

Statement of the League of Women Voters of Scarsdale  
to the Board of Education regarding Revisions to Gift Policy  
October 6, 2014

The following statement is made on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Scarsdale (the "League").

The League thanks the Board of Education (the "Board") for considering our comments on the September 19 revisions to the gift policy, which comments were transmitted to the Board last week and are posted on our website. Our comments reflected concerns that we believed had not been addressed in the September 19 revisions, and we suggested language to do so. Our concerns included:

- monitoring the aggregate gifts given to ensure parity in the schools;
- retaining the aspiration to avoid the proliferation of fundraising in the community to minimize multiple fundraising appeals by a myriad of groups; and
- considering whether a gift will result in undue or unreasonable additional or hidden costs to the District.

We commend the Board for its responsiveness and appreciate that the Board addressed most of our concerns as reflected in the revised draft of the gift policy before the Board and recommended for adoption this evening. We note also that the Board addressed the concern we raised regarding the draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Board and the Scarsdale Schools Education Foundation ("SSEF") regarding the active involvement of the Board and District leadership in SSEF's fundraising efforts.

We hope that the Board will give serious consideration to our recommendation that the Board adopt a separate policy regarding its relationship with SSEF as the Board has done with respect to booster organizations and Parent Teacher Associations. In light of the unique relationship between the Board and SSEF and the size and nature of past and contemplated gifts from SSEF to the District, we have suggested components that we hope the Board will consider including in such a separate policy, as outlined last week in our written comments to the Board.

As the process to revise the gift policy is coming to a close, the League would like to leave the Board with the following additional comments.

1. We encourage the Board to be ever mindful of its responsibility "to provide adequate funding for the District's programs and services it offers," a responsibility in both good and bad times and borne by the taxpayers. We hope that the existence of the SSEF will not diminish the Board's commitment to fulfill that responsibility.
2. We recognize that the existing gift policy, well crafted and carefully considered, has endured since its adoption in 1996, for almost two decades. We hope the revised gift

policy that the Board adopts today, along with a separate policy for SSEF that we have recommended, will stand the test of time as the 1996 policy has, regardless of economic conditions.

3. Lastly, we respect that the Board must conduct its business in a timely manner. We note, however, that our policies require that we adhere to a prescribed process before we can speak publicly on an issue. We therefore suggest that when seeking public comment on an issue before it, the Board bear in mind that community organizations may be limited in their ability to respond within short time frames.