's a win-win!

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Elementary School Fundraising Ideas

1. Pyjama Day

This is a simple school fundraising idea that is sure to get students excited (maybe even some teachers)! Collect donations from children in exchange for them coming to school in pajamas for one day.

2. Easter Egg Hunt

A seasonal crowd pleaser, this school fundraising idea is easy to organize. Hide chocolates and other treats around the school and have the kids look for them. Children can compete individually or in teams. The student/team who finds the most hidden treats wins!



3. Treasure Hunt

Treasure hunts are fun for students of all ages, but they are especially exciting for younger students. Students can pay to participate on their own or in teams. Think of a theme, potentially one related to the curriculum, and organize the treasure hunt. Make sure you have an award for the winning team. Bonus points for explorer outfits!



4. Carol Singing

Carol singing might be seasonal, but who can resist elementary school children singing carols? This fundraising activity can raise a lot of funds for your school. Practice a couple of carols with the students several weeks leading up to **Christmas**. Go around your school's neighborhood with your student choir and collect donations.

5. Disney Day

On Disney Day, students get to dress up as their favorite Disney characters in exchange for a small donation. Promote this event well in advance to allow parents to make or buy the costumes.

6. Crafts Day

Encourage the children to do arts and crafts, either in groups or with parents, and give the public the opportunity to purchase the items. Contact the local art supplies stores and try to get the art supplies donated.



7. Snowman Building Competition

If you live in a country that gets some snow, organize a snowman building competition in the schoolyard on a snowy day. Charge per team entry into the competition. Offer a reward to the winning team.

8. Lemonade Stand

Transform this classic, old-time favorite activity into something that can serve the **fundraising** needs of your school. Help your students set up a lemonade stand at a school event. Students can sell the lemonade, with all proceedings going towards funding a school project. Make sure to get all the supplies donated.

9. School Picnic

Ideal for warmer days, this school fundraising idea helps build your school's community. Picnic fundraisers generate needed funds while encouraging spending time outdoors. Planning a picnic fundraiser means selecting a park or a green area (if not your schoolyard), designing announcements, determining a participation fee, ideally getting food and drinks donated, and lining up a raffle to bring in even more funds.



10. Rock, Paper, Scissors Tournament

Charge a small fee for students to enter the tournament. Match them up and get the tournament started! The best two out of three wins, then the winners match up and play again. Keep going until only a few

participants are left playing. Then, have a \$5 buy-in to get back into the game. The final winner gets a prize.

11. Popcorn Fundraiser

Unlike candy bars, popcorn is still a relatively healthy snack (unless loaded with too much sugar, salt or butter). To make things even easier, there are many companies with whom you can work to organize a popcorn fundraiser for your school – they provide the gourmet popcorn, you sell it, and then you split the profit.

12. Staging a Theatre Play

Every parent will want to come and see their child performing in a play. Work with your students to prepare an age-appropriate play, promote the play to their friends and families, and charge them to see the play. Make sure the viewers know that the money is going towards a specific cause (e.g. modernizing the school gym).

13. School Sleepovers

Everyone remembers how fun sleepovers are! Host a school sleepover in the school gym or the school library. Tell every student's parents what the student needs to bring, and plan fun activities, games or a movie for the children to enjoy. Charge a specific amount. Any profit goes towards the school's fundraising needs.



Middle School – Middle School Fundraising Ideas

14. Spelling Bee

Most spelling bees will see children compete as individuals. Each child, in turn, is asked to spell a different word and they might call out their answers or write them on a board. Raise funds by charging entry fees to children, charging the parents who come to watch, or charging for “second chances”.



15. Trivia Competition

Think of fun but challenging questions, either about your school and its history or pertaining to general knowledge. Invite people who are connected to the school and set a date for the competition. In order to raise money, you can charge a small entrance fee, sell food and refreshments, or do both. Select good questions, a great quizmaster, and be careful to select a reasonable time.

16. Dress Up As...

This school fundraising idea is fun and versatile. Have students dress up as characters from movies, books, or TV shows – and of course, pay for that opportunity. Not only is this fundraising idea a great way to engage students, but is also easy to incorporate into the school curriculum.

17. Obstacle Course Event

Organize a race that includes obstacles like rope and wall climbing, walking on a beam, bag races, running

through sprinklers or pools of soapy water, climbing stairs, dodging water balloons filled with paint, mud pits, jumping through tires etc. Charge for participation and get the material donated. Obstacle courses are exciting for everyone involved, so there should be plenty of donations pouring in.



18. Parents Night Out

Charge a small amount and organize a fun night of food and drinks for your students' parents. The gathering can be quite relaxed, and you can even get volunteers to look after the children so that parents don't have to pay extra money for a babysitter.

19. Read-a-Thon

This school fundraising idea might be the favorite of your teachers and parents, as it encourages children to read for pleasure. Students obtain pledges from teachers, family members, or parents for the number of pages or books they can read, and then they log the hours.

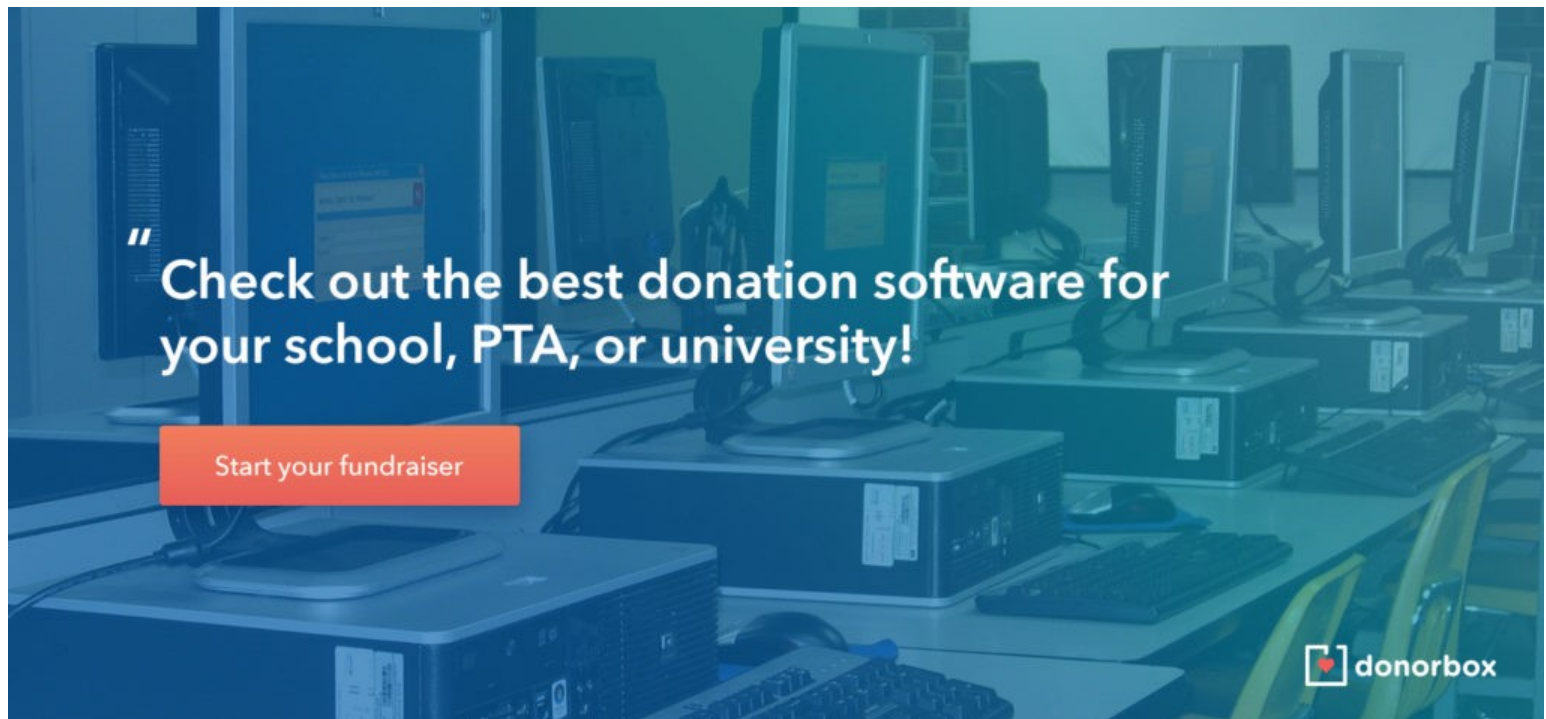


20. Balloon Pop Party

Put money into 100 helium-filled balloons and sell them for \$10 each. Put \$100 in one balloon, \$50.00 in two, \$20 in two, \$10 in two, \$5.00 in two and \$2.00 the rest. This idea won't bring you thousands, but it's a great one for a smaller fundraiser.

21. The Big Cleanup

Who wouldn't want to do something that's both good for the environment and raises money? When organizing a community cleanup project, pledges are tied to a specific attainment goal such as the number of pounds of trash collected or the number of road miles cleaned of debris. Parents, alumni, and members of the local community pledge to support the students cleaning up.



22. Jellybean Count

This school fundraising idea is famous for a reason. It's incredibly easy to set up and is very entertaining. Put up a jar of jellybeans in your school hallway. Have students pay a dollar or two to guess how many jellybeans are in the jar. At the end of a week of guessing, announce the winner – the person who guessed the number closest to the number of jellybeans in the jar. The winner gets to keep the jar or wins another prize.



23. Cupcake Decorating

This is a perfect activity for the young ones (and those young at heart). Cupcakes are pretty inexpensive to bake. Reach out to multiple families (or classes) to bring in their favorite flavors of baked cupcakes. Buy toppings in bulk (or get them donated): icing, chocolate chips, coconut flakes etc. Charge customers for a cupcake and let them decorate it.

24. Pancake Breakfast

Spruce up the school menu by offering pancakes one morning before school in the school gym. Offer drinks and other refreshments and charge per serving.

25. Family Fun Day

Once per month or several times per year, depending on your capacity, organize a family fun day. Make it a Saturday so that both students and parents can attend. Make the event fun, but also educational. Have staff members, alumni, and some parents volunteer their time. You can organize many different activities e.g. face painting, gardening, or sculpting with clay. Charge a participation fee.

26. Sports Day

By the time warm weather rolls around, there's nothing that we want more than spending some time outside. Organise a field day or a sports day, and set up a variety of games and sports to give an opportunity to all children to join in. Charge admission to parents and other spectators. Sell merchandise, snacks, and drinks to **maximize donations**.



High School – Fundraising Ideas for High School

27. Babysitting

Give parents a break and have the high school students babysit for one evening while parents go out. Charge for the service.

28. Battle of the Bands

Music is a hobby for many high school students. Organise a battle of the bands at your school. Charge the bands, as well as friends and family who come to see the show.



29. Karaoke Contest

For a fun twist on the Battle of the Bands, have students form teams and compete in singing/lip syncing.

30. Yard Sale

Host a school-wide yard sale. Ask students, parents, faculty, and staff to donate their gently used items for the sale. The key to a successful yard sale is promotion, so promote the yard sale like there's no tomorrow.

31. Movie Night

This idea can be used to fundraise in elementary schools, middle schools, and colleges. Organise a viewing of an age-appropriate movie in your hall or team up with your local cinema to get a special rate for families to attend a new release.



32. Color Run

Color Runs make running more fun for schools and students. Have students wear white tee shirts. At specific checkpoints, volunteers will spray them with water-based paint or throw water balloons containing paint at them. Raise money by charging a participation fee or by getting sponsors to pledge money for each lap completed.

33. Principal Challenge

Get your principal on board to complete a challenge (e.g. dye their hair a fun color) if a fundraising goal is met. Students can either vote for their favorite idea by donating or simply donate to reach the fundraising goal as soon as possible.



34. "Hostage" Situation

Have students fundraise a specific amount of money to get their teacher or principal "locked" inside the school for the duration of one period. This means the students (and teachers) get a free period!

35. Recycling Drive

Get your students to bring to school old cartridges, mobile phones or clothes. Set up a partnership with a company that is going to buy these off you and then enjoy your newly raised money.



36. Power of Change

Elsewhere known as the “Penny Drive”, this fundraising idea is simple, yet very effective, as it utilizes the competitive spirit of high schoolers. Place one jar per class in the hallway. The students can then add their spare change to the jars until they’re full. The first class that manages to fill their jar gets a reward.

37. Book Sale

Ask students and staff to bring gently used, no longer wanted books to school. Organize a big book sale day, promoting it a couple of weeks in advance.

38. No Uniform Day

If your school requires its students to wear uniforms to school, this fundraising idea is perfect for you. Organize no uniform days several times per year. Ask students for a small donation in exchange for dressing down. Students will get to showcase their personal style, and you will raise funds.

39. Car Wash

Set up a car washing station in your schoolyard. Have your staff and students volunteer to wash the cars of parents and other visitors in exchange for a small donation.



40. Walking to School

Depending on where your school is and how your students get to school every morning, this could be a great idea! Organize a week in which the students would come to school on foot, not by car. Ask the students to donate all the money that was saved by not using cars to go to school.

41. "Seed" Money

This school fundraising idea is unique, interesting, and stimulates creativity and entrepreneurial mindset in students. Give each student a small amount of "seed money" and ask them to use their creativity to come up with a way to turn the initial \$5 or \$10 into a larger amount of money. It might be helpful to set some ground rules.

College – Fundraising Ideas for College

42. Dorm Decorating Contest

For a more college-appropriate fundraising idea, try a dorm decorating contest. Have students pay a small fee to enter their room in the contest. Think of a prize and award it to the best spruced up space.

43. Cook-Off

Think of a theme (e.g. muffins, chili, pancakes) and have participants pay a fee to enter their best dishes. To increase the number of donations, guests can judge the entries by making a donation themselves.



44. Naming Rights

Naming rights aren't reserved just for multi-million donations. Sell naming rights to a brick in a wall or a seat in a lecture hall to individual student donors making the highest donations.

45. Alumni Luncheon

Partner with a local restaurant and host a luncheon for your alumni. You can host the luncheon as part of an alumni weekend or as its own event. You can either sell tickets to raise money or ask attendees for donations.

46. Sponsorship Letters

Have your students write letters to businesses asking them to sponsor your programs/events.

Students can remind them of the tax write-off and offer a certificate that businesses can then display.

47. Community Service

Raise money by offering the skills and services of your students and teachers to the highest bidder. These skills can be professional (e.g. photography, tutoring, web design), but also everyday activities (e.g. running errands, driving, babysitting, pet sitting). Otherwise, have people sponsor your staff members and students doing community service for 24 hours.

48. Stress Relief Event

College students have a lot on their plate. Organize a stress relief event to help them de-stress and relax before exams. Have volunteers offer aromatherapy, gentle massages, and foot rubs. Make sure there are a lot of scented oils and candles around, as well as soothing music.

49. Selfie-Themed 5K Run

College students and selfies – the perfect match! Student runners take selfies at specific checkpoints (to be posted on social media later). Register participants and have them pay an entry fee. Since those selfies will be shared, this activity is also an excellent marketing tool and can attract even more donations.

50. Scrabble Tournament

Individuals pay to participate. Players can sneak a peek at a dictionary for an additional donation. Make additional fundraising money by selling refreshments, organizing auctions and raffles etc.

51. Dinner For A Week

Every college student appreciates cooked food. Get several restaurants to donate a dinner for 2. Raffle off a week of eating out. Set your raffle ticket price based on your ultimate fundraising goal.

52. Care Packages

These will especially be popular at the start of every semester or during major exam periods. Packages could include candy, chips, hot chocolate, cookies, a mug, fruit, a magazine, etc. that would be appropriate for both male and female students at colleges. Parents are always looking for ideas on things to send their kids when they are away from home. Send order forms to the parents who can order the packages as a surprise gift. You will make most money making these yourself.

53. Multicultural Fair

Host an event where students can share the richness of their cultures with others. Students can share their local meals, sweets, dances, or other traditions. Albeit this event might take a bit longer to organize, it has a lot of fundraising potential. You can invite members of the wider local community and your alumni and charge everyone for entering the fair.

Conclusion

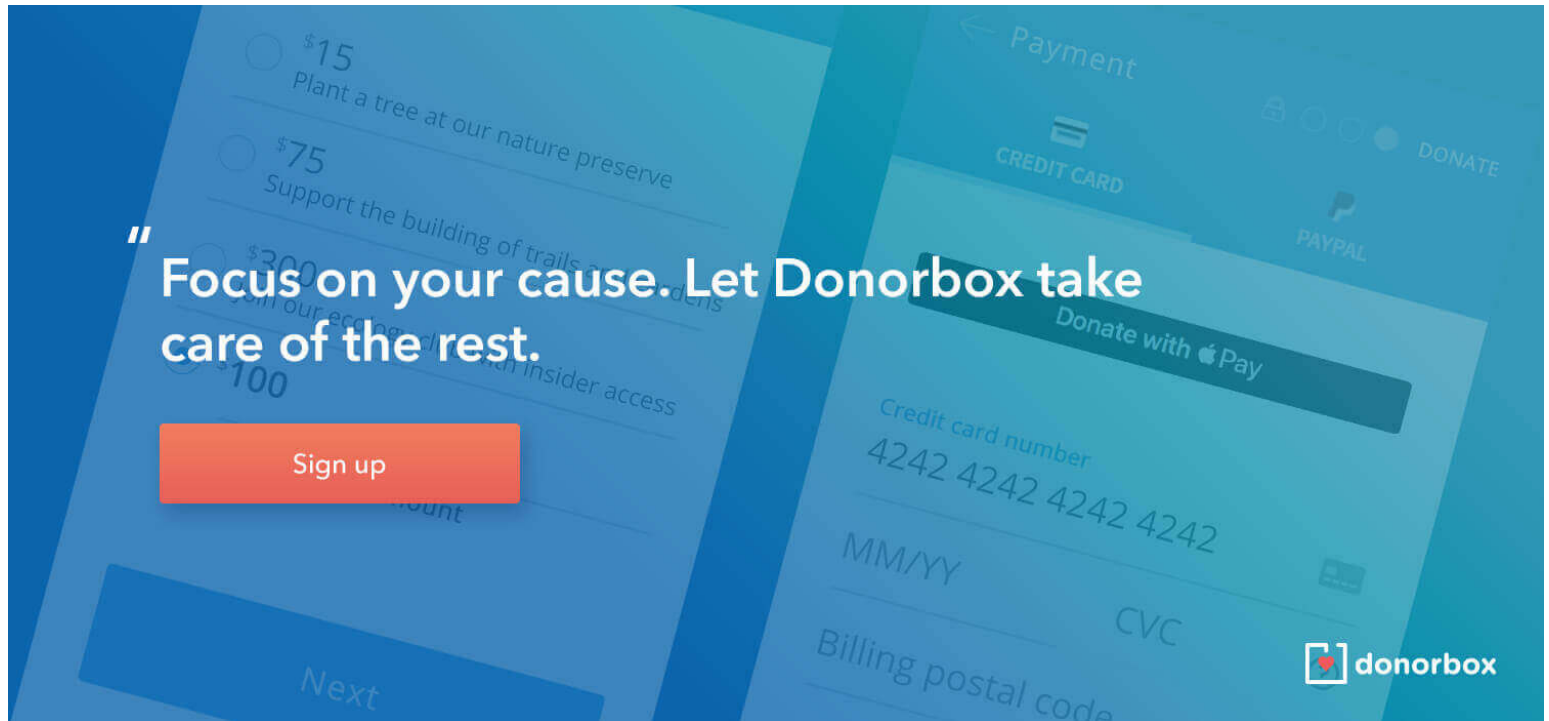
School fundraising is difficult. Schools increasingly fundraise to cover necessities like teachers' salaries, which is a far cry away from organizing a bake sale to purchase additional photography equipment. Parents have started to criticize the seemingly endless fundraisers. Parents with more than one school-aged child can especially find themselves juggling too many fundraisers, some at the same time. Fundraisers can be expensive to organize and can add stress to already busy staff schedules.

With all of this in mind, what's the best way forward?

When planning the school year, do not omit the fundraising plan. Use the above ideas as inspiration and make them your own! Choose the ones that reflect your school's spirit, make sure you have the balance between the ones easier and the ones harder to organize, and finally – prioritize. Don't overwhelm the school calendar, the parents, the staff, and the students.

Most of the fundraising ideas we shared above are physical but do not forget about the digital. Your school's website needs to be modern, functional, regularly updated, optimized for mobile, and able to receive donations. Having an online donation process can help relieve some of the work. Check out Donorbox – a powerful **donation software** that easily integrates into your website and allows you to receive both one-time and **recurring donations**.

Planning and implementing a multitude of school fundraising ideas throughout the year can help your school achieve its goals and serve its students in the best possible way.



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