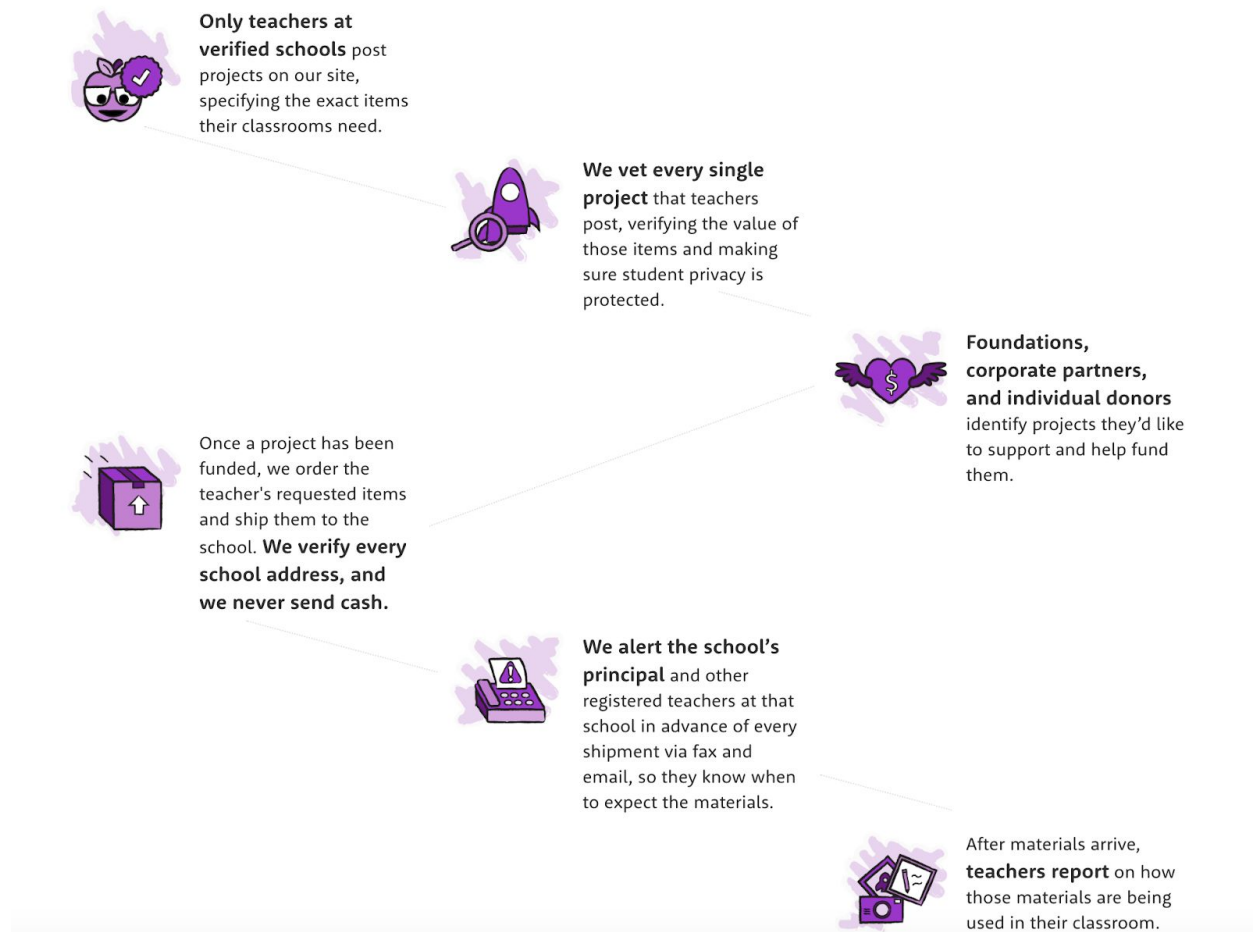


DonorsChoose.org Challenge

Business Context

How it works



Project data

- **Project submission and funding is very seasonal.** We typically have a big spike during the back-to-school-season (August - September), and another big spike around the holidays (end of November - January 1).
- **#BestSchoolDay.** For the past three years, we've had a "best school day" event every March, which has resulted in many funded projects, followed by high project submission from teachers. This past year, (March 2018), we partnered with Ripple to fully fund every single project on the site. As you can imagine this skews many of

our metrics, like the percentage of projects that get fully funded, project submission numbers, etc.

- **Teachers respond to funding opportunities.** We never tell teachers what they should request for their classrooms, but many of our corporate and foundation partners offer up funding to teachers who post projects for certain subject areas, or types of resources. For example, a partner might want to fund math projects in Texas, or 3D printer requests nationally. Teachers often take advantage of these funding opportunities when they come up, so some trends in resources may be impacted by these incentives.
- **Subject categories and grade levels are self-reported by the teacher.** We have volunteers screen every single project on DonorsChoose.org to make sure it is eligible and that the resources being requested match up to the project essay. We do not screen subject areas or grade levels, leaving it up to the teacher to self-report those pieces.

Resource data

- **Teachers “shop” through DonorsChoose.org.** When a teacher is submitting a project on DonorsChoose.org, they essentially go online shopping through our site and put the exact resources they need from Amazon or Best Buy or Lakeshore Learning directly into their cart on our site. We do this because once a project is fully funded, we purchase those exact items from the vendor and ship it directly to the school. All project resources are vetted by volunteers to make sure they match with the project essay the teacher has written.
- **Teachers mainly request physical supplies through our vendors, but we don’t restrict the types or resources or experiences teachers can get for their students.** While the majority of teachers “shop” online through our site, some teachers choose to get their resources through an outside, specialty vendor, (for example, a coach who wants to order custom sports jerseys for their team). We label these projects “special requests,” and rely on the teacher to provide the name of the resource, (which is then vetted by volunteers). Teachers can also request class trip or class visitor experiences for their students. Again, we rely on the teacher to provide us with a clear name for these “resources” and they are vetted by volunteers.

Donation data

- **We’ve only provided first-time donor donation data.** We are very curious to know more about the new donors who have come in to support classroom projects over the past couple of years, so we have only included data about a first-time donors very first cart.

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- **A donor can place more than one project donation at one time.** Donors “cart” project donations, as you would cart an item while online shopping. It’s possible for one donor to show up multiple times in the dataset for this reason, but all of the donations linked to that donor are part of their first-ever donation on our site. The vast majority of donors cart only one project donation.
 - **Donation messages.** Donors are asked to leave a message with their donation, telling the classroom they supported why they chose to give. This is optional.
 - **We’ve excluded teachers and partners from the data.** Some of our teachers also like to support classrooms through DonorsChoose.org, so to keep things clean we’ve excluded them from the dataset. We also dole out partner funding through donor accounts, so we’ve excluded those as well.
 - **Some donors know the teachers they’re supporting.** Our teachers are amazing at spreading the word to their social networks about their projects. We do our best to identify which donations we think came from someone a teacher knows personally, versus a donor who came across the teachers project on the site organically, as these groups have very different motivations for giving.