

8 Tips to Help Teachers Find Money



School budgets are tight these days, and it can be hard to get money to pay for the instructional materials you need.

Here are 8 tips that teachers have used to successfully fund important resources like ExploreLearning Gizmos and Reflex in their schools.

Tip #1: Do your research!

Educate yourself about how school funding works in your state and district. Talk to colleagues, know your district and state's educational priorities, and read the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

States such as Ohio require by law that budgeting for textbooks and instructional materials, plus school board financial statements, are public information. If this is true in your state, you can easily find how out much money your district has and where the money goes. **The more you know about funding and priorities in your school and district, the better able you are to find multiple sources of funds.**

Tip #2: Make a plan.

Before you ask for resources or funding for classroom materials, figure out in advance what you want, why you want it, and what it will cost.

Sounds simple, but you really don't want to waste your time—or anyone else's—when you make a request.

To get prepared, it's helpful to ask yourself:

- *What is the problem you want to address with the instructional materials you're looking for?*
- *How will this solution help your students?*
- *What is the total cost this year and any subsequent years?*

Write out your answers to these questions so they are firmly defined. Now you're ready to find money to fund what you want.

Tip #3: Where's the money?

There is money available at your school. You just might not know about it (yet). Principals often keep discretionary funds that they can use for whatever they want. Department chairs, principals, curriculum coordinators and special needs coordinators all have money for specific projects, and your request could fit their requirements.

Here's another great tip from a teacher: Find out what kind of fancy coffee your school treasurer or Chief Financial Officer likes, and bring it to them! Ask them how funding works at your school, and learn all you can from an expert!

Tip #4: Who else has money?

You can also ask the Title I coordinator, technology coordinator, CIP/SIP Committee, Treasurer, or Superintendent for funding. They all have control over parts of the budget.

Don't know any of those people? Find people who will introduce you!

Tip #5: Ask!

Reach out to your community and ask for help! People do want to help, but often don't know how. Reach out to the parents at your school and explain what you need.

PTOs and PTAs will occasionally fund special projects for teachers using the dues and donations they collect. Sometimes schools leverage school fees for special projects, too, and that money may be available for you. There may also be organizations in your community, like rotary clubs or local businesses, that may be willing to donate. Ask.

Tip #6: Ask someone else!

If your community is low on resources, you can try reaching out over the Internet to others for funding. Many teachers have found success using sites like DonorsChoose.org to get the technology or resources that they need. Some companies also offer grants to teachers. For example, ExploreLearning has a Reflex Grant Program to help exceptional teachers get access to their math fact fluency program.

You may need to get creative to stand out from the pack when you post on a site like DonorsChoose.org, though. To make your case as convincing as possible, you can make a video, share over social media, post pictures and send out a link for others to share.

Tip #7: Timing is everything.

It's important to pay attention to the calendar when you're looking for funding. Since budgeting always happens in the spring, start your research in January. Whatever you do, don't wait to ask in September! The money has usually all been spent by then.

Tip #8: Success! Now what?

You got funded! Now you can relax, right? Wrong! Make sure you set yourself up for future funding success first.

You'll want to start off by saying "thank you" to everyone who helped you get the materials you needed. You might want to consider inviting the funding parties (plus more) into your classroom to see your class use the resources and materials that they helped you buy. You'll also want to evaluate the effectiveness of the materials you received, and share the results with other teachers.

Also, be sure to be smart about spending and using what you have. Pass on materials when you're done and make sure you follow up on any promises you made.

Finally, share what you know and get involved in your district. You can become a fiscal mentor and support other teachers' efforts to get the materials they need.

Share your tips!

Have you found creative ways to access funding for resources? Comment on our Facebook page and share your experience with your fellow educators.

Interested in delving deeper on finding funding for resources and instructional materials? [Check out our webinar for more information.](#)

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