



Guidance for Parent Organizations and Schools

Parent involvement is a critical component of a school's success. Parent organizations exist at our schools to assist the staff in promoting and supporting student achievement and activities. They provide an important link between school and home—helping share information and ideas, planning and holding events that build a positive climate, and raising funds for equipment and programs.

Having some common understandings and operating principles are helpful for both schools and parent organizations, as they work to fulfill their common mission of providing an optimal educational experience for students.

The school-parent organization relationship

Parent organizations are, by their nature, separate from the school itself. However, most parent organizations welcome participation by staff and administration.

Regardless of whether staff and/or administrators regularly participate in parent organization meetings, there needs to be an understanding that the District's and school's policies, guidelines, and philosophies must be followed when planning activities, events, fundraisers, and communications within the school and the broader school community.

Principals must always have the opportunity to weigh in *before* decisions are made regarding anything that will be done involving students or the school, or that will be done on behalf of students or the school. That doesn't mean principals can dictate what parent organizations do, but they must always be collaborative partners.

Events and Fundraisers

Events and fundraisers are a great way for parent organizations to help build community spirit and rally people around opportunities to earn money for needed school items. Care and consideration must be exercised, however, when determining what and how many fundraisers will occur over the course of the year, and what the expectations will be for students and families.

Minimal school time should be used for fundraising. As much as possible, manage fundraising activities outside of school hours. Also, keep in mind that we have a very diverse student population and a wide variety of home circumstance. A fundraising activity that may seem reasonable to one family, may seem completely impossible to another.

Having goals and incentives for levels of participation is fine, but should not be exclusionary or serve to make students feel singled out or embarrassed. Incentive activities taking place during school time should be accessible to entire classrooms, the entire school, or should have opportunities for all students who participated at some level in the fundraising effort to earn a spot to attend.

Insurance and money handling

The District's liability insurance will cover events held by parent organizations as long as those events have been approved by the Board. The District's Risk Manager, Leah McCarthy, can assist parent organizations in getting their activities on an upcoming Board agenda. PTAs carry their own insurance and are already covered. Another option is for parent groups to purchase event insurance.

The District does not require that parent organization funds be managed by the District; however, we do recommend it so that there is an extra layer of security for funds collected. Talk with Michelle Morrison, Director of Business Services, for more information.