Nonprofit plans to raise $2 million to help schools

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A nonprofit foundation announced plans yesterday to raise $2 million for Palo Alto schools next year as part of a re-energized fundraising effort.

Partners in Education — the result of a recent merger between the All Schools Fund and Palo Alto Foundation for Education — plans to grant about $100,000 to each of the district's 12 elementary schools and $120,000 to $180,000 to each of the five secondary schools.

Unlike district money, the money raised by the foundation goes directly toward individual school budgets.

Works with district

Partners and Education works in collaboration with the district in allocating the funds, said associate superintedant Gerry Matranga.

"They're really an outstanding group of people with what they're doing for our schools," he said.

The organization's primary goal is helping the district restore services that were cut due to budget shortfalls in the past few years, said Simone Coxe, a spokesperson for Partners in Education.

But after the $493 a year parcel tax measure passed, the Palo Alto district is starting to recover.

The district enrolled 10,706 students this year and will spend $11,579 per student — a figure that increased 8.8 percent from last year, mostly due to the parcel tax revenue. The $2 million target has increased from $1.8 million last year, but still does not surpass some fundraising feats by similar groups in other districts.

Lofty goals

The Los Altos Education Foundation plans to raise $1,450,000 this year for the Los Altos school district, comprised of 4,000 students in six elementary schools and two middle schools. Last year, the foundation raised $1,350,000.

Campaigns at several even smaller districts up and down the Peninsula are achieving results above the million-dollar mark as well.

Palo Alto schools receive funds from three sources: district revenue, donations by nonprofits like Partners in Education — which fund teacher aides, tutors, electives teachers and technology upgrades — and donations by school PTAs —which help purchase books and other classroom supplies.