Fundraising 101 for Governing Boards

Michele Neely, President & CEO, State Charter Schools Foundation

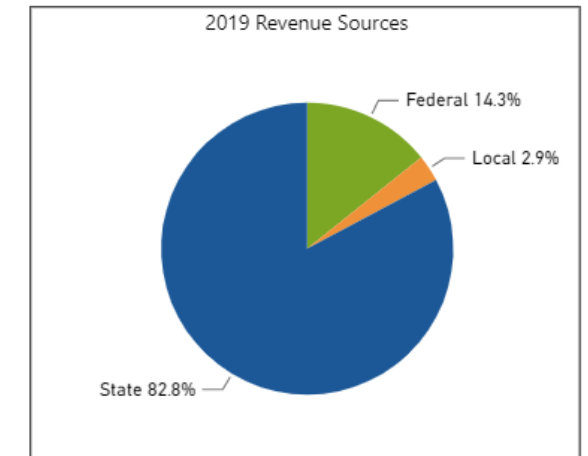# Fundraising 101 Toolkit

The Need to Raise Funds

Understand your revenue & unmet needs.

1. State Funding = QBE (per pupil funding) + Charter School Supplement + Facility Grant

2. Federal Funding = Title grants + IDEA (Special Ed) + Nutrition Grant + ESSER funds (based on your school's poverty %) + CSP

3. Local Government Funding = $0

Aggregate for all GA Schools

2019 Revenue Sources

State 45.7%
Federal 8.7%
Local 45.5%
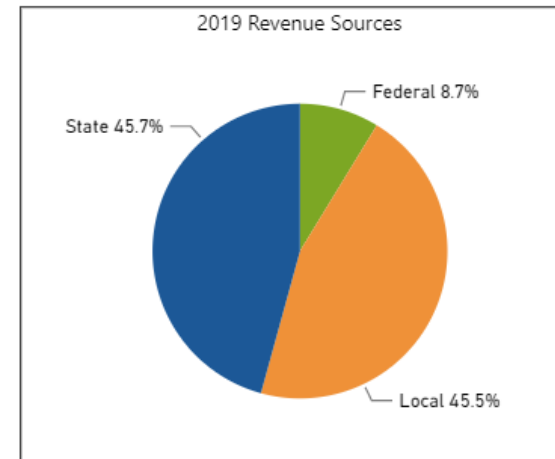
Typical Title I State Charter School

2019 Revenue Sources

Federal 14.3%
Local 2.9%
State 82.8%

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

Types of Fundraising

Understand different fundraising strategies.

- **Annual Fund** – This is the most effective, ongoing fundraising approach for schools. Ask families & others to give a one-time or recurring donation.

- **Special Events** – Everyone wants to hold a gala or golf tournament, but beware! Events 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.*

Types of Fundraising

Understand different fundraising strategies.

- **Grants** – Most grant funding is for specific projects/needs & funds are restricted.

- **"Spirit" Events** – Usually easy but may not be effective. Often more valuable for businesses.

- **Sponsorships** – Frequently used in conjunction with other activities.

- **Box Tops/Soda Tabs/Grocery Store Clubs** – Usually easy but low return.

- **Product Sales** – Consider carefully. Usually time-intensive & frustrating to families.


STATE
CHARTER
SCHOOLS
FOUNDATION
of Georgia

ANY OTHER PARENTS EVER BUY $40 OF FUNDRAISING CANDY BARS FROM YOUR KID?

makeameme.org

*Note: Amazon has ended its Amazon Smile program.

Getting Started

What do you need? Who can raise the funds?

- Find your funding gaps & set realistic goals. Plan on a diversified approach to fundraising.

- Grants are for specific projects, priorities, & programs. Many grants are not available to individual schools.

- The board should lead fundraising until/unless a staff member can be hired. School leadership needs to run the school.

- Is anyone else – like a PTO – raising funds for your school?

  - Who controls those funds?

  - Who approves fundraising activities?
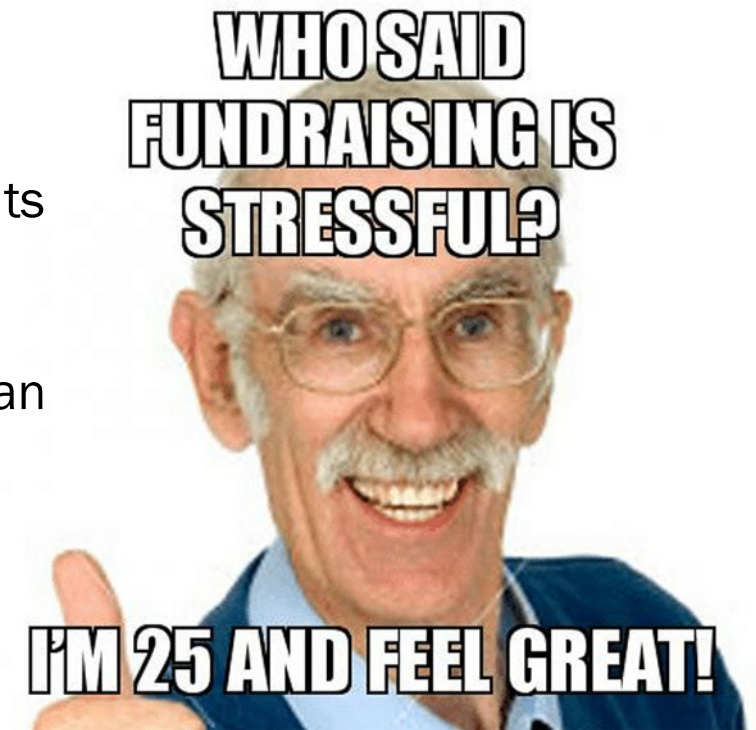
Make a Plan

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 next year.

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?

State Charter Schools Foundation of Georgia

Basic Tools

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
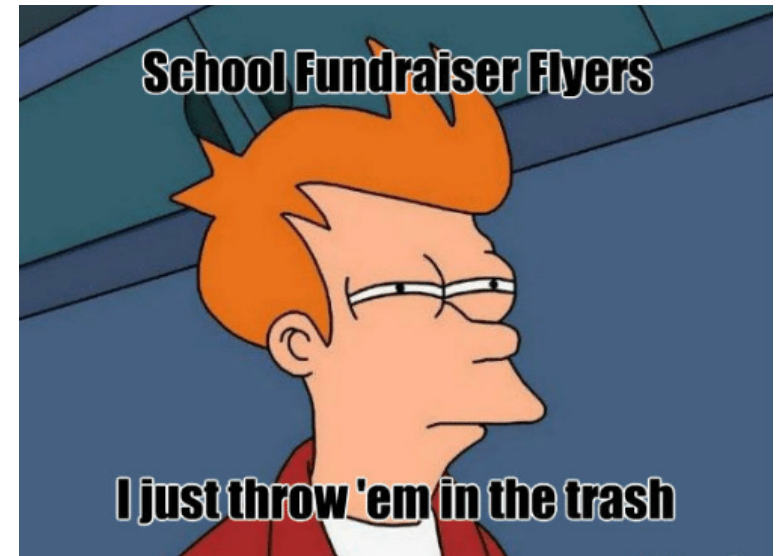
Electronic materials are easy to update & save money!

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 GaGives.org. 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 fundraising success.

- If you send them an email with photos of cute kids they will give you money & help with your event.

- Celebrities love supporting organizations they know nothing about!

- Email the Gates Foundation too!

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			
Expenses			
	Individual	Quantity	Total
Car stickers	$ 0.65	500	$ 325.00
Blankets	$ 17.00	100	$ 1,700.00
Misc	$ 250.00	1	$ 250.00
Teacher incentives	$ 50.00	4	$ 200.00
Class incentives	$ 30.00	15	$ 450.00
			$ 2,925.00

Revenue Projections		
Donation	Quantity	Total Projected
$ 25.00	100	$ 2,500.00
$ 50.00	50	$ 2,500.00
$ 100.00	50	$ 5,000.00
$ 250.00	60	$ 15,000.00
$ 500.00	60	$ 30,000.00
$ 1,000.00	25	$ 25,000.00
	345	$ 80,000.00
	matching gifts	$ 20,000.00
	TOTAL	$ 100,000.00

PROJECTED NET PROFIT	$ 97,075.00

5K & Fun Run Budget		
Expenses		
5K & Fun Run	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Race Management	$ 2,899.00	$ 2,899.00
Medals	$ 732.39	$ 732.39
Shirts	$ 3,900.00	$ 3,152.50
Park Fees	$ 185.00	$ 185.00
Police Vehicles	$ 110.00	$ 110.00
Police Personnel	$ 150.00	$ 300.00
Miscellaneous	$ 200.00	
RACE EXPENSES	$ 8,176.39	$ 7,378.89
Revenue		
Registrations & Donations	$ 13,000.00	$ 15,913.50
Sponsorships	$ 5,825.00	$ 5,825.00
Shirt sales on site		$ 50.00
RACE REVENUE	$ 18,825.00	$ 21,788.50
NET PROFIT	$ 10,648.61	$ 14,409.61

Could you lose money?

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. (Examples: Boosterthon, color runs)

- They require the least amount of school staff/volunteer effort.

- This is the least customizable approach.

- They typically take 50% of all funds raised.

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.

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.

STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS FOUNDATION *of Georgia*

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!

STATE
CHARTER
SCHOOLS
FOUNDATION
of Georgia

Grant Writing 101

Super secret tips for grant success!

1. 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/ne

8. Provide clarifying information when requested

9. Don't make them guess....

10. Don't insult the funder

SCSF Resources

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!

STATE
CHARTER
SCHOOLS
FOUNDATION
of Georgia

scsfga.org
@SCSFofGA

Michele Neely, President & CEO – mneely@scsfga.org – 404-615-5925