

2017-2018 Fall Fundraising Drive Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Why do we have a Fall Fundraising Drive?

Our PTSA is an organization that is completely operated and funded by students' parents and supporters. Donations received through the school year will have direct impact on programs and services that PTSA provides.

Due to varying factors and changes in recent years, the number of donors and average donation amounts have seen a downward trend. Traditional fundraising methods used in the past are not generating enough revenue to support the PTSA's vision and budget.

A survey conducted by the PTSA in 2016 showed that there is a preference to do less fundraising activities and that people prefers to just donate. The PTSA organized the first ever Fall Fundraising Drive in 2016 and raised over 90K from parents, supporters and from within our local community.

Based on our updated revenue projection, the PTSA is budgeted to spend over \$300 per Somerset student for the school year 2017/2018, equivalent to what we had spent in 2016-2017. So far, the PTSA has secured about one third of the funds needed (\$95 per student) through our successful biennial auction held back in March of this year. The rest must be raised through the Fall Fundraising Drive.

Why your participation is so critical?

Our data shows that during the 2016 Fall Fundraising Drive, 396 students, or 54.5% of enrolled students, donated to the PTSA. During the 2016/2017 school year, donations raised were about \$50K less than actual spending. Thanks to the generous donations of previous years, the PTSA was able to use some reserves to cover the deficit. Our goal is to be able to cover all of our expenses from fundraising without having to tap into reserves every year. **This year, our goal is to increase our participation rate from 54% to 65% and raise \$100K.** This is why your participation is vital.

Will the \$200 donation cover me for two years?

As mentioned above, the PTSA plans to spend over \$300 per student this year. So, your \$200 donation is the bare minimum needed to offset a part of the spending for one school year. The other \$100 per student has been secured by auction for this school year and the next school year. If you are able, please consider donating more.

Why do I need to support the PTSA?

For many years, Somerset Elementary School remains one of the highest ranked elementary school in Washington. However, state funding of K-12 education alone is never sufficient to reach education goals set by the school and to meet the expectations from parents. The excellence of Somerset Elementary School depends on a strong partnership between parents, the school and the surrounding community. Decades of commitment have produced the great school Somerset is today.

Much of the programs and services offered that differentiates our school from others is sponsored in whole or in part by the Somerset PTSA. Being a non-profit organization, our budget solely relies on the donations of families, corporate matches and various grants/sponsorships. The Somerset PTSA advocates for a nurturing, friendly, educational and healthy environment for all of our children. 'Children First' has always been the goal of the Somerset PTSA.

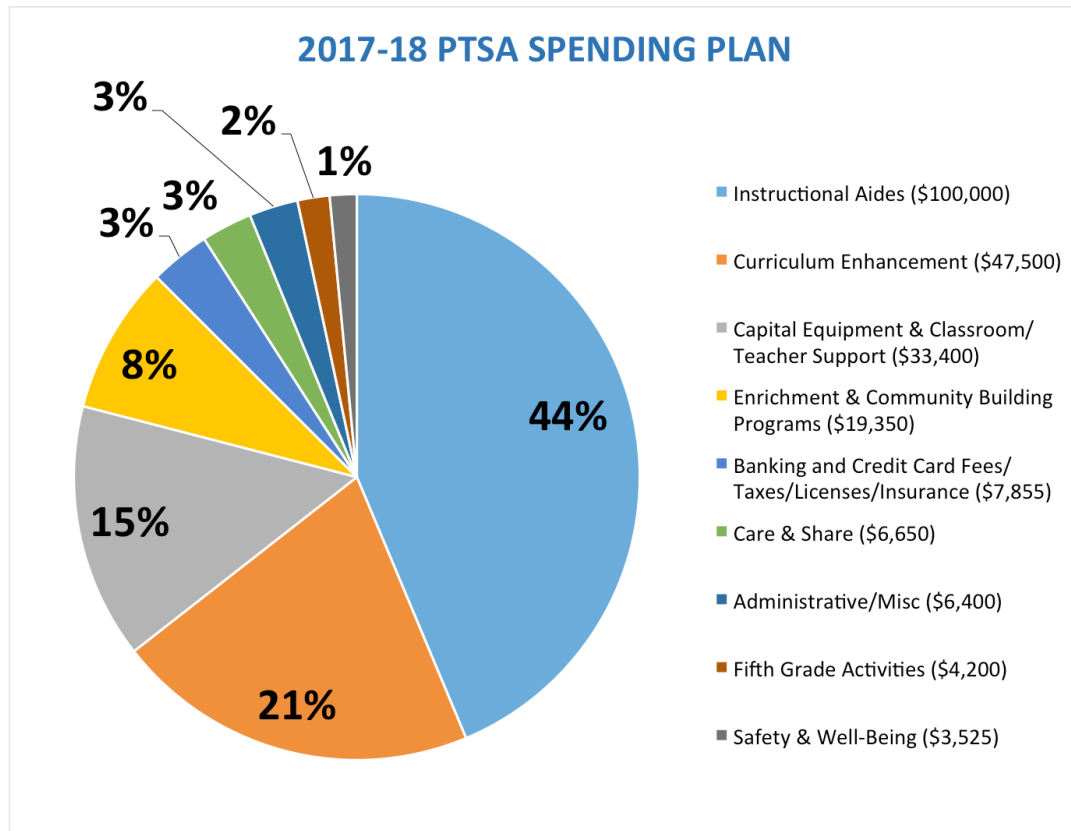
Your donations, big or small, will be 100% directly invested to our children and school.

Let's INVEST to ENRICH our children's education...TOGETHER!

What does the PTSA spend its money on?

The budget for 2017/2018 can be found here

<http://somerseptsa.org/Doc/eNews/Budget%202017-2018%20Draft%20in%20June.pdf>



How much have we raised through the auction?

Although we had a very successful auction back in March of this year, we net \$137K after all expenses and costs. Remember the auction is every other year so the funds raised through the auction for school year 2017/2018 is about \$69K, or \$95 per student. This only accounts for about one third of our budget needs.

Why not continue to raise money just through the auction, if it has been successful in the past?

Although the auction has been historically financially successful (net profit is \$137K in 2017), the bulk of the proceeds have been donated by a very small percentage of Somerset families. Due to varying factors and changes in recent years, the number of bidders, average spending per bidder, and top donation amounts show a downward trend. The auction itself is no longer able to generate enough revenue to fully fund PTSA's programs and services. The Fall Fundraising Drive is meant to broaden the donating base and involvement of more families. Additionally, not all families are interested or able to attend the auction, and we want to provide those families a means to contribute to the PTSA. Finally, it takes a lot of work to put on the scale of auctions we have had in the past. We need to diversify our fundraising mechanisms to match our volunteer resources as well.

What if we don't reach our goal?

If we don't reach our fundraising goals through the Fall Fundraising Drive, we will have to make some very difficult decisions to cut from areas in the budget for this school year.

Why do we spend on Instructional Aides?

In our annual PTSA survey, the teachers resoundingly cite Instructional Aides (IA's) as their top priority for PTSA funding. IA's work in every classroom at Somerset. Each teacher uses the IAs differently, but examples of what they do might include: running challenge groups for accelerated students, helping students who may need reinforcement on certain topics, or sometimes work with the main group of students when the teacher works with a smaller set of students. Even if your child doesn't work one-on-one with an Instructional Aide, they benefit from having the IAs, since teachers can continue moving the class forward while still looking out for students that might be accelerated or needing additional assistance.

How are Curriculum Enhancement funds spent?

This year, the PTSA will spend \$65 per student on Curriculum Enhancement. We have volunteer grade level representatives from the PTSA that work with each grade level teams to determine the best way to spend the funds. CE funds might be used to fund field trips, in-house speakers and workshops, or even additional classroom materials and subscriptions. Some grades might have more field trips than others, but the CE funds spent per child is the same for all students. Parents will still be asked to pay bus transportation costs for field trips, as PTSA's insurance policy does not allow PTSA to fund transportation expenses.

My child is in the 5th grade. Why should I still donate to this drive?

Donations raised from this year's Fall Fundraising Drive will be used this year (2017/18). Your child will directly benefit from the donation. Also, our school community has always operated on a "pay it forward" philosophy that has worked with much success. We were excited to see that many 5th grade parents went to this year's auction and donated a lot to the PTSA even though their children will not get any direct benefits from their donation. All children's early years at Somerset were supported by generous donations of families that have come before us. Every dollar counts and your contribution is always appreciated.

What can I do if I have questions and suggestions on budgeting priorities?

The Somerset PTSA welcomes all comments, suggestions, and questions. All families are welcome to attend any of the PTSA General Meetings (listed on the Somerset PTSA website Calendar, <http://somerseptsa.org>). If you have additional questions or feedback, please email somerseptsa@gmail.com. Our volunteers will respond to your questions at their earliest convenience.

How do you donate?

You can drop off your donation check in the PTSA mailbox. It is located inside the front office of Somerset Elementary School. You can also mail it to:

Somerset PTSA
Attn: Fall Fundraising Drive
14100 Somerset Blvd SE
Bellevue, WA 98006

The easiest and fastest way is to donate online at <http://somerseptsa.org>