

eBook FUNDRAISING

A young girl with brown hair and bangs, wearing a light blue and white plaid dress, is smiling and holding a black tablet. The tablet displays text about fundraising with eBooks.

Planning successful
fundraising with
eBooks created *by*
and *for* your school
or organization.

BY E. A. Provost

eBook Fundraising

Introduction

Schools, Parent/Teacher Associations, Scout Troops, Church Groups, Sports Teams, etc... They all need to do fundraising. While this book will focus on planning a school fundraiser, the contents should be adaptable to any organization.



Decisions

Why eBooks?

The most significant question I ask when considering a new project is: Can we plan a fundraiser that raises money, without requiring a substantial investment, that also builds our community in some way? Bake sales and book fairs are popular choices but they tend to more about raising money and less about building community. eBooks, on the other hand provide an elegant way to achieve both goals.

It was winning a poetry contest, and seeing my poem in a school anthology with the rest of my classmates', that ignited my passion for writing. Imagine the impact on a child of seeing their name in print, hearing how many of "their books" have sold. Twenty years ago, that project was only possible because of a grant my school district received in the tens of thousands of dollars. Today, a school can self-publish an eBook anthology through BookBaby and manage all your sales digitally for just \$199.

Why use BookBaby? Aren't there other free self publishing sites for eBooks?

For a flat fee, BookBaby handles all the technical aspects of taking your text document, formatting it to the specifications required for all the major and minor eBook outlets including Amazon and the iBookstore, setting up distribution to these outlets, creating an affordable print option with a minimum order of just 25 books

for customers who want a hard paper copy, collecting royalties and statistics from all outlets, and producing unified reports of book sales. Then, they return 100% of the royalties from all these outlets to your organization. (It takes 45-60 days to receive your first royalties.) Go ahead and check out what other companies provide. At this time, for this sort of project, I believe BookBaby is the best resource. That's why I approached them about making this book available to other parent volunteers like myself.

This simplifies your job, as the fundraiser planning committee, to creating or collecting content and promoting the final product. All sales are handled through the various online retailers and the product, being digital, is delivered instantly. Exactly as your customers prefer it.

Is this kind of fundraiser a good fit for our school?

An e-published student anthology won't be a good fit for every school. Collecting and assembling content for a book that only a small percentage of your community will see, is not a good use of your school and volunteer resources. Before you begin this project, you need to ask a few questions to determine if it's right for you.

Ask the Principal and Parent Association Leaders:

- What percentage of our school community has access to computers at home?
- Does our school and/or parent association have a regular email list?
- Do parents see and respond to emails sent out through this list?
- Do we have a social media presence? Facebook? Twitter?

- Who is responsible for disseminating information through these channels?
- Are we seeing active participation from our community in social media?
- Does our school have a website that is kept updated at least monthly?
- Who is responsible for updating it and how should I contact them?
- Do we have any running themes this year for our events/yearbook/etc.?
- Are there any school or district policies I should be aware of that may limit or prevent us from making an eBook anthology of student work available to the general public?

Ask each Teacher:

- Would you be interested in having your class participate in creating a school anthology?
- Do you have any class writing projects already planned that might be a good fit for an anthology?
- What sort of themes might fit well with what you're teaching this year?
- Do your students routinely submit their assignments typed?
- Do you have someone (parent, aide, student) who can type the poems/stories/essays your class produces or would you need me to find a volunteer to do it?
- Can you help your students select and edit their submissions to the anthology? (This is too much work to place on one volunteer for the entire school.)

Ask Parents:

- Do you ever read eBooks?
- Where do you purchase eBooks?
- Would you be interested in buying an eBook anthology that includes your child's writing?
- Do you think your relatives and friends would buy it?
- What would you expect it to cost/be willing to pay?
- Would you be interested if print copies were also available?
- Would you be interested in helping your child's teacher assemble/edit/type submissions for their class?

- Would you be interested in being on the committee that will bring this anthology together and promote it?

Ask Yourself and your Team:

- Do we have the creative resources to assemble interesting/marketable content?
- Who are we planning to sell to?
- Is that group big enough to justify the time, effort, and expense that will go into this project?
- Do we have the social media network in place to get the word out that we have an eBook for sale?

While it is tempting in this digital age to send out email or photocopied questionnaires, or even to set up an online survey, talking to people in person is the only way I have found to generate a genuine response. This is also the first step in your marketing campaign. The more people you talk to about your project, the more people will start talking about it to each other, the more anticipation will be generated, the more sales you will have when the book is released. In an age where everything else is impersonal, a real conversation stands out. If you're in the PTA deep enough to be planning this project, the odds

are good you're already spending a lot of time on campus. Use every opportunity to talk it up!

If you're assembling this anthology as a homeschool collaboration, you still need to consider all of the above questions and talk it up in person whenever and wherever your group gets together. Collect emails as you go along for the purpose of managing submissions, orders, and promotion. Treat each family as a class where Mom or Dad is the teacher. Figure out how many submissions and how many sales you will need to be profitable.

Do the math:

If my school has 330 students and at least half regularly connect to the school via email, I figure I can sell at least 100 eBooks at \$4.99, at that price point Amazon will pay royalties of 70% and other eBook retailers will pay at least 50% so, I can expect to make at least \$250

500 eBooks
 @ \$9.99 each
 x 70% = \$3,500
 - \$199 BookBaby
 = \$3,300 profit

which will pay the expenses on this project plus a little. This should be a conservative estimate based on the responses you received to the above questions.

Because it's a completely new type of project, when I do this math I'm less concerned with how much money I could potentially bring in than I am with making sure the project won't be a loss. This brings us back to what I said in the beginning. Because I choose projects that are also community builders, if they don't raise a lot of funds, I've still done something of value. If they do raise a lot of funds, even better. And the potential for raising a lot of funds is here.

Realistically, if my school has 500 students and at least half regularly connect to the school via email, I can probably sell 2 eBooks per connected student to parents, family and friends at \$9.99 – the standard price for most eBooks today. The majority of sales will typically be on Amazon with royalties of 70%. BookBaby takes 0%

That adds up to a profit of about \$3,300. That's a pretty impressive sum with BookBaby doing the bulk of the technical work. Parents and grandparents might be willing to pay a little more than the customarily low eBook prices because it supports the school and their kids' work is in it. Your school may be larger or smaller in size. You may have a different percentage of parents using technology. You may choose to do some pre-selling of print copies (at a necessarily higher price) to reach the rest of your school community.

Should we make print copies available?

If your school has a significant number of families without access to computers, or eReaders, you may consider pre-selling print copies of your book. You can add this to your eBook order through BookBaby and there is often a discount if you do both together. However, your print copy will need to be priced significantly higher than the eBook to make money. The minimum order is 25 but the price per book drops significantly when you order 100. Check the cost before setting prices and make sure it's reasonable for your potential customers. If you can sell the book for between \$10-\$15 it will probably do okay. If you pre-sell 85, order 100. The price break is worth it and you can probably sell the extras pretty easily once parents see them finished. If you're going this route, make sure you order at least one extra copy to place in the school library.

You could also find and use a Print On Demand service where individuals order books online one at a time, and they are produced one at a time, but the cost is even higher and the profit margin lower. If you want to eliminate all risk this is the way to go, but you will also reduce sales.

IF...

In every project you undertake, there will be challenges. In any project involving schools and parents, there will be even more challenges. When you downloaded this book you probably already had visions of the lovely eBook your school was going to produce and all the lovely money it would bring in to fund special projects. I'm going to be the wicked step-mother to your Cinderella dreams and say, "IF!"

IF you have the support of your school Principal and Parent/Teacher Organization leaders, IF you have the enthusiastic agreement of teachers to participate, IF you've received a largely positive response from parents, IF you have a committee of at least two other parents to help you assemble and promote the overall project, and IF your school is tech savvy enough to have a majority of the population interested in buying eBooks, then, you may begin your eBook fundraiser project.

If you're beginning this process near the end of the school year, do ask all these questions and get the ball rolling, but consider planning the actual project for next year. It takes time to create content and market it. You will create a better product and generate more sales if you take the time needed. You will also be less stressed and have more fun. All of which will make it more likely that an ePublished school anthology will become a profitable annual project other parents will be excited to take on when your kids grow up and move on to other schools.

Make sure you have a committee of three

This is a moderately big project with about a two month lead time. If you get sick or injured, or have to move suddenly (it happens) someone already involved should be ready to step in and keep it going. If all goes well, you can split the workload at least three ways.

The Promoter/Organizer will probably be you. You're the kind of person that downloads this book, reads it cover to cover, and gets the ball rolling. So, this is likely your strength. That means you are the point person for

questions, keeping the enthusiasm up, managing all the communication, distributing and collecting release forms, etc.

The Editor will assemble the complete manuscript from teacher submissions and make the final changes after it comes back from the proofreaders. They might also be the one who connects with BookBaby on issues regarding the product, your book. They should become familiar with the online guides for formatting. (See Creation.)

The Sales Manager will create promotional flyers, get the word out through all channels, manage pre-orders and delivery of print copies if you decide to make them available, and look for more ways to promote, promote, promote. (See Promotion.)

The work can be divided in other ways, but when building a committee I try to look for people with strengths in the areas needed, and this is a good breakdown by strengths. I want you to have a great experience with this fundraiser and make it an annual project. Trying to do too much by yourself is a recipe for failure. Principals know this and will often require you have a committee before beginning a project on this scale.



What kind of book should we create?

There are many options for anthologies. Take your committee to coffee at the local bookstore and browse. Consider some of these options:

Poetry - The whole school could write poetry on a single theme, or each class could choose a theme. The only type of poetry that does not work well in eBook format is the type that must be laid out in a specific shape. Text must be fluid to accommodate all the different sizes of ereaders. Line returns will remain as set by the writer, but a line that is too long may end up split. Left alignment with no spaces at the beginning of lines will insure that each poem looks the same on every ereader as it did in your original manuscript.

Short Stories - Creative writing is sometimes the most fun, but often requires the most editing. Plan to set limitations on word count if you don't want a long tiresome editing project.

Collaborative Stories - One person starts the story and each person in the class continues it for a predetermined number of words. Each class can write its own story. This might be a good option for k-1 classes with the teacher doing the writing as the kids dictate.

True Stories - A collection of childhood experiences written by children. You might be amazed by what some of the kids in your school have experienced.

How To/Craft Projects/Recipes - BookBaby includes the insertion of ten images in its Standard package and fifty in its Premium package. If you have a good photographer available to you this can be a fun type of book to produce.

Combination - If you have a strong theme, you might consider a combination of writing types. On your bookstore field trip you will find this kind of book in the holiday section. A combination of true and fictional stories, poems, projects, and recipes all about Winter for instance.

How do I choose a theme?

This is a huge decision that will affect student participation and eventual marketing. A strong theme will help create a unified project and the result will be far more marketable. It helps if your theme is especially meaningful to your community. What is unique about you? You've been out talking to everyone about their ideas. If that hasn't got your creative juices flowing consider the following: Many schools have an annual theme that runs through many projects. If that's the case in your school, try to connect your project with that theme.

Timing can affect your choice of theme. When will you be selling your eBook? A book sold in October could be a collection of Ghost Stories, November could have a theme of Gratitude. One sold in April might have a theme of Spring, Rebirth, or The Best of 20XX. For younger grades an imaginary biography of themselves at 100 years of age written as part of the 100th day of school celebrations.

Kids know what they like. Consult the Student Council, Yearbook Staff, or School Newspaper Club for ideas. The more you involve students in the planning, the more enthusiasm they will put into producing content.

Teachers plan their entire year in advance. Find out what they're already doing and see if something can be used for your book. If they don't have to create an extra assignment they'll be more supportive of your project. They can use your publication as motivation for their students to do their best on an already important assignment. This may affect the timing of your publication as it will necessarily follow the teachers' plans.

Keep the main theme broad and let each class choose a specific aspect of that theme to explore. For instance, a holiday themed book where each class chooses a different holiday, if you have twelve classes participating give each a different month to write poems about, make science or nature your theme and let each class choose a specific aspect. Have each class choose an different work of art to inspire their writing.

Consider crazy ideas, but get feedback from kids and teachers first. Each student could write a letter to their hero, or to their future self. Have each class create a character and each student in that class write one of "The Many Adventures of Mr. X." Perhaps a collection of

imaginary classified ads or an advice book for parents. An advice book created by a large school could have a different subject for each class.

Try out your ideas on lots of people and see which ones generate excitement. Keep asking parents, "Would you be interested in buying this book?" and teachers, "Is this something you'd like to create with your class?" Choose the idea that generates the most excitement. Give extra weight in this decision to ideas that excite your team and teachers. You're the ones who will be putting in the most work so your enthusiasm is essential.

Caution:

Many holidays have religious origins and you may face objections if you're working with a public school. The general rule is that schools may not create assignments or projects that are religious in nature, but students are allowed to express their religious beliefs within the context of their assignments. In other words, you can't make a Christmas themed book, but you could make a Winter Holiday book and include work submitted by students that includes religious content or ideas, like a description



of going to Synagogue for Hanukkah or how a family gathers around a Christmas tree. You might not be able to make a Halloween book, but you could make a book of Scary Stories.

You also cannot selectively exclude content that you disapprove of unless it is vulgar or violent and would already be inappropriate in a school context. The Principal and teachers will be aware of these limitations. That is one of the primary reasons to have student content be submitted through them rather than directly to your committee. If student work is submitted directly to your committee for approval then you have just added your names to the list of people who will be liable should anyone sue the school over your book, and you're not covered by the school's liability insurance.

What's the plan?

You've got approval and support, done your market research, and chosen your type of project and theme. Hopefully, during the process of choosing a theme you've been thinking about when you want to make your book available. Look at all the information you've gathered, especially from teachers, and choose a release date. This is the date you want to make your book available to purchase.

If your book is connected to a season or holiday, you want to make it available at least three weeks before that holiday. If there is an ideal time frame in the school calendar where it won't be in competition with other fundraising, choose that time. Build your production schedule backwards from this date. If it can't take place until after a specific writing project on the teachers' schedules, consider this the starting point in your schedule and build it forward.

Make sure you know the contact people for every line of school to parent communication AND the submission deadlines for announcements to be made through each channel. The deadlines will be earlier for printed flyers and newsletters than for emails and social media. When you've gathered all that information you have what you need to create your calendar. In the end, the creation and distribution process will all take place rather quickly...IF you've planned ahead well.

These are the steps you will need to take with timing recommendations:

Submit your project to teachers.

This should not be a surprise to them as you've been talking about it for a while now. Give them about one week notice before the Call for Submissions.

In your letter be sure to include an appreciation for their participation as a subtle reminder that they already agreed to it, specific instructions, specific dates, specific contact information, and an answer to the inevitable question, "What are you going to do for kids who can't afford a copy of the book?"

Include an adequate stack of copyright release forms with each letter and deliver it to each classroom personally if you can. Teachers often miss things that are left in their box in the School Office.

Your school secretary is a priceless resource to you. Be nice to him or her, make sure they are informed of everything you are doing so they can answer parent and teacher questions, and leave a stack of extra release forms in the office for parents who lose them.

Official call for submissions.

This is when teachers give their students the assignment and you announce it to parents through all school to parent communication channels. If your school sends home a printed newsletter once a month, that will be the date of this announcement. Plan for 2-3 weeks between the time the assignment is given and the time final drafts are ready. More than that can make students lazy about their submissions. If you plan on having a cover art creating contest, make that announcement now too. While printed newsletters may only go out monthly, emails go out more often. Take advantage of this by asking the person who creates them at your school to include reminders in each email until the deadline.

Be sure to include exact dates and prices, your theme, type of book, and title. Tell people what you're raising funds for. Create an incentive for the quick return of submissions based on what usually works well at your school. Honor all submissions to your cover contest in some way.



Collect signed copyright release forms and pre-orders.

The teachers should send home, for approval, the final draft of each student's work attached to a copyright release form you have provided (see appendix). According to the United States Copyright Office (www.copyright.gov/), all written work is copyrighted the minute it is put down in fixed form. Even the work of five year olds. You may only publish work for which you have received signed permission. Make the return deadline for the form clear. Include information at the bottom of the form about your book, how it will be available, and how much it will cost. If you plan to pre-sell hard copies, have an order form at the bottom and collect payment with the orders. These should go home on a Monday and be expected back by Friday with daily teacher reminders in between. If the work was a collaborative piece written down by the teacher, you only need the teacher to sign a copyright release form.

Assemble the book.

This means collecting all the signed release forms from the teachers and the digital files of their student content via disc, flash drive, or email. Expect to do a lot of formatting fixes as you paste each class' content into your final manuscript. Verify that you have a signed release form for each submission. This is really a one person job, so another committee member could spend

the time chasing down the stragglers who didn't get permission forms in. A simple phone call (preferred) or email, to verify that they didn't want their child's work to appear in the school anthology, will get the ones who did to move quickly getting their form turned in. This would take me about a week. Be realistic about your own ability to get this part done.

To ensure that the original formatting of your eBook is preserved for the conversion process, BookBaby provides these guidelines (<http://www.bookbaby.com/ebook-conversion-tips>)

- Proofread your file! Spelling and grammar are up to you. Print a copy for your proofreaders. Things will jump out in a printed copy that you didn't notice in the digital file.
- Use format paragraph or the alignment buttons in the toolbar to format paragraphs.
- Put any publisher or copyright info in the first two pages. Remember to include a title page. (<http://www.theBookdesigner.com/2010/02/self-publishing-basics-the-title-page/>)
- Use a standard font like Times New Roman or Courier New.
- Use 12pt font size for body text and 14-18pt for chapter titles.
- Don't use tables, inserts, or sidebars.
- Only refer to page numbers in your formatted Table of Contents. Do not put numbers or any headers or footers on your pages. BookBaby will create an interactive table of contents as part of their Standard distribution package.
- All images including cover must be in .png, .jpg, or .tif format, 72-300 dpi, and in RGB color mode. If you are resizing images, do so outside of the document, then reinsert them. Images should also look good in black and white as not all ereaders have color. Ten are included in a Standard package but you may add more for \$2 each. Plan ahead if and how you will use them.
- Don't wrap text around images, set "in-line" with text.
- Choose a font like Times New Roman so special symbols convert properly.

Complete your cover design.

This can be done by another committee member or volunteer while the Editor is assembling the final manuscript. If you've had the time and interest to manage a student cover contest, select an image from student

submissions. You may not want to do this for your first book if your committee already feels a little overwhelmed. The odds are good that you have a parent artist or photographer in your school that would be willing to provide an image, or design the cover entirely. BookBaby has submission guidelines for cover image files (<http://www.bookbaby.com/help/faq#images>). They also provide cover creation services if you want to put the money out for them, and most authors should. Should you? Consider...

There are many limiting factors when designing e-book covers. You have little control over how the cover displays. Various devices will display it in black and white, grayscale, color, high resolution, low resolution, thumbnail size or full size. It should look good and be clear in all the many possible variations. For this reason most experts recommend hiring a professional. If you have a professional among your parents, by all means, ask them to donate their services.

But you're creating for a targeted market that will find and buy your book regardless of what the cover looks like. The added expense will probably not be justified by added sales. Just keep it simple, use an image and fonts that are still clear when the cover is reduced to thumbnail size, and make sure you check what it looks like in black and white and at low resolution. Check out covers in eBookstores to see what grabs you or look for online guides (<http://www.theBookdesigner.com/2013/02/e-book-cover-design-awards-january-201/>).

Assemble or create the required metadata.

This also can be done while the Editor is assembling the manuscript, or even earlier as you set goals for your project. The Sales Manager should be involved in this process as this data is all related to selling your book. Metadata includes the information about your book that will help readers find it. There are excellent articles online about how it works (<http://www.pbs.org/media-shift/2010/10/a-self-publishers-guide-to-metadata-for-books285.html>). Purchasing a single ISBN code from Bowker will cost you \$125. Publishers buy ISBN codes in bulk so the cost per code is drastically reduced. BookBaby does this so they can provide self-published authors individual codes at the lower price of \$19. They also include conversion of the code into the scannable image you see on printed books. They will help you complete all the Metadata on Bowker so your book can be found,

but you will need to provide them with certain information. Before you fill out the form with them, all of the following need to be finalized, proofed, and approved:

Title, when selecting your theme you probably tossed around many titles and most likely selected one before making the call for submissions. If you still don't have one or are having trouble with the one you chose, it's time to buckle down and finalize the decision. A shorter title will stand out when your cover is reduced to a thumbnail. A title that is too vague may give people the wrong idea about your book. Copyright laws do not protect titles, but specific titles associated with popular works may be protected as trademarks. "Spring in Milwaukee" would be fine, "Silent Spring" would not. Google your top title ideas to be sure they're okay.

Book Description, this is the summary of your book that shoppers will see when they click on it in the various eBookstores. It is similar to the back cover descriptions on print books. If you hope to sell copies of your book outside of your immediate school community, look at the descriptions of books that are selling well, before creating yours. There are many online guides to help you (<http://blog.bookbaby.com/2011/06/selling-tip-captivating-book-descriptions/>). Do be clear that this is a book compiled from student work as a fundraiser for your school. Lots of people want to help out schools. Don't reveal detailed information or information about specific students that is not readily available online and could allow a crazy person to target your school.

Keywords, these are the words that search engines will reference when responding to a potential buyer's search. They should be specific enough to find your book, but not so specific you get missed by simple searches. Don't waste space with repetition of any words. You may want to use multiple words of the same meaning. As more schools create this sort of work, we will need some keywords that help interested buyers of one, find others. Please include "school fundraiser anthology" among your keywords so we can help each other be discovered. Include the type of writing featured in your anthology and words associated with your theme i.e. "poetry short fiction spring Easter solstice duck bunny rabbit rebirth renewal hope fertility egg."

Submit the completed manuscript, cover design, and MetaData to at least three proofreaders including the Principal. He/She knows what potential liability pitfalls exist and carries the ultimate responsibility for them and for maintaining the public image of your school. You cannot publish a book with the school's name on it without their approval. Additional good proofreaders might be: supportive teachers, members of your committee or the parent association board, or an experienced parent you met while doing your initial market research. Give them an overnight deadline, and plan two days to get it back from them.

Decide if you need ISBN codes. Amazon and Barnes & Noble do not require that eBooks have ISBN codes, but other eBook retailers do. If you want the widest possible distribution you will need to get one. It is necessary to get a different ISBN code for digital and print versions of your book. If you've chosen the print option but you don't intend to sell any copies outside of your school you probably don't need one for that. ISBN codes allow book retailers to use inventory tracking at the register, you to track book sales through retailers, and provides the statistics that are used to create best seller lists. BookBaby can supply ISBN codes at a cost of \$19 each.

Submit your final manuscript to BookBaby with payment. Decide on one contact person from your committee who will communicate with BookBaby to decrease the likelihood of miscommunication and subsequent errors. Remember, once your book has been published, making changes will cost you. From submission to publication takes about 5-10 business days, if you've done everything correctly. Some retailers will take a little longer to make your book available. Availability in the Kindle store, for instance, does not guarantee immediate availability in the iBookstore. BookBaby will have done their job, and the iBookstore will have it soon, but they take a little longer approving submissions.

If you've chosen to pre-sell print copies, now is also the time to order those so you can take advantage of any order combination discounts. Remember to order a library copy.

Announce that your book is finished and when it will be available to purchase. You have a fantastic eBook to sell. It's time to unleash your inner cheerleader! B-U-Y, buy, buy, buy!

Take care of your school Library. Either by contributing a copy from your print order, or creating a single printed copy at your local copy shop. If you take a digital copy of your manuscript and cover to any major copy shop, they should be able to produce a hard cover bound book from it. They don't need to do the expensive photo book method. A double sided black and white printout can be bound that way while you wait. Your librarian will place it in the reference section. This gives every student access to the finished book, and preserves it as a time capsule of student thought for posterity.

No one gets left out. This is not a simple generic sales fundraiser. This is a community project and no one gets left out of community projects for financial reasons. (That's my rule and I'll hold you to it!) If you hear of any students whose family cannot afford to get a copy of the book, make sure they still have access. There are several ways to do this. In every case, the library copy should be available to them. If they have access to a computer you could email them a PDF of the book and it costs you nothing. If you made print books available you could sell them one at cost, or give them a copy if you've made enough profit to cover it, or, and this is what usually happens, the parent who told you about their child's friend who can't afford a copy will offer to buy one for the child. Sell them a copy at cost.

Teachers and school secretaries are usually aware of who the neediest families in your school are. If you're pre-selling print copies, you may want to approach them early on and ask them to let you know if this situation comes across their radar. The sooner you know the easier it will be to order a few extras. Do not make an announcement or put this in writing anywhere. You run the risk of embarrassing people that way. Give the free book to the child's teacher to pass on to them discreetly while other books are being delivered. DO NOT make a big deal out of it.

You don't want to give students too much time to work on their submissions, or parents too much time to pre-order. Your eBook will be available to buy for at least a year, but early heavy promotion and sales can improve its ranking in the various distributor's algorithms creating a higher likelihood of incidental sales outside your school community. You never know when something is going to catch on and be a best seller. If you have assembled great content on an interesting theme, your

book is out in the same market as everyone else's and anything can happen.



How do I get the word out that we have an eBook?

Start by putting all the links provided by BookBaby up on your school website. Make sure you have an image of the cover and a great description of the book to go with them. Say what the money from sales is being raised for. Display them prominently. Now you have somewhere to send customers.

Post the link to the book order page of your school website, with a cover photo and announcement of publication, EVERYWHERE. In your school newsletter, in every email that goes out for the rest of the year, every week on your FaceBook page for a month, then every other week for the rest of the year, on your twitter account, in the school blog, in the student newspaper, somewhere in the school yearbook, on posters around campus, on the Marquee out front, on the websites of any parents at your school that are willing, in their blogs etc., in notices to your local community library, newspaper, to FaceBook communities for parent groups, libraries, parks and rec., scout troops, youth organizations, in local parent magazines, on posters in local businesses. Anywhere you can think of, both online and on the street.

SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENT:

"Pine Crest School has just released a Student Anthology of Short Stories titled "Smiling at Nothing." It's available as an eBook through most online retailers. Find links to all of them at www.pinecrestschool.edu/smilingatnothing. Money raised from this project this school year, will go toward the purchase of new band instruments."

ASK parents to forward FaceBook posts and emails to friends and relatives that might be interested. Also ask them to leave good reviews on whatever sites they purchase their copies from. If you forget to ask, they'll forget to do it.

Ask your school district to place the links on their website and send out a notice on their social networks. Most districts have multiple schools in them so this expands your promotional reach exponentially.

Consider ordering bookmarks with the school web page link, from a site like VistaPrint, to send home with each student as a reminder. Leave a stack in the school office for when new or prospective parents stop by. This book is also a great advertisement for your school. The bookmarks can be used if your school participates in any fairs or other promotional events.

Consider entering your eBook in a few self-published book contests. You've put a lot of work into this book and a contest can bring attention to it and to your school. If you lose, oh well. If you win, well, imagine telling your kids their anthology won a contest!

Report sales figures as you get them. It will take 45-60 days to see the first sales figures on your BookBaby account dashboard. This can be the reason for yet another email or FaceBook post with a link to your book. If your book hits any top seller lists report it immediately, no matter how specific a category or how big the list. There are hundreds of thousands of eBooks being self-published every year and most sell fewer than 100 copies. Be proud of your achievements. For example, "Congratulations Pine Crest Students! The first sales figures are in and 114 digital copies of 'Smiling at Nothing' have already been sold! This put it in the top 100 anthology eBooks in the iBookstore for two weeks. Remind your friends and family to get their copies right away and leave reviews online! Early sales and reviews generate more outside sales."

Every school has an end of year assembly. Look up your sales figures in advance of this assembly and calculate the amount of money you've raised. Get up and congratulate your students and teachers on creating such a great book this year. Tell them how many have sold, how much you've raised, and any other notable achievements your book has made. If it hit any top seller lists, say so! Remind them that it will continue to be available for at least a year.

Be aware that you are laying the groundwork for future books. If your first book did nothing but build up your community, GREAT! Your second book will do better

financially. And subsequent books will do better still. That's how it works with eBooks. Your school gets known for producing quality publications and people come back for the next one, even when their own kids have outgrown the school. Additionally, every year millions of new eBooks and tablets are being sold. Your potential for sales is growing every day.

Keep your book available. Even if it has only moderate success, if you plan to make this an annual project then, you should keep last year's book available. BookBaby charges a nominal fee of \$19 per year to do so. If you publish with their Premium package for \$299, it includes 50 photos and has no future annual fees. When you promote next year's book, you will reach people that didn't see this year's. Some of them will buy both. In five years the entire student body will have changed and five years worth of anthologies will be available to a new group of parents.

The project the first book raised funds for will likely be long since completed by that point. Instead of specifying x book raises money for x project, say all eBook sales this year will go toward this project. Decide with your Parent/Teacher Association which project they will fund each year. This may require a vote.

Congratulations! You've got the tools to put together a BookBaby eBook anthology project and fundraiser for your school or organization and YOU CAN DO IT!

I am always in awe of the wonderful moms, dads and grandparents who put in countless volunteer hours at schools around the country. Whatever challenges the government sends our way in the form of tax cuts, or liability insurance companies do to restrict our activities, you roll up your sleeves and make sure that what needs to get done, gets done. You are awesome!

Please share your stories with us, especially what worked for you. As we share and encourage each other we can create a new category of school anthologies in online bookstores and build a shared market base of individuals interested in supporting schools and reading the work of children. We all know that kids say the darnedest things, but they also write things that make us laugh, make us cry, and help us remember what our own childhoods were like.

E.A.Provost blogs about Crafting a Family at www.themensamom.blogspot.com.



Appendix: Sample Copyright Release Form

(Print on school or parent/teacher group letterhead.)

Date _____

I, _____, hereby give permission for my original poem/story titled " _____," to be included in the Pine Crest School anthology titled "Smiling at Nothing," an eBook to be published on November 30, 2013, and remain in publication indefinitely, and release any present or future right to compensation. I would like my name to appear on the byline as _____ (first name only, or first name last initial, is advised).

Child's Signature _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____

**This form is for example purposes only and neither BookBaby nor the Author guarantee its suitability for any given anthology project. We recommend you run your final copyright release form by a legal professional and/or the relevant authority in your school or organization.