



Fundraising ~ Frequently Asked Questions

What is The Cougar Campaign?

The Cougar Campaign is the annual direct appeal campaign run by the Niwot Elementary School PTAC. This campaign was formerly known as Round Up.

This is THE largest single fundraiser of the 2014/2015 school year.

What is a direct appeal campaign?

This is your family's chance to give directly to the school by writing a check or donating online. Our community has selected this method of fundraising as the preferred method for several years in a row, because it is cost effective and requires minimal time and effort from our busy families.

There are many advantages to a direct appeal campaign. These include:

- 100% of the donation goes directly to the education initiatives budgeted for and funded by the PTAC (see 2014-15 PTAC Budget);
- We don't have to send kids door-to-door selling magazines or cookie dough;
- The donation is tax deductible. NES PTAC is a 501(c)(3). Our federal tax ID number is EIN 84-1519662;
- Donations are eligible for corporate matching, potentially doubling their impact;
- Allows the PTAC to have money in the bank at the beginning of the year to provide good cash flow for our expense commitments;
- Prove to SVVSD that NES PTAC is financially sound and responsible and able to meet our commitment to pay paraprofessional salaries and benefits throughout the school year.

I'd like to give to the campaign, but I'm not comfortable with the amount suggested. What should I do?

Any amount that your family can give directly to this cause is appreciated. All giving is confidential. We understand that not every family will be able to give the suggested donation amount. Please give what you can. If you can give more, please consider a scholarship amount for another family.

How do I give to The Cougar Campaign?

Giving is easy!

Write a check payable to NES PTAC. You can snail mail your check (Niwot Elementary, Attn: Cougar Campaign 8778 Morton Rd, Niwot, CO 80503), send it to school with your child, hand it to your child's teacher, or drop it in the Cougar Campaign box in the front office.

Donate online. We use PayPal, a well-known and reputable site for online giving. This secure site is available for anyone wishing to put their donation on a credit card, or use their personal PayPal account. There is a processing fee deducted from your donation when you make it online, **so please consider adding an additional 3% to your online donation to help cover our cost.**

Why is The Cougar Campaign at the beginning of the school year when I have so many other expenses for back-to-school?

The money raised from The Cougar Campaign begins funding classroom support and paraprofessionals immediately! We need to know at the beginning of the year if we are going to be able to fund our budgeted commitments so that we can plan for any additional fundraisers accordingly. Of course you are always welcome to give to NES PTAC.

Can grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends give to the The Cougar Campaign?

Yes! The campaign runs through the end of September, however donations are accepted and appreciated all year. NES parents are encouraged to mention the campaign to other family members and friends. All donors will receive an email thanking them for their donation and providing a receipt for tax purposes.

How does the PTAC decide what to spend money on?

First and foremost, these donations go directly into your child's classroom.

Our Principal, teachers and staff know all too well the needs of our children. They know what works to keep Niwot Elementary a school of excellence. The PTAC Board and the Principal discuss the needs every spring for the following year. The Executive Board prepares the PTAC and spending is approved at the April PTAC meeting *by the parent body*. This cycle repeats every year and the PTAC welcomes your participation.

Looking at the 2014–15 budget, you will see that approximately 50% of funds is spent on providing paraprofessionals to the classrooms. Niwot Elementary is a “school of differentiation” and our teachers believe that by having extra instructional support they can provide the necessary accommodations to improve the education in their classrooms. Additionally, having classroom paras allows for more small groups and one–on–one instruction, which leads to a measurable and immediate difference in your child's education.

How did the PTAC arrive at The Cougar Campaign suggested donation amount of \$225 per family?

This number is based on three factors: the 2014–15 PTAC budget, the anticipated enrollment at NES for the 2014–15 school year, and the history of participation. We understand that some families can give more; others cannot give quite as much. We encourage families to donate what they can to **IN**vest in their child's education!

How else does the PTAC raise money to meet its commitments?

As a Board, we strive to make fundraising as easy as possible for our parents and students. Our goal is to bring in additional revenue through Directory and Niwot Trot Sponsorships, Dining for Dollars events, Book Fairs, the Box Tops program, and through family participation in shopping programs such as using your reloadable Grocery Cards, shopping online, and enrolling your Target RedCard in Take Charge of Education. The more participation we have in each of these programs, the more we can earn for supporting our school and our kids! For additional information about all of these fundraising opportunities, please visit their respective pages on the PTAC website, at <http://niwotelementaryptac.weebly.com/fundraising.html>.

What is the PTAC Budget this year?

Based on our 2014/2015 budget, the PTAC needs to raise \$106,484 to support your child's education. The Cougar Campaign (formerly run under the name of Round-Up) is budgeted to bring in about 46% of that amount.

Some highlights of what the PTAC Budget covers are:

- Paraprofessional salaries to assist teachers in classroom instruction and small group interactions;
- Curriculum enhancements as identified by each grade level;
- Technology enhancement for classrooms;
- Support to specials programs: PE, Music, and Art;
- Library purchases;
- Science programming and Science Garden maintenance;
- Enrichment programs including field trips, guest speakers, and other programs to further curriculum specific learning.

For additional specifics, see the [2014/15 budget](#).

Niwot Elementary is a public school. Why are our taxes not enough? And what about the Mill Levy Overrides?

Believe it or not, school taxes in the state of Colorado are not high relative to other states. In addition, Colorado Public Education ranks 43rd in the nation in per pupil spending (adjusted for regional cost differences). Also, Colorado is 40th in median student-teacher ratio in primary level schools. Our PTAC is a 501(c)(3) organization established to raise funds for the needed programs that the District and State will not provide. Fund raising is a necessity. (source: <http://greateducation.org/colorado/stats.html>)

The "Public School Financial Transparency Act", HB 10-1036, directs local education providers to post financial information on-line, in a downloadable format, for free public access. To view specific financial, budget, and Mill Levy information for St. Vrain Valley School District, visit <http://www.svvsd.org/about/departments/financial-services>.

I still have a question. Who can I contact?

The PTAC Executive Board welcomes your questions and feedback. Please feel free to contact one or all of us. All discussions will be kept confidential. Our contact info can be found here:

<http://niwotelementaryptac.weebly.com/executive-board.html>.