

POLICY FAMILY	Business Affairs	900
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## **Policy 914: Crowdfunding**

**Adopted 04/10/19**

Shrewsbury Public Schools (The District) recognizes that crowdfunding campaigns have become a useful method by which teachers and organizations can procure resources for specific projects and/or programs. The revenue-raising potential that crowdfunding campaigns may provide can be a benefit for the District. The District further recognizes, however, that unregulated employee use of crowdfunding campaigns on behalf of the District can subject both the District and employees to potential legal liability. This policy's intent is to effectively regulate and establish parameters for use of crowdfunding campaigns for District purposes.

It is the responsibility of the donor to understand the potential tax benefits of any donation they make to a crowdfunding platform in support of the District. Moreover, donors should have no expectation of favoritism towards their student nor *quid pro quo* considerations in exchange for any donation of funds or other resources to a crowdfunding project.

### **Definitions:**

For the purpose of this policy, crowdfunding is defined as the practice of funding a project or venture by raising monetary contributions, typically via the internet, for a particular purpose or cause.

For the purpose of this policy, campaign is defined as a fundraising effort launched on an approved platform that is designed to raise funds to meet an advertised goal or need.

### **Guidelines:**

- 1) The only online crowdfunding sites approved by the District for use by its employees are those that take monetary donations and distribute goods only, not cash, to the District, like *DonorsChoose* ([www.donorschoose.org](http://www.donorschoose.org)).
- 2) The District employees eligible to sponsor a crowdfunding campaign must meet the eligibility requirements set forth by the crowdfunding site.
- 3) No employee shall post any proposal to a crowdfunding site without prior written approval from the employee's building Principal or designee. When determining whether to approve, the building Principal or designee will consider issues including the intended purpose of the

campaign; how the project for which funds are being raised fits with the District approved curriculum; the logistics and manageability of the District taking and keeping possession of the materials to be obtained with said funds; the total number of crowdfunding campaigns underway or projected for that school year; as well as any other issues salient to how the crowdfunding campaign might impact the District or school.

- 4) To the extent an employee's campaign is to include any technology or software, the employee must secure written consent from the Director of Technology or designee prior to submitting a request for approval to the building Principal or designee.
- 5) The District employees, individuals, groups, clubs and/or organizations that do not meet the crowdfunding site's eligibility requirements and that have not been granted formal approval by their building Principal or designee may not engage in crowdfunding campaigns on behalf of the District.
- 6) If an employee's campaign is approved, the employee agrees to use the donated materials solely as stated in the employee's proposal.
- 7) Approved crowdfunding campaigns must operate in compliance with all laws and all District policies and administrative guidelines.
- 8) All materials obtained from a crowdfunding site become the property of the District, not the individual staff person who initiated the project, and, if applicable, will remain in the school where the staff person who originated the project was located at the time of the crowdfunding campaign.
- 9) Once a campaign is approved by the building Principal or designee and the crowdfunding site, the District employees may solicit donations to a campaign from their own personal network of acquaintances. Employees may not directly solicit students or family members of students they currently teach, support or over whom they have any authority.
- 10) Communications to current school families about an active crowdfunding campaign may be done through the building Principal's regular newsletter to school families or other school- or district-wide communications. Those communications will be informative in nature and not forceful solicitations for support.
- 11) If a campaign is not fully funded within the time period required by the crowdfunding site or the campaign cannot be concluded for any reason, donations already made to the campaign will be handled in accordance with the crowdfunding site's policy for such occurrences.

### **Crowdfunding campaigns MAY NOT:**

- 1) Disparage the District or any of its buildings, programs, students or employees or paint the District or any of its employees, students or programs in a negative light;
- 2) Include identifiable pictures of the District students in the crowdfunding post or on the project sponsor's project page on the crowdfunding site if said student's parents have made this prohibition.
- 3) Include identifying information of any District student on the crowdfunding site;
- 4) Be used for personal gain of any individual other than the District-related benefits associated with the campaign's purpose;
- 5) Result in the items being provided delivered directly to the District employee sponsoring the approved campaign;
- 6) Solicit funds for items or projects that are religious or political in nature or that have a religious or political purpose;
- 7) Violate any applicable state or federal law;
- 8) Be contingent on additional District spending or "matching" funds from the District or another organization;
- 9) Request food items; or
- 10) Contain language that suggests or states that an item or items for which the donations are being sought are required for or otherwise integral to a student's individual education plan (IEP), necessary for a student to achieve his/her IEP goals, or necessary to ensure participation of a student or students with disabilities in school or a program offered by The District.

### **Additional Requirements and Regulations:**

- 1) The District reserves the right to refuse items that have been obtained through an approved crowdfunding campaign if it discovers that the project violated this policy or was in violation of the crowdfunding site's requirements, policies and/or regulations.
- 2) The District reserves the right to terminate any pre-approved crowdfunding campaign or withhold approval for any crowdfunding campaign for any reason.

This policy will be reviewed within five years of its most recent revision.

MGL 44:53A  
MGL 71:37A  
MGL 268A:3  
MGL 268A:23