

# Frequently Asked Questions

## *How can PTOs spend their funds? Part 2*

*Please refer to Part 1 of this topic, for guidelines on how Ann Arbor PTOs may use their funds.*

If a PTO wishes to purchase, donate or use their funds in any way towards property, improvements, services or any other item for the benefit of their school, such use of funds is classified as a gift by the district. The PTO's school principal and the district must agree to accept the gift and any ongoing maintenance that results. PTOs/PTSOs cannot encumber the district for liability and ongoing maintenance of a gift without agreement. Your principal's support and involvement is the first step in undertaking any purchase involving permanent features or fixtures. To proceed with funding purchases or installations requiring contracted services for projects approved by your principal, your contact in the administration is: Executive Director of Physical Properties, Randy Trent, E-mail: trentr@aaps.k12.mi.us, (734) 994-8118

**Q. Our school would like to replace the folding chairs used in our auditorium. Our PTO has the funds to do this and would like to proceed with purchasing the chairs. How can we find out how much it will cost and how do we go about making the purchase?**

**A.** These guidelines should fit for any sort of equipment used in a school building.

Once you have obtained the agreement and support of your principal for the purchase, decide on the scope of the project and the budget. Contact Randy Trent in administration and he will make sure all the appropriate issues are addressed and get the right people involved.

Considerations for a purchase such as folding chairs will include finding chairs that are: (1) rated for the durability needed for school use; (2) submit to any maintenance requirements; (3) sized to fit in the existing storage area; (4) have the necessary storage equipment; and (5) purchased using an approved vendor, if necessary.

The steps would be similar for any item that does not require installation of any kind. Other examples may include specialized tools for classroom use, software, musical instruments, and gym equipment.

*When contacting the Physical Properties office, always include the contact information for the volunteers involved in the purchase.*

**Q. Our PTO would like to install a "rain garden" in conjunction with becoming certified as a "Green School". We have parent and community volunteers willing to hand-dig the garden and donate plants for this project. What do we need to do to begin?**

**A.** Again, your contact for any project involving an installation is Randy Trent. Make sure you contact him in the "idea phase" of the project so that he can make sure

all the right questions get asked and answered, and get the right people involved.

Considerations for an outdoor installation include: (1) Is the intended site appropriate? (2) Is it free from utilities right-of-way and located where rain can be collected? (3) Does the site have adequate drainage? (4) Has an architect drawn plans of the proposed features? In projects of this sort, a written proposal will be needed to determine the scope required to accomplish the project.

Any project requiring physical installation will follow similar steps. Some examples include adding bleachers to a gym, risers to a stage area, adding or replacing a stage curtain or scrims, installing a trophy or other display case, installing outdoor seating or picnic tables replacing stage lighting or sound mixing equipment, or creating a donor "thank you plaque" or "awards plaque" wall. The possibilities are as varied as our schools and families! Keep in mind when planning an installation as a memorial, try to avoid using tree or shrubs. While these can provide a beautiful living memorial, trees and shrubs require maintenance over their lifetime and can be susceptible to storm damage and disease. You may want to consider a more long-lasting choice such as a plaque, brick walkway or scholarship fund as a memorial.

Gather your information including the full names of the volunteers working on your end of the project, their profession and business name if applicable, phone and email address, and any applicable drawing and documents for beginning the project.

*Our PTOs are strong because of the incredible amount of parent involvement. Our schools benefit from this strength and the caring community that results. PTO Council thanks you for your efforts in creating and maintaining this caring community to keep Ann Arbor schools exceptional!*