# Fundraising 101 for Governing Boards

Michele Neely, President & CEO, State Charter Schools Foundation of Georgia

# Fundraising 101 Toolkit





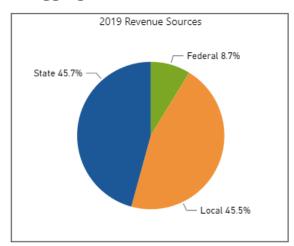


### Make the case for raising funds.

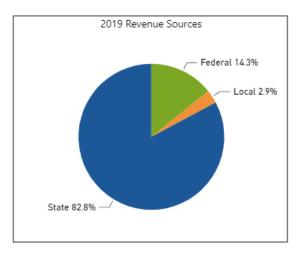
State charter schools:

- Only receive funds from the state & federal grants.
- Usually have higher operating & facility costs.
- 3. Cannot access SPLOST or financing available for traditional school districts
- Don't have access to resources usually shared across districts.

Aggregate for all GA Schools



Typical Title I State Charter School



Charter schools usually receive less government funding overall than traditional public schools while facing higher operational costs.





## **Give the facts – motivate but don't scare your community.**

- Set a confident tone: We have a budget/revenue to meet all of our school's needs. We must have your help to meet all of our school's wants.
- Outline the difference from fundraising at other schools:

  We are our own school district. So, we need to work together to provide the best educational environment for our students. Fundraising is more essential for our school to offer a unique public education experience.

  We do not have an endowment or wealthy alumni like a private school.







## Create ways for everyone to give & support your school.

- Students want to feel important to their school community. Help them understand why giving is important & find ways for them to contribute.
- Families of every income level want to be a part of the school community & making a better environment for their children.
- Local businesses want schools in their community to thrive.



Big funders come & go. Your community is always there.

# Types of Fundraising

## **Understand different fundraising strategies.**

- Annual Fund Ask families & supporters to give a one-time or recurring donation once a year (same time every year).
- Special Events Events can bring communities together. But they are costly & can take years to become profitable.
- Capital Campaign These campaigns are for one-time facility or program expenses and require a fundraising professional to help.









## **Understand different fundraising strategies.**

- Grants Most grant funding is for specific projects/needs & funds are restricted.
- "Spirit" Events Businesses hold special events to give a portion to the school. Beware!
- Sponsorships Ask businesses, organizations, individuals to "sponsor" an event, special need – even the carpool line.
- Box Tops/Soda Tabs/Grocery Store Clubs Many products & companies have loyalty programs. Find a parent to coordinate.
- Product Sales Traditional school fundraising technique that is often considered inequitable
  & too time/effort intensive. Look carefully at the effort required & payout. Consider if the
  product supports your school model & values.

# Most schools net more from just asking for \$.





## What do you need? Who can raise the funds?

- Find your funding gaps & set realistic goals. Plan on a few different fundraising strategies & set a plan before the school year starts. Example: annual fund, 1 event, box tops, 2 grant applications
- Coordinate with your PTO on fundraising & decide together how funds will be spent. Example:
   The school leader/board gives a list of needs to the PTO & ideas for fundraising. All fundraising activities are agreed to together & put on one calendar for families.
- The <u>board</u> should lead fundraising until/unless a staff member can be hired. School leadership needs to focus on running the school.

# Make an Annual Plan



## Deciding in advance gives you more time for success.

- Start with a fundraising policy and procedures with an approval process that helps your school carry out its mission.
  - Include who can raise funds (parent groups, departments, teachers, etc.)
  - Decide who determines how funds are utilized.
  - Think about communications for fundraising activities.
  - Address "crowdfunding" (Donors Choose) & grant applications
- Review & update your financial policies and procedures for donation handling.
  - Cash handling
  - Credit/debit card payments online & in-person

# Make a Plan



### Think strategically to maximize fundraising success.

- Create a fundraising plan & calendar every year when you develop your academic calendar.
  - What activities are approved? Consider an annual proposal & review period.
  - Who will lead them?
  - How will funds be spent?
  - Who will lead communication?
  - Put the dates on the calendar! Anything new is considered for the <u>next year</u>.

#### **Two Case Studies:**

- Go-getter teacher
- Unplanned PTO benefit dance

#### Add It Up

- How much are you asking families to pay?
- How many times are you asking them to give?





## Have your materials ready!

- A standard donation packet with a letter, school info page, and 501(c)(3) letter
- A donation acknowledgement letter (money & in-kind, automated & personalized)
- Business sponsorship packet with a list of how they will be recognized
- Information for the website & social media
- Any special logos or graphics



Electronic materials are easy to update & save money!

# Basic Tools



## Set your school up for fundraising success.

- Have at least one way to accept electronic donations.
  - Paypal, Stripe, and Square all offer nonprofit rates & buttons for your website.
  - Create an account with <u>GaGives.org</u>. It's free, but you cannot control payment frequency or payment processing.
  - Utilize a fundraising software program. You can track donors easily from year to year, automate thank you emails, etc. Take one-time & recurring donations. Also, accept payments for other school fees. (There is a limited fundraising option in Infinite Campus.)
  - Ideally, your school will have online giving, credit card processing in person, and a way to accept checks. Electronic payments are the most secure & easy to track.

Follow your Finance Policies & Procedures for \$ collection & handling!

# Basic Tools



## **Create a team for fundraising.**

- Establish a Fundraising Committee with clearly-defined roles & goals. Include parents.
- Assign jobs:
  - Donation tracking
  - Matching gift processing
  - Thank you notes (official & personal)
  - Event planning
  - Coordination with vendors
  - Recognition gifts, events, announcements, etc.
  - Website & social media updates. Letters to families.



# Fundraising requires coordination & cooperation.

# Get a Celebrity



# Who will be your school's celebrity spokesperson?

- Finding the right celebrity is essential to rundraising success
- If you send them an email with photos of cute kids ey will give you money & help with your event.
- Celebrities love surging of a ations by knowledge about!
- Email the Gates I dation



# Focus Your Efforts



## Weigh the costs and benefits of fundraising activities.

#### **Possible Costs**

- Venue (inc. transportation, cleaning, setup, etc.)
- Equipment
- Food & supplies
- T-shirts & promo materials
- Software & payment fees
- Staff time
- Volunteer time (opportunity costs)
- Instructional time
- Burn out
- Alignment with the wrong group/business
- Reporting/restrictions/other requirements



#### **Possible Benefits**

- Funds
  - Restricted or unrestricted?
  - Variable or fixed amounts?
  - What the projections?
- Community engagement
- Potential new students
- Bringing school community together

#### Two Case Studies:

- Grant with strings attached
- Spirit night with unknown local business

# Focus Your Efforts



## **Budgeting helps you plan & make decisions.**

Annual Giving Club							5K 8	5K & Fun Run Budget					
Ехр	enses						Ехро	enses					
	Individual		Quantity		Total		5K &	5K & Fun Run		BUDGET		ACTUAL	
Cars	stickers	\$ 0.65		500	\$	325.00	Race	Management	\$	2,899.00	\$	2,899.00	
Blan	kets	\$ 17.00		100	\$	1,700.00	Med	als	\$	732.39	\$	732.39	
Misc		\$ 250.00		1	\$	250.00	Shirt	S	\$	3,900.00	\$	3,152.50	
Teac	cher												
ince	ntives	\$ 50.00		4	\$	200.00	Park	Fees	\$	185.00	\$	185.00	
Class incentives		\$ 30.00		15	\$	450.00	Polic	e Vehicles	\$	110.00	\$	110.00	
							Polic	e Personnel	\$	150.00	\$	300.00	
					\$	2,925.00	Misc	ellaneous	\$	200.00			
							RAC	E EXPENSES	\$	8,176.39	\$	7,378.89	
Rev	enue Proje	ections											
Dor	nation	Quantity	То	tal Projected			Reve	enue					
\$	25.00	100	\$	2,500.00			Regis	strations & Donations	\$	13,000.00	\$	15,913.50	
\$	50.00	50	\$	2,500.00			Spor	sorships	\$	5,825.00	\$	5,825.00	
\$	100.00	50	\$	5,000.00			Shirt	sales on site			\$	50.00	
\$	250.00	60	\$	15,000.00			RAC	E REVENUE	\$	18,825.00	\$	21,788.50	
\$	500.00	60	\$	30,000.00									
\$	1,000.00	25	\$	25,000.00				NET PROFIT	\$	10,648.61	\$	14,409.61	
		345	\$	80,000.00									
		matching gifts	\$	20,000.00									
		TOTAL	\$	100,000.00			Co	uld you l		sa mai	74	21/2	
		IOIAL	7	100,000.00			CO	uiu you i	U.		11	<b>-y</b> :	
PRO	PROJECTED NET PROFIT			97,075.00									

# School Fundraising Companies



## Carefully consider all-inclusive school fundraising companies/events.

- Several companies offer programs to raise money for you. They provide the theme, materials, messaging, etc.
- They require the least amount of school staff/volunteer effort.
- This is the least customizable approach.
- They typically take 50% of all funds raised.
- Caution: Be very transparent with your school community about the fees paid for any
  fundraising service. All fundraising efforts will have expenses, but can you justify the
  expense? Do you feel comfortable telling parents about the cost? If not, you should not do it.

Does this approach make sense for my school right now?

# Co-branded Fundraising

## Think carefully about "spirit night" fundraisers.

- MANY businesses will offer "spirit nights." Most do not bring you much \$. Look at the percentages & requirements before you give them free advertising & customers!
- Look for those who give a percentage of ALL sales for that time period and/or give free products to the school.
- Scholastic book fairs are a win-win for schools. They promote reading & provide the school with credit for products or cash.
- Consider asking the PTO to lead spirit night activities.

Send home flyers, post on social, give stickers to students during dismissal.









# **Donor Incentives**



## Small gifts & exclusive experiences help encourage donors to give.

#### Free or Low-Cost Options

- Student DJ at lunch
- Lunch outside
- Pajama/hat/jeans/out-of-uniform day
- Extra recess
- Popcorn & movie party
- Ice pop party
- Prime parking spot
- Front of the line for carpool
- Meet & greet with the school mascot
- Principal for the day
- School announcer for the day

Offer these incentives when classes, grades, buildings, or whole school meets goals. Or have a drawing for privileges.

#### Other Options

- Snow cone truck
- Pizza party
- Cups/mugs with exclusive design
- Bumper stickers/car magnets
- Branded blankets/other products
- Exclusive movie showing/other event
- Exclusive shirts/hats/other merch
- Signs in carpool line
- Commemorative tile/brick installed
- Tickets to school event

Offer these incentives based on participation rate and/or level of donation.

# Sponsorships



## Give businesses & organizations a great way to meet your families.

- Offer ways to display businesses' logos, names, coupons, etc. around the school, on t-shirts (events), on the carpool tag & in the carpool line, on the website, social media, etc.
- Limit the number to make it "exclusive" & give the first right to school family-owned businesses.



# Grant Writing 101



## You don't need a grant writing certification!

- 1. Define your need. Develop an approach. Work on details. Prepare a budget.
- 2. Search for grant makers & specific grant opportunities that fund needs/projects like yours.
- 3. Note the grant deadline & method of application. Some will ask for a LOI (letter of intent) first. Most do not take unsolicited grant requests outside of grant windows.
- 4. Most grants are submitted online through a portal. Create an account & look at the application. Copy the questions into a document on your computer & answer them there first.
- 5. When you are satisfied with your responses, enter them into the portal.
- 6. Submit your grant!

# Grant Writing 101



## **Super secret tips for grant success!**

- Follow directions
- 2. Meet the deadline
- 3. Use the right funder's name
- 4. Answer questions clearly & fully
- 5. Proofread & edit (please!)
- 6. Know what you are talking about
- 7. Apply for a grant that funds your type of project/need
- 8. Provide clarifying information when requested
- 9. Don't make them guess....
- 10. Don't insult the funder







## The SCSF is constantly compiling resources for you.

- The SCSF maintains a list of grants for schools.
- The SCSF Slack site is a great place for resources & communication with other schools.
- Contact Michele if you would like one-on-one consultation on fundraising activities.

# Fundraising 101 Toolkit



# We are here for state charter schools!



Michele Neely, President & CEO - mneely@scsfga.org