



2019 Direct Appeal FAQs

1. What is the Direct Appeal?
 - a. Direct Appeal is a fundraising drive organized by the PS145M PTA to help fund the most expensive and most urgent priorities for the school. We will have other, smaller events throughout the year.
2. When will the money raised be spent?
 - a. Given our plans to hire assistant teachers and engage outside vendors, we need to plan one year in advance. Money raised during the 2019-2020 school year will be spent during the 2020-2021 school year.
3. What are we raising money for?
 - a. We plan to hire teaching assistants for all K and 1st grade classes, provide coding classes and mobile computer labs for all classes in grades 2-5, and expand our engagement with Wellness in the Schools.
4. Why do we need teaching assistants in the classrooms?
 - a. Lowering the student/teacher ratio is one of the most powerful ways to improve student performance. An extra educator in a classroom can provide support to the children who are behind and at risk of becoming discouraged. An extra educator can also challenge the children who are ahead and at risk of becoming bored and disruptive. Multiple studies have shown that students who learn in smaller classes in the early grades tend to score higher on tests, receive better grades, and exhibit better attendance. In fact, research by the US Department of Education has shown that reducing class size is one of the very few interventions demonstrated to improve outcomes in randomized experiments – the “gold standard” of scientific research.
5. Why are we targeting assistants in the lower grades rather than the upper grades?
 - a. We would love to eventually offer assistants for all of our classrooms. We are starting with K and 1 because these are our largest classes, and where additional educators would consequently make the biggest difference.
6. Why do we need coding classes?
 - a. Familiarity with the basics of computer programming will be a requirement for most high-paying jobs of the future. Not all of our children will be software engineers, but they will be turning their ideas into reality with the help of technology across a wide variety of fields. It’s also very important to introduce coding at a young age, so that children perceive it as a fun, creative endeavor, and not as something intimidating.
7. Why do we need mobile computer labs?
 - a. Mobile computer labs will enable children to learn coding while staying in their classrooms instead of going to the computer lab. This will help integrate their computer lessons with other things they’re learning in the classroom.



8. What is Wellness in the Schools?

- a. Wellness in the Schools (WITS) is a grassroots, non-profit, community based organization founded in 2005 in order to improve the environment, nutrition, and fitness in NYC public schools. Trained WITS chefs work with our cafeteria staff to create nutritious meals from scratch, and also host fun and educational cooking classes for kids. Overall goals for the WITS Cook for Kids program are:

- To provide a salad bar daily that offers two lettuces, three additional vegetables, and one fresh composed salad.
- To provide salad dressings made from scratch.
- To provide at least one fresh fruit daily (not canned or in syrup).
- To ensure that vegetables served are fresh (frozen only when necessary and never canned).
- To ensure that at least 60% of the meals offered each week are made from unprocessed ingredients (at least 3 times/week). We eliminate all foods that list more than 5 ingredients.
- To offer only whole grain pasta, bread and rice.
- To ensure access to water daily at lunch.
- To eliminate sweetened milk.
- To offer grass-fed beef at least twice each semester.
- To support sustainable disposable recycling efforts
- To eliminate the service of meat products at least one day per week.

9. Don't we already work with WITS?

- a. We were able to begin working with WITS several years ago thanks to a corporate grant. Unfortunately, without additional funding, WITS is only able to offer us a scaled-back version of the program.

10. How important is my participation?

- a. Parental engagement is a crucial component of a child's success in school. We have ambitious goals for our school, and we can only succeed if we work together. Additionally, if we reach 100% participation in this fundraising drive, it will make our school eligible for additional grants and funding sources, enriching your child's education even more! Don't give more than you can afford, but please contribute what you can.

11. How do I make my contribution?

- a. On the PTA website at www.ps145pa.org. Click on the "Donate" tab to make your contribution using Paypal. Paypal allows you to pay via credit card, debit card, or bank transfer and either via a one-off or monthly recurring payment. In the "Add Note" section, you may put in "Direct Appeal".
- b. If you would like to pay by check, please address it to "Parent Association of PS145 M". In the comment field of the check please include "EIN 82-3358919".



- c. If you would like to contribute cash, please place it in an envelope, label it with your name and "Direct Appeal," and give it to the direct appeal liaisons Mariela Angulo, Naveed Hasan, or Ksusha McCormick.
 - d. If you would like to donate stock, please contact the direct appeal liaisons Mariela Angulo, Naveed Hasan, or Ksusha McCormick.
- 12. What is the deadline to contribute?
 - a. Since we intend to hire teaching assistants and engage vendors using the money we raise, we need to plan well in advance of the next school year. We would like to receive all commitments by December 15th, 2019. If you choose to donate via a recurring monthly payment, we would like to receive your final contribution for the year by May 30th, 2020.
- 13. Is my contribution tax-deductible?
 - a. Yes. We will provide you with a tax-deductible donation receipt.
- 14. Can I use my company matching program to make a gift?
 - a. Yes.
- 15. I have a question or concern that has not been addressed in these FAQs. With whom should I speak?
 - a. Please contact the direct appeal liaisons:
 - i. Naveed Hasan: naveed@cs.columbia.edu
 - ii. Mariela Angulo: mariean16@hotmail.com
 - iii. Ksusha McCormick: ksusha.mccormick@gmail.com