

betterworld

The ultimate guide to school fundraising

[Start your fundraising campaign](#) →



School funding challenges aren't new, but they are growing. In the [2023 edition of Momentum](#), the National Catholic Educational Association's magazine (NCEA), it was reported that tuition alone isn't enough to cover the true cost of education. That's true across the board—for Catholic, private, and public schools alike.

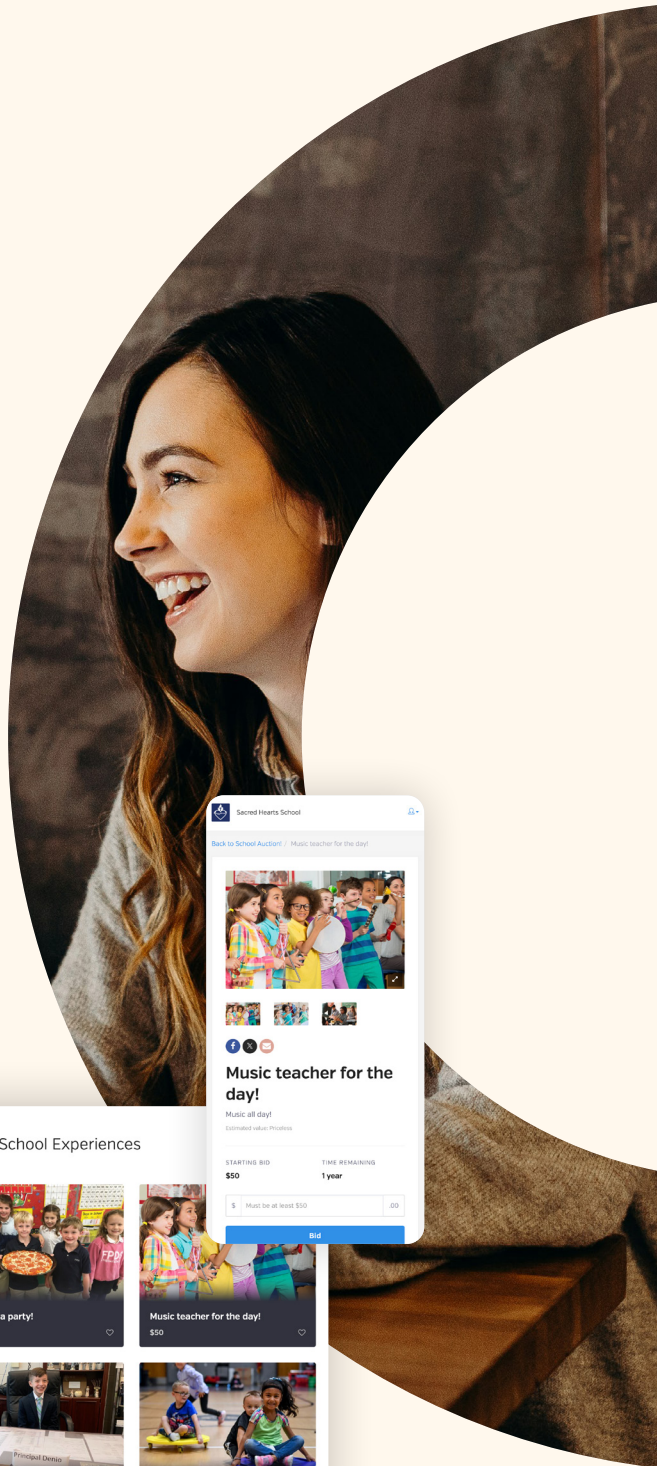
When budgets are tight and funding gets cut, fundraising becomes more than a nice-to-have. It becomes essential. However, while fundraising can fill critical gaps—covering classroom technology, student scholarships, and more—it isn't always straightforward to execute. There's no quick fix, no one-size-fits-all campaign.

That's why support matters.


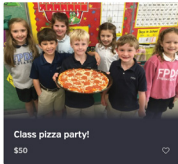
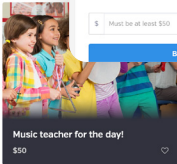
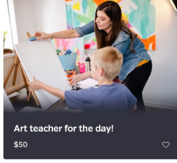
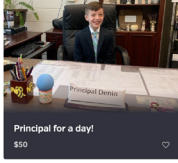
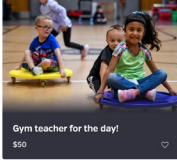
Whether you're a one-person team or part of a larger development effort, having the right guidance and tools can make all the difference. With a clear plan and the right support in place, it's possible to run campaigns that feel less overwhelming and more impactful.

In this guide, we'll walk you through practical and effective fundraising strategies for schools of all kinds. You'll learn about the different types of fundraisers, find tips for measuring success, and ways to build a sustainable approach that works even when resources are limited.

Let's get started.




Amazing School Experiences

 <p>Ice cream with your teacher! \$50</p>	 <p>Class pizza party! \$50</p>	 <p>Music teacher for the day! \$50</p>
 <p>Art teacher for the day! \$50</p>	 <p>Principal for a day! \$50</p>	 <p>Gym teacher for the day! \$50</p>

Secret Hearts School

Back to School Auction / Music teacher for the day!



Music teacher for the day!
Music: all day!
Estimated value: \$1000

STARTING BID: \$50

TIME REMAINING: 1 year

\$ Must be at least \$50

Bid

Popular ways schools can raise money year after year



Galas & auctions

Galas are formal events designed to bring together school supporters, including parents, alumni, school leaders, and community members, for an evening of dining, entertainment, and philanthropy.

The primary goal is to raise significant funds for the school while promoting community engagement and celebrating the school's mission and achievements. Galas have long been classic fundraising events. They aren't the easiest to pull off, but they often bring large gifts through an auction that typically occurs during the event.



School carnivals & festivals

A school carnival or festival is another fun, larger-scale option for a fundraiser. A carnival or festival is a community-oriented event that typically includes games, food, entertainment, and activities designed to bring together families, parishioners, and the local community.

The primary goal of these events is to raise funds for the school while fostering a sense of community and fun. While they can generate a lot of excitement and, in turn, donations, carnivals and festivals require a lot of time, resources, and money to host.

If you choose to host a carnival, some fun things to consider include:

- Food and drink booths or trucks
- Raffle tickets and auctions
- Inflatable attractions for children
- Carnival games with prizes
- Live entertainment

Walk-a-thons & 5Ks

Want to rally your supporters in a way that doesn't require as much overhead or resources but still engages and excites the community? Consider hosting a walk-a-thon or 5K race. A walk-a-thon is a fundraising event where students, families, parishioners, and supporters participate in a sponsored walk to raise money for the school.

Participants collect pledges or donations from family, friends, and local businesses, with the funds for school programs, scholarships, or other needs. This event can incorporate a faith-based or school spirit theme, fostering physical activity and community engagement.





Golf tournaments

Golf tournaments have long been utilized as fundraisers for schools, nonprofits, and charities. And it makes sense why that's the case—they're fun, versatile, and driven by community action.

A golf tournament fundraiser typically includes a full day of golfing, as well as other fundraising elements, such as auctions, raffles, and sponsorships.

When choosing a fundraising model for your golf tournament, consider these sponsorship options:

Hole sponsorships: Businesses or individuals can sponsor a hole with their company name or logo displayed on signage at the hole.

Event sponsorships: Local businesses can sponsor different aspects of the event, such as lunch, dinner, awards ceremony, or golf carts. This type of sponsorship provides additional funding while giving businesses visibility in the community.

Prize sponsorships: Prizes for winners or raffle items are often donated by sponsors, with businesses recognized during the awards ceremony or in event materials.

You might consider hosting a closing awards ceremony and dinner at the end of the tournament. Use this opportunity to make a formal fundraising appeal or host an auction.



Fund-a-need

Donors love to see the tangible effects of their contributions, and what better way to showcase that than through impact giving? This type of campaign offers a unique opportunity to create specific items or projects that people can donate towards.

For example, you could design an entire impact giving campaign focused on classroom necessities. This approach allows donors to directly fund specific needs, such as purchasing a new projector required for an 8th-grade classroom or providing new building blocks for a pre-kindergarten class.

By aligning donor contributions with clearly defined goals, impact giving enhances the sense of connection and fulfillment, making the donation experience more meaningful and impactful for everyone involved.



Online auction

Auctions are a classic way to raise vital funds for your school. An online auction is a virtual event where individuals can bid on various items or experiences to raise money.

Hosted on a [digital platform like BetterWorld](#), it enables participants to view and place bids from their own homes. Online auctions are a popular fundraising option because they are accessible to a wide audience, offer flexibility in timing, and can engage donors who can't attend in-person events.

TIP: BetterWorld can handle auction logistics, including listing items, managing bids, and processing payments. The platform also allows for customization with your school's branding, details about the fundraiser, and descriptions of the auction items.



Peer-to-peer fundraising

Peer-to-peer fundraising helps schools raise money in a way that inspires their entire community and taps into the power of their networks.

The top 30 peer-to-peer fundraising programs activated 3.8 million participants—a 15.6% increase for 2023 following 2022's 58% increase.

Personal fundraising pages through BetterWorld allow participants to share their stories, explain why the school matters, and build a stronger emotional connection with potential donors. It's low-cost, too.

BetterWorld's fundraising platform is 100% free for schools.

Since much fundraising happens online and through social sharing, there are fewer logistical costs compared to in-person events like galas or carnivals.

Measuring success in school fundraisers

A critical piece of any fundraising campaign is analyzing performance and optimizing the next campaign. Here, we break down key measures to help you track your success and learn what works best.



Top 5 key performance indicators (KPIs) of school fundraisers

01. Total funds raised

- **Definition:** The total amount of money raised from the campaign.
- **Why it matters:** This is the primary measure of success, showing if the campaign met or exceeded its financial goals.
- **How to track:** Compare the total funds raised to the campaign's initial goal and previous years' performance, if applicable.

02. Return on investment (ROI)

- **Definition:** The ratio of net funds raised to the campaign's total cost.
- **Why it matters:** A high ROI indicates an efficient campaign where the funds raised are significantly greater than the costs.
- **How to track:** $\text{Net funds raised} / \text{total campaign costs} \times 100 = \text{ROI}$
- **Example:** If a fundraiser raised \$50,000 and cost \$5,000 to run, the ROI would be 900%.

03. Average donation size

- **Definition:** The average amount given by each donor.
- **Why it matters:** This KPI helps identify how effective the school is at encouraging larger gifts from donors.
- **How to track:** $\text{Total funds raised} / \text{Total number of donors} = \text{Average donation size}$
- **Example:** If \$50,000 is raised from 200 donors, the average donation size is \$250.

04. Donor retention rate

- **Definition:** The percentage of donors who gave in previous campaigns and continued to give during the current campaign.
 - **Why it matters:** Retaining donors is often more cost-effective than acquiring new ones, demonstrating the school's ability to maintain strong relationships.
 - **How to track:** $\text{Returning donors} / \text{previous donors} \times 100 = \text{donor retention rate}$.
 - **Example:** If 150 donors donated to the previous campaign and 120 donated again, the retention rate would be 80%.
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05. Event attendance (if applicable)

- **Definition:** The number of attendees at fundraising events (e.g., gala, auction, walk-a-thon).
Why it matters: Attending in-person or virtual events helps gauge engagement and community support. High attendance usually correlates with higher funds raised.
- **How to track:** Count the total number of attendees and compare it to previous years or events.

With BetterWorld, you can access all campaign data and reporting to make real-time, data-driven decisions and get a comprehensive view of campaign performance from one easy-to-use dashboard.



3 qualitative metrics to consider

Qualitative metrics like feedback from participants or donors or replies to a thank-you email are just as critical as quantitative KPIs. Consider these qualitative forms of measurement post-campaign to better understand your current and potential donors:

01. Donor & community feedback

- **Definition:** Direct feedback from donors, parents, alumni, parishioners, and volunteers about their experience with the campaign.
- **Why it matters:** Understanding how the community perceived the fundraiser provides valuable insights into what worked well and what can be improved for future campaigns.
- **How to collect:** Use surveys, interviews, or informal conversations to gather feedback on their experience with donating, volunteering, or attending events.
- **Example:** Feedback may highlight how well the school communicated the campaign's mission or suggest more engaging event activities.

02. Volunteer satisfaction

- **Definition:** The level of satisfaction among volunteers who contributed their time and effort to the campaign.
- **Why it matters:** Volunteers are critical to many fundraising events. Ensuring they had a positive experience helps retain them for future events and fosters a stronger sense of community.
- **How to collect:** Post-campaign surveys or one-on-one conversations can help assess volunteer satisfaction by asking about their experience, training, and sense of contribution.
- **Example:** Volunteers may feel their roles were well-defined or suggest improvements, like clearer communication or more training.

03. Mission alignment

- **Definition:** The extent to which the fundraising campaign communicated and reinforced the school's mission and values to the community.
- **Why it matters:** A successful fundraiser should also raise awareness about the school's mission and create deeper connections.
- **How to collect:** Gather feedback from donors, students, and faculty on how well the campaign highlighted the school's mission. Review promotional materials and campaign messaging to see if they effectively conveyed these values.
- **Example:** The campaign may have effectively emphasized the importance of education, service, and community, reinforcing the school's identity and mission.



Fundraising is easier when you're supported

Fundraising isn't just about events or donations, it's about people. And as a school leader, you're likely juggling it all: leading your team, supporting your students, engaging with families, and ensuring your school stays financially strong.

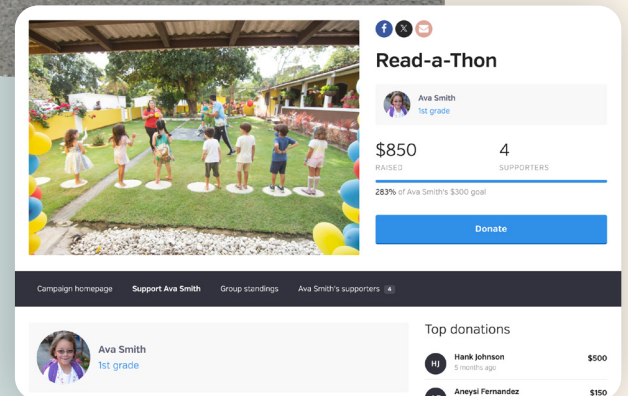
But here's the truth: *you shouldn't have to do it alone.*

Many school leaders don't have a dedicated fundraising staff. Some are working with limited resources or have inherited systems that no longer work. Even the most passionate teams can feel overwhelmed when it's time to launch a new campaign or consider long-term funding strategies.

That's why support matters.

Whether it's guidance from an experienced mentor, resources from a partner organization, or a structured fundraising plan, having support makes a real difference. It can help you:

- Prioritize your time and energy
- Build a fundraising strategy that actually fits your school's capacity
- Feel confident and prepared when asking for support from your community
- Raise more, with less stress



If you're feeling stretched thin, you're not alone—and there are people and tools that can help. Seeking support doesn't mean you're not capable. It means you're building something sustainable.

If you're looking for hands-on guidance, the BetterWorld Accelerator Program is a free support program designed to help school teams plan and launch successful fundraisers.

It includes access to planning templates, timeline support, and a real person to answer questions and help you stay on track. Whether you're fundraising for the first time or looking to grow an existing campaign, the Accelerator can help lighten the load and make the process feel more doable.





Ready to get started?

With the BetterWorld Accelerator Program, we'll help guide your strategy and bring it to life, so you don't have to go it alone. Whether you're planning an auction, raffle, or peer-to-peer campaign, everything you need is here—and easy to use.

Learn more about our Accelerator Program at www.betterworld.org/accelerator.



The good news is, we guarantee that you will raise more over the course of the program, or we will refund your program fees and make a donation of up to \$10,000 to your cause.

Here are some other perks of running your fundraising campaign through BetterWorld:

● BEAUTIFULLY DESIGNED

BetterWorld campaigns are designed to look beautiful, whether your donors use a phone, tablet, or computer.

● INCREDIBLY EASY-TO-USE

We designed BetterWorld specifically with the user experience in mind. Not only is BetterWorld incredibly intuitive for school fundraisers wearing many hats, but it is also easy to navigate for donors.

● SEAMLESSLY INTERCONNECTED

The BetterWorld platform offers a single place to manage every campaign you must run for your nonprofit. Streamline operations with a central hub for auctions, raffles, and ticketing.

● THOUGHTFULLY AUTOMATED

At BetterWorld, we take great pride in helping schools achieve their online fundraising goals. Our tools are automated to save you time on busywork so you can focus on doing good.

Contact us today to [get a demo](#) or simply [sign up!](#)

betterworld.org