MCS Foundation Fundraising Plan

2017-2021

MOSIER COMMUNITY SCHOOL

A K-8 Public Charter School

Mosier
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Mosier Community School Foundation
Fundraising Plan
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Highlights:

- **MCS is in a good financial position with a positive net fund balance the last few years and a growing capital fund.**
- **We want to diversify the funding base by creating a mix of revenue streams, including more emphasis on cultivating donors and grant-writing.**
- **We want to move away from focus on resource-intensive fundraising events and choose events/strategies that meet multiple objectives.**
- **We want to ensure all fundraising efforts incorporate key messaging around place-based education and our school mission. We want to get better at telling our story.**
- **We want to build internal structures to support the implementation of this fundraising plan (donor database & acknowledgement process, event coordination, website & other communications, volunteer recruitment, grantwriting contractor, accounting procedures to track fundraising, etc.).**
- **We want to restart a PTA type committee made up of parents and other volunteers who will take a more active role in fundraising, event planning, and community-building activities.**

Summary:

Mosier Community School (MCS) is a public charter school in Mosier, Oregon. The charter school was founded in 2003 and is sponsored by the North Wasco County School District 21. Currently the school is approved for up to 220 pupils in grades K-8, with a charter contract that extends to June of 2021. Mosier Community School serves the local students of the Mosier Valley and offers available enrollment to students in Wasco and Hood River counties.

MCS is committed to providing an education for students that has rigor, relationships and relevance at the heart of it, allowing each student to develop to his or her maximum potential and to become outstanding citizens. The mission is to foster independent learning and citizenship, in partnership with and for the benefit of the Mosier community.

Students will become global citizens who analyze their work in a critical and equitable manner, while respecting the richness and diversity of all living things.

As a public charter school, Mosier Community School can do things a little differently while remaining committed to providing quality, core education for all they serve. MCS has chosen to focus the school on place-based education, weaving in the natural and cultural history of the Columbia Gorge region, as well as integrating service-learning and the creative arts into what they do. It makes MCS both unique in the Gorge and responsive to their community's needs and wishes.

The designation of "public charter" school represents a great opportunity for the school and the community. It allows MCS to operate with freedom from many of the regulations that apply to traditional public schools. In return for this increased autonomy, the school is held accountable for both academic results and fiscal practices to several groups: the sponsoring district- North Wasco County District 21; the parents whose children attend the school; and the public/community that funds it. Mosier Community School receives approximately 83% of the state funding that other public schools receive and they depend on volunteers, donors and fundraising to fund the remaining operating costs. Also, as a charter school, traditional bond funding and several state education grants are not available to the school, such as the Oregon Seismic Rehabilitation Grant funding. Thus for building renovations and new facilities, more creative strategies must be employed.

For many years MCS had to organize numerous fundraisers, solicit donations, write grants, and operate on a very lean budget in order to cover their annual operating expenses. At one point the school board even had to make the incredibly hard decision to combine two leadership positions- Executive Director and Principal- into one position in order to save on administrative costs. This was at the same time that funds to rural schools were declining due to declining timber payments.

The pressure for MCS to aggressively fundraise to meet their annual budgetary needs has diminished, starting in the 2016-2017 school year when the school ended the year with a sizable net fund balance and was able to begin putting money into a building reserve fund for future capital expenditures. This change has transpired for the following reasons:

1) They combined the elementary and middle schools, which increased their ADM payments per student.
2) The combining of the schools also eliminated some expenditure redundancy, such as insurance and tax auditing.

3) The Oregon State School Fund increased for the 2017-2019 biennium, beyond their original budget, providing an additional $90,000/year to the MCS income.
4) Spending on administration, staff, building needs, and other school expenditures has been very conservative for several years, which has increased their net fund balance carryover from year to year. The 2017-2018 school year, for example, began with $519,500 in net fund carryover.

For the next couple years, MCS administration anticipates minimal fundraising will be necessary for meeting their annual budget. However, should the administration want to add more staff, new curriculum resources, address some significant building repairs, or embark on more ambitious renovations, more aggressive fundraising will be needed. That is the focus of this plan- to begin to add staffing and curricular resources to enhance MCS education, address some deferred maintenance projects and provide a safer built environment, and begin planning for the future facility needs in accordance with the Mosier Community School 5 Year Strategic Plan. This document is meant to be a planning document for MCS leadership to implement. The actual budgets, job descriptions, RFPs, contracts, and other actions that may result from this plan are not included. *Think of this plan as a road map, but not a set of engineering plans.*

Income Trends:

It is useful to understand what has happened in the past and how things have changed over the years with respect to MCS fundraising income. For the purposes of this plan, we will be looking back the last five years because that is the most accurate information we have access to. Because some accounting procedures have changed over the years and the combining of the two schools into one, some of the following numbers may be off somewhat, but not wildly so. Small shifts of dollars from one category into another will not change the fact that fundraising has been less than 10% of the MCS budget in the past and it will not affect the strategies laid out in section three.

Income from various fundraising activities has represented between 3.7-7.2% of the MCS budget over the years. The total fundraising dollars raised has shrunk somewhat while the overall MCS budget has increased, therefore it represents a smaller percentage of the total budget.

Income Years:	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Events	38,697	31,569	24,192	46,440	30,058
Individual	26,942	15,563	6,645	15,258	9,007

Donations					
Grants	13,685	1,750	400	6,714	6,420
Sales-Based Fundraising	6,185	11,119	12,004	575	6,147
Club Fundraising	1,489	2,497	2,935	4,942	5,987
Passive Fundraising	150	0	183	345	498
Endowment	6,825	6,860	7,300	8,470	7,800
Misc Other	553	1,235	3,108	0	1,931
Total	**94,525**	**70,593**	**56,767**	**82,744**	**67,848**
Total Budget	1,319,447	1,590,334	1,520,595	1,469,685	1,726,546
% of Budget	7.2%	4.4%	3.7%	5.6%	3.9%

While some categories of fundraising have declined, such as individual donations and events somewhat, other categories have increased, such as the endowment funds, passive fundraising strategies, and club fundraising. Grants declined and then picked back up again in 2015-2016. It should also be pointed out that a large percentage of the income in individual donations was actually part of what was previously known as the "parents share", which was a suggested donation of $1,000 per pupil that went away in 2014. When the income from the parents share is removed in the year 2012-2013, for example, the year end fundraising total would decline to around $75,055. There is no overall trend once the parents share is eliminated from the first two years of this table. The five year fundraising average is around $74,495.

Donor Demographics:

As the above table illustrates, individual donations have been an important part of the MCS fundraising income, about second or third in the ranking of different strategies. Soliciting individual donations will be an important strategy for the coming years as well. This section dives into a bit of the demographics of who gives, how much do they give, and what do they give for. The data to analyze these questions is fairly limited, however we will attempt to make some educated guesses.

Individual Donations	**2012-13**	**2013-14**	**2014-15**	**2015-16**	**2016-17**
Total $	31,747	22,567	15,920	15,466	9,135
# of Gifts	127	73	81	43	38
Average Gift Size	249.98	309.14	196.54	359.67	240.39
# of Gifts if you exclude Parents Share	36	10	81	43	38

From this table, it would appear that a normal year would see around 30-32 individual gifts. 2014-2015 was excluded because a large number of the gifts were for a specific professional development teacher training project. This data does not include donations that teachers solicited directly from classroom parents, such as through the DonorsChoose program. Thus far, that data has not been captured because the donations go straight to the vendor of the item that the teachers is requesting. An example of this was a science teacher raised funds to purchase microscopes for her classroom. Some parents donated directly to the project and the money was not routed through the school, therefore the data was not collected. If those donations were factored in, the number of individual gifts would likely double to 60-70 donors.

A common rule of thumb is that 80% of donations come from 20% of the donors. By analyzing the names of those who have given in the past, this rule of thumb appears to be true for MCS as well. In the past, individual donors have included MCS parents, board members, teachers, former teachers and administrators, alumni, and some of the older families of Mosier and surrounding communities. MCS has also received some cash donations from businesses and some small family foundations that were not grants. This includes the Survival Garden, Mid-Columbia Medical Center, Mosier Grows Farmstand, Seniors of Mosier Valley, Interesting Mosier, Google Matching Gifts, Intel Matching Gifts, Mosier Grange, and some family trusts.

The majority of the individual donations were for the general fund, but there have been some donations in the past that were for specific projects. Some examples of this include funds specifically to help cover school lunch costs, funds for drama club, garden club, or chess club, funds for science and technology costs, funds to buy teachers specific items, or funds donated towards the capital campaign and a new middle school.

In general, why do individuals give to schools? The *2016 U.S.® Trust Study of High Net Worth Philanthropy*, conducted in partnership with the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, looked at factors driving charitable giving among wealthy households. Similar research has shown these motivations to be similar in middle class households as well. This biennial study found that donors' primary stated motivations for giving were as follows:

- Believing in the mission of the organization (54%)
- Believing that their gift can make a difference (44%)
- Experiencing personal satisfaction, enjoyment or fulfillment (39%)
- Supporting the same causes annually (36%)

- Giving back to the community (27%)
- Adhering to religious beliefs (23%)

Other factors that come into play for Mosier Community School is that it has been the historical center of the community for nearly 100 years and people want to see that continue. It also serves as the defacto community center for the small town- hosting indoor soccer, zumba classes, tamale making gatherings, skate parties, birthday parties, town meetings, and the only playground in town. For alumni of the school, there is an emotional attachment as well. And for parents with children enrolled in the school, there is the desire to keep the school operating at the same high level and to provide a well-rounded, enriching education for their children. To some extent, parents probably feel that donating to the school is similar to a membership due- it is a cost of being a member of the school. Or they give to a specific club or project that they are connected to in some way. Knowing this information can inform communication methods for courting donors and other future strategies.

The following sections detail the MCS funding goals (section 1), fundraising goals by source (section 2), and fundraising strategies (section 3).

Section 1: Organizational Funding Goals (all estimates)

Need (school year)	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
Annual operations (assume 5% increase in expenditures/ year)	$2,010,000	$2,110,000	$2,216,000	$2,327,000
Special Projects Fund (funded by grants, donations)	$0	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000
Projected Capital Expenses (for future projects	$15,000 Theater renovations	$25,000 FCA & Long-Range Facilities Plan	$1,000,000 Begin Renovations on existing	$3,000,000 Begin Construction of new building

in years 2021-2030)			buildings	
TOTAL NEED	$2,025,000	$2,150,000	$3,231,000	$5,385,000
Revenue (all estimates)				
State School Fund	$2,065,000	$1,800,000 est.	$1,800,000 est.	$1,800,000 est.
Other Local Sources (building rental, registration, club fees, etc, assume 5% increase annually)	$69,700	$73,185	$76,844	$80,686
Endowment (assume 5% increase annually)	$8,300	$8,715	$9,150	$9,608
Fundraising	$71,000	$268,100	$845,000	$1,494,706
Construction Loans	$0	$0	$500,000	$2,000,000
SubTotal	**$2,214,000**	**$2,150,000**	**$3,231,000**	**$5,385,000**
Building Reserve Fund (stop at $200K)	$155,000	$200,000	$200,000	$200,000
Capital Campaign Fund (increase by 5% annually)	$600,000	$630,000	$661,500	$694,575

Explanation of Table 1:

Need is the estimated expenses of running the school. The first year is almost to a close, but it still an estimate based on expected year end numbers. Annual operations includes all the expenses of running the school, including the costs associated with fundraising. Based on past operational costs, we expect about a 5% increase in costs each year. Special Projects are things that come up during the school year that were not included in the budget but are needed or desired by staff/admin/board. Examples include replacing playground equipment, building a greenhouse, adding field trip experiences, an artist in residency, specialized curriculum, etc. Fifteen thousand is probably a conservative number but it is also attainable. Capital expenditures are investments into the land or buildings that will endure for many years. In 2018, that would include theater renovations (lighting and curtains), in 2019 it may include conducting a Facilities Condition Assessment of our current buildings and developing a long-range facilities plan for all of our properties. In 2020 and 2021, we may begin renovating existing buildings and constructing new ones. This is based on anticipated planning timelines of the MCS Facilities Committee.

Revenue is also known as income. This includes money coming in each year and money that we allocate to funds that will grow over time (building reserve and capital campaign). We expect the state school fund to level out and decrease somewhat going forward because it is unclear if we will continue to receive enhanced payments for combining the elementary and middle schools. It is prudent to be conservative with these estimates. Other local sources include registration fees, club fees, meal fees, and building rentals. The next line is our Gorge Community Foundation endowment disbursement, which we expect to grow by around 5% a year as well based on past performance. Fundraising includes individual donations, grants, corporate gifts, special events, and passive strategies listed below in the next section. These will increase over time based on implementing the strategies outlined in this plan. Construction loans are a potential in 2020 or beyond should we decide to embark on new construction.

The building reserve fund is at $155,000 currently and expected to grow with interest accrual. Although the board has not decided on this yet, we anticipate that the upper limit or need of that fund is around $200,000. It is not intended for major capital expenses but more ongoing building maintenance and emergencies, such as the boiler going out or requiring a new washer/dryer. The other reserve fund is in development and will be called the capital campaign fund. It currently stands at around $600,000 and is also expected to grow with interest accrual and some fundraising to build it over time. We expect to begin to use those funds as match for raising grants and loans for building

renovations and construction. So some of that money may be shifted to fundraising once it becomes match.

Section 2: Fundraising Goals by Source

This will vary somewhat by year, in particular the grant proposals submitted. Once a long-term facilities plan is created, which is anticipated to be completed in 2019, a capital campaign will be launched and additional revenue sources will be considered, such as larger grants and construction loans.

Potential Revenue by Fundraising Strategy (does not include Capital Campaign)

Fundraising Strategy	**Projected $/year**
Individual Donors	
Annual Appeal	$3,000/year, increase 5% annually
Online Giving throughout the year	$10,000/year, increase 5% annually
Giving directly to teachers/classrooms	$3,000/year, increase 5% annually
Grants	
TrailBlazer Grant	$10,000/year 2018 (applied, $6,500 obtained). Apply every 2-3 years
Pacific Power Foundation	$7,500/year 2018 (applied, pending). Apply every 2-3 years
UP Foundation Grant	$25,000/year 2018
Ford Family Foundation Grant	$20,000/year 2019. Apply every 2-3 years
Other small grants (such as Walmart, Arts in Ed, Google STEM grants, Joan Burchell Fund grant, etc)	$5,000/year. Apply every 1-2 years
Corporate Gifts	
Google Chromebooks (in-kind)	$20,000/year 2018
Special Events (gross proceeds)	
Turkey Trot	$4,500
Christmas Fair	$7,000

Made for Mosier	$30,000
Fall & Spring Play donations	$500
PTA Fundraisers (popcorn & pickle, bake sales, skate nights, book sales, etc.)	$2,500
New Ideas: Fall Picnic or Earth Day Festival (also ran by PTA)	$2,000
Endowment	
Annual Disbursement	$8,500 (increase about 5% annually)
Passive Strategies	
Clothing Shed	$266 (increase 5% annually)
Amazon Smile	$300 (increase 5% annually)
New Idea: Can Deposit Trailer	$2,000
TOTAL REVENUE	**$161,066**, of which the following is:
In-Kind	**$20,000**
Restricted Funds	**$70,500**
Unrestricted Funds	**$70,566**

Other Proposed Metrics	**Projected**
# of Donors >$250	50
# of Donors <$250	15
# of Individual Donors	65
# of face-to-face donor meetings	5
# of names on donor email list	300
# of website donations	30

Section 3: Fundraising Strategies

Individual Gifts

Strategy	**Actions**	**Staff Involved/Resources Needed**
Solicit MCS and the broader community with a once a year fundraising appeal.	● Develop mailing list ● Develop appeal letter that outlines different ways to give (General Fund, Endowment, Capital Fund or special project) ● Get envelopes pre-printed ● Work with post office to send mailing ● Advertise annual appeal on website, monthly director newsletter, and Mosier Valley News ● Collect donations & record them ● Send thank you letter/tax receipt ● Invite all donors to a once a year appreciation breakfast	-Fundraising Database -MCS Fundraising Committee & Executive Director -Volunteer/Community Coordinator -$ for envelopes and bulk mail rate (~$300) -Fundraising Committee organize the appreciation breakfast
Encourage year-round giving from an even broader community (alumni, relatives, friends, region) through a secure web portal and ongoing social media campaign. This can include individual teacher crowd-funding campaigns.	● Identify prospects ● Make donation information on website more apparent. Add more narrative about what the $ is for ● Develop a short video that can be shared ● Add donate button	-Fundraising Database -Executive Secretary in collaboration with D21 webmaster -Volunteer/Community Coordinator -FB Admin volunteers -Fundraising Committee organize the appreciation breakfast

	to MCS Facebook page ● Regularly promote online giving through FB page, newsletter, & on website ● Collect donations & record them ● Send thank you letter/tax receipt ● Invite all donors to a once a year appreciation breakfast	

Grants

Strategy	**Actions**	**Staff Involved/Resources Needed**
Write grant proposals to appropriate private foundations and government agencies.	● Research funders, deadlines, eligibility, etc. ● Develop budget & RFP for contract grant-writer ● Identify main contact at Foundations and schedule phone call /in-person meeting to share information about the school and discuss the foundation's goals and giving interests ● Write grant proposals ● If application is not funded, ask for feedback ● If application is funded, establish	-MCS Fundraising Committee -MCS Facilities Committee -Contract grant-writing professional, supervised by Executive Director -Volunteer/Community Coordinator

	process for completing plan, evaluation, & reporting. ● Acknowledge all funders on the MCS website.	

Corporate Gifts

Strategy	**Actions**	**Staff Involved/Resources Needed**
Solicit donations/gifts from local corporations	● Identify corporations with giving programs or who make in-kind donations ● Find appropriate contacts and make contact with them ● Speak or attend Gorge Tech Alliance meetings to share the STEAM work of MCS & connect with local tech corporations ● Follow-up as needed ● If donation/gift is secured, send thank you & tax receipt ● Acknowledge all donations/gifts on MCS website ● Invite all donors to a once a year appreciation breakfast	-MCS Fundraising Committee -Executive Director or Executive Secretary as needed -Volunteer/Community Coordinator -MCS parents & wider community who have personal connections to a company
Encourage matched tithing for MCS from parents & other community members	● Encourage parents/community members to look	-MCS Fundraising Committee -Executive Director or

	into matched tithing options from their employers ● Contact a couple key employers in the region to ask them if they would offer matched tithing for MCS ● Ensure proper recordkeeping & tax receipts	Executive Secretary as needed -Volunteer/Community Coordinator -MCS parents & wider community who have personal connections to a company

Special Events

Strategy	**Actions**	**Staff Involved/Resources Needed**
Determine best mix of events to meet our goals such as: high ROI, build community cohesion, good messaging opportunity	● Review all existing fundraising events & track metrics ● Determine which events should proceed and which should cease or go dormant ● Determine which should be ran by MCS Board and which should be ran by PTA ● Determine if any additional fundraising events should be considered that meet our goals	-MCS Fundraising Committee -Executive Director -Newly launched PTA
Plan & launch a new PTA type organization that can help organize and run many of the fundraising event and other community building activities	● Organize the mission, activities, and leadership structure of the PTA ● Recruit members at end of year BBQ or	-MCS Fundraising Committee -MCS Board -Executive Director -Volunteer/Community Coordinator

	at Back to School night ● Schedule regular meetings; take notes ● Develop webpage with PTA info, meeting notes ● Develop annual goals & schedule ● Meet and delegate tasks ● Manage & track finances ● Report regularly to the board	-Parents & others in the community
Plan & deliver high-quality fundraising events, such as: Turkey Trot Christmas Fair Made for Mosier Club Fundraisers	● Schedule events for the year ● Organize volunteer committees for each event ● Determine tasks, delegate tasks, manage progress ● Deliver event ● Generate media attention ● Collect, count, and record the proceeds accurately ● Send thank yous & tax receipts as needed ● Thank all volunteers ● Communicate the results to the community ● Write a how-to manual for each event	-MCS Fundraising Committee (high level planning) -Executive Director -Volunteer/Community Coordinator -Parent Teacher Association -Volunteers
Plan a 100 Year Celebration for 2020 to raise awareness of the	● Make goals & determine event (or series of events)	-MCS Fundraising Committee -Full MCS Board

school, local pride, and funds for capital improvements.	● Plan & deliver events ● Generate media attention ● Send thank yous & tax receipts as needed ● Thank all volunteers ● Communicate the results to the community	-Executive Director -MCS Staff -Volunteer/Community Coordinator -Parent Teacher Association -Volunteers -Main Street Mosier, City of Mosier, Mosier Fire, Mosier Grange, etc.

Endowment

Strategy	**Actions**	**Staff Involved/Resources Needed**
Build the MCS Foundation Endowment to provide a greater share of unrestricted funding each year. Goal is to eventually provide 1% of our overall funding (approximately $30,000 a year, growing over time).	● Identify individuals that may be interested in legacy funding ● Develop strategy to communicate to those individuals (such as in-person meetings or via a special appeal) ● Solicit contributions to the fund ● Send thank yous & tax receipts to all donors ● Invite all donors to a once a year appreciation breakfast ● In years that we do not need the disbursement for our budget, reinvest the money back into the fund in order to grow it quicker	-MCS Fundraising Committee -Executive Director -Volunteer/Community Coordinator

Create new Capital gift fund for the UP settlement $, annual capital funds allocation, and donations from the community. Goal is to reach $2 million dollars by 2021.	● Research and set up the fund ● Solidify capital campaign (costs, goals, etc.) ● Identify individuals that may be interested in legacy funding for capital improvements ● Develop strategy to communicate to those individuals (such as in-person meetings or via a special appeal) ● Solicit contributions to the fund ● Send thank yous & tax receipts to all donors ● Invite all donors to a once a year appreciation breakfast	-MCS Fundraising Committee -MCS Facilities Committee -MCS Finance Committee -Executive Director -Volunteer/Community Coordinator

Passive Strategies

Strategy	**Actions**	**Staff Involved/Resources Needed**
Increase the use of passive strategies so that the school earns more income from these strategies.	● Advertise regularly on website, social media, school newsletters, and Mosier Valley News ● Make sure there is good signage at Clothing Shed	-MCS Fundraising Committee -FB Admins -Volunteer/Community Coordinator
Look into the new idea of a can deposit trailer on the gas station parking lot as a fundraising mechanism.	● Contact Home at Last or other groups that have can deposit trailers, ask	-MCS Fundraising Committee -FB Admins -Volunteer/Community

	them how they do it ● Find a few volunteers willing to manage it ● Manage well so that it does not become a nuisance ● Set up payment system to receive & track the money received ● Continually promote via website, social media, newsletter, etc.	Coordinator -Volunteers

Section 4: Support Materials (to be developed)

- Case for support describing the funding needs and the school's benefit to the community (will utilize materials developed for marketing purposes)
- Mosier Community School 501c3 letter
- Mosier Community School charter renewal letter
- Mosier Community School Foundation Board of Directors List
- Annual Appeal Letter
- Donor acknowledgement letter
- Donor database or CRM program