

FIT TO LEARN TIP SHEET

Healthy Fundraising



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Schools have many options for successfully raising money while keeping school wellness a priority—without relying on sales of unhealthy foods. Learn more about easy ways to hold healthy fundraisers in your school that send consistent, positive messages that wellness really matters.

Why is This Important?

Research shows that fundraisers can make an impression on students and, if they are not in line with wellness goals, can reverse some of the progress being made by school-wide wellness efforts. When schools provide healthy choices for fundraising, they send positive, consistent messages about the importance of good nutrition and physical activity.

Get Started

In the fall of 2012, CPS passed a Healthy Snack and Beverage Policy, which established nutritional standards for food available to students outside the school lunch program, including a la carte items sold in the cafeteria, vending machines, fundraisers and school stores. This policy is necessary because these “competitive foods” include snacks high in sugar, salt or fat, and students often will choose these foods instead of the healthy school lunches that adhere to nutritional standards. The CPS Healthy Snack and Beverage Policy established guidance for CPS schools regarding school fundraisers:

- All CPS non-food fundraisers require approval from the network Chief and all food fundraisers require approval from Nutrition Support Services.
- Schools that implement the sale of non-approved food or beverages will have to forfeit the revenue to the district.

1. Learn about the requirements

Foods sold as fundraisers are also called “competitive foods” because they are outside the regular school meal program. To learn about the requirements for healthy competitive foods that are in line with the CPS Wellness Policy, visit learnwellcps.org. With fundraising, a good rule of thumb is to focus on fun, rather than on food.

2. Create a team

Some people to contact may include the school principal, school dining manager, school nurse, parents and

fellow teachers. Make sure to state your case for healthy fundraising. Questions to ask the group include: What does current fundraising look like, and how could it be healthier? What programs do we need to fundraise for and how much do we need to raise? How many fundraisers should we host? How do we determine the success of a fundraiser? (For example, is it measured by dollars raised, student involvement, community involvement?) Brainstorm a list of potential team members, their names, and the ways they can help on the next pages.



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Healthy Fundraising Team

Category	Who?	How can they help?
Principal	_____	_____
School Dining Manager	_____	_____
School Nurse	_____	_____
Parents	_____	_____
Athletic Coaches	_____	_____
Student	_____	_____
Representatives	_____	_____
Who Else?	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
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4. Analyze previous school fundraising

Interview those who've been involved in the school's fundraising efforts in the past. Questions might be:

- How far in advance do you plan your fundraisers?
- How do you decide what fundraisers you will conduct?
- Do you only continue fundraisers historically connected to the school?
- Are they based on a need for money for particular programs?
- Are they based on ideas from the PTA or teachers?
- Do you choose fundraisers that will reinforce school policies?
- For each of the sources of income in the chart from Step 3, note briefly what has worked well to bring in money that you want to do again. What hasn't worked? How can you improve or modify these strategies to make them work?

5. Choose a fundraiser

See the following pages for ideas to make your fundraiser successful. A good rule of thumb is to focus on fun instead of on food: Plan activities and themes to keep kids excited without food being at the center. Ideas include walk-a-thons, car washes, academic contests and much more.

6. Spread the word

Reach out to parents, teachers, school staff and, of course, students! Work with your team to create a plan about how you will make sure the school community knows about your health-promoting fundraiser. Set realistic goals—but make sure they are high enough to inspire success.

7. Some things to keep in mind:

- All fundraising should be voluntary, safe, and should not distract students from learning.
- Fundraisers should be accountable and transparent and should have a specific goal and a set plan of how the funds will be distributed. Make sure to set clear expectations and outcomes.
- A healthy fundraiser is a great way to spread school pride. Make sure participants know they're improving wellness as well as raising money.

Remember!

If using a fundraising company, make sure to select a CPS vendor-approved company. Questions? Contact the Office of Student Health Wellness at studentwellness@cps.edu.



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Learn from Success Stories

Ana Roqué de Duprey Elementary, Chicago

Flower-Grams. Selling student-made “Santa-grams” for Christmas and “Flower-grams” for Mother’s Day are two of the most successful fundraisers. The school also hosts a no-candy **Halloween Fall Festival** where the eighth graders create different stations with activities and games, such as face painting, hula hooping, bean-bag toss and a scarecrow photo station. Students buy tickets for the different activities or a wristband which will give them unlimited access to all the activities.

Madero Middle School, Chicago

Students can wear casual clothes instead of their uniforms for the day with a donation of \$1. Other non-food fundraisers at this school include rummage sales.

Manuel Perez Elementary, Chicago

At Perez fun festivals, the school gym becomes a carnival with games, activities and prizes. Parents create baskets for a raffle.

Chicago International Charter School Prairie Campus

The school invites students’ families to participate in fun reading and math skills-based games that teachers create and families can take home during the school’s “family game night.” Families are asked to pay \$3 to participate. The school also hosts book fairs either through a vendor or by asking families to donate old books and inviting students to purchase “new” books for 25 cents each.

Westwood Elementary, Illinois

At Westwood’s Reading Challenge Academic Fundraiser, students find five people to pledge \$10 for the student to read 15 minutes per day. For every \$2,000 raised, the principal pledged to spend an hour on the roof reading to students!

Walsh Elementary, Chicago

Walsh hosts candle sales. Students sell candles for \$10, and \$5 of the profit goes to the school.



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Bright Ideas

[Fill in the blank!]-a-thon

From Walk-a-thon to Sled-a-thon or even Math-a-thons, students could get a sponsorship for each lap, sled trip down the hill or math problem solved. For example, students could raise \$1 for every lap walked (up to eight laps).

Fun with Digital Photography

Rent a digital photo booth for your next school event or set up a station with a digital camera and different homemade props. Try to find a community photographer volunteer. Charge \$2 per session to offset cost (depending on the size of the event) and post photos online.

Cookbook Fundraisers

Create a cookbook of healthy recipes. The school spends about \$3 to \$5 per book for a basic cookbook. Groups can charge whatever they choose. Typically, books are sold for \$10 each.

Student Art

Everyday items (T-shirts, mouse pads, cups and tote bags) can be turned into family keepsakes while helping to raise money for your school. Print students' artwork on these items and sell them at your next fundraiser or turn classroom art projects into holiday gifts parents can purchase. Projects can be linked to art or curriculum-based activities.

Clean-up Day

Ask for donations for students' work. Create teams of students and adults who offer services (all conducted in public places and/or outside) such as spring yard work, washing windows and cleaning cars. The students and adults donate their time, but the home or business owners pay for the services. Establish a fair rate and make arrangements in advance.

Back-to-School Ideas

Order back-to-school supplies in bulk for discounts. Have parents purchase packages of supplies directly from school—this is convenient for parents, ensures students have correct supplies and raises money for the school.

Do-it-Yourself Fruit Baskets

Ask parents or parent groups to volunteer. Buy fruit and decorative supplies in bulk at large discount stores. Sell baskets or raffle them at the next school event.

Go Green Sales

From selling reusable bags to green cleaning items to energy saving lightbulbs, schools can fundraise and save the earth with items that highlight school spirit or an environmental message.



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Suggested Monthly Fundraising Activities

Fundraising ideas for the entire school year! Convene fundraising committees (student or parent) or your School Wellness Council at least monthly to ensure that fundraisers are well-organized, advertised and successful.

September

- Back-to-school sale (school logo merchandise, school supplies)
- Start ongoing fundraisers via the school store or donation drives (e.g. annual appeal)

February

- Valentine's Day flower sale or dance

October

- Columbus Day
- Halloween
- Walk-a-thon
- Pumpkin sale

March

- NCAA Basketball Tournament

November

- Election Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving
- Recycling drive for America Recycles Day (Nov. 15)
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Autumn fruit, vegetable, or plant sale

April

- Earth Day
- Seed, plant, or flower sale
- Walk-a-thon
- "Green" fundraiser (e.g., recycling drive, reusable bags) for Earth Day (Apr. 22)

December

- Holiday items (Festively packaged fruit or vegetables, wrapping paper, plants, candles, etc.)
- Holiday event (concert, dinner, theater, dance)

May

- Mother's Day
- Memorial Day
- Fresh fruit or vegetable sale
- School logo merchandise (e.g., "My teenager goes to _____ school")

January

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Talent show, battle of the bands, board game night, and other indoor events

June

- Graduation (flower sales, etc.)
- Father's Day



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Example Letter: Healthy Fundraising

[Insert date here]

Dear **[insert school name]** parents, guardians, and staff,

As a member of our school community, many of you are already aware that we have regular, annual fundraisers that provide vital funds for school programs. These fundraisers help to support new school initiatives, after-school activities, field trips, and athletic programs that enhance students' learning and achievement. In the past some fundraisers have relied on the sale of unhealthy foods like candy and baked goods, and we now recognize that this practice sends the wrong message to children and goes against our commitment to creating a healthy school environment at **[insert school name]**. To continue to build a school culture that models healthy behaviors, we are implementing the following guidelines regarding school fundraising. Importantly, healthy-food and non-food fundraisers can still generate the income necessary for school programming while promoting health and wellness. At **[insert school name]**, we recognize that a child's health and wellbeing is the result of a team effort between parents, teachers, and the community, and we greatly appreciate your support with these changes.

Healthy School Fundraising Guidelines

All school-sponsored fundraisers at **[insert school name]** that occur during or outside the regular school day will involve the sale of food items that either make a positive contribution to children's health and are aligned with healthy nutrition standards, or use non-food fundraising methods. Examples of non-food fundraisers include walk-a-thons, product sales (wrapping paper, greeting cards, magazine subscriptions), and book fairs. Fundraisers to be avoided include activities like bake sales, label redemption programs, and candy and cookie sales. **[Insert school name]** will support this policy with the necessary resources and assistance to adapt current fundraising practices.

Please see attached pages on ideas for additional healthy fundraising ideas. These are simply some suggestions, and we welcome your input and creativity. Do not hesitate to contact **[insert contact name]** at **[email or phone number]** should you have any questions or concerns regarding the new school guidelines. Again, we appreciate your support in making **[insert school name]** a healthy, successful school.

Sincerely,

[Insert school principal or classroom teacher name]



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Example Letter: Healthy Fundraising

Ideas for Healthy Fundraising at [Insert School Name]

Non-Food Fundraising

- Create a school cookbook. Ask families and staff to submit their favorite healthy recipe to compile in a cookbook and involve students with illustration and writing. Sell the finished product to parents and community members. Ask local businesses to join in the effort and feature the cookbook in their store for a period of time. If a professional look is preferred, personalized cookbooks can be printed through companies like Cookbook Publishers, Inc. (cookbookpublishers.com) and G & R Publishing (gandrpublishing.com).
- Sell flower-grams. Sell flowers and cards on holidays such as Valentine's Day and Mother's Day for students and staff to give to friends or family. This is a great way to acknowledge a holiday without candy or treat sales.
- Hold a [fill in the blank!]-a-thon. From Bowl-a-thons and Math-a-thons many activities can be turned into school fundraisers. Students can get sponsorship for each lap walked, bowling frame completed, or math problem solved.
- Host a book fair. Holding a book fair at school can accomplish the two important goals of fundraising and literacy promotion at the same time. Hosting schools receive a percentage of the profit from all book sales. See www.scholastic.com/bookfairs for more information.

Healthy Food Fundraising

- Sell do-it-yourself fruit baskets. Buy assorted fruit, dried fruit, nuts, and decorative supplies in bulk at large discount stores. Ask student groups and parent volunteers to assemble baskets. Sell the fruit baskets around holidays or raffle them off at school events.
- Switch out the bake sale for a smoothie sale. Instead of the traditional school bake sale, try selling smoothies during or after the school day. This does not require many materials: a few donated blenders, cups, and smoothie ingredients. Include a variety of fresh or frozen fruits and low-fat and low-sugar yogurts for children to design their own creations.
- Create a school "farm stand." During the fall months, highlight seasonal produce like pumpkins, gourds, and squash. Students can bring these home for cooking or decorating.
- Sell culinary herbs and spice sets. Herbs and spice sets make great gifts for the holidays and year round while promoting cooking and healthy family meals.