



Options for School Partnership

Because school districts and the communities they serve vary in size and needs, establishing either charitable funds or a school foundation can help close some funding gaps. Beyond these recommendations, those considering either a school foundation or a school fund should educate themselves on which system will best serve their needs.



RURAL SCHOOLS
PARTNERSHIP

ESTABLISHING CHARITABLE FUNDS

Charitable funds established by a school district or its supporters can support any appropriate aspect of the school's programming. For example, a donor might wish to support arts programming beyond the school's budget. Endowment funds can provide stable funding for a school over generations. If the charitable funds supporting a district continue to grow in value, a formal school foundation can be established later.

ESTABLISHING A FORMAL SCHOOL FOUNDATION

Establishing a school foundation can have far-reaching effects and can help provide a conduit for securing donations and funds to support schools. If a district has community members that are passionate about education but not serving on the school board, a formal school foundation with bylaws and a board of directors could be the answer. A successful school foundation is primarily focused on success and opportunities for all students. Its leadership is rooted in the community, supports the foundation financially and advocates for planned giving and endowed funding.

ACTION STEPS FOR ESTABLISHING A SCHOOL FOUNDATION

- 1** Establish a small, working group to explore the feasibility of establishing a school foundation as an independent 501(c)3 or under the umbrella of a community foundation's charitable status.
- 2** Keep administrators and school board members in the loop and garner their support before moving forward.
- 3** Establish a formal board or advisory board, depending on the legal structure of the school "foundation."
- 4** Clearly articulate the foundation's mission statement.
- 5** Develop a launch plan that focuses heavily on community education/communication.
- 6** Determine short-term goals to build momentum and launch the foundation.
- 7** Determine long-range objectives and consider existing assets that eventually could be included in the school foundation's portfolio.

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