

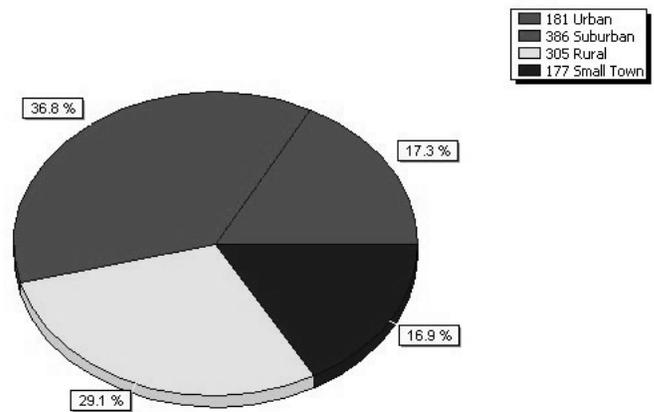
*The Value of  
Fundraising:*  
NAESP's 2007  
Fundraising Survey  
Results



*Established in 1921, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) serves 30,000 elementary and middle school principals in the United States, Canada, and overseas. NAESP leads in the advocacy and support for elementary and middle-level principals and other education leaders in their commitment to all children.*

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) recently conducted a nationwide survey of K-8 principals on the value of fundraising. A total of 1,055 principals from schools across the country responded to the survey. The principals hail from K-8 schools that range from low to high socioeconomic areas and from urban, rural, and suburban schools in every state and the District of Columbia. The survey was conducted online over a 27-day period through WebSurveyor.

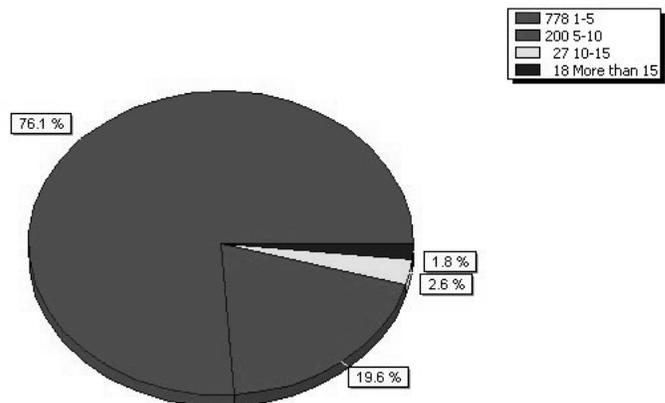
How would you describe your school?



**Major Findings:**

Principals were asked to provide the average number of fundraisers they conduct at their schools each year. Seventy-six percent hold an average of 1-5 fundraisers each year; while 20 percent hold 5-10.

On average, how many fundraisers do you conduct a year?



They were also asked how many fundraisers they expect to conduct during the 2007-08 school year and the percentage was consistent with their previous answer. A little more than 75 percent plan on holding 1-5 fundraisers in the 2007-08 school year; and 20 percent will hold 5-10 in the upcoming school year.

Principals use a variety of techniques to raise funds, including collecting food box tops and labels and holding book fairs and bake sales. The most common yearlong fundraising methods are: collecting food box tops and labels (63%), retail store affiliations (42%), supermarket receipts (24%), and sales from the school store (21%). For fundraisers that are held once a year, product sales are the most common at 44 percent. For fundraisers that are held twice a year, book fairs lead the way with 54 percent.

*"For many principals, school fundraising provides a means to an end. The revenue that's generated from fundraisers provides them with sorely needed resources for their students and teachers. Until our schools begin receiving the appropriate funding necessary to purchase these resources, which in many cases are very basic items that all schools should have, we will continue to see an increase in the number of fundraisers."*

--- NAESP's executive director, Vincent L. Ferrandino

## *Comments and Concerns*

Eighty-five percent of the principals who responded have noted an increased need for school-wide fundraisers within the last decade; 56 percent have concerns about this increase; and 64 percent would stop fundraising if they could. Many also believe fundraisers have become too much of a distraction to the school's instructional day and are a symptom of the larger issue—a lack of school funding. A common theme in many of the principals' comments is that fundraisers place too much pressure on young children to sell products and can also be burdensome to teachers, parents, and community members. Here's a sample of some of the comments:

### **General**

- *They are a fact of life!!*
- *Schools should not have to be in the fundraising business.*
- *Supplies are higher than they used to be. We need additional funds to try to help students succeed.*
- *Our school is growing in need. Fundraisers only put more pressure on families that are already struggling. We are here to educate, not create salespeople. I have a hard time putting the students and families in this position, but we also need money.*

### **Concern for students**

- *We discourage our elementary students from any fundraiser that requires them to handle actual cash.*
- *I think it is wrong for children to be salespeople. I think it could be a dangerous activity at times, it should be for special things not necessary things.*

### **Concern for parents**

- *At just the time when our parents' resources are stretched the most, we are asking them to participate because our dollars are so stretched.*
- *Parents have limited resources and cannot afford to support so many fundraisers either with their money or with their time.*
- *I feel we are asking too much from our parents when we expect their tax dollars to fund education and then on top of that ask for additional monies on the side to fund other activities that should be paid for either through local, state, or federal funds.*

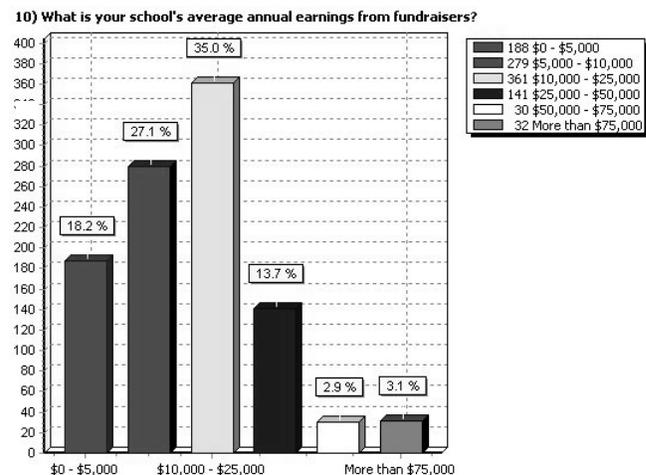
## Impact on instructional learning

- *It is a distraction for teachers and students. It is good for school spirit, but it is a concern for me to take the interest away from study.*
- *This takes time away from the real business of education-teaching children!*

## Funding

- *More and more, we are required to raise funds on our own to support our schools. This creates a huge inequity between the haves and have nots.*
- *To have parents help pay for education is not what this country was built upon. Free education means that all students get a **free** education.*

Despite their concerns, 87 percent of the principals admit that there is a valuable return on investment. And 35 percent report that their school's average annual earnings from fundraisers are between \$10,000-25,000. Although a much smaller percentage, 3 percent have seen average annual earnings from fundraising exceed \$75,000.



## *Other notable findings:*

- In 67 percent of the schools, PTAs/PTOs are responsible for the fundraising program decisions; in 49 percent of the schools, staff are responsible for the fundraising decisions.
- Sixty-two percent of teachers are actively involved in fundraising.
- The majority of fundraising revenue is used to purchase classroom equipment and supplies and allocated to the general fund.

**Summary:** Rising operating costs, shrinking budgets, and enrollment booms have left many schools increasingly dependent on fundraising. Though many principals experience fundraising fatigue, they rely more than ever on the revenue to purchase classroom equipment and supplies, field trips, and playground equipment, among other items. Despite the dramatic increase in the number of schoolwide fundraisers and the various concerns, almost 90 percent of principals think that the money raised from fundraisers is worth the effort.