

Rowland USD

Guidelines for student fees, donations
and fundraising



Welcome and Purpose

- The subject of student fees, charges, deposits, donations, and fundraising related to courses and activities has been at the forefront of public attention locally and nationally.
- The purpose of this presentation is to review and present our district guidelines for student fees, donations, and fundraising.

Free Public Education

- California Constitution requires that we provide a free public education, unless a charge is specifically authorized by law.
- Since 1874, the California Supreme Court has interpreted “free school system” to mean that students are entitled to be educated at the public’s expense.
- **(for more detailed information, please refer to “Guidelines for District Staff And Parents Regarding Student Fees, Donations, and Fundraising Section I & II)**

Impermissible Fees

- California public schools—including charter schools—cannot charge fees in order for students to participate in any required or elective class.
- This includes: **participation fees** (e.g., curricular, co-curricular, extra-curricular), **supplies** (both necessary and supplemental), or any course instruction.
- **(for more detailed information, please refer to “Impermissible Fees & Charges”)**

Permissible Fees

- California public schools—including charter schools—may charge fees as outlined in the Education Code. These include:
 - Transportation to and from school
 - Transportation to places of summer employment
 - Charges for food (limited by the free and reduced price meal program)
 - Insurance for field trips
 - Lost or damaged books or district supplies
 - Direct cost of materials for property the student has made in class for their own use

Permissible Fees

- Fees for school camp programs (e.g., outdoor science camp)
- Fees for field trips and excursions in connection with courses of instruction or school-related social, education, cultural, athletic, or school band activities
- Optional fingerprinting program for kindergarten or newly enrolled students
- Actual cost of duplication of public records or student records
- Charges for medical and accident insurance for athletic team members
- **(For more detailed information, please refer to “Guidelines for District Staff And Parents Regarding Student Fees, Donations, and Fundraising Section III)**

Donations

- California Attorney General addressed issues of donations and emphasized that the Constitutional concerns are alleviated when the raising of private funds is truly voluntary
- School districts, schools, programs and classes can and do seek donations and this practice is permissible as long as it is truly voluntary and in no way a prerequisite to participation in the program or activity

Fundraising

- School districts, schools, programs and classes can and do also engage in fundraising activities and programs, and this practice is permissible as long as the raising of funds is voluntary.
- A student who is asked to but does not raise funds may not be denied participation in an educational or extracurricular activity.

Fundraising: Suggested Language

- You are not required to purchase any of these items.
- Donations are voluntary and all students will be allowed to participate regardless of whether a donation is made.
- A voluntary donation of \$___ is appreciated.
- A _____ (\$20) donation to the art department is appreciated to help offset costs for this program and to maintain the quality of the art program that we have at _____ School.
- Students who participate in the after-school athletic program are encouraged to support a one-time sports program donation of _____ (\$40), and a donation of _____ (\$25) per season for bus transportation. The program donation will help to cover the cost of uniforms, equipment, coaches, and officials for the year. The bus transportation donation will help to cover the cost of transportation to the away games during the season of sport.
- We appreciate any donations made to this program.

(For more detailed information, please refer to “Guidelines for District Staff And Parents Regarding Student Fees, Donations, and Fundraising Section IV and V)

FAQs

- Question 1: May a school still accept donations from parents and guardians?
 - Response: **Yes.** School districts, schools, programs, and classes may accept donations of funds and property, and this practice is permissible as long as the donation is truly voluntary and in no way a requirement for participation in the program or activity. Donations cannot be made for a specific student; instead, they are made to a school or program. The opportunity to participate in educational or extra-curricular activities, must not be linked to either the willingness or ability of the student or the student's family to pay a fee or request a waiver.

- Question 2: May a school still solicit donations or engage in fundraising activities?

- Response: **Yes.** School districts, schools, programs, and classes may engage in fundraising activities and programs, as long as the raising of funds is voluntary. Schools may require students to attend a fundraising event; however, if a student is unable to raise funds for the event, the student may not be prevented from participating in the educational activity. Also, attendance at a fundraiser can be required if it is a team or club event. Members of an athletic team, for example, may be expected to help at a fundraising event at a Back to School Night, just as a player might be expected to attend a practice or game. Penalties for non-attendance would be similar to those imposed for failure to attend any other team or club event (e.g., sitting out a game, etc).

- Question 3: May a school charge fees for uniforms for team sports?
 - Response: **No.** A school must provide a free uniform to any student who is a member of the school team in question. You can allow student to purchase their own uniforms if they want to purchase uniforms; however, buying a uniform cannot be a requirement to participate in a sport.

- Question 4: May a school require team members to purchase Spirit Packs?
 - Response: **No.** Spirit packs may be sold; however, a school cannot require a student to purchase a spirit pack as a prerequisite to participate in a sport. If there are practice uniforms, etc., which are required, they must be provided free of charge to any student who is a member of the school team in question.

- Question 5: What if a school only charges fees to those students who can afford them; and has a waiver process for those who can't?
 - Response: **No.** A waiver process based on financial need or inability to pay does not make an otherwise non-permissible fee permissible.

- Question 6: May students be required to pay dues for student clubs that are part of national organizations?
 - Response: **No.** Students may not be required to pay dues as a condition of membership in a student club at the school level. If the school club is part of a national organization that collects dues, the students should be advised to pay the national organization dues directly to the organization. However, membership in the national level club or organization cannot be a requirement for membership in the school club.

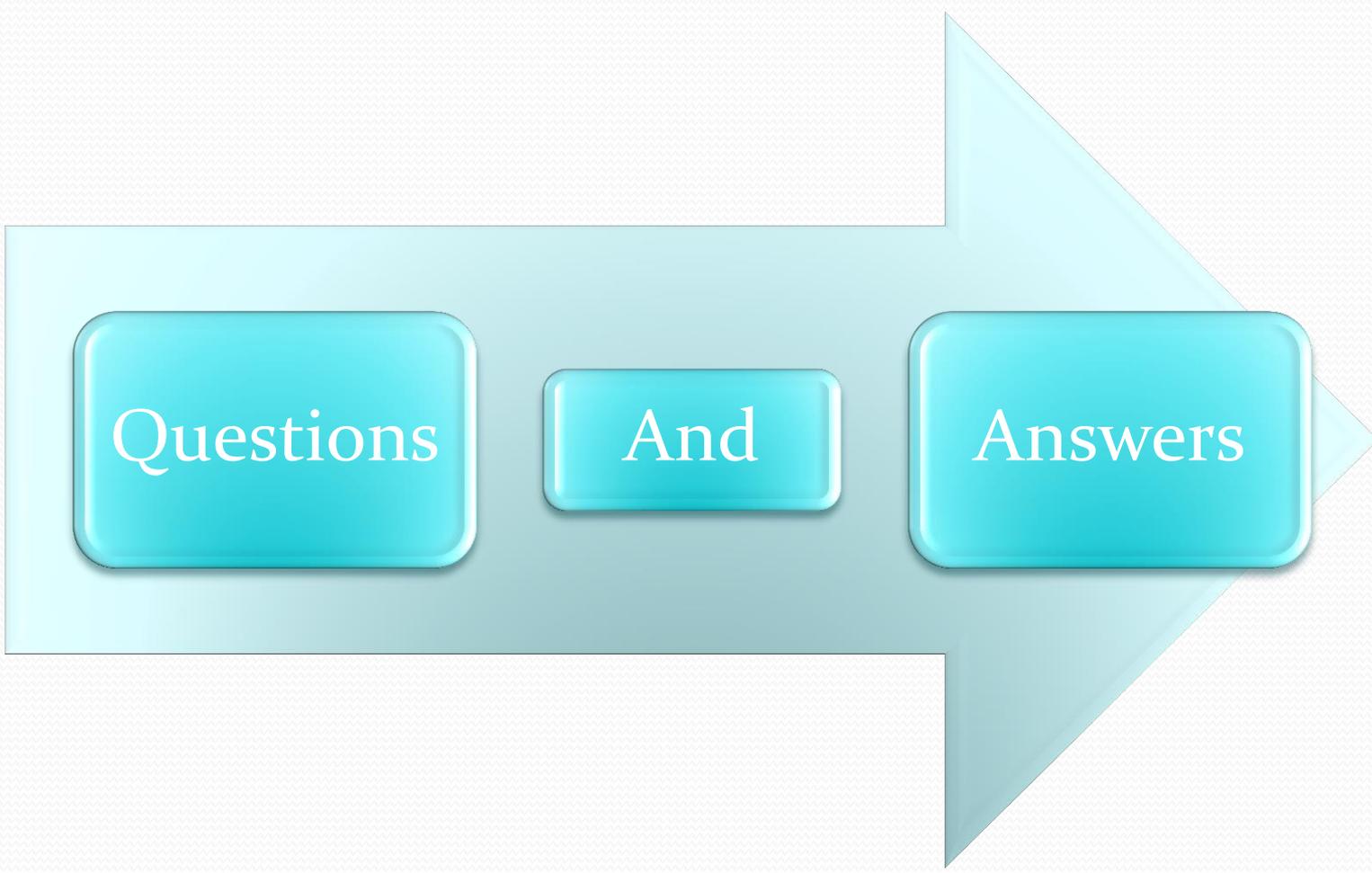
- Question 7: May students be charged fees for materials that students take home and keep from courses such as art, home economics, photography, etc.?
 - Response: **Yes.** Students may be charged for materials that they do take home. However, students should be allowed to make things they do not take home, if they do not want to pay for the extra materials. Students who decide not to take things home will not have to pay a fee but the materials may be thrown away or reused by the school.

• Question 8: May a school district charge fees for field trips?

➤ Response: **Yes.** According to Education Code, a school district may charge a fee for a field trip. However, no pupil shall be prevented from making the field trip or excursion because of lack of sufficient funds. School districts shall coordinate efforts of community service groups to supply funds for pupils in need.

- Question 9: May a school district charge a fee for school camp programs?

- Response: **Yes.** According to Education Code, a school district may charge a fee for a school camp program, provided that the payment of such fee is not mandatory and no pupil is prevented from participation because of lack of sufficient funds. The fee may not exceed the actual cost of the services provided. A camp program is defined in Education Code as including programs and classes in the outdoor science education program. School districts shall coordinate efforts of community service groups to supply funds for pupils in need.



Questions

And

Answers