

The Ultimate Guide To School Fundraising: Challenges, Opportunities and a Toolkit to Run Successful Auctions



School Fundraising: **The Challenge**

Critical education programs for schools are an important part of the school year. Thankfully, volunteers, parents and the community are coming together to help raise funds to support these programs and activities to enhance children's education and experience. The added effort and time associated with planning, organizing and running school fundraisers may seem overwhelming amidst everyone's already jam-packed schedules. So now — more than ever — it's important for fundraising event organizers to find quick and easy solutions along with innovative ways to raise more money, get the most out of every dollar, and use time as efficiently as possible.

The good news is that schools are uniquely positioned to run successful fundraisers, due in part to the deep connections with parents and local communities. More schools are trying innovative approaches that:

- **Make the most of these community ties**
- **Help to forge even deeper connections**
- **Have a positive, tangible impact on shrinking budgets**

That's why FrontStream has put together this comprehensive school fundraising guide with the tools to help save you time and energy when the back-to-school and fall fundraisers start firing up.

In this eGuide, we'll show you how schools and educational institutions like yours can maximize the time spent planning and organizing events and reach new heights of fundraising success, by running successful in-person, online, mobile and hybrid auction fundraisers.



Almost 30% of American schools
earn over **\$75,000** a year from
fundraising.

Nonprofit Source

<https://nonprofitssource.com/online-giving-statistics/>



"Our organization has used Panorama's auction management platform and access to the BiddingforGood™ community to promote our online auctions for the last eight years. The program makes it easy to set up and run an auction, communicate with donors and bidders, and process payments. Customer service is helpful and responsive." —Mia Russo, *Arlington Classics Academy*

School Fundraising: The Opportunity

FrontStream's all-in-one digital fundraising platform, [Panorama™](#) includes a cloud-based auction management platform to help you host your school fundraiser and promote it at any time, from anywhere. Our organization has helped run over 40,000 online auctions on the industry's top auction destination site [BiddingforGood](#), and we know what it takes to run fun and successful fundraisers. While working in partnership with our school customers, we've learned a lot, and are thrilled when we're able to help a school reach its fundraising goals.

Of all the organizations we work with, schools have a distinctive opportunity to be successful. Schools, students, teachers and parents have authentic ties to the community, which allows them to have a truly engaged base of supporters. This engagement with the community keeps these important educational programs and activities — that so deeply enrich our children's lives — funded.

At the same time, there are challenges that are entirely unique to educational institutions. For example, you may lose a superstar parent volunteer when his or her child moves on to middle school, high school or college. These volunteers are the backbone to many of these auction fundraisers and some may or may not be able to add more to their already overflowing plates. And, with new parent volunteers each year, you may not necessarily hang on to institutional knowledge when members of your fundraising team move on. The opportunity you have is to have a place where you can easily, quickly and successfully set up auction pages and upload auction items to help raise funds for your school! So what's next, you may ask?



BiddingforGood's 1.7+ Million Supporters Are Here to Help

Auctions created on the [Panorama™](#) platform are hosted and promoted on [BiddingforGood](#), the nonprofit industry's top donor destination site for auction participation today. With our generous, cause-minded bidder community of over 1.7-million members, we've been privileged to have helped schools and nonprofits like yours raise over \$245-million with online auction fundraisers. Customers who use [Panorama™](#) Auctions and promote on [BiddingforGood](#) raise an average of 33% more! With the tools we provide, including a complete suite of tools designed to help you expand your audience, get more auction items, promote your event, your school can raise more money. More schools and nonprofit organizations are including fundraising auctions for one reason: they work!

1.7 M
cause-minded bidder
community

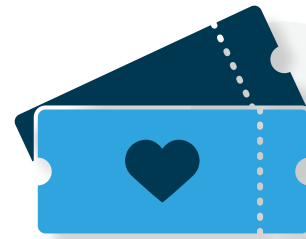
\$245 M
raised with online
auctions

33%
more raised on
BiddingForGood

Fundraising: Go Big or Small!

Cookie dough and gift wrap sales, raffles, car washes, and spring flings have all been helping to boost fundraising for years, and these fundraisers help create bonds and connect the committees while having fun. These small-scale fundraising programs are great for discrete activities or needs, such as a school trip, uniforms and to help get funding that is needed quickly.

Want to go bigger? For long-lasting impact, you can collaborate your efforts into a big fundraising event. One or two events during the school year can yield more funds, and when you combine an online auction with an in-person silent auction, you'll have a winning formula for success.



Why Add an Online, Virtual or Hybrid Auction?

Adding an online, virtual or hybrid auction to your fundraiser provides opportunities that other programs do not. With online, virtual and hybrid auctions, you can partner with local businesses and parents for item donations and sponsorships. Local media are always interested in fundraising events, and you can easily get their attention with a personalized email, phone call or press release. Best of all, you can expand your reach outside of your immediate parent community. With bake sales and car washes, your reach is more local to the school newsletter.

With an online, virtual or hybrid auction, you have the power to tap into discretionary household spending instead of money set aside for charitable giving. It can be easier and definitely more enticing for parents to bid on a dynamic item like a fun "date night" or a cool spa day.

There are benefits to having an online auction beyond the money to be raised. You can build awareness about your school and what goes on behind the scenes, deepen relationships with your donors, and educate your attendees about your school's financial need, all while highlighting the positive impact of your school on the community. Think of an online auction as more than a fundraiser; it's a way to deepen personal connections that have long-lasting benefits.





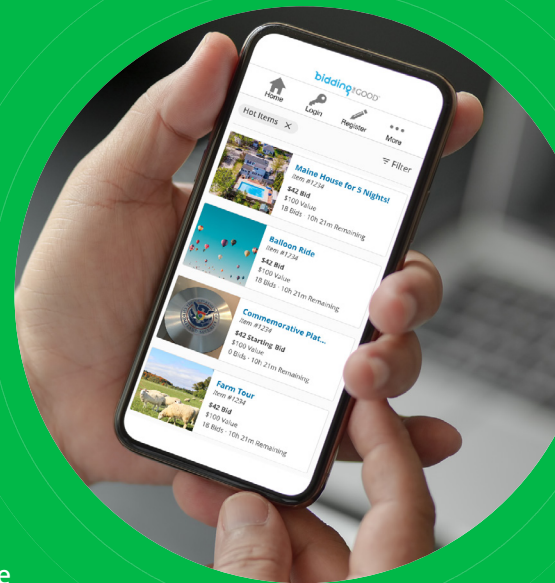
Mobile Bidding – Increase Your Reach and Engage Anytime and Anywhere!

Mobile Bidding is a great way to transform your auction into a 24/7 online fundraiser that allows you to raise money before, during, and after your live event.

Be Inclusive and Expand Your Reach: Everyone Can Participate

Adding Mobile Bidding to your event is not that different from current practices. Today, many schools run online auctions in combination with silent auctions and live events. They start with an online auction, usually one to two weeks before their event, showcasing their catalog of items to generate excitement and start the bidding early. They close out about half of the silent auction items online before the event, then take the remaining items into the room, and finish bidding via a silent auction, with items displayed on tables and clipboards for collecting bids. With mobile bidding, the only difference is that your attendees can now bid on the items in the room, at home, or across the country using their own mobile phones, effectively replacing the clipboard as a bidding device.

With Panorama's platform, mobile bidding is optimized for mobile browsers where bidders can enjoy searching and bidding on their own devices. In addition, take advantage of text messaging, where bidders can bid and receive alerts via text message, can enter the item numbers, bid amounts and with a push of the 'send' button can bid on all items, it's as easy as 1, 2, 3!



8 Steps To Make A Successful and Fun Auction

1. Get a Robust Cloud-Based Software Platform. Choose an auction management platform with features and tools that allows you to host in-person, online and hybrid auctions, with table seating, ticketing and streaming options to help you run and execute a seamless auction.

2. Outline Your Plan of Action. Layout the date, your budget and other critical details at the start to help you stay organized and know exactly what you need to do each step of the event.



3. Inventory your Auction Items. Think outside of the box and get creative when curating them — go for experiences like spa packages and dinner with the principal in addition to traditional items like local restaurant gift certificates. With the right software like FrontStream's Panorama, you can request auction items and donations from socially conscious corporate partners. *Pro Tip:* Check out the [101 Auction Items Ideas eGuide](#) to help you get started.

4. Enter, Tag and Tell a Story with Your Items. When you enter your auction information and create your packages, don't forget that each item sold helps support your mission or helps raise funds for your educational institution. Tell your story, create a narrative for each item to help convince your audience why they should bid. Once you've got some items confirmed, enter all of your procured items into your auction software and make a plan for any items you might be missing.



5. Reach out to Your Network and Local Businesses. Connect with local stores around your school or neighborhood, remind the community why your school, organization and event is the one to sponsor. Show them the cool and fun items to sponsor and showcase the benefits of their support (school programs, activities, etc.). By reaching out to a variety of businesses, you can engage their employees to do something good for the community. They can also help you by augmenting additional donations or offering direct funds.

6. Call on Your Family, Friends and Volunteers. Build your crew but make sure to delegate specific tasks and play to their individual strengths.

7. Orchestrate Your Masterpiece. Start to lay out the logistics of your auction. Line up any MC, food and beverage services or equipment rentals, like tents, tables, etc. Put together your plan on how you will begin the event from start to finish. Include as many details as possible to help you feel relaxed and at ease on the day of the auction. Share your logistics with team members so everyone is on the same page.



8. Tell Everyone About Your Auction - Shout it from the Rooftop! Ok, so maybe don't shout it from an actual rooftop but, you get the point. Start to find ways to market your event to help generate a giving audience and create a buzz around your items so encourage bidding before it's even bidding time! Now's the time to start digitally promoting your event on social media, email campaigns and on your website. Don't forget with Panorama's BiddingforGood network, you can promote your event to 1.7 million active bidders around the world!



Get Organized And Prepare To Host A Great Auction With These Checklists

With all of these steps, it's important to stay organized! Here are [4 checklist items every event planner needs](#) to get you started on a successful school auction fundraiser and stay organized in the process.

Here's Your Homework To Reach The Most People With Your School Auction:

Actionable steps to get you moving:

- Set up your [auction](#) with FrontStream's Panorama's Digital Fundraising Platform to empower your auction to have the biggest impact, opening your event to [BiddingForGood's](#) network of more than 1.7-million-strong bidder community.
- Create your own customized fundraising page and social media pages, all of which can be managed through FrontStream's Panorama platform.
- Stay organized; organization is key to a successful event and Panorama's auction solution keeps you on track with powerful event management tools like bid sheets, email and letter templates, table seating, shipping labels, printable auction catalogs and more, all built into our easy-to-use software.

Save Time and Money With An All-in-One Cloud-Based Software Platform

The right technology features and tools are key to a successful auction. Whether it's for an in-person, virtual, online or hybrid auction, Frontstream can help schools create fun and exciting auctions to support parents and teachers while they raise funds for educational programs, activities and students. Tedious logistics are funneled into easy-to-use software that manages everything from tracking bids and managing the auction items, creating ticketing and table seating, all the way to processing the payments and funds, making it manageable from start to finish.

Make your school fundraising auction a breeze with Panorama, FrontStream's digital fundraising platform, where you can plan, manage and promote your in-person, online, mobile or hybrid auctions and:

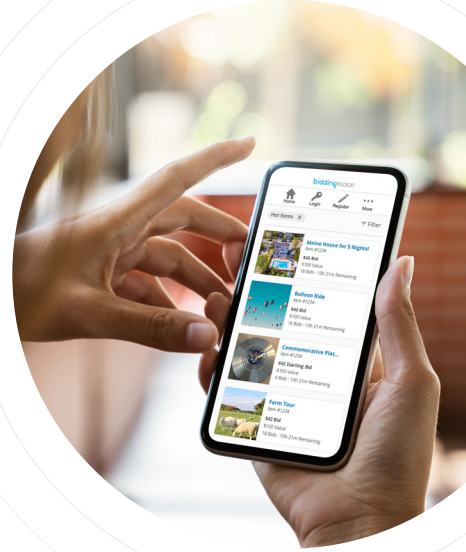
- 1. Create Easy to Configure Auction Sites:** Custom, branded, interactive auction pages with embedded videos, streams, photos, sponsorships and leaderboards.
- 2. Utilize Powerful Event Management Tools:** Guest and bidder registration, ticket sales, raffles, table seating, email and thank you letter templates and shipping labels.



3. Access In-Product Event Communication Features: Promote your auction across all communication channels such email, social and web as well as on BiddingForGood.com - the industry's largest online bidder community of 1.7 million supporters.

4. Add Mobile and Online Bidding: Empower supporters to bid anytime, anywhere and on any device.

5. Feel Safe with FrontStream's Secure, Integrated Payments: Integrated, highly secure, PCI Level-1 compliant payment processing platform.



With Panorama, you can raise more funds at your auction with ease, so you can do more good for your school and community.

Let's Get Started

