

## **2018-2019 Fall Fundraising Drive Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

### **Why do we have this 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 substantial demographic change occurred in recent years, our long time "big donors" are gradually phasing out and numbers of active donors and average donation amount are all going down year after year. Traditional fundraising method did not generate enough revenue to support PTSA's vision and budget.

Survey conducted by the PTSA in 2016 showed that there is a preference to do less fundraising activities and that people prefer to just donate. PTSA organized the first ever Fall Fundraising Drive in 2016 and received 90K from parents, supporters and local community.

Based on our updated revenue projection, the PTSA has budgeted to spend over **\$400 per Somerset student for the school year 2018/2019** (this amount is higher than budgeted costs from previous years). So far, the PTSA has secured about one third of the fund (\$95 per student) through our successful biennial auction held in March 2017 (this school year we will run another auction in 2019, date TBD). The rest of the funds must be raised through the Fall Fundraising Drive.

### **How much have we raised through auction?**

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

### **What if we don't reach our goal?**

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

### **Are you requesting a \$200 donation per student every year?**

Yes, the PTSA will be requesting a \$200 donation per student every year. As mentioned above, the PTSA plans to spend over \$400 per student this year. So, the \$200 donation only offsets part of the spending this year. The other \$100 per student has been secured by auction. We encourage families to donate whatever amount they are able to donate as every family's financial situation is different. If you are able, please consider donating more.

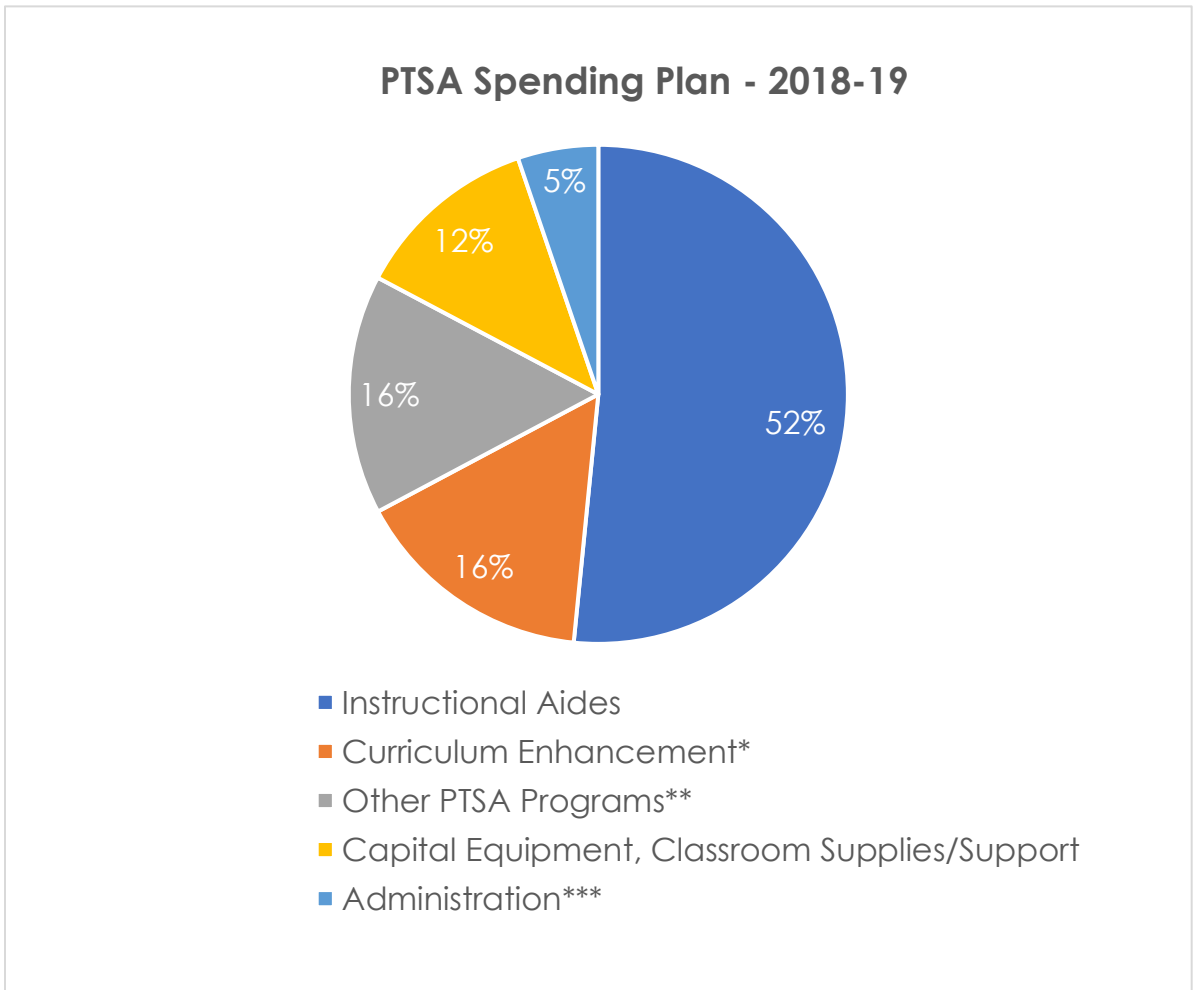
### **Why your participation is so critical?**

Our data showed that in 2017 Fall Fundraising Drive, 391 students, or 55% of enrolled students, donated to the PTSA. In 2017/2018, received donation was about \$27K less

than actual spending. Thanks to previous Somerset parents' generosity, PTSA had some savings in the account to pay for the deficit. Our goal is to raise enough funds to break even before we use up those savings. We'd like to increase our participation rate from 55% to 65% this year. Your participation is very important to help us to make a smooth transition from single and bigger traditional fundraising method to multiple but smaller fundraisings.

**What does the PTSA spend its money on?**

The budget for 2018/2019 can be found [here](#)



### **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. Please see our teachers' testimony about IAs: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tHvcn\\_XXXhs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tHvcn_XXXhs)

### **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.

### **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), but the bulk of the proceeds have been donated by a very small percentage of Somerset's families. Due to the significant demographic change, number of bidders, average spending per bidder, and top donation amounts are all slowly decreasing year after year. 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 recent past. We need to diversify our fundraising mechanisms to match our volunteer resources as well.

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

In Fall Fundraising Drive, we are donating to the current school year 2018/2019. Your child will directly benefit from the donation. Our school community has always operated on a "pay it forward" philosophy that has worked with much success. We were excited to see many 5<sup>th</sup> grade parents attend the 2017 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 highly 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://somersetptsa.org>). If you have additional questions or feedback, please email [somersetptsa@gmail.com](mailto:somersetptsa@gmail.com). Our volunteers will respond to your questions at their earliest convenience.

**Why do I need to support the PTSA?**

For many years, Somerset Elementary School remains one of the highest ranked elementary school in the State. However, the State funding of K-12 education is never sufficient to reach education goal set by school and expectation from parents. The excellence of Somerset Elementary School depends on a super strong partnership between parents, community, and business. Decades of such consistent and deep involvement generates amazing outcomes that could only be envied by many other public schools in the *Bellevue School District*.

Much of the programs and services offered that differentiates our school from others is sponsored either 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' is the goal of the Somerset PTSA!

Your donations, big or small, will be 100% directly invested to our Somerset Super Stars. You not only donate, but also invest in our children's future.

**How do you donate?**

You can drop off your donation check to the PTSA mailbox which is located in the front office of the Somerset Elementary School. Or mail it to

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

Or you can donate online at <http://somersetptsa.org/Page/2018-19 Fall Fundrasing>