

Gift Giving, Awards, and Incentives

A gift is an item given to an individual or a group of individuals that has not been earned and is given for the personal use of the individual(s).

An award or incentive is an item given to a student or an employee or a group of individuals in acknowledgment of attaining a specified level of achievement or in remuneration for outstanding services. This item can be held by the work site or become the possession of the individual(s). The award must be personal in nature, of nominal value, and of intrinsic sentimental value to the recipient.

The district must control and account for the use of its funds within the legal parameters governing public funds. This results in certain restriction on the use of public funds for gifts or awards.

Procedures

Gifts

Article VIII, Section 7, of the Washington State Constitution prohibits giving gifts of public funds: “No county, city, town or other municipal corporation shall hereafter given any money, or property, or loan its money, or credit to or in aid of any individual...”

Some examples of payments that have been determined to be gifts and thus are not allowed are listed below.

- Volunteer parent workers brought to an appreciation lunch. This is either a payment for their services, in which case they cease to be volunteers and have received a salary, or it is a gift. The exception to this is providing light lunches or refreshments during or near the time the volunteer services are provided.
- Fees paid for teachers who wish to attend an optional professional workshop. If a workshop is required, the district could pay the fee from the General Fund. If ASB funds are used to pay for staff, then students must also be in attendance.
- Flowers purchased for someone in the hospital.
- Food purchased for a needy family.
- Membership fees paid to a professional association for non-students, unless otherwise specified in a negotiated agreement.

Awards

Work sites are encouraged to have written site incentive program guidelines. These guidelines should accompany requests for payment of awards. An example would be “Student of the Month.”

General Fund awards and incentives must be of nominal value, which is \$25 or less per item. For detailed information on ASB awards and incentives, see the sections on Gifts and Awards and on Fund Raising in the ASB Procedures manual.

It is legal to give awards/incentives in recognition of achievement under certain conditions. The distinction between gifts and awards/incentives will be made based on the following:

- No item can be given to an individual unless the item has no functional use. For example, a letterman's jacket or a pen and pencil set would be disallowed since they are gifts. An inexpensive pin or athletic sew-on letter could be given and are not considered gifts.
- District moneys can be used for the purchase of perpetual trophies or plaques to be engraved with the names of employees or students as long as the trophy/plaques remain on the district premises.

Legal Reference: Washington State Constitution, Article VIII, Section 7

Former Procedure: 7003-P3

Date: 09.01.03

Revised: 05.13.13