

Part Three Navigating Forward:

Working with tight school budgets

Finding new ways to provide the value you expect during financial challenges

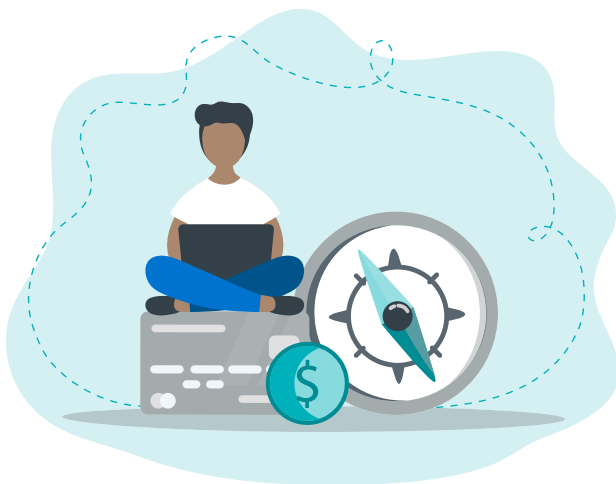


The coronavirus outbreak in early 2020 required many schools to think differently and even scramble to make things work for students, staff and families. Even before the pandemic, schools faced numerous issues in their operations, including staff wearing many

hats, overwhelmed parents and tight budgets. The pandemic and its stresses have only increased the strain schools feel from these causes. However, there are some changes and adjustments administrators can make to ease these pressures and come out on top.

Tight Budgets

Tight school budgets plague many administrators. Typically, private schools are funded by student tuition, donations made by parents or alumni and fundraising. But, many of these funding opportunities need to change drastically to keep participants safe. For instance, in-person fundraising events — such as bake sales or gala events — may not be possible with social distancing requirements.



While many schools pivoted to online events, it will be difficult to fully recoup donations from last spring's fundraising cycle.

In addition to lower funds, COVID-19 has increased the need for different types of supplies for both in-person and remote classes. In a survey of 1,000 teachers at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, an equal percentage of teachers, [79%, reported needing cleaning supplies](#) and PPE for in-person classes and instructional technology for online classes. Teachers also wanted technology for their students and instructional development to help them create better, more engaging online lessons.

TIP

A technology partner that offers full services with software can function as an extension of your team, giving you extra hands when and how you need them.

All these tools require funds that schools may not have had in their budgets. Even the superintendent of the second-largest school district in the country, Los Angeles Unified School District, acknowledged that [returning to school in fall 2020 cost more](#) due to the investment required for protective equipment, cleaning supplies, nurses and mental health support for students and staff. Schools need to think about giving differently, be innovative in using experiences to reward students and consider how technology can offer cost-saving solutions.

Giving

To reimagine fundraising, schools have several options. First, focus on how the community can help. Compared to previous years, [20% of people](#) have reduced how much they give to charity in 2020. However, of those still giving, over half say they are donating the same amount, and 21% report donating more to charitable organizations. The challenge lies in getting these donors to choose your school - the top donation recipients in 2020 so far are organizations that provided hunger relief, religious groups and medical charities. The lesson learned is to make sure you're effectively communicating your needs to your community.

The following are ways to more effectively solicit donations from families and community members:

1. Continue your fundraising campaigns

Even small campaigns are still seeing results, so don't slow your efforts to raise money.

2. Boost your online presence

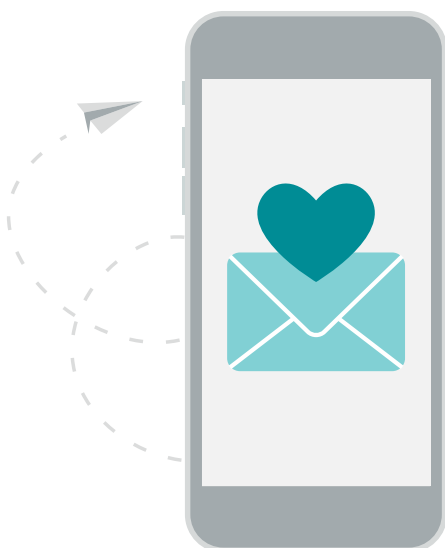
Just as schools shifted to online instruction, you also need to shift fundraising efforts online to spread information about opportunities to give as well as the school's needs.

3. Share your story

Be sure to show how the funds raised are going to be used. Post videos or stories showing how students and teachers benefit from donations.

4. Thank all donors

It's a simple thing, so make sure you thank your donors for their kindness and generosity. Acknowledgment and appreciation can go a long way in encouraging repeat donations.



Experiences

Appreciation for students and staff does not have to cost much. While students may appreciate ice cream or pizza parties, there are other ways that your school can generate memories for students and make them feel rewarded.

For instance, students could have a read-a-thon day or afternoon. This type of event only requires younger students to arrive at school, bringing their favorite pillows or stuffed animals to lie on while reading instead of doing a lesson.

Memorable experiences

Scheduling a picnic outside on the playground instead of eating in the cafeteria can also change their routine, creating a memorable experience that costs the school nothing and rewards students for their hard work.

Uniform switch-up

For schools with uniforms, reward students with a day when they can wear a school spirit shirt and jeans for the school or for a college they want to attend. Staff members can enjoy this type of reward, too, especially if your school typically requires more formal attire for staff.



Technology

Another way to manage tight budgets is by adding fees to mitigate the financial impact of some new costs incurred by providing remote or hybrid learning options.

For instance, many schools charge a technology fee to invest in more computers or networking systems to accommodate online learning. Even a small fee from all students at the school can contribute significantly to the school budget.

Consider using software that allows you to create your own pricing structure, including adding technology and processing fees. TADS Flex allows you to create a pricing model that gives you maximum control over the fees you charge, so you gain better predictability for your budget.

In addition to increasing incoming funds, schools can also look at cost reduction measures. First, you can increase efficiency among staff members by integrating the right software into operations. Using a single system with integrated administrative tools can often eliminate the time required to manually enter student information or transfer data – ultimately driving significant savings. For instance, TADS streamlines the tuition process and requires little training to get running, minimizing productivity loss.

Though budgets may be tight, TADS offers several ways to ease the constraints you may feel from a loss of fundraisers and other school events. TADS helps you reach more families and promote your school by:



1. Providing an easy admission experience

TADS acts as your virtual admission team, providing families with easy-to-use applications, interfaces and navigation.

2. Manifesting your brand digitally

Branding is an important aspect of attracting families and students to your school. TADS adapts to your unique brand. Students will get an accurate feel of what your school has to offer, and families will appreciate your consistency and attention to detail.

3. Freeing your time so you can focus on what matters

Let TADS handle the time-consuming tasks. That way, you can focus on increasing enrollment, creating virtual fundraisers and leading other promotional efforts to support your school in ways you didn't have time to before.

4. Freedom from inefficiency

TADS gives you an modern platform that will create a smooth family experience, free your staff from inefficient tasks and save your school valuable time and money in the long run.

TIP

Maximize your budget by finding a solution that has all the tools and support you need to streamline processes and connect your community, without breaking the bank.

Get Started with TADS

TADS by Community Brands can help your school adapt to your new and ever-changing environment. With assistance from our suite of products, you can automate billing and tuition management, improve workflows, monitor admission applications and assess financial aid awards.

Whether you need a standalone solution or a complete suite of products, TADS can deliver. Earn peace of mind with zero restrictive contracts — just quality products and services suited to your school.



DEMO

Find out how TADS can help ease the burden on staff, parents and budgets. [Request a demo](#) of our products or [contact us](#) with questions or to get assistance with choosing the modules right for your school.



TADS®

[Learn more at tads.com](https://tads.com)