

FUNDRAISING FOR SCHOOLS

In today's economy many schools are experiencing financial difficulty and school administrators are realizing that fundraising may be an important part of their position. Raising funds for the extras such as field trips, renovations, and musical instruments has typically been necessary but for more and more schools it is becoming necessary to raise funds for necessary budgetary items as salaries, textbooks, or science equipment. Most schools have become very good at cutting costs and attempting to reduce expenses as much as possible but care needs to be taken that the essentials are preserved in order that a quality education be maintained.

Parents are the first choice for raising funds and tuition is an obvious source. Current economics are challenging more and more parents and making it impossible for them to afford increased tuition costs. As a result, most schools have a fund available for tuition assistance and solicit donations for this purpose. Parents are often approached to help fund a program such as a music program or a sports program. Care needs to be taken that parents are targeted for funds above what their budgets can accommodate and other options need to be investigated.

A teacher looking to raise funds for a classroom purchase or activity may choose the traditional opportunities such as selling items or providing a service. It is always a benefit to have an individual who would be willing to serve as fundraiser so that this is not the responsibility of the teacher. Hopefully this individual would be able to devote more time to developing creative fundraisers. Many of the following have been used previously: Sled-a-thons; 3 on 3 basketball tournaments; car washes; spring yard work; walk-a-thons; talent shows; dinners with live or silent auctions; gift baskets; GST auction (goods, services and talents); engraved bricks; selling seat cushions at sporting events; plant sales; rummage or yard sales. Tailoring these ideas to the community is also important so that they align with not only the standards held by the school and church but are also compatible with the financial situation of the targeted groups.

Involving local businesses with funding education is a viable option. It is in their own best interests to have well educated workers and consumers. "The application of prudential principles in resource utilization in the practice of education ensures that investment in education produces a labour force that is relevant to the economy in terms of quality and quantity." (Agabi, 2012, p.4)* Engaging the local business community involves education the business owners about the school's education program.

Direct and indirect advertising are both popular for funding. Marketers have realized that these are excellent means of securing advertising. Direct advertising may be seen on scoreboards, sign boards, gym floors or other items which have been provided for the school. Indirect advertising is used by marketers who provide curriculum materials such as books, DVD's, or other materials on topics such as health, environment or science. Some of these marketers have created materials which are unbiased, provide balanced information and are a great asset to educators. Unfortunately, a large percentage of these materials contain serious bias and even untruths so are not reliable sources for educating children.

Another source of funding is corporate gifts and grants. Large sums may be available for large ticket items such as playgrounds, computer labs, or renovation projects. There is concern that as a result pressure is put on the students and their families to favor their establishments. A company in the US provides networked TV's and satellite dishes to schools who promise to show its 12 minutes of programming on at least 90 percent of school days. Schools would need to determine whether the free

equipment is worth the required programming. They would also need to investigate possible privacy concerns when corporations are allowed access to student information as well as parental information.

Financial challenges continue to be a present reality in the field of education. Each individual school needs to collect data in order to determine which creative solutions are viable in their unique situation. A final admonition is that key factor in the process is prayer and seeking God's direction for funding His school.

-- By Rob Parker

*Agabi, C.O. (2012, March.) Education as an economic investment. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, 5(1), 1-11. Retrieved from <http://www.igsre.com>