

ORGANIZATION HISTORY

What is the Carroll Education Foundation?

Founded in 1996, the Carroll Education Foundation is an independent, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) corporation that provides financial resources to ensure excellence within the Carroll Independent School District.

As the primary fundraising arm for Carroll ISD, the foundation helps bridge the gap between state funding and what it costs to deliver on the District's promise of excellence in education.

In 2018, the foundation refined its vision and mission to focus on funding teachers, ensuring the District has the resources to support teacher and educator critical positions that inspire learning, enrich the student educational experience, foster academic excellence and elevate student success.

Is CEF involved in Carroll ISD decision making or determining District policies?

No, CEF is not involved in policy or decision making of Carroll ISD or the CISD School Board. CEF's mission is to fund teachers who are not fully funded by the State of Texas. These educators are vital to maintain the enrichment choices that provide excellence in education for our students.

Do your board members sign an NDA?

Each year, CEF board members agree to a set of board documents, including a confidentiality clause. It is a standard statement meant to protect sensitive data – donor lists, campaign strategy – and to allow for open discussions at board meetings.

FUNDRAISING

Why do we need the Carroll Education Foundation?

In 2019-20, Niche ranked Carroll ISD as the 2nd best school district in the State, and CISD ranked in the top 7% of school districts in the nation. However, the ever-increasing state tax dollar recapture program (known as "Robin Hood") has put substantial budgetary pressures on the District. Nearly 33 percent of our property tax revenues are directed to the state's general fund and other less-wealthy districts, leaving us with a significant funding gap to fill every year.

Unwilling to compromise the best-in-class education we've always provided, the foundation was created to ensure an exceptional education for all CISD students, now and for future generations. Specifically, the foundation is focused on funding teachers, which guarantees more personal attention, more advanced courses, and more electives for every student in CISD.

What is Robin Hood and why does it matter?

Currently, 33 percent of the annual budget is recaptured by the state of Texas to support the state's general fund and other less-wealthy districts. In the 2020-21 school year, this recapture will total approximately \$30 million. Since the 2001-02 school year, the total recapture has exceeded \$304 million! For more information about Robin Hood payments, please visit carrollbudget.com.

Where do those original budget dollars go?

CISD adopts a deficit budget - meaning CISD spends more than it brings in. CISD has a history of working out of that, but as our community expects excellence in programs and services, CISD is only able to deliver and meet these expectations if it has additional income helping to close that funding gap.

CISD has curricular positions that are required to be funded by the State of Texas. CISD has other locally decided positions (like nurses, librarians, athletics, AP classes, electives and the arts) that may not be possible without the support of the community and additional donations/funding. CEF plays a key role in helping CISD manage out of the deficit and maintain the excellence our community has come to expect.

How does CEF's fundraising focus differ from that of the PTO's?

We describe our focus areas as "staff" vs. "stuff." The foundation is focused on raising money for the District to fund teachers, educators, and other key staff. We complement the outstanding work done by the PTOs, which raise money for materials, equipment, and activities at each campus.

Why is my support important?

Stronger schools mean a stronger community. The quality of schools is a critical factor in neighborhood choice for homebuyers and business owners. The success of our schools directly impacts property tax values and translates into strong economic vitality of the community and quality of life for residents and businesses.

Why does CEF still need to raise money for teachers?

School funding will be facing even more challenging times in the future. The Texas school finance recapture system (Robin Hood) continues to put pressure on our District, with more than \$30 million sent from CISD to the State each year. This annual stress, coupled with the far-reaching effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, makes it more important than ever to help fund positions that we know are necessary to sustain the high-quality education that our children deserve.

Does CISD operate at a deficit?

That's best answered by the District. This site is a great place to learn all about how school finance is organized in our District: <https://www.carrollbudget.com/budget/budget-101/index.html>. It is a dedicated site about budgetary matters. There, you'll find a link to submit a question for consideration by Carroll ISD.

Detailed financial information is also available on the CISD website. You might start here: <https://www.southlakecarroll.edu/Page/185>.

Where does my money go?

CEF has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the District. CEF's MOU with the Carroll ISD states that the District will administer grants, gifts, and donations in accordance with the Foundation's requests and will provide an accounting to the Foundation evidencing the status of all such grants, gifts, and donations. Our donation to Carroll ISD goes into an account set up specifically for CEF. The funds in this account offset the salary payment from the Maintenance & Operations (M&O) expense account portion of the budget. 85 percent of the M&O budget is dedicated to District staff positions. The foundation is the only organization that provides support to the District to fund positions; PTOs and booster clubs provide material support to campuses, and the District's school bond program covers capital improvements to the campuses. A detailed accounting of the District's allocation of CEF funding can be requested by sending CISD an open records request. For more information on the district's budget, please [click here](#).

How much has CEF raised and distributed to CISD over the last five years?

The total distributed from our fund raising efforts is \$1,339,215 from 2015-2020. We've prepared a graphic to illustrate the past 10 years, separated into three time frames. Click [here](#) to see that data.

What was the issue (and its impact) around diversion of monies by an employee back in 2015?

We've answered that very question in a statement from our Board of Directors. Please click [here](#) to read the full explanation.

Is CEF fully transparent about its finances?

Yes. In fact, CEF was recently named to the Platinum level by GuideStar, the national database of charities in the USA. Learn more about that transparency, click [here](#). And you can see our financials [here](#).

We are also dedicated to transparency organizationally, as privacy considerations allow. By expanding our communication program this year – adding media relations for news announcements, bolstering our FAQs here on the website, posting our newsletters on a new [News & Info](#) page on our website as well as emailing to all in the District, among other efforts – we hope to engage more of our community and educate our donors, supporters, friends and neighbors about how CEF is helping make education in our District the best it can be. We are redoubling efforts to respond quickly and clearly to questions, too.

TEACHER FUND

How does the Teacher Fund work?

The Teacher Fund supports and highlights teachers, educators and functions with broad parental, student, and community appeal from across all 11 campuses. In particular, we focus on positions that are not required or fully funded by the State of Texas yet are critical to providing a superior education to

our students. We fund a teacher for every \$50,000 that we raise during the year. To learn more about the Teacher Fund, please click [here](#).

How are the CEF Funded Teachers selected?

The District collaborates with CEF on enrichment choices to ensure that educators who are selected are not required or fully funded by the State of Texas. This collaboration includes input from District and CEF leadership, and CISD principals.

Was the CEF Funded Teacher's job in jeopardy?

While the positions being funded by CEF are not currently in jeopardy nor would they have been eliminated if CEF funding did not happen, CISD does adopt an operating budget that includes a deficit. This means any and all income CISD can receive to help fund these positions and close the gap on the funding shortage, is helpful and prevents positions from being at risk. The CEF donation is critical to ensuring we can maintain these programs and retain excellent teachers.

Would they have eliminated her/his position?

Program and position cuts have been a reality for CISD in the past. Several times in the last 20+ years, Carroll ISD has been in a position to have to cut positions that are not required by the state. In the past this has included CISD's elementary and intermediate Spanish teachers, custodians/maintenance staff, paraprofessional office staff and others - CISD has had to cut positions and increase class sizes in the past, too. At one point CISD had such a deficit it had to reduce art/music at the elementary schools to half-time positions. Thankfully CISD has been able to reinstate those to full time positions. So, although these jobs are not currently in jeopardy, should the deficit grow and supplemental income not be available, the District may be in a position to reduce staffing.

Why are you funding nurses and counselors instead of teachers?

Did you know that 55% of Texas public schools do not have a full-time nurse? We are fortunate to have a nurse on each campus and an intervention counselor at each 7th-12th campus. Nurses and intervention counselors are vital to the health and emotional well-being of our children – not just this year, but every year. CEF is proud to support the crucial effort to keep our children and teachers physically healthy and emotionally safe.

Does this mean nurses were not going to be or would not be funded if it weren't for CEF?

CISD lived through a time in recent history when they lost Art, Music and Foreign Language. We are at a critical time, and there is limited or no funding for teacher, educator and staff positions and programs that are not fully funded by the State such as nurses and emotional counselors. For a full list of educators who are not fully funded by the State of Texas, please click [here](#).

Why does CEF have a large amount of assets reported? Does that increase your vulnerability?

CEF has an investment account, a reserve, that was created by the original board as a source of rainy day funds. In the last two years, CEF has been drawing down from that account to lean into the District and provide more value. Annually, CEF re-evaluates a responsible amount of funds to maintain CEF's ability to preserve donation levels should we be in an unfavorable environment.

CEF announces donations each year to CISD. Where are they on tax returns?

In 2018, CEF transformed its focus to The Teacher Fund and adjusted its tax reporting year to better align with the school year (The new fiscal year (FY) runs from July to June). CEF uses a cash basis accounting method and must report donations in the FY in which they are completed.

The tax return for FY 2018 only includes Jan – June 2018, due to realignment. Our donation during that school year occurred in the Fall (teacher grants) and appears on the FY 2017 return.

Under The Teacher Fund, CEF's donations to CISD occurred in

- July 2019 - \$415,000 (reported in FY 2020)
- June 2020 - \$550,000 (reported in FY 2020)

Scholarship awards from CEF are paid directly to colleges during the summer, varying according to each college's process, so those awards may appear in different fiscal years even though they were paid during the same summer.

Please click [here](#) to view our last 10 years.