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Introduction

This toolkit is for public school principals looking to learn more about DonorsChoose.org and encourage their teachers and advisers to get the most for their students.

You’ll find information about DonorsChoose.org policies, frequently asked questions, examples of ways leaders like you have helped their schools benefit, and training materials for your staff.

We’re committed to working with principals like you to make it as easy as possible for public school teachers and advisers to get resources for their classroom.
The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) is the leading organization of and voice for principals and other school leaders across the United States. NASSP seeks to transform education through school leadership, recognizing that the fulfillment of each student’s potential relies on great leaders in every school committed to the success of each student. Reflecting its long-standing commitment to student leadership development, NASSP administers the National Honor Society, National Junior Honor Society, National Elementary Honor Society, and National Student Council.
About DonorsChoose.org

Already well-versed DonorsChoose.org? Skip ahead to learn best practices directly from principals or four easy actions that will set your teachers up for success!
Teachers Ask. We Deliver.

Education takes a community, and DonorsChoose.org is ready to work with your school, teachers, and advisers to get the additional materials and supplies that help students thrive. DonorsChoose.org is a 501(c)3 public charity founded by a Bronx public high school teacher.

Since 2000, we've been trusted by teachers, donors, and school administrators across the country.

Through our platform, teachers and advisers request the exact materials and experiences they know will bring learning to life for their students. For some, that means some extra paper and pencils. Others want to expand their classroom libraries, sports teams, extracurriculars, or student orchestras. Many dream even bigger, proposing robot kits for their students, flexible seating furniture for their classrooms, and professional development opportunities to further their teaching.
Teachers and advisers at verified schools request specific items.

We vet every single project that teachers and advisers post.

Donors and foundations contribute to these requests.

We order the items and ship them to the school.

We notify the school in advance of every shipment.
National Fundraising, Local Impact

Unlike any other education funding platform, 75% of the dollars given to classrooms each year come from people and organizations outside of educators’ personal networks, making our site especially useful for educators in low-income communities.

Since our founding, our corporate and foundation partners have given more than $300 million to support classrooms. And by engaging a community of donors passionate about supporting classrooms, we connect educators with individuals they would never otherwise meet through traditional fundraising efforts.
DonorsChoose.org is an accountable, transparent way for teachers to get funding for classroom needs and for projects that bring learning to life.

Arne Duncan
Former U.S. Secretary of Education
Most schools remain under-resourced to meet the learning goals to which students aspire, but the success of DonorsChoose.org reminds us that a well of public generosity is available for projects that are well-articulated and connected with larger goals.

JoAnn Bartoletti
Executive Director, NASSP
What is Crowdfunding?

Public schools have long relied on donations to enrich students’ academic experience and to fund materials that system budgets cannot always afford.

Historically, schools have raised such donations from the local community, often through PTO/PTA fundraisers. In many instances, teachers also spend their own money (on average $500 per year) on school supplies.

Today, online crowdfunding makes it possible for schools to raise more funding for classroom resources regardless of the size of their PTO/PTA.
Why We’re the Leading Crowdfunding Site for K–12 Education

Plenty of websites let educators raise money from their local networks. But on DonorsChoose.org, teachers and advisers can reliably get funding from outside their personal community. Our network of over 3 million donors loves to support educators they’ve never met.

As the largest crowdfunding site dedicated to public schools, DonorsChoose.org meets a **singularly high standard of transparency, accountability, and security**. We send materials, not cash, to teachers and advisers, and we always keep principals in the loop.
Why We’re the Leading Crowdfunding Site for K–12 Education

Our dedication to efficacy and transparency has earned us the highest possible rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator, for 13 years straight. This achievement is held by fewer than 1% of nonprofits.
DonorsChoose.org in Action
Principal Power

Principals can support their teachers’ and advisers’ use of DonorsChoose.org in a variety of ways. Beyond helping your school get more classroom supplies, you can leverage DonorsChoose.org to:

- Promote **instructional priorities**
- Offer **professional development** opportunities
- Recover from a **schoolwide disaster**
- Develop National Honor Societies and National Student Council student **service projects**
- Engage **parents** and the broader community
- Support classroom **innovation**

In a 2018 survey, teachers who receive resources through DonorsChoose.org said their students are more engaged, happier, and more excited to learn because of those resources. And 74% of teachers said support from DonorsChoose.org played a role in their decision to stay in the teaching profession.
Partnering With Your Teachers and Advisers to Dream Big

Although principals can’t create DonorsChoose.org projects, any **full-time teacher or adviser** at a U.S. public school or charter school can. Along with traditional classroom educators, this also includes:

- Librarians and media center specialists
- Guidance counselors and social workers
- National Honor Society and National Student Council advisers
- School nurses
Partnering With Your Teachers and Advisers to Dream Big

In addition to classroom resources, principals can encourage their staff to create projects that contribute to the broader school community. Some of these such projects include:

- A professional development conference to learn about innovative pedagogy practices
- New volleyball team equipment for the whole school to use
- Travel to a state convention for student council members
- A high-quality MakerBot so students across the school could engage in engineering
Case Study: Supporting Enrichment Opportunities

Kevin Osborn, Executive Director
Helix Charter High School, CA

Executive Director Osborn encourages teachers at Helix Charter High School to use DonorsChoose.org in support of the school’s mission to maximize opportunities for students to learn and experience success. Since 2007, donors of all stripes have given $540,000 to enhance the instructional program at Helix Charter. This funding has brought furniture for flexible classroom instruction, enhanced literary materials, increased access to a variety of technologies, and helped support the performing arts department.
Case Study: Collaborating with the Community

Mildred Charley-Green, Principal
Northwood High School, MD

Principal Charley-Greene takes every opportunity to empower and applaud her teachers’ creativity in using DonorsChoose.org to support Northwood High School’s mission. She works directly with teachers, encouraging project proposals that align with the schoolwide focus on equity, powerful instruction, and shared accountability. She sees DonorsChoose.org as a learning tool not only for her teachers, but for other principal leaders in her community. By promoting DonorsChoose.org to other secondary school leaders across her district, Principal Charley-Greene is sharing best practices with her local professional learning community.
Case Study: Boosting Staff and School Culture

Joe Simo, Principal
Centennial Middle School, CO

Principal Simo’s leadership is rooted in a holistic strategy for success and continuous improvement. He prioritizes “relationships first” by strengthening staff culture and instituting character education for students, and one-fifth of his annual budget goes toward teacher development. With data-driven practices, the school focuses on teaching literacy and math across the entire curriculum to help close the achievement gap, which is why Principal Simo supports teachers creating project requests ranging from engaging STEM resources to professional development opportunities.
Engaging Your Teachers and Advisers
Four Steps to Best Engage Your Teachers and Advisers

**Step 1**
Host a [staff professional development teacher training](#). Have a DonorsChoose.org teacher expert help run your training and share their firsthand experience.

**Step 2**
While you’re gearing up for the [back-to-school season](#), send regular email reminders or include information in your school newsletter so teachers and advisers can take advantage of two of our biggest funding months: [August and September](#).

**Step 3**
Let your teachers, media specialists, and advisers know when there are DonorsChoose.org [match offers and funding opportunities](#) from our corporate or foundation partners.

**Step 4**
Share the success your teachers and advisers are having at regular staff meetings. Educators are most likely to use the site after seeing how it has supported their colleagues.

**Why wait?** DonorsChoose.org is open 365 days a year.
Host a Teacher Training

Use the following tools to engage your teachers and advisers:

- [Training preparation checklist](#), including follow-up tips
- [PowerPoint slides](#) for training your teachers and advisers on how to post a classroom project on DonorsChoose.org

Leverage Your Staff

Empower other members of your staff to help teachers and advisers maximize their participation.

- DonorsChoose.org veteran teachers can host trainings.
- Your professional development team can keep teachers and advisers up to date on match offers and funding opportunities.
- Assistant principals can sign up for notifications when teachers and advisers post new projects.
- PLCs and teaching teams can work together to create similar projects for their classrooms.
5 Ways to Harness the Power of DonorsChoose.org

Principals across the country are collaborating with educators, using DonorsChoose.org to bolster school initiatives, access new funders, and so much more.

1. **Support Educators, Increase Retention**
2. **Advance District Priorities**
3. **Access a National Network of Funders**
4. **Raise Your School's Profile**
5. **Engage Students**
Support Educators, Increase Retention

When educators feel supported by their colleagues and administrators, they’re more likely to stay in the teaching profession.

DonorsChoose.org can be a way to show that support. Almost three-quarters of our teachers say DonorsChoose.org played a role in their decision to stay in the teaching profession.

Ninety-four percent of teachers report their funded projects increased their effectiveness in the classroom.

Hosting a Teacher Training in your school is an easy way to get started. This training preparation checklist and these training slides will get your teachers and advisers up and running on DonorsChoose.org.

Superintendent Dr. Meria J. Carstarphen writes letters of congratulations to all teachers who have a funded project, and regularly takes to Twitter to celebrate with them.
Advance District Priorities

You can use DonorsChoose.org to amplify your district’s initiatives and goals, giving teachers and advisers an opportunity to think creatively about the supplemental materials that can take their lesson plan and your district’s priorities to the next level.

Whether your district is focused on student leadership, working toward 1:1 technology, or looking to expand your extracurricular offerings, you can encourage teachers and advisers to create project requests in line with these initiatives.

Atlanta Public Schools
Every Student: College and Career Ready

Atlanta Public Schools wanted to empower educators working toward the district mission “Every Student: College and Career Ready,” without tapping into district general funds. APS Superintendent Dr. Meria J. Carstarphen and the APS Office of Partnerships & Development encouraged teachers to create DonorsChoose.org requests that bolstered the district’s strategic plan through e-blasts, trainings, and social media.

APS uses special revenue from vending machines and employee parking contributions to run a mini-grant program. Educators create DonorsChoose.org project requests focusing on college and career prep, and the APS team selects winners based on mission alignment, innovation, and demonstration of need. Each winning project receives a $500 donation.
Access a National Network of Funders

Unlike any other education funding platform, **75% of the dollars given to classrooms come from people and organizations outside of educator’s personal networks**, making our site especially useful for educators in low-income communities. Our national corporate and foundation partners include The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Google.org, PNC Bank, and Staples. Through DonorsChoose.org, you can help teachers and advisers get extra resources to help your students thrive, regardless of the size of your PTA or the wealth of your local community.

A Nation of Support
Recovering from Hurricane Harvey

When Hurricane Harvey impacted Aransas County ISD’s Rockport-Fulton High School, Principal Scott Rogers had to act quickly so educators could start the school year with everything they needed.

School staff turned to DonorsChoose.org for additional help. Through our platform, Rockport-Fulton educators were connected with donors across the country looking to help.

Throughout the 2017-18 school year, corporations and foundations gave **$9 million to districts in support of disaster recovery**, with citizen donors giving even more.

Rockport-Fulton High School was just one of more than 550 schools to receive funding for disaster recovery projects this year.

“It really pumped up the faculty, and lots of projects posted as a result.”

—Principal Rogers, Rockport-Fulton High School
Raise Your School’s Profile

Your educators are always going above and beyond for their students, and using DonorsChoose.org to get additional classroom resources is just one way they do that.

By showing the public that your educators are working hard to ensure their students have the most learning opportunities possible, you can garner media attention and increase your school’s reputation on local and national levels.

#BestSchoolDay
Turning a national story into a local achievement

In March 2018, Ripple, a San Francisco-based technology company, donated $29 million to fund every project on our site in a single day. As Ripple’s donation gained national attraction from outlets like the New York Times, so too did the benefitting schools and districts. The DonorsChoose.org team sent districts detailed impact reports from the day, along with a templated press release, which resulted in dozens of schools and districts like Charleston County School District and Boston Public Schools featured in local media outlets across the country.
Engage Students

Every class is as different as the students in them. Educators know what will excite their individual students best, whether that’s a new novel, an exciting class trip, or a special art project. By empowering educators to think outside the budget, you can help them bring learning to life for their students.

Impact of Gates’s Grants: Academic Achievement and College Readiness

We work with partners who are excited to inspire and support teachers and advisers creating innovative classroom solutions. One such partner is the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, who invited educators to create projects supporting academic achievement and college readiness. In a post-campaign survey, teachers who received funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation reported that the Gates-inspired projects had an even greater impact on student outcomes.

- 93% reported improved cognitive skills
- 92% reported increased content knowledge
- 91% reported improved academic behaviors
Signing Up for Notifications
Controls for School Principals

Get notified the moment any of your teachers or advisers post a project. When a project request is posted, DonorsChoose.org can email your team, allowing administrators to reach out to teachers and advisers directly if revisions are needed. Read more about how to sign up for these automated emails.

Receive notifications before materials ship. DonorsChoose.org notifies each principal by fax whenever materials are shipped to one of their classrooms. If we also have your email address, we can make sure you receive these notifications electronically. For more information, visit www.DonorsChoose.org/principals.

More information at www.DonorsChoose.org/principals
How to Talk to Your District Leaders About Crowdfunding

You can be a DonorsChoose.org trailblazer for your district. We’re here to help make sure district administrators have what they need to understand the benefits of our site and to set all teachers and advisers up for success.

Here are some links you can pass along to your superintendent, grants officer, or technology team:

- District administrators page
- DonorsChoose.org 101
- K-12 Crowdfunding best practices
- Controls for school districts
More information at DonorsChoose.org/principals

Contact us anytime at DonorsChoose.org!

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