



ONTARIO STUDENT TRUSTEES' ASSOCIATION –
L'ASSOCIATION DES ÉLÈVES CONSEILLERS ET CONSEILLÈRES DE L'ONTARIO
POSITION

SCHOOL FUNDRAISING, CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS, AND STUDENT FEES

*Crafted in consultation with student trustees from school boards across Ontario
Submitted to the Ministry of Education on January 4th, 2010 by Gorick Ng, President*

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

What are some of the key principles that should guide school board policies related to fundraising, corporate partnerships and student fees?

Policies must:

- 1) Incorporate as much student consultation and involvement as possible before and during its implementation
- 2) Be equitable and thus support all students, regardless of their needs and abilities
- 3) Consider diversity which may include but is not limited to: cultural backgrounds, gender, and sexual orientation
- 4) Support students of all financial backgrounds to ensure that no student is excluded from a particular activity
- 5) Consider the age group of the particular student population by allowing for greater independence for older students and providing the necessary support for younger ones
- 6) Send a positive message to the school and community
- 7) Be flexible enough to allow for local decision making
- 8) Consider the geography of the particular school board so that the unique needs of students from rural/urban boards are met
- 9) Keep in mind the business practices of particular companies (in the case for corporate partnerships)
- 10) Be clearly communicated to all schools and communities to ensure that they are properly and fully implemented
- 11) Support, not detract from, students' learning and a school's overall development
- 12) Be sustainable to ensure that the funding and/or project has a timeline agreed upon by all parties and that the timeline is upheld
- 13) Be safe for the participants, in the case for a fundraising initiative



- 14) Be fully justified and be backed by good reasoning and thoughtful consideration
- 15) (In the case for fundraising) Never be a substitute for proper funding from the appropriate levels of government

FUNDRAISING:

How should the school community be informed of fundraising activities?

Possibilities:

- 1) Physical newsletters/letters home
- 2) Direct phone calls home
- 3) School assemblies
- 4) Posters
- 5) Morning announcements
- 6) Updates on the school and/or school board website (if applicable)
- 7) Dissemination/promotion through the school's student government
- 8) Updates before class directly from a homeroom or first period teacher

Notifications must:

- 1) Reach all students/community members the first time to ensure that everyone has equal access to the opportunity
- 2) Be mindful of the diversity of the school community through the translation of messages to the necessary languages
- 3) Be disseminated as early as possible in order for the school community to make the appropriate scheduling changes
- 4) Involve some form of reminder as the opportunity approaches

How do capital fundraising projects complement or enhance existing funding? Should restrictions be placed on major capital donations?

Considerations:

- 1) Details of where funds from a particular fundraising initiative are going need to be shared with those involved to ensure that the process remains accountable at all times



- 2) Details of donations should be made available to the public, with consideration for donors that wish to remain anonymous
- 3) Fundraising initiatives should never be a substitute for adequate funding from the appropriate levels of government
- 4) Existing government funding must be transparent and clearly and verbosely communicated to the public so that school communities may clearly decipher how fundraising projects complement or enhance existing funding
- 5) Students and the larger school community must be consulted on matters related to major capital donations
- 6) No restrictions should be placed on major capital donations (with consideration on the above guiding principles) where the donor does not seek compensation
- 7) A careful review of where the funding would be most beneficial should be conducted in consultation with the school community
- 8) Capital donations should be encouraged as they foster positive relationships between schools and the surrounding communities

How can school fundraising activities benefit schools and/or communities?

School fundraising activities are able to:

- 1) Enhance ties between schools and communities
- 2) Engage students outside of the classroom
- 3) Provide funding in areas that are in need of resources to enhance students` quality of education
- 4) Raise awareness for particular causes
- 5) Encourage meaningful community participation to accomplish a common goal
- 6) Enhance school spirit
- 7) Allow students to learn what no textbook can teach

CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS:

What criteria or ethical guidelines should govern the selection of corporate partners?

The selection of corporate partners must:

- 1) Incorporate extensive prior student and community consultation



- 2) Consider the business practices of the particular organization as well as its history to ensure that it does not operate contrary to the values of the school board and its diverse communities
- 3) Consider the reasons why a particular corporation might be seeking a partnership to ensure that students are at the forefront, not an increase in profits
- 4) Ensure that the company in question is a positive role model for the larger community (through fair trade practices, environmentalism, etc.)
- 5) Be Equitable (inner city schools, programs with special needs students or underprivileged areas should supersede already privileged schools with many resources)

What requirements should guide the administration of corporate partnerships?

The administration of corporate partnerships must:

- 1) Be fully transparent to the entire school community through the effective dissemination of information
- 2) Incorporate extensive prior student and community consultation
- 3) Be mindful of a company`s history, current practices, and future goals

What limits should be placed on the use of corporate advertising? What are appropriate ways to recognize corporate donations, particularly those to support capital projects?

Considerations:

- 1) One-time, permanent and stationary recognition in the form of a name plaque for capital projects is favoured
- 2) School newsletter recognition of the donation or speaking time at an appropriate school event (such as a fundraising dinner) is appropriate to inform the school community
- 3) The age of the student population must be evaluated
- 4) Continuous recognition in the form of jersey logos for sports teams or space in a school newspaper should be approached cautiously after extensive consultation with the student population and school community
- 5) The nature as well as the lifespan of the donation must be evaluated in conjunction with the advertising request. The donation of a school pool, for example, benefits the community for years to come, while a one-time donation of school computers has a limited equipment lifespan.
- 6) Advertising must not conflict with students` learning environments. Recognition that inhibits upon students` class time or ability to concentrate should not be tolerated.



- 7) An ongoing dialogue must be fostered between the parents, students, staff of the school, and the donor

FEES FOR LEARNING MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES:

****The Ministry of Education was previously advised by the Ontario Student Trustees' Association to work in collaboration with school boards and stakeholders in education to adopt the recommendations from OSTA-AECO's 2009 report titled "Equitable Education?: The Cost of Extracurriculars in Ontario's Schools". The report is available at <http://www.osta-aeco.org/publications.html>****

What criteria should boards or schools use when determining what activities, programs, or courses are eligible for fees?

Considerations:

- 1) Financial circumstances must never inhibit upon a student's ability to participate in everyday course activities. Materials, equipment, and activities that are a part of the curriculum must be available to all students equitably. Those students who are not able to pay due to financial constraints should be able to apply for funding assistance at the school level.
- 2) Funds must be made available at the school level to support those students who are unable to pay for curriculum-related activities upon request
- 3) Extracurricular activities offer a valuable opportunity for students to grow beyond the classroom environment and thus are essential in a comprehensive education that prepares students for life. Fees should not inhibit a student's opportunity in this area.
- 4) The criteria for special consideration in activities, programs, or courses include duration and frequency, equipment/materials, whether the activity is mandatory or not, and costs inherent in the activity (excursion fees)
- 5) Students must have equitable access to extracurricular activities regardless of the school they choose to go to, and as a result board-wide student fee guidelines need to be properly enforced from school to school

What practices are in place to support fairness and access to student activities in a way that is sensitive to the needs of all students?

Student Accounts:

- 1) Transportation subsidies are available to ensure that students are able to partake in activities regardless of where they live or their financial backgrounds



- 2) Programs are offered at multiple locations across a district to allow for convenience and equity of access
- 3) Activity fees are kept low through subsidies from the school, local community, or fundraising initiatives

Considerations:

- 1) Students report that different levels of support is available depending on the school one chooses to go to. Such inequities allow some students at one school to immerse themselves in a range of curricular and extracurricular activities, at the same time limiting others at different school that does not provide any support.
- 2) Students from rural and urban boards have different transportation needs. Both groups of students report not having enough transportation support to travel to school or other activities.
- 3) Some school student activity fees go towards capital investments in the school (in places where existing funding formulas are inadequate), such as in the purchase of sound equipment for the Stage Crew
- 4) Students overall feel that not enough financial support is made available for activities, programs, and courses

ACCOUNTABILITY:

Is the school community consistently made aware of what they are paying for, how much they are paying, why they are being asked to pay, and how the funds are spent?

Student Accounts:

- 1) The proceeds of the funds collected through student activity fees are not disclosed to the student population, even upon request
- 2) A general lack of transparency exists in the allocation of funds both within a school board and at the school level
- 3) Some parents are surprised themselves when they hear that their high school children must pay an annual student activity fee as the requirement is not properly communicated to the public and students sometimes pay for the fee themselves
- 4) Students and parents alike are surprised when they arrive at a school that has a student activity fee requirement as these procedures were not made available during school visits or on the school website
- 5) Students and parents who are accustomed to paying student activity fees view the process as a yearly ritual but rarely understand why they must pay



- 6) Some school boards that have a pre-existing policy that mandates transparency of school funds, but this policy is rarely followed at the school level. School administration officials are often surprised to find that such a policy even exists
- 7) Some information is made available through School Council meetings, but parents who do not attend often will never learn about where student activity fees go
- 8) Some schools effectively provide annual financial breakdowns for all students and parents in the form of newsletters

Considerations:

- 1) Students and parents must be aware of all necessary fees prior to their enrolment at a particular school, program, or activity
- 2) The destination of funds must be readily available for the public to access, regardless of their connectedness to the Internet or to the School Council. Thus, not only does financial information have to be posted online, but must also be available in the school office and be disseminated regularly to the school population for those who do not have internet access
- 3) Student activity fee funding formulas must be readily available in a clear and concise format to ensure that those without financial backgrounds can still decipher where the money goes
- 4) Student activity fee funding explanations must be available to the entire school community, regardless of language barriers. It is thus necessary to translate important information to languages appropriate to the school community
- 5) Board-wide and province-wide policies related to funding must be transparent and clearly communicated to all school administrations to ensure proper that the implementation process is followed
- 6) Subsidy opportunities must be made public to ensure that all students who fit the requirements may submit a waiver petition if they so choose to
- 7) Student activity fees must never substitute adequate capital or operating funding from the appropriate levels of government