Contents

Introduction
About NAESP
About DonorsChoose.org
Principal Case Studies
Engaging Your Teachers
Signing up for Notifications
Contact Us
Introduction

We’ve designed this toolkit for public school principals who want to learn more about DonorsChoose.org and encourage their teachers to take full advantage of our platform.

You’ll find information about DonorsChoose.org practices and policies, the answers to frequently asked questions, examples of ways leaders like you have helped their teachers benefit, and training materials for your teachers.

We’re committed to making it as easy as possible for public school teachers to get resources for their classroom, and we hope that this information empowers you to champion DonorsChoose.org at your school.
NAESP

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), founded in 1921, is a professional organization serving elementary and middle school principals and other education leaders throughout the United States, Canada, and overseas. NAESP’s mission is to lead in the advocacy and support for elementary and middle level principals and other education leaders in their commitment for all children.
About DonorsChoose.org

Already well-versed in how DonorsChoose.org works? Skip ahead to learn best practices from fellow principals or the four most important actions you can take this week!
Teachers Ask. We Deliver.

Education takes a community, and DonorsChoose.org is ready to work with your school and teachers to get the additional materials and supplies that help students thrive. DonorsChoose.org is a 501(c)3 public charity founded by a Bronx public high school teacher. **Since 2000, we've been trusted by teachers, donors, and school administrators across the country.**

Through our platform, teachers request the exact materials and experiences they know will bring learning to life for their students. For some teachers, that means some extra paper and pencils. Others want to expand their classroom libraries, sports teams, or student orchestras. Many teachers dream even bigger, proposing to equip their students to build robots, outfit their classrooms with flexible seating, or attend professional development opportunities.
Our Impact

To date, more than **11,000 public school districts** and **82% of public schools** in the United States have used our site. Over **three million donors** have given **$850 million** towards classroom materials and experiences, often to teachers they’ve never met.

You can always view live impact stats for the nation or your state at [www.donorschoose.org/impact](http://www.donorschoose.org/impact).
510,000 classrooms with funded projects

$850 million given to support classroom projects

34 million students benefiting from DonorsChoose.org projects

82% of America’s public schools have had at least one teacher create a project

National Fundraising, Local Impact

Unlike any other education funding platform, 75% of the dollars given to classrooms each year come from people and organizations outside of teachers’ personal networks, making our site especially useful for teachers in low-income communities.

Since our founding, our corporate and foundation partners have given more than $450 million to support classrooms. And by engaging a community of donors passionate about supporting classrooms, we connect teachers with individuals they would never otherwise meet through traditional fundraising efforts.
How it works

Teachers at verified schools request specific items.

We vet every single project that teachers post.

Donors and foundations contribute to these requests.

We order the items and ship them to the school.

We notify the school in advance of every shipment.
DonorsChoose.org is an accountable, transparent way for teachers to get funding for classroom needs and for projects that bring learning to life.

“Arne Duncan
Former U.S. Secretary of Education"
DonorsChoose.org is the crowdfunding platform of choice for Atlanta Public Schools — it combines the generosity of our community with education enthusiasts across the country to ensure all our students are college and career ready.

Dr. Meria J. Carstarphen
Superintendent, Atlanta Public Schools
What is Crowdfunding?

Public schools have long relied on donations to enrich students’ academic experience and to fund materials that system budgets cannot always afford.

Historically, schools have raised such donations from the local community, often through PTO/PTA fundraisers. In many instances, teachers also spend their own money (on average $500 per year) on school supplies.

Today, online crowdfunding makes it possible for schools to raise more funding for classroom resources regardless of the size of their PTO/PTA.
Why We’re the Leading Crowdfunding Site for K–12 Education

Plenty of websites let teachers raise money from their local networks. But on DonorsChoose.org, teachers can reliably get funding from outside their personal community. Our network of over 3 million donors loves to support teachers they’ve never met. We predominately serve low-income schools, which is why Dan Domenech, Executive Director of the AASA, calls us “the PTA equalizer."

As the largest crowdfunding site dedicated to public schools, DonorsChoose.org meets a singularly high standard of transparency, accountability, and security. We send materials, not cash, to teachers, and we always keep principals in the loop.
Why We’re the Leading Crowdfunding Site for K–12 Education continued

Our dedication to efficacy and transparency has earned us the highest possible rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator, for 13 years straight. This achievement is held by fewer than 1% of nonprofits.
Principal Case Studies
Principal Power

Principals can support their teachers’ use of DonorsChoose.org in a variety of ways. Beyond helping your school get more classroom supplies, you can leverage DonorsChoose.org to

- Promote instructional priorities
- Encourage teachers to collaborate with each other
- Help teachers explore innovative new resources in the classroom
- Offer more professional development opportunities for your teachers
- Make teachers feel engaged in the classroom
- Engage parents and your greater community
- Recover from a school-wide disaster

The majority of funded teachers say their students are more engaged, happier, and more excited to learn thanks to the supplies they received. And 74% of teachers said their DonorsChoose.org funding played a role in their decision to stay in the teaching profession.
Partnering with Your Teachers to Dream Big

Although principals can’t create DonorsChoose.org projects, any full-time educator at a US public school, charter school, or Head Start center can! That includes:

- Librarians and media center specialists
- Guidance counselors and social workers
- School nurses and language pathologists

But principals can partner with their staff to create school-wide projects that go beyond the scope of one classroom. Some examples include:

- A principal who worked with a lead teacher to source a professional development opportunity for over one dozen teachers
- Working with the PE teacher to request new playground equipment
- A second-grade teacher creating a project to establish a school TV station
- Getting special leveled readers to match a PD training the principal had conducted
Case Study: Encourage Teachers to Collaborate

Sharon McNary, Principal
Richland Elementary School

NAESP member since 2004

Principal McNary celebrates her teachers success in a weekly bulletin and encourages them to work together on projects and learn from each other. When her Kindergarten teachers saw a colleague receiving iPads, the entire team started posting projects together to get iPads funded on DonorsChoose.org so that all students could benefit. She makes sure it’s not just her classroom teachers who are getting new supplies and has created a school culture where teachers who don’t have homerooms, like art instructors, librarians, and music teachers regularly have projects funded. She also had a teacher ambassador train 11 new staff members at a recent inservice day so that no one is left out.

“When a few of my teachers began posting projects on DonorsChoose.org, the news spread like wildfire. Now we have a teacher who serves as a DonorChoose.org Ambassador, and I always refer my new teachers to her so she can help them post their first project.”
“I always have my eyes on the lookout for funding sources that can provide my students and teachers with classroom materials, but they must have few strings attached and be easy for all involved. DonorsChoose.org definitely fits the bill.”

Case Study:
Partner on a School-wide Project

Julie Bloss, Principal
Grove Early Childhood Center

NAESP member since 2001

During a grade level meeting, Principal Bloss and her teachers discussed how student behavior was negatively impacted when students couldn’t go outside for recess. She challenged her teachers to create a DonorsChoose.org project that would provide students with an alternative variety of inside recess games that could be set up in the hall during recess to help students be physically active. One teacher offered to post the school-wide project and take responsibility for handling the thank you notes if the project got fully funded. It was funded in less than a month thanks to citizen donors and a match offer provided by the Oklahoma City Thunder, and all of the materials were being used by students within a few weeks.
“Watching children in control of their learning with flexible seating options, iPads, Document Cameras, and classroom content manipulatives warms my heart. Engaged learners are forever learners!”

Case Study:
Technology to Flexible Seating

Melissa D. Patschke, Principal
Upper Providence Elementary

NAESP member since 1997

Missie Patschke introduced DonorsChoose.org to the UPE teachers in 2011. Since that time, multiple projects were launched and fully funded. DonorsChoose.org has provided many of the teachers the vehicle to find new and exciting classroom resources. Recently, several teachers posted projects to enhance their class environment through flexible seating options. As you walk into one of these rooms, you’ll see small groups of children working collaboratively with wiggle chairs, yoga ball seats, bean bag chairs, pop up tents, and a variety of styles of desks or tables. Learning should be comfortable and fun, not one size fits all. DonorsChoose.org has allowed this school to explore new way to use space in primary classrooms.
Engaging Your Teachers
Four Steps to Best Engage Your Teachers

**Step 1**
Host a staff professional development teacher training. Have a DonorsChoose.org teacher expert help run your training and share their first-hand experience.

**Step 2**
While you’re gearing up for the back-to-school season, send regular email reminders or include information in your school newsletter so teachers can take advantage of two of our biggest funding months: **August and September**.

**Step 3**
Let your teachers know when there are DonorsChoose.org match offers and funding opportunities from our corporate or foundation partners.

**Step 4**
Share the success your teachers are having at regular staff meetings. Teachers are most likely to use the site after seeing how it supported their colleagues.

Why wait? DonorsChoose.org is open 365 days a year.
Engaging Your Teachers

3 Tips from Dawes Elementary School

Teachers at Dawes Elementary School have been using DonorsChoose.org for over 11 years, and they’ve raised more than $750,000 in classroom project funding.
1. Celebrate wins, big and small.

When Dawes Elementary teacher Amani Abuhabsah had her first project funded through DonorsChoose.org, Principal Mary Dixon sent an email to the entire staff celebrating her win. Ninety-nine projects later, Principal Dixon bought cupcakes and threw a party for the staff when Amani’s 100th project was funded. Dixon explains, "When other teachers saw the resources Amani acquired through her crowdfunding projects, it piqued their interest."
2. Support collaboration.

Principal Dixon incorporates discussions on crowdfunding into the Dawes Elementary staff’s weekly grade-level meetings. Every Thursday, teachers and administrators work together to write and post projects, and discuss school-wide funding needs.

As a peer mentor to other principals in the Chicago Public School System, Principal Dixon also sends her teachers to other schools in the district to train those unfamiliar with using crowdfunding sites to support classroom needs.
3. Spread the word.

Communication to parents, friends, and the community can help to raise awareness of, and funding for, teacher projects. Dawes Elementary has started tweeting about teacher projects that are funded, and teachers often use social media sites like Facebook to spread the word about their fundraising goals. Principal Dixon also makes sure to include information about funded projects in newsletters, at local school council meetings, and at open house nights to keep parents and community members in the loop on how Dawes Elementary is going above and beyond for its students.
Host a Teacher Training

- [Training preparation checklist](#), including follow-up tips
- [Powerpoint slides](#) for training your teachers how to post a classroom project on DonorsChoose.org

Leverage Your Staff

Empower other members of your staff to help teachers maximize their participation.

- DonorsChoose.org veteran teachers can [host trainings](#)
- Your professional development team can keep teachers up to date on [match offers and funding opportunities](#)
- Assistant principals can [sign up for notifications](#) when teachers post new projects
- PLCs and teaching teams can work together to create similar projects for their classrooms
Celebrate Your Teachers

- Use templates like these to shout out your school’s successes on social media

Our teachers are bringing their classroom dreams to life for our students! Thanks to @DonorsChoose and our teachers' innovative ideas, [##] teachers have received more than $[X] in classroom materials this [week/month/year]

Congratulations to [teacher name] who had a @DonorsChoose project funded today! Thanks to generous donors like [@funder], new classroom materials are on their way to our school right now.

[\$] was donated for classroom materials at our school on @DonorsChoose during [#BacktoSchool/#TeacherAppreciationWeek]! Thank you to our amazing teachers who go above and beyond for their students.

Exciting news! Last school year, our classrooms received $[X] in new resources on @DonorsChoose. We’re thrilled to see our teachers’ innovation on display and can’t wait to see what they think up next year!
Spread the Word About Special Funding Opportunities

Your staff can create projects that go beyond classroom supplies, like

- Professional development opportunities including materials, conferences, courses, certifications, and trips.
- Resources to help with your students’ health and well-being, to help them fully focus in the classroom. These projects can provide basic needs like warmth, hygiene, and nourishment.
- Materials that reflect students’ identities and projects created by underrepresented educators through our #ISeeMe partnership with Google.org and many other funders. This includes funding for teachers of color, female math and science teachers, and projects from teachers of any background who are requesting resources to help students see themselves in their learning materials.

These types of projects also often qualify for special corporate partner funding opportunities.
Join DonorsChoose.org for a webinar **September 17, 2019** to learn about crowdfunding best practices. **New NAESP members** can receive a $100 DonorsChoose.org gift card to support projects created by your teachers.

**Two NAESP members will be selected each month** from September 2019–June 2020, to receive $500 DonorsChoose.org gift cards that can be applied to school projects.

Existing NAESP members who **recruit new members and engage DonorsChoose.org and NAESP on social media** will be eligible to win gift cards.
DonorsChoose.org & NAESP Team Up to Support Your Schools

NAESP Members Are Eligible to Win DonorsChoose.org Gift Cards!

NAESP and DonorsChoose.org are teaming up to help principals support their teachers get projects funded on DonorsChoose.org. Encourage your teachers to post projects on DonorsChoose.org from September 2019 thru June 2020.

Each month, NAESP and DonorsChoose.org will award two DonorsChoose.org gift cards of $500 to fund a school project.

To be eligible for the drawing, teachers should include the keyword “NAESP” in their About Your Project essays, such as “I teach at an NAESP-member school,” or “My supportive principal is an NAESP member.”

NAESP will announce winners each month in Communicator e-newsletter and on social channels. Winners will be featured in NAESP communications and are required to submit photos and a blog post.

Not an NAESP member? No problem. Click here to join so that your school can become eligible to enter the drawing to win a $500 gift card from NAESP and DonorsChoose.org.
Signing Up for Notifications
Tools for School Principals

We stand ready to work with your school to ensure you’re always aware of your teachers' use of DonorsChoose.org!

Get notified the moment any of your teachers posts a project. When a project request is posted, DonorsChoose.org can email your team, allowing administrators to reach out to teachers directly if revisions are needed. Read more and sign up for these automated emails at www.donorschoose.org/principals.

Receive notifications before materials ship. DonorsChoose.org notifies each principal by fax whenever materials are shipped to one of their classrooms. If we also have your email address, we can make sure you receive these notifications electronically. Update your contact information in our database at www.donorschoose.org/principals.
Tell Your District Leaders About Your School’s Success and Lead the Charge

By using DonorsChoose.org, your school could be a leader within your district. Consider leading a district-wide principal PD session and share your teachers’ success stories with your superintendent and communications director. And know that we’re here to help make sure your administrators have what they need to understand the benefits of our site and to set teachers up for success district-wide.

Here are some links you can pass along to your superintendent, grants officer, or technology team:

- Our district administrators page
- DonorsChoose.org 101
- Overview of crowdfunding best practices
- Controls for school districts
- AASA’s crowdfunding model policy toolkit
Contact Us
More information at DonorsChoose.org/principals

Contact us anytime at DonorsChoose.org!

Kirk Smiley
Managing Director
Advocacy and Public Partnerships
ksmile@donorschoose.org
@AKirkSmiley

School District Customer Service
districts@donorschoose.org