

1889 INSTITUTE

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OKCPS Teachers Begging for Basics

1889 Institute identifies \$34,000 in basic supplies teacher have had to beg for.

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (October 9, 2019) – The 1889 Institute has published a study that identifies \$34,000 in charitable solicitations by Oklahoma City Public Schools (OKCPS) teachers in their efforts to obtain basic necessities for classrooms that the district should be automatically providing. Entitled “Why Are OKCPS Teachers Begging the Public for Basics?” the paper highlights 64 separate solicitations from teachers across the district for basics, including frogs to dissect, whiteboard supplies, sets of dictionaries, chairs to fit tables for small children, and basic physical education supplies. All of the solicitations are from the DonorsChoose.org website and were identified on August 22, 2019.

“We did not look at the entire state’s Donors Choose solicitations on that date, but the Piedmont district, which spends about 70 percent of what OKCPS does, had no teacher solicitations for basic necessities on that date,” said 1889 Institute Director Byron Schlomach. Schlomach authored the report with research assistance from fellow 1889 Institute analysts Mike Davis and Ben Lepak. Schlomach pointed out that the necessities identified are only a small proportion of all the Donors Choose solicitations since his study only sought to identify true classroom necessities.

The report points out that OKCPS is not a low-spending district in the state, but is relatively well-funded. Therefore, the study argues, the fact that OKCPS teachers are effectively begging for necessities, like bulbs for district-provided projectors and printers due to poorly-maintained school copiers, is strong evidence that priorities are poorly decided.

Schlomach said he got the idea for the study from his wife having to do a Donors Choose solicitation for copy paper last year, since her campus was not being provided with it. “I wondered if other teachers were being denied such basic supplies. Clearly, they are,” said Schlomach. “Now, I only wonder what I don’t know. How much have teachers spent on basics the district should be readily providing, given that I know the district can afford them? How many teachers around the state are dealing with the same neglect from their district administrations?” he asked.

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About the 1889 Institute

The 1889 Institute is an Oklahoma think tank committed to independent, principled state policy fostering limited and responsible government, free enterprise and a robust civil society. The publication, “Why Are OKCPS Teachers Begging the Public for Basics?” and other reports on public education finance can be found on the nonprofit’s website at <https://1889institute.org/education-finance-1>.