



Cherry Creek Schools Parents' Council

Restaurant Nights/Spirit Night/Dining for Dollars

Planning

- Check PTO, School, District, sporting events (Broncos games) and holiday calendars for any conflicts
 - Schedule the Restaurant Nights for the year during the summer so the schedule is set at the beginning of the school year which helps with communication to your community
- Hold a spirit night once a month OR once every other month
- Set up a Google account with email and drive to store all the information (flyers, emails, templates, contacts, etc.) to pass along onto the next chair (ex. PCdiningfordollars@gmail.com)

Marketing

- Market to *EVERYONE!* It takes people 3-7 times to see something before they will act, so remind them!
 - PTO Facebook page
 - Neighborhood Facebook Groups
 - Nextdoor (open it up to your whole community)
 - PTO newsletters
 - PTO Website
 - Signs at pick up and pick up lane the day of event
 - Marquee
 - Brightly colored flyers home in backpacks. Reminder: don't include %!
 - Mascots from restaurant/school
 - Labels on kids' clothes or bracelets with date/event/time
 - Hand out flyers in pick up lanes (upper grades)

- Make a template flyer to update (some restaurants require usage of their flyer)
- Use Print Services to create and print flyers/posters
- Use a signature color for your flyers so everyone knows it is a Restaurant Night flyer
- Events can be promoted as a community event and a chance for families to get together
- Ask teachers to get involved. Some restaurants encourage you to have teachers volunteer to help at the cash register or serve to increase turnout
- Have BOD and Chairs email people in the community
- Ask parents in each grade to reach out to families in their grade
- Reach out to new families in all the grades as well as incoming Kindergarteners

IRS Rules

- Advertising- language containing price information, dollar savings, dollar value, endorsements, and inducements to purchase or use products and services. The IRS has rules around advertising which can constitute Unrelated Business Taxable Income (UBTI). If you collect more than \$1,000 of unrelated business income in a calendar year, a separate return (990-T) must be filed with the IRS. So, rather than “advertising” your school restaurant night with flyers that detail the \$ value or % back that your school will earn, it is best to promote with general language such as “Come and support our school at XXXX Restaurant”

Money Raised

- The higher % the more money that comes back to your PTO
- Look for restaurants that give 30-50% back and/or serve alcohol to increase your dollars raised
- Higher dollar restaurants (so more \$ back to your school) might be a good option to try but it depends on the schools’ demographics
- Many locally owned or franchised restaurants decide their % back to schools. Ask if they would consider giving back more and remind them how many patrons and business they get from your school community
- Combine with other events
 - Before/after a school social/community event
 - Two neighboring restaurants to appeal to more families
 - Shopping fundraising event near the restaurant
- Ask for the whole day, not just a meal, to allow more time for families to participate

NOTE: If the goal is a community event (not fundraising) then % may not be as important

Restaurant Selection

- Pick locations that are convenient, appealing, and well known in your community
- Don't fight what the people want, it's okay to repeat restaurants in the same school year, just space them out
- Established restaurants are more reliable and can handle capacity better
 - Be aware that smaller/locally owned businesses could go out of business and therefore not cut a check.
- Consider options where families can pre-order and pick up food at school at pickup to make it convenient to participate like a Take & Bake pizza
 - Make pre-ordering and payment easy as possible for families
 - Make sure to be thoughtful of logistics with restaurant and parents in after school care to be able to pick up their orders
- Consider other shopping events where % goes back to the PTO outside of restaurants like jewelry, spa, clothing, carwashes, etc.

Execution

- Call the Manager the week and the day of the event to confirm
- Remind Managers to have their employees ask customers if they are with XYZ school spirit night
 - There is a lot of turnover in restaurants so this step can really help to make sure all the schools customers are recorded and money gets back to your PTO
- Many restaurants record on the receipt that it is for a Spirit/Restaurant Night (so good check for Parents)
- Ask if you can place a poster /sign in the restaurant or flyers to remind families to say they are with XYZ school