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Classroom Supplies – 8 Surefire Ways to Save

1. Use social media, become a teacher blogger!

Many of you already have a webpage from your school; why not use it to raise money for your classroom? Turn your webpage into a multimedia platform by using such tools as Twitter, Pinterest, and Facebook. These tools allow you to reach out to parents and community members and vice versa. Parents can tweet or pin a deal they saw and alert you before it expires.

2. Sponsor a community event.

There are the tried and true standards such as bake sales, book sales, and car washes but why not host a walkathon or a race? This may sound like a daunting task, but don't despair! Check out sites www.activenetwork.com for guidance. For inspiration look up: www.milesformusic.org. Miles For Music 20K is a race to raise funds for music education and equipment in the classroom.

3. Turn your classroom into an eco-friendly recycle center!

Encourage parents to bring in cell phones and other electronics and turn them into a profit. You can also arrange with your colleagues and administrators to set up an outdoor space to receive glass, plastic, and aluminum recyclables to turn into cash at the donation center. Build this into your environmental science; math or civics lesson plans as an added bonus. Check out these sites for more ideas and guidance: wikihow.com/Recycle-Aluminum-Cans-and-Plastic-Bottles-and-Earn-Cash, and www.electronicstakeback.com.

4. Become aware of the numerous Not For Profit organizations that focus on teachers, students and classrooms.

Two prolific organizations are Adopt a Classroom and Donors Choose.

5. Turn your lesson plan and student work into a fundraising campaign.

Have your students reach out to local business and corporations with compelling and persuasive reasons for them to donate money to their class. Make sure to make it a mutually beneficial arrangement. Assure the prospective donor that they will be invited to a celebration and children will write letters to the local newspaper and news channel. This will also give the students a real world experience. This idea is perhaps better suited for third grade and above, but the idea can be modified to fit any age.

6. Become aware of the great discounts and teacher friendly business in your area.

A great resource to check out is Gift Card Granny's The Complete List of 77 Teacher Discounts at www.giftcardgranny.com. Here you will find big name companies like The Container Store and Office Max as well as 72 others.

7. This may sound obvious, but check in with your colleagues and see what they have and don't need anymore.

I remember at the end of the school year going through my supply closet and seeing how many reams of paper and boxes of crayons that I over ordered and could not use. Instead of having these supplies collect dust I gave them to another classroom that needed them. This is also a great way to create a culture that values conservation and financial thriftiness.

8. Keep your eyes open for a great new product set to arrive before the end of summer called The Teacher Fund Card.

You can check out its concept page at www.teachercard.com.

Helping teachers make sense of finance.

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