



Earn More
and
Stress Less!

the *Ultimate*

BACK to SCHOOL

123 Fundraising Playbook



Featuring
Sneakster!

TM



Introduction

Hey there, fellow fundraising superstars!



Sneakster here! – Your green, slightly mischievous fundraising buddy who's about to let you in on something that'll change your whole approach to raising money this fall for your school.

You know that moment when you're staring at another email asking you to organize the annual candy sale? It's that moment when you get that sinking feeling of "here we go again" with the order forms, the money collection, and the parent who forgot to pick up their kid's chocolate bars?

Yeah, I've been watching from the sidelines. Honestly, I got tired of seeing dedicated educators and parent-teacher groups stress themselves out over fundraisers that feel more like punishment than progress.

Here's what I've learned after years of helping schools across the country: **the best fundraisers are those that don't feel like traditional fundraisers at all.**

I'm talking about raising real money, \$1,500 to \$10,000 or more, without asking anyone to buy anything, without upfront costs, and without turning your volunteer fundraising team into a customer service department. Sound too good to be true?

Stick with me. I promise you'll discover why schools everywhere are ditching the catalog sales and embracing something that actually makes a difference.

Oh, and between you and me? I'm on a mission to help organizations raise funds and collect 1 million pairs of shoes through school drives.

Ready to try something different?

Sneakster[®]

P.S. - I know you're skeptical. I would be too. But give me a few pages to show you what schools achieve when they think outside the shoebox.

Perfect Timing Playbook

Okay, can we talk about timing for a minute?

Many well-intentioned fundraisers crash and burn simply because they launched at the wrong time. Not because the idea was bad, not because people didn't care, but because life got in the way.

Remember last spring when three different groups at your school launched fundraisers the same week as state testing? Or when the PTA candy sales went live during the week everyone was packing for spring break?

That's not bad luck—timing is fixable and vital for a shoe drive, or any fundraiser.



When People Actually Check Their Phones:

Look, I spend a lot of time observing human behavior (it comes with the territory of being a shoe), and here's what I've noticed:

- **Morning emails:** 8-9 AM (that first coffee + phone check combo)
- **Text reminders:** 3-4 PM (school pickup zone = scroll time)
- **Social media:** 8-10 AM and 7-8 PM (during breakfast or a commute and after dinner)

Launch During Windows That Don't Compete With Life:

- **Fall:** September through October (back-to-school energy, closet-cleaning season)
- **Spring:** March through May (spring cleaning, pre-summer organization)
- **Use to Your Advantage:** Any week with holidays, major school events, or games
- **Avoid:** Testing weeks and large dances/events

Fundraising Ideas That Don't Make You Want to Hide

Skip the Stuff That Doesn't Work

Let me be straight with you.

I'm tired of watching dedicated educators and volunteers burn out on fundraisers that require a PhD in logistics to manage. You know the ones—you spend more time organizing than raising money.

Here are five fundraisers that consistently work without requiring you to become a small business owner:

#1: Shoe Drive Fundraiser

Earnings: \$1,000 - \$10,000+ | **Time:** 8 weeks | **Difficulty:** Easy-Medium

Why It's My #1:

- Zero upfront costs, and Funds2Orgs provides everything
- No selling required—just collect gently worn, used and new shoes
- No inventory nightmares, and direct pickup from your location
- Works year-round, especially during cleaning seasons
- Helps globally, as shoes go to micro-entrepreneurs worldwide



Real Talk from Schools:

- Launch during back-to-school or in the new year when families are already organizing closets
- Create a visual progress tracker (kids love seeing the shoe pile grow)
- Accept shoes of ANY size, season, or style
- Pair with fall festivals or other events you're already planning
- Families love it because they don't have to open their wallets

The Bottom Line: Families get to declutter, schools make money, and you're not managing a complicated sales process.

#2: Community Cookbook

Earnings: \$2,000 - \$5,000 | **Time:** 6-8 weeks | **Difficulty:** Medium

What Works:

1. Collect family recipes through simple online forms
2. Take pre-orders before printing (this is crucial!)
3. Use services like Heritage Cookbook or Morris Press
4. Sell at school events and through social media



Success Tips:

- Include family photos and stories with recipes
- Pre-sell 75% before placing your order
- Create themes like "Around the World with [School Name]"
- **Profit Margin:** 50-60% after printing costs

#3: Principal for a Day Auction

Earnings: \$1,000 - \$3,000 | **Time:** 2-3 weeks | **Difficulty:** Easy

What the Winner Gets:

- Morning announcements over the PA system
- Time at the principal's desk with special rewards
- Ability to give school tours to visitors
- Lunch with the principal
- Official certificate and photos



Why It Works: Zero cost to create, high perceived value, and amazing social media content.

#4: Family Fun Run + Sponsorships

Earnings: \$3,000 - \$8,000 | **Time:** 8-10 weeks | **Difficulty:** High

Revenue Streams:

- Individual sponsorships (i.e., families collect pledges for distance or laps)
- Business sponsorships (e.g., logos at water stations, finish line banners)
- Registration fees
- Event merchandise



The Math: 200 families × \$25 average sponsorship + 10 businesses × \$200 = \$7,000+

Fair Warning: This requires a strong organizing team, so only choose this if you have committed volunteers who can handle logistics.

#5: Local Business Partnership Nights

Earnings: \$500 - \$2,000 | **Time:** 2-3 weeks | **Difficulty:** Easy

How It Works:

- Partner with local restaurants for “school nights”
- Restaurants donate 10-20% of the proceeds from families who mention the school
- Promote through your usual social and marketing channels
- Show up, eat, and collect the check.



Best Partners: Chain restaurants with established fundraising programs (e.g., Chipotle, Panda Express, local pizza places).

The Reality Check: Not every fundraiser needs to be a home run. Sometimes a simple \$1,000 from a restaurant night is precisely what you need.



Getting People to Participate

The Parent Engagement Game Plan

Let's address the elephant in the room.

Fundraising fatigue is real. People are tired, overwhelmed, and honestly a little skeptical when they see another "exciting opportunity" email in their inbox.

I've been watching this cycle for years, and it breaks my heart to see dedicated volunteers take it personally when participation is low. It's usually not about the volunteer—it's about the approach.

Overcoming the "Oh No Not Another Fundraiser" Syndrome

Acknowledge the Problem Head-On:

- Start with: "We know you've been asked to do a lot. That's why we chose something with zero selling, zero upfront costs, and zero complications." (Yes, I'm talking about a shoe drive fundraiser).
- Create a simple comparison chart showing how a shoe drive is different and works in any fundraising calendar.
- Lead with time savings in every single communication.



Make It Feel Different:

- **Instead of:** "Please support our fundraiser!"
 - » **Try:** "Help us turn this crazy idea into reality" or "We're building tomorrow's leaders today and they need your help" or "It takes a village - be part of ours" or "Our kids can't wait for 'someday' - let's make it today"
 - » **For a shoe drive:** "Look in your closet for shoes you haven't worn in 6 months" or "We don't want your money, just your shoes!" or "From your floor to our cause - every pair counts" or "Turn your shoe clutter into classroom magic"
- Celebrate EVERY level of participation.
- Be specific about what you're asking for from your community.

Making It Easy for Busy People

Remove Every Possible Barrier:

- **Flexible timeline** (i.e., fundraising/collection window, not a single day)
- **Easy participation** make giving and supporting your fundraiser simple & clear
- **One-touch marketing** with copy-paste social media templates
- **Multiple drop-off locations** (e.g., office, library, gym, and yes, volunteer homes)

The Three-Touch Rule That Works:

TOUCH 1 **Personal Introduction** Face-to-face or personal text from someone they know *"Hey Sarah! Our school is trying something different this year. Instead of another bake sale, we're doing a shoe drive and actually investing in [specific need like new playground equipment/library books/STEM supplies]."*

TOUCH 2 **Social Proof** Share early wins and momentum on social media, *"Already at \$3,500 raised! The Martinez family said 'this feels different...'"* Or *"Already at 150 pairs of shoes! The Johnson family found 8 pairs in their closet..."*

TOUCH 3 **Gentle Follow-Up** Personal follow-up with a helpful offer, *"Final week to support our fundraiser! Want me to send you the link again?"* or *"Final week! Want us to grab your donation during carpool tomorrow or would you prefer to drop something off during pickup?"*

The Grandparent Secret Weapon

Why Grandparents Are Fundraising Gold:

- They may have more time and often resources.
- They want to help their grandkids succeed.
- They're not burnt out on school fundraisers.
- They have fewer competing financial priorities (no mortgage/daycare costs).
- They're motivated by legacy - investing in the next generation.

How to Activate Grandparents:

- Have kids write personal notes or texts or shoot a video asking for support.
- Share the global impact story (they love feeling part of something bigger).
- Create a "Grandparents Wall of Fame" recognizing their contributions.
- Send them photos/videos of kids using what their donations funded.



- Grandparents usually have the most shoes to donate.
- Make it easy for them and their network with multiple drop-off locations.
- Create a "Grandparents and Community" collection day.

Building Your Core Shoe Drive Fundraising Team (Without Burning Out)

The Reality: You need 3-5 committed people, not 20 "maybe people."

Core Roles:

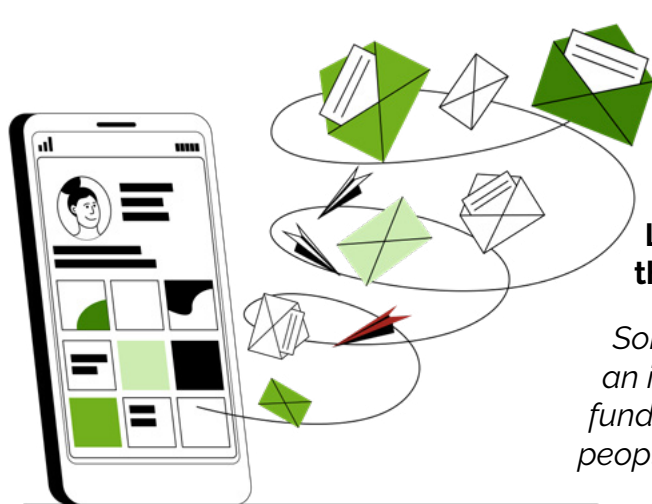
- **Communication Lead** (social media, emails, updates)
- **Collection Coordinator** (drop-off points, storage)
- **Community Connector** (business partnerships, extended outreach)
- **Progress Tracker** (counts, goals, celebration)
- **Thank You Captain** (recognition and appreciation)

Team Building Tips:

- Meet people where they are (some prefer texting, others email)
- Set clear expectations upfront

- Create a simple group chat for quick updates
- Celebrate small wins together

The Truth: Most people want to help but don't want to be in charge. So, give them specific, manageable tasks and they'll often exceed expectations.



Digital Marketing That Doesn't Require a Degree

Social Media That Actually Works

Look, I know not everyone loves social media, and that's ok!

Some of you are thinking, "Great, now I have to become an influencer?" But here's the thing, social media for fundraising isn't about going viral. It's about reaching the people who already care about your school.

Platform-Specific Strategies (Keep It Simple)

Facebook (Where Grandparents and Some Parents Are):

- **Best for:** Detailed posts, creating events, sharing in parent groups
- **Post timing:** 7-9 AM (coffee + scroll time) and 7-8 PM (evening check-in)
- **What works:** Progress photos, success stories, clear event details
- **Pro tip:** Pin important posts to the top of your page

Instagram (Visual Impact):

- **Best for:** Behind-the-scenes content, Stories, visual progress
- **Post timing:** 11 AM-1 PM and 5-7 PM (lunch break and commute scrolling)
- **What works:** Student volunteers in action, impact/shoe pile photos, before/after shots
- **Pro tip:** Use Stories for quick updates, save important info in Highlights

TikTok (If You Have Student Volunteers):

- **Best for:** Student-created content, fun challenges/trends, reaching younger families
- **Post timing:** 7-9 AM (before school), 3-6 PM (after school) and 8-10 PM (evening entertainment)
- **What works:** "Day in the life of our shoe drive," time-lapse sorting, student testimonials
- **Pro tip:** Let students create content – they understand the platform better

Hashtag Strategy (Without Overthinking It)

Use These Every Time:

- #[YourSchoolName]Fundraiser
- #[YourSchoolName]ShoeDrive
- #CommunitySupport
- #SchoolFundraiser



Mix and Match:

- #EcoFriendlyFundraising
- #[YourCity]Schools
- #ShoesForACause
- #MakingADifference
- #[YourSchool]ShoeDrive

The Reality: Hashtags help people find your content, but don't stress about having the perfect ones. Consistency matters more than perfection.

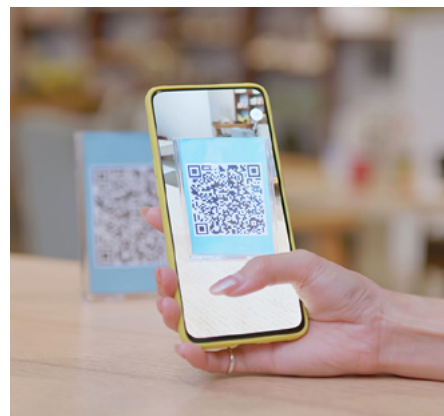
QR Codes (They're Useful)

What QR Codes Should Link To:

- Fundraising details page on your school website
- Google Form for volunteer sign-ups
- Funds2Orgs information about global impact
- Your school's social media pages

Where to Use Them:

- Flyers sent home with students
- Posters in hallways and pickup areas



- Email signatures
- Social media posts
- Physical signs at drop-off locations

QR Code Basics:

- Include instructions: "Scan with your phone camera"
- Add context: "Scan for shoe drive details"
- Test before printing (seriously, test them!)
- Make them big enough (at least 1 inch square)



Free QR Code Tools:

- qr-code-generator.com
- QRCode Monkey
- Google Chrome (built-in)
- Canva (integrated with designs)

Content That Gets Shared

Photos That Work:

- Students and volunteers in action
- Behind-the-scenes moments
- Before/after shots of the collection areas
- Piles of collected shoes (people love seeing progress)



Posts That Get Engagement:

- Progress updates with specific numbers
- Thank you posts tagging participants
- Stories about the global impact
- Countdown posts ("3 days left!")

The Golden Rule: Social media should feel like a conversation, not a constant sales pitch. Share the journey, celebrate the wins, and make it feel human.

Making Your Fundraiser Successful

The Deep Dive Strategy

Ready for the real insider information?

Looking for what really makes a school fundraiser thrive? It's not luck. It's not the size of your school. It's smart planning, strong community ties, and clear communication. Here's how the best campaigns do it.



Pre-Launch Preparation (The Make-or-Break Phase)

2 Weeks Before Launch:

- Set your fundraising goal—make it specific and achievable
- Recruit a small, committed team (3-5 reliable volunteers)
- Lock in your key dates.



- Choose multiple collection locations
- Schedule Drive-thru & Drop-off events
- Secure a place to store donated items

1 Week Before Launch:

- Create your marketing materials (If you're doing a shoe drive, templates are available from Funds2Orgs)
- Set up collection points with lots of foot traffic
- Brief your volunteers on the basics and common questions
- Plan your kickoff announcement

Launch Day:

- Announce across all school channels (email, social, flyers, text, morning announcements)
- Start tracking participation right away

- Share your first win (photos, stories, or early numbers)
- Build momentum with visuals and energy!

The Sneakster Secret: Schools that spend time on prep consistently collect 40% more shoes than those who wing it.



Community Outreach (Beyond School Families)

Think Bigger Than Your School Directory:

Local Businesses:

- Ask if you can leave flyers or donation boxes in break rooms
- Offer to feature them in thank-you posts or newsletters

Sports, Fitness and Teams:

- Gyms, community sports teams, and athletic clubs
- Dance studios and cheer gyms
- Martial arts studios, yoga studios, and rock climbing gyms

Your Neighborhood:

- Post in neighborhood Facebook, Nextdoor or Ring groups
- Ask friends and family to share with their networks
- Tap into community centers, churches and local service clubs

Volunteer Management (Without Drama)

Core Team Structure:

- **Communication Lead:** Handles emails, social media, and progress updates
- **Collection Coordinator:** Manages drop-off points, storage, and logistics
- **Community Connector:** Reaches out to local businesses and organizations
- **Progress Tracker:** Tracks goals, collections and celebrates milestones
- **Thank You Captain:** Handles recognition and appreciation

Best Practices:

- Set clear expectations from the start
- Create a simple group chat for quick coordination
- Meet people where they are (some prefer texts, others email)
- Celebrate small wins together—momentum matters!



Tracking Success and Staying Motivated

Numbers to Track:

- Donations collected or amount raised
- Participation by class or grade
- Average donation per family
- Community vs. school-based contributions



- **Post Daily Progress:** Simple spreadsheet: Date | Location | Bags/Pairs | Source | Running Total
- **Share Public Thank Yous & Donor Photos**
- Use our free tracking templates

Sharing Progress:

- Post weekly (or daily!) updates: "We're 60% to goal!"
- Visual trackers—thermometers, posters, bulletin boards
- Friendly competitions: "Ms. Smith's class is in the lead!"
- Social proof: Post photos of community contributions

The Four Pillars of Success





Collection Setups That Work

Have Multiple Drop-Off Points:

- School office (during regular hours)
- Gym (before/after school events)
- Library (for families who visit regularly)
- Volunteer homes (for convenience)

Clear Signage:

- Bold and bright with arrows, dates, and school name
- Use QR codes for more info or quick donations
- Weatherproof signs if outdoors

Logistics:

- Keep areas tidy and check them daily
- Share progress photos of collections
- Label boxes so it's clear where things go

Collection boxes:

- Funds2Orgs provides these assets to start and has yard signs available for purchase on our website as well
- Place them where people can easily see and access them
- Empty regularly so they don't look full
- Take photos of full boxes for social media

Real Numbers from Successful Drives:

- **Ideal Length:** 8-12 weeks
- **Photo power:** Daily progress photos = 30% more donations
- **Thank you impact:** Public appreciation = 60% higher future participation
- **Volunteer sweet spot:** 15+ total volunteer hours typically exceed goals

The Bottom Line: Great shoe drives feel like community celebrations, not school obligations. When people feel good about participating, they contribute more and tell others about it.

When Things Don't Go According to Plan

Troubleshooting the Unexpected

Sometimes – not everything goes as planned.

I've seen enough shoe drives to know that Murphy's Law applies to fundraising too. The good news? Most problems have simple solutions if you are prepared.



When Participation Is Lower Than Expected

Quick Fixes That Work:

Personal Outreach:

- Individual texts from volunteers to their networks (10x more effective than mass emails)
- Phone calls to families who've participated in past events
- Face-to-face conversations during pickup/drop-off

Add Some Energy:

- Create friendly urgency: "Only 3 days left – we need 47 more pairs to hit our goal!"
- Offer small incentives: "First 50 families get [school stickers/bookmarks]"
- Start class vs. class challenges with daily leaderboards

Lower the Bar:

- Emphasize "Even ONE pair helps"
- Share stories of individual contributions making a difference
- Celebrate every single donation publicly

Emergency Tactics:

- **Grandparent activation:** Have kids personally text or call grandparents
- **Staff participation:** Teachers and administrators donate publicly first
- **Social proof:** Share specific examples – "The Johnson family found 15 pairs!"

When Volunteers Don't Show Up

The Reality: Life happens, and people get busy.

Prevention Strategies:

- **Buddy system:** Pair every volunteer with a backup person
- **Micro-tasks:** Break big jobs into 15-minute chunks anyone can handle
- **Family involvement:** Encourage volunteers to bring their kids to help
- **Flexible scheduling:** Offer multiple time slots for the same task

When People Don't Show:

- **Reduce scope:** Fewer collection points if necessary
- **Emergency contacts:** Have 3-5 people who can help last-minute
- **24-hour confirmations:** Quick text check-ins before events
- **Accept help as offered:** Someone can only help for 30 minutes? Perfect.



Competing with Other Fundraisers

Standing Out in a Crowded Field:

Partnership Strategy:

- "Help us this month, we'll help you next month"
- Coordinate timing with other groups
- Cross-promote each other's events
- Bundle with existing school events

Winning Messages:

- "The fundraiser that makes sense"
- "Clean out your closet, fund your school"
- "No order forms, no money collection, no delivery hassles"
- "Drop off and done"



Emphasize the Difference & Impact of a Shoe Drive:

- “No selling or asking for money required—just donate gently worn, used and new shoes”
- “Zero upfront costs to families”
- “5 minutes of your time, maximum impact”
- “Help your school AND help families globally”

The Secret: When yours is the easiest option, families will choose you even when they're tired of fundraising.

Other Challenges

Weather Problems:

- Have back up plans ready
- Extend timeline if weather impacts collection days
- Use weather delays as opportunities for extra promotion

Communication Breakdowns:

- Designate one person as the primary contact
- Create a simple phone tree for urgent updates
- Use group texting for quick coordination
- Have backup communication methods ready

The Most Important Troubleshooting Tip

Stay Flexible and Keep Perspective:

- Every fundraiser teaches you something for next time
- Celebrate what works, learn from what doesn't
- Focus on the positive impact you're making
- Remember, even an “unsuccessful” drive usually raises more money than not trying at all

Real Schools, Real Results

Success Stories from the Trenches

Want proof that this works?

These aren't made-up success stories with perfect numbers. These are real schools with real challenges that have figured out how to make shoe drives work for their communities.



Riverside Elementary PTA (Florida)

450 students | Goal: \$3,000 for playground equipment

Their Previous Reality:

- Gift catalog sales netted \$1,200 after expenses
- 25% of families participated in earlier fundraisers
- Required 80+ volunteer hours

Shoe Drive Results:

- **Collected:** 8,150 pairs in 8 weeks
- **Raised:** \$4,236 (31% over their goal)
- **Participation:** 68% of families contributed
- **Volunteer time:** 15 hours total

What Made the Difference:

- Launched with grandparent activation through student-written letters
- Posted daily progress photos on their Facebook page
- Teachers and staff donated first, leading by example

Parents actually thanked us for an easy fundraiser!

- PTA President



Washington High School Seniors (California)

320 seniors | Goal: \$2,500 for prom cost assistance

Their Previous Reality:

- Monthly car washes and bake sales throughout the year
- Raised \$1,800 over 8 months
- Only 30% of seniors participated regularly

Shoe Drive Results:

- **Collected:** 6,000 pairs in 8 weeks
- **Raised:** \$3,015 (21% over their goal)
- **Participation:** 85% of seniors contributed
- **Social media reach:** 12,000+ TikTok views

What Made the Difference:

- Student-led campaign
- Created TikTok "clean out your closet" challenges
- Homeroom competitions with leaderboards
- Emphasized a message that resonated with teens

When students own the fundraiser, magic happens.



- Student Body President



Lincoln Middle School Sports (Texas)

850 students | Goal: \$5,000 for new uniforms

Their Previous Approach:

- Ran 6 different fundraisers throughout the year (car washes, bake sales, etc.)
- Raised \$3,400 total despite constant “ask fatigue”

Shoe Drive Results:

- **Collected:** 11,600 pairs in 8 weeks
- **Raised:** \$5,847 (17% over their goal)
- **Community partnerships:** 8 local businesses participated
- **Volunteer satisfaction:** 95% said they would repeat this fundraiser

What Made the Difference:

- Framed it around the athletic angle: “Help athletes worldwide”
- Partnered with local gyms who promoted the drive to their members
- Created grade-level competitions
- Student athletes personally reached out to teammates and families

One great fundraiser beat six mediocre ones.

- Coach Martinez

Oakwood Elementary (North Carolina)

180 students | Goal: \$1,500 for classroom supplies

Their Challenge:

- Small volunteer base (only 8-10 active parents)
- Families spread across 3 different towns
- Previous cookie dough sales only raised \$890

Shoe Drive Results:

- **Collected:** 4,160 pairs in 8 weeks
- **Raised:** \$1,892 (26% over their goal)
- **Participation:** 78% of families (highest ever for any school fundraiser)

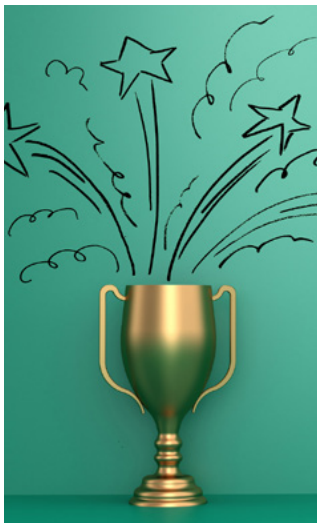
What Made the Difference:

- Extended timeline to accommodate rural families
- Set up collection points in all 3 towns
- Used “only if you can” low-pressure messaging
- Principal personally hand-delivered thank you notes

*School size
doesn't matter—
heart does.*

- Principal Johnson

The Success Pattern



What These Schools Did Right:

- ✓ **Personal asks** instead of mass emails
- ✓ **Visual progress tracking** with photos and charts
- ✓ **Community expansion** beyond just school families
- ✓ **Leadership participation** with staff contributing first
- ✓ **Simple, clear messaging** focused on ease of participation

The Real Truth: Every single one of these schools exceeded their goal. That's not luck—that's the power of choosing a fundraiser that actually works.

Your Next Steps

Ready to Go Green and Earn Green?



Here's what you can do this week:

Step 1: Text three others right now: "Want to help plan a fundraiser that's actually easy?"

Step 2: Go to Funds2Orgs.com and click "Start Your Shoe Drive." It takes less than 2 minutes, I promise.

Step 3: Block out 20 minutes to connect with a fundraising coach.

That's it. Three simple steps, and you're already ahead of 90% of schools out there.

Ready to step into success? Your community is waiting.

*Your biggest supporter,
Sneakster®*

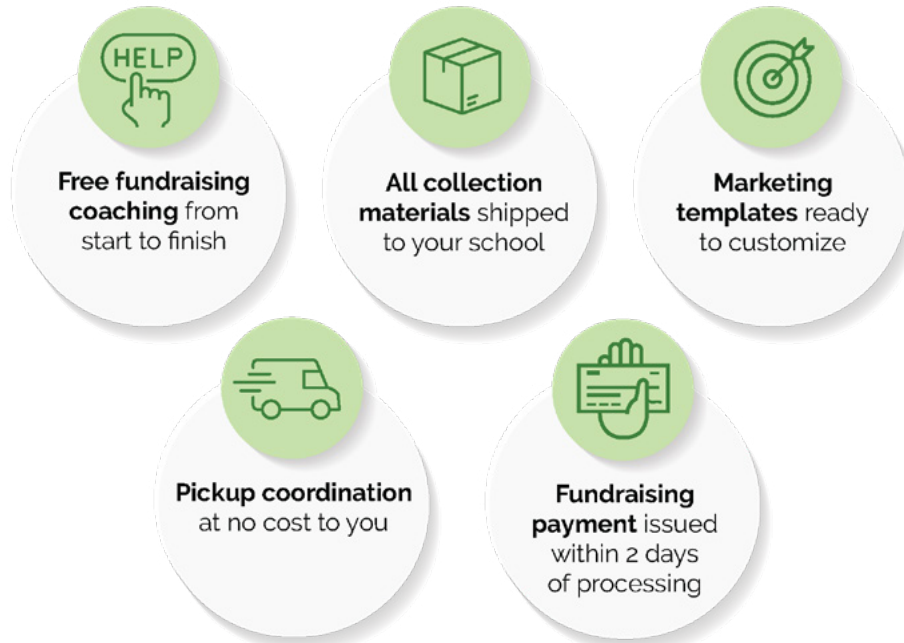
One Final Truth

The best fundraiser is the one that actually happens. Stop overthinking, start planning, and let's get those shoes collected!

Every pair of shoes tells a story. Your fundraiser creates thousands of new stories—stories of community generosity, global impact, and schools that chose to do things differently.


You've got everything you need. Your community is ready. The question is: are you?

What You'll Get for YOUR Shoe Drive Fundraiser:



Ready to Get Started? Contact Us!

 **Email:** hello@funds2orgs.com

 **Phone:** (407) 930-2979

 **Website:** funds2orgs.com

We're available: Monday-Friday, 8 AM - 5 PM EST