Note: For purposes of this policy, the terms “gift” and “donation” have the same meaning.

**Definitions**

**“Gift”**
A “gift” or “donation” shall mean something bestowed voluntarily and without a fee to the District.

**“Device”**
A “device” shall mean a tangible product, commodity, good, or instrument that has relative value or worth.

**“Donor”**
A “donor” shall mean an organization or individual who contributes a donation, device, or gift.

**Voluntary and Unsolicited Gifts**
The District, schools, programs, and classes may seek and accept gifts with approval from designated administration. The practice is permissible as long as it is truly voluntary and in no way a prerequisite to participation in any District program or activity. Furthermore, the District shall not solicit anything of value from known technology service providers who plan to participate or currently participate in the District’s E-Rate Program. However, the District may accept voluntary philanthropic gifts initiated by such vendors where such actions further the educational mission of the District and comply with all aspects of this policy. Any statement or explanation related to a gift that may lead a reasonable person to believe the donation may not be truly voluntary shall be avoided.

Examples of such statements include, but are not limited to, a specified minimum amount of a gift, a date by which a gift is due, or a lesser gift amount if funds are received prior to a certain date. Additionally, any statement or action that exerts explicit or implicit pressure on a student or parent to make a gift shall be avoided. The reason a student or family does not make a gift is not a subject for inquiry.

**Authority to Accept**
Except as provided below, the Board delegates the following employees authority to accept and seek approval for unsolicited gifts on behalf of the District as follows:

1. Principals or department/campus designees, the school support officer of the school to which the gift has been made or the program director of the program to which the gift has been made shall be authorized to accept and seek approval for unsolicited gifts with a cost or market value up to $1,000.

2. The Superintendent or designee shall be authorized to accept unsolicited gifts with a cost or market value more than $1,000 but less than $5,000.

Any gift with a cost or market value of $5,000 or more, any gift that the potential donor has expressly made conditional upon the
District’s use for a specified purpose, or any gift of real property, shall require Board approval.

Any gift to the District that requires the prior approval of the Board shall be considered by the Board at its next regularly scheduled Board meeting following the date the gift was offered. The principal or appropriate department head shall work with the appropriate member of the Superintendent’s cabinet to submit an agenda item for Board approval.

Once accepted, a gift becomes the sole property of the District.

[For technology service provider contributions, see TECHNOLOGY DONATIONS, below.]

The District shall not accept any gift that would violate or conflict with policies of or actions by the Board or with federal or state law.

Before employees accept a gift or an agenda item is submitted for Board approval, the following shall be considered: the Superintendent recommends acceptance of a gift to the Board, as applicable, the Superintendent shall consider whether the gift:

1. Has a purpose consistent with the District’s educational philosophy, goals, and objectives;
2. Places any restrictions on a campus or District program;
3. Would support a program that the Board may be unable or unwilling to continue when the donation of funds is exhausted;
4. Would result in ancillary or ongoing costs for the District;
5. Requires employment of additional personnel;
6. Requires or implies the endorsement of a specific business or product [see GKB for advertising opportunities];
7. Would result in inequitable funding, equipment, or resources among District schools or programs;
8. Obligates the District or a campus to engage in specific actions;
9. Is connected to an existing contract, future promise, or future contract.
10. **Creates** Does it create a controversy calling into doubt the appropriateness of the gift or donation;

11. Does not it require factual determination as to the legal ownership of the gift; and

12. **Affects** Does it affect the physical structure of a building or would require extensive maintenance on the part of the District and meets the District’s design standards?

For real property, the Superintendent shall determine whether the title to the property has been transferred to the District.

**Playground Equipment**

Donated or used playground equipment shall not be accepted by the District. [See CS2(REGULATION)]

**Technology Donations**

Technology devices that are donated must be coordinated through the department of technology and information systems. A donation must meet the minimum approved standards as described in the Guidelines for Donated Equipment section of the Technology and Information Systems Manual located on HISDConnect at [www.houstonisd.org](http://www.houstonisd.org).

Before a vehicle may be accepted as a gift, a complete analysis must be conducted to determine if the vehicle is operational and will pass state inspection. All costs (i.e., repairs, maintenance, inspections, insurance, and the like) must be given careful consideration prior to determining if ownership is fully justified.

The following shall apply for vehicle donations:

1. The official title of ownership must be transferred to the District and placed in the possession of the property management department.

2. Vehicles with a free and clear title shall be considered.

Additional information regarding vehicle donations can be accessed in the Finance Procedures Manual, Section 908—Donation of Vehicles to Schools, located at [www.houstonisd.org](http://www.houstonisd.org).

**Technology Service Providers**

Anything of value offered by a technology service provider that is valued shall require Ethics and Compliance Office review prior to acceptance of the gift. Any technology device donations made by E-Rate vendors must also be reviewed by the Ethics and Compliance Office. [See CQ(LOCAL)]

**Refusal of Gift**

The Board and employees shall reserve the right to refuse any gift offered to the District, at any time and for any reason, as deemed appropriate by the Board and/or the Superintendent.
Donor Recognition

Recognition of the donor for the gift may be made at the school or department with approval from administration or program level. Formal recognition may be made by the Board or the administration. Groups that make a number of donations throughout the school year may receive formal recognition at the end of the year. Appropriate plates, plaques, markers, or other means of identifying the donor may be used.

Solicitations

An employee who solicits gifts on behalf of the District or for use in the fulfillment of his or her professional responsibilities shall comply with relevant state and federal law and any District administrative regulations.

All donations solicited on behalf of the District, including solicitations in the name of the District or a campus, or donations solicited using District or campus resources, become the sole property of the District.

Web-Based Solicitations

An employee may solicit web-based donations of money or items for use by the employee in fulfilling his or her professional responsibilities or for the District’s use, including “crowdfunding.” However, an employee shall obtain prior approval from the employee’s supervisor before using the name or image of the District, a campus, or any student. [See CDC(REGULATION)]

Effective Date

This policy shall be effective as of the adoption date, September 9, 2022.