



How to fund raise for your school without selling food

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Shopping Donation Programs

If your school has only one volunteer to organize fundraising, this is the place to start. Check out the links below and sign your school up for all of them. These programs require participants to sign up, but most can be done online. Once registered, a donation is automatically made to the school every time the participant shops. There is no added cost to the participant; the donation is paid entirely by the merchant. Parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, teachers can all support the school at no cost to themselves by registering with these programs.

- ▶ Escrip: Supporters register grocery loyalty (like Safeway), debit and credit cards, and participating merchants will make contributions to your chosen group, based on purchases made. Paperwork-free, the purchases are tracked and available online. Sign up [here](#).
- ▶ Schoolpop; register at this [site](#) and your school will automatically get a donation every time you shop at hundreds of online merchants, like L.L. Bean, Barnes & Noble, Expedia, Kmart, Macy's, Nordstrom; works for many catalogs and stores too.
- ▶ Target; the [Take Charge of Education](#) program rebates 1% of your purchases made with a target RED Card to your school.
- ▶ Office Depot; sign your school up for the ["5% Back to Schools"](#) program, and families who buy their back to school supplies at Office Depot can simply give the name of the school to the cashier and 5% of their purchase price will be rebated to the school.
- ▶ [More information](#) on fundraising using the Internet, including setting up your own website or your own online shopping mall.

Corporate Donations

Many corporations, such as Boise (OfficeMax), Levi Strauss, Charles Schwab, Starbucks, Macy's, Radio Shack, Wells Fargo, and Bank of America will match employee contributions to schools. Some companies, such as The Gap and Starbucks, will make a cash donation to a school for volunteer hours worked by a parent. Remind parents to check with their employer to see if such benefits are available. Other companies with various school support programs include [Lowe's Toolbox for Education](#).

Staples [We Care](#) Gift Cards and In-Kind Product donations.

Best Buy [store donations](#).

Benefit Events

Some stores and restaurants will allow your school to sponsor a day or evening benefit. The school publicizes the event and distributes flyers; customers bring the flyer with them and a portion of their purchase is donated to the school. Try [Borders](#) for book shopping, or [Chevy's](#) or [Fresh Choice](#) for dinner.

Whole Foods Markets hold community giving days (otherwise known as "[5% Days](#)") several times a year, when 5% of that day's profits are donated to local nonprofit or educational organizations.

Scrip or Gift Cards

Many stores sell scrip; these are gift cards or certificates which your school can buy at a reduced price (usually about 8-10% off face value) and then resell at full face value. Scrip centers offer scrip from multiple stores. Here's [one](#) ; here's [another](#); and here's a [third](#) .

[Kohl's](#) department stores sell discounted gift cards for schools to resell at full value as fundraisers.

Things to sell

Appropriate for all grade levels

- ▶ Auction, live or silent, of donated goods and services; popular items for elementary school auctions include field trip for 3 or 4 children to the zoo, or a tide pool, or a nature hike, led by a favorite teacher; the opportunity for a child to be Principal for a Day (2 hours plus lunch with the Principal is usually enough for most kids); for adults, seats at a 12-person dinner party hosted by a school family and featuring an elaborate menu.
- ▶ Balloon bouquets for special occasions (birthdays, Valentine's Day.)
- ▶ [Bead jewelry](#) and accessories in school colors.

▶ Book sale, especially used books donated by students and resold for \$1 each (also CD's, videos, DVDs.)

▶ [Candles](#).

▶ Car wash; tickets good for a wash can be sold in advance; may be held on the playground at school.

▶ Earthquake kits; among the most useful items are a manual can opener, matches in a waterproof container, a utility knife, and a gas shutoff wrench. Can also include light sticks, 4x4 inch gauze pads, adhesive tape, "space blanket" (to retain body heat), flashlight, and a fire extinguisher (ABC type.)

▶ [Emergency kits](#) for cars.

▶ [First aid kits](#).

▶ Flowers or plants, especially for holidays such as Mother's Day or Valentine's Day.

▶ Glow in the dark [novelties](#) (necklaces, earring, tumblers, etc.); these are incredibly popular at high school dances. Another [source](#) here.

▶ Graduation Day sale of flowers, balloons, stuffed animals, for families to buy on the spot to give to grads.

▶ "No Bake" Bake Sale (from the [Reach Every Child/Horace Mann](#) web site, by Alan Haskvitz):

"My favorite fundraiser is the No Bake Sale - Bake Sale. It is easy, all profit, and the parents appreciate it. First, create a list of baked goods and complete cards with the item names and prices, for example, "Carrot Cake, \$5." The parent selects this baked item NOT to make and sends \$5 instead. You respond with a note thanking them for the carrot cake. Offer a variety of baked goods from "First Marriage Wedding Cakes" to "Crestfallen Angel Food Cake." The students can name the items and research how much they would cost to make, so it is educational as well.

"Send the list home and have parents decide what not to make. You can also send the list to others in the community. Obviously, it is all pure profit and pure fun, especially the "Oops I Burned the Turnovers" which usually go for \$10 and the \$15 pan of "Brown Knees."

"And the best part is, think how many calories aren't consumed!"

This is a wonderful site and has links to [many other fundraising ideas](#) .

▶ [Organic seeds](#); a great fund raiser to complement a school garden or nutrition education program.

- ▶ Raffle.
- ▶ School spirit items – tee shirts, sweatshirts, sweatpants, lanyards, pennants all printed with the school logo.
- ▶ [School supplies](#) - spiral notebooks, assignment pads, pencils, pens, calculators with school name and logo or just in interesting designs; another source especially good for [pens](#); and a [third source](#).
- ▶ Student artwork.
- ▶ [Stuffed animals](#); also available [here](#).
- ▶ Teacher gift shop; set up before the winter holidays and during the last weeks of school, as parents are shopping for teacher gifts. Could sell typical gifts such as candles, soap, note cards, picture frames, gift certificates from bookstores or supermarkets (especially if bought at a discount and sold at a small markup), bookmarks or book covers, bud vases, pretty mugs filled with fancy tea bags, scarves, mufflers, gloves, book lights, travel coffee mugs, disposable cameras, Macy's scrip.

Appropriate for elementary school

- ▶ [Calendars](#), especially designed by students; also [here](#).
- ▶ [Ceramic tiles](#), hand painted by kids and parents, for a wall or walkway in your school.

Similar idea with [bricks](#).

- ▶ [Cookbook](#), featuring favorite recipes of school families and staff members; or [here](#).
This can be done without using an outside company by soliciting recipes, especially of ethnic recipes, from families; typing them up and copying the pages, then collating and binding using binding combs (available at office supply stores); students could also illustrate their family's recipe page.
- ▶ [Educational games](#).
- ▶ Greeting cards, especially [designed by students](#).
- ▶ Holiday decorations.
- ▶ Party bags for kids' birthday parties; filled with an assortment of [novelties](#) (bouncy balls, glitter pens, fancy erasers, toy cars or plastic jewelry, puzzle books, glow in the dark novelties, mini beanies, tiny flashlights); saves time and effort for party-planning parents; novelties can be bought in bulk [here](#) too, and [here](#).
- ▶ School mascot [temporary tattoos](#).

- ▶ [School photo ID](#).

Appropriate for middle/high school

- ▶ Birthday, Valentine's Day, or Congratulations message delivery; students deliver a message to the recipient for a fee.

- ▶ [Bottled water](#) with the school's own label.

- ▶ Refillable [water bottle](#) with school logo.

▶ SAT practice test; many test prep companies contact high school administrators trying to sell their test-preparation courses to students. Some will provide a free administration of an SAT practice test; school sponsors the test, advertises it to students, and sells tickets to take the test (around \$20, or whatever the market will bear.) Students take the test and receive their scores within a few days from the company, which also offers guidance on how to interpret the scores. Students are then free to make an arrangement with the test company to enroll in the test prep course, or simply to walk away with no obligation. Test prep companies vary in their policies, so it would be wise to talk to several to see which offers the most information to students before making them commit to enrolling in the course.

- ▶ [School spirit items](#), such as stadium cup, pompoms, megaphone, foam spirit hand or paw, imprinted with school name.

- ▶ [Stadium pillows](#).

Walkathons and other “thons”

Walkathons have become popular fund raisers and are a good alternative to food, as they encourage more exercise. Students solicit sponsors to pledge a certain amount per lap for each lap they walk on a set course; those most likely to make a pledge include parents, grandparents, siblings, other family members, neighbors. This can be done on a track, or laps around a sports field. Laps are recorded for each participant and the sponsors are billed for their pledge. Participants can also solicit a flat donation pledge (set amount not based on the number of laps completed.) Some schools raise additional money by selling a colorful tee shirt designed by students which promotes the event. Variations: bike-athon, skate-athon, jogathon, jumprope-athon.

Other “thons”, all based on the idea that participating students solicit pledges for each unit they accomplish, include:

- ▶ Mathathon; students are given a math test with a set number of problems (say, 20). Pledges are collected for each problem correctly solved. Even kindergartners can compete, writing numbers in correct order from 1-20. Older students solve algebra or geometry problems.

- ▶ The same idea can be adapted to a geography or science format.
- ▶ Spellathon; hybrid of a spelling bee and a thon; pledges collected for every word correctly spelled; optional bonus pledge collected if student wins the bee.
- ▶ Readathon; pledges collected for every book (or amount of pages) a student reads in a set time (say, a month.)

For more "thons", [here](#).

Entertainment

- ▶ Faculty Follies talent show; afternoon performance with cheap tickets for students; evening performance with higher-price tickets for parents and friends of the faculty.
- ▶ Carnival; an oldie but goodie, featuring games of chance, refreshments, performance by the school music group, face painting, bouncy house, etc.
- ▶ Teacher/student sports competition - basketball game, baseball, softball, whatever. Tickets sold to watch the kids defeat the teachers (or vice versa.)
- ▶ Dance for adults; a twist on the typical school dance. The students run this one for the parents and teachers. Student jazz band provides the music; students sell refreshments; students chaperone (no "inappropriate" dancing by parents, please!). Students can also sell corsages and set up a photo station for parents to have their portraits taken for an additional fee.
- ▶ Magic show; hire a professional and sell tickets, or have students and faculty perform.
- ▶ A hybrid "thon" and entertainment event is the dance marathon, in which participants pay to enter and a prize is given to the participant who is able to dance nonstop for the longest amount of time. The last one left dancing wins. This could also be done with aerobics.
- ▶ Adult spelling bee; just like the kid version, but this time it is the parents, teachers, coaches, and principal who are competing, while kids run the show and sell the tickets.

More lists of fund raising ideas:

From the Center for Science in the Public Interest [here](#).

From the Center for Food and Justice, Occidental College "[Farm Raisers](#)".

From the Connecticut State Department of Education and California Project LEAN [here](#).

From the PTA [here](#).

From the South Dakota Department of Education [here](#).

From the Top School Fundraisers blog "[healthy fundraisers](#)" category.

From the Mississippi Department of Education [here](#).

From the Los Angeles Unified School District, [things to do](#) and [things to sell](#).

A [directory](#) of over 1200 fundraising companies (note: some of these are for selling candy and other junky food, but there are lots of non-food ideas too.)

From [Horace Mann Educators Corp.](#)

From the Texas Department of Agriculture [here](#).

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