

## **Minnesota PTA Emergency Financial Guidelines** **GIFT CARD PURCHASE AND DISTRIBUTION**

*Approved May 4, 2020 :: Expires June 30, 2020*

COVID-19 has presented Minnesota PTA with many challenges, especially as guidance from federal and state authorities changes rapidly. We are attempting to stay on top of information as quickly as possible and communicate clearly and efficiently to the officers of Minnesota PTA units to the best of our ability.

In response to many questions and concerns regarding local PTA financial issues, the Minnesota PTA approved new Emergency Financial Guidelines today. The broader document will be published soon, but we wanted to pull out the section on “*Purchase and Distribution of Gift Cards*” since it relates specifically to teacher/staff appreciation which is likely happening now or in the near future.

While Minnesota PTA has always advised that gift cards were not allowed, we are revising that for extremely limited circumstances between now and the end of the fiscal year.

- If your PTA’s budget has a line item specific to teacher/staff appreciation, and the PTA cannot use the money as intended (in-person meal, classroom gifts, etc), the PTA may substitute gift cards instead, with the following restrictions:
  - Individual gift cards may not exceed \$25 each.
  - Gift cards must be for specific retail or restaurants - NOT debit or prepaid cash cards such as Visa or Mastercard. Amazon and other online-only retailers are okay.
  - Gift cards may not be purchased from alcohol, tobacco, gambling, or other vendors/activities that have age restrictions.
  - PTAs must track where cards were purchased and maintain a list of individuals receiving gift cards.
  - Gift cards must be distributed equally (ie. all teachers/staff must receive a gift card, and all must have the same denomination and area of use).
  - Gift cards may only be given to teachers/staff - no parents, community members, etc.

We understand that the timing of teacher appreciation activities might be different for each of our local units, but use of gift cards to recognize teachers/staff is only allowable from May 4 through June 30, 2020. After this time, we will either 1) default back to our original stance of no gift cards allowed, 2) expand qualifying emergency use, or 3) expand qualifying use not related to emergency. The Minnesota PTA Board of Directors needs some time to determine this course of action, but will have it in place no later than July 1, 2020.

We encourage PTAs to find unique ways to celebrate teachers and staff during this time. If your PTA recognizes Teacher Appreciation Week, there are resources from National PTA of ways to celebrate that do not require funds and/or in-person communication:

<https://www.pta.org/home/events/PTA-Teacher-Appreciation-Week>

Thank you for your continued service to your school teachers, staff, students, and families, especially during this challenging time.