

Crowdfunding in Rural Districts

As more schools tap into crowdfunding to provide innovative resources and learning opportunities for their students, administrators in rural districts might feel left out. Since traditional crowdfunding usually only generates donations from a teacher's personal network or the local community, it may seem impossible for rural schools with a smaller footprint to have the same funding success as schools in large metropolitan areas. But not all crowdfunding is made equal, and thanks to charities like DonorsChoose.org that help schools secure funding from donors across the nation, rural districts stand to benefit just as much as their urban peers.

Outside Funding for Rural Schools

Unlike any other funding platform, 75% of the dollars given to classroom projects on DonorsChoose.org come from people and organizations outside of teachers' personal networks, making the site especially useful for teachers in rural or low-income communities. In addition to the generosity of nearly four million citizen donors, DonorsChoose.org corporate and foundation partners have provided more than \$450 million of classroom project funding nationwide. And by engaging a community of donors passionate about supporting classrooms in all parts of the country, DonorsChoose.org connects teachers with individuals they would never otherwise meet through traditional fundraising efforts. That's why Dan Domenech, AASA Executive Director, calls the site the "PTA equalizer."

Superintendents Inspiring Greatness

Frank Killian, Superintendent of Richland R1 Schools in Missouri, has encouraged all the teachers in the district to use DonorsChoose.org. Under his leadership, Richland – which serves 270 students – has received more than \$200,000 in student resources thanks to donors across the nation. This has helped Richland schools better serve their students, institute innovative new curriculum, and even achieve National Blue Ribbon status.

In Barron, Wisconsin, District Administrator Diane Tremblay also recommends her teachers use DonorsChoose.org for materials

\$81 million

Total funding for rural schools

14,200

Rural schools receiving resources

60,000

Rural teachers with funded projects

78%

Teacher funding success rate

31 days

Average time to be fully funded

56%

Funding from out-of-state donors to rural schools

that go beyond what the district can provide. Thanks to hundreds of donors, 61% of whom reside outside the state, her students have received \$112,000 in resources and learning opportunities.

“DonorsChoose.org allows our district and our students to obtain and utilize the materials needed to be successful in their world. Our teachers are not afraid or too proud to reach out for help to ensure the betterment of our students, which allows us to achieve at higher levels than anyone thought possible.



DonorsChoose.org has helped our district:

- Become the first One to One Pre-K to 12th grade school in Missouri
- Achieve National Blue Ribbon status for every building in the district
- Obtain virtual reality equipment to help our students with possible jobs after graduation
- Ensure all our sporting teams have new uniforms and equipment when needed
- Get 3D printers and other technology for our students”

—**Frank Killian**, Superintendent, Richland R1 School District

“I’m always heartened to see folks from across the country – who don’t personally know our teachers – giving to our district. Not only does it help teachers give more to their students, but it makes teachers feel supported and appreciated.”



—**Diane Tremblay**, District Administrator, Barron Area School District

Putting the Right Policy in Place

Earlier this summer AASA worked with DonorsChoose.org to publish a [Crowdfunding Best Practices & Model Policy Toolkit for District Leaders](#). The PDF guide contains example policies, case studies from leading districts, and a multitude of crowdfunding best practices superintendents should consider implementing. To have a more in-depth conversation about crowdfunding, [reach out to the DonorsChoose.org team](#) who can help you safely navigate the growing crowdfunding landscape.