

Donations of Equipment to School Districts

The primary function of PTA is child advocacy. Each PTA unit is self-governing and operates under the guidance and structure of National, State, and Region PTA.

PTA is an educational organization and should not be expected to provide for the needs of their school district or individual school. It should not allow itself to become the provider of services, supplies or equipment for schools, even during times of financial strain.

If a unit feels there is a specific need in their school, approach the principal and site-based team first and encourage them to include this item in the individual school building budget or school district budget.

It is **NOT** recommended, but if a unit chooses to donate a gift or money to their school, it should be supportive of school programs and educational needs. The gift must be approved by a unit's general membership and donated to the school district's board of education. The Board of Education has to approve the receipt of the gift and the PTA should receive written verification of the School Board's acceptance of the gift. Upon the board's acceptance of said gift, the PTA relinquishes all control. The equipment becomes the property of the district, and the district is free to use the equipment in any manner it deems appropriate. This could include moving it, selling it, not using it, or giving it away.

The following are reasons why PTAs **should not** give gifts to schools:

1. It can provide inequity among schools.
2. Liability factor (in certain circumstances).
3. A donated gift does not necessarily remain in the school it was originally intended for.
4. Where does the responsibility lie for maintenance and servicing of donated gift?
5. When a gift is given by one PTA, it puts other units in the district in a difficult position by parents and school personnel who now exert pressure for a similar donation.
6. It establishes a precedent that it's an acceptable practice.
7. Constant and unnecessary fundraising establishes PTA as a "fundraising" organization and members easily lose sight of their goals.
8. Lastly, it is not PTA's job to provide financial assistance to schools. It is however, their responsibility to be vocal during school district's budget sessions to ensure that the needs of the children and teachers are met.

Grants of Money to School Districts

The purpose of PTA is not to buy equipment and donate it to a school district. If a PTA wants to purchase (or help purchase) equipment for a school district, it should do so only through a "grant" process. A "grant" is a gift of money for a very specific purpose. A grant of funds to the district (rather than the PTA purchasing equipment and donating it to the district) is the smartest and safest way for PTA to conduct its affairs. It assures the funds will be used for their intended purpose or they must be returned to the PTA. The PTA does not become the owner of a product or piece of equipment, this DOES NOT absolve the PTA of all liability but does lessen their exposure.

If a grant (or multiple grants) is to be offered, the PTA can establish a committee to prepare a grant application, receive and review the completed applications, and determine the process by which grant recipients are to be decided. The plan of the committee should be approved by the membership prior to the offering of the grants.

Publicize the applications to all those who may be eligible to apply, and after the selection is completed, publicize the recipients of the program or supplies to be funded.

Before granting funds to a school district (or other recipient), the PTA should take the following steps:

- Determine that the school district (or other recipient) actually wants the equipment or project which the PTA is willing to fund.
- Secure an understanding with the district (or other recipient) on all the terms of the grant before writing the specific grant agreement.

A grant agreement should be signed between the PTA and the school district (or other recipient).

This agreement should specify:

- The amount of the grant
- The "sole and express" purpose of the grant
- A date by which the district (or other recipient of a PTA grant) must spend the grant funds
- Unused grant funds must be returned to the PTA. A complete accounting of the expenditure of the grant fund should be submitted to the PTA.