



Support Organizations: An Extension of the School

Booster clubs and parent teacher organizations/associations are separate entities from the school district. As such, they have their own governing board, establish their own policies and maintain their own set of accounting records. Each one also must have its own checking account along with a separate federal tax identification number. These organizations are generally formed as non-profit entities and therefore must follow federal and state tax regulations. These organizations **MUST NOT** take advantage of or use the tax identification number of the district. If tax exempt status is desired, they must obtain such status individually with the appropriate taxing authority.

These valuable organizations provide a needed source of financial support for school activities. Without them, the district's schools would not be able to provide many of the opportunities that students enjoy through the programs supported by these organizations. However, a separation between these organizations and the school district must be maintained so that third parties are not misled into believing that an organization is part of the school district. This protects both parties in case of litigation. It is imperative that strict and proper accounting practices are followed in order to ensure this separation.

School support organizations are organized for the purpose of supporting schools or specific school programs within a school. The relationship with the school must never be forgotten. The mission, vision, and goals of the support organization must mesh with those of the school. For this reason, the support organization's officers and board must work closely with the school principal to establish an atmosphere of cooperation and confidence to ensure that the programs operate smoothly within the school's and district's policies.

Establishing the School

- Follow the SDPC Policies and Administrative Rules regarding support organizations and fundraising.
- Prepare bylaws.
- File a current copy of bylaws with the chief building administrator.
- Incorporate as a nonprofit organization.
- Obtain the 501(c)(3) designation.

Key Committees and Officers

■ Executive Committee

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer

■ Audit Committee

An audit of the organization's financial records should be conducted annually by individuals who are independent from day-to-day financial activities and should not be part of the executive committee.

Funds Management

A major initiative of most school support organizations is fund raising for school programs the organization represents. Guidelines are offered to ensure funds are handled properly and therefore are available for the greatest benefit to students. District employees shall not serve in a financial capacity of a booster or other parent organization.

- Key officers should be bonded.
- The **Treasurer's Report** should be provided monthly to the membership.
- Cash receipt procedures should be followed explicitly.
- Disbursements procedures should be followed explicitly.

Fund Raising

Clear distinctions should be made to separate the responsibilities of the support organization from the responsibilities of the school. School support organizations are very closely tied to the school district and the school, but they operate independently from the school and district, subject only to the district's policies that provide for their formation and their relationship with the school and district. This same relationship gives guidance to fund-raising activities conducted by support organizations.

- **Fund-Raising Guidelines**
Final approval of all activities of the school's support organizations rests with the school principal. Fund-raising activities must not conflict with the instructional programs of the school.

Administrative Rule LEB-R/LEC-R requires that the organization inform the school principal of all fund-raising activities.

- **Solicitations**
Procedures must be in place to ensure that all money donated ultimately gets to the support organization.