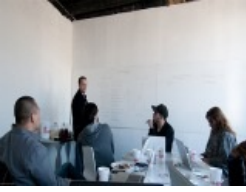


ADVERTISING IN GEORGIA SCHOOL DISTRICT



High school football has become so popular that high schools across the country are displaying advertisements on their fields, fences around their fields, and in their team programs each year. To take things to another level, a metro Atlanta school district is proposing to advertise for major companies on cafeteria trays, salad bar sneeze guards, and seat backs in auditoriums to raise money for schools that are strapped for cash. The Douglas County school board has proposed that its 37 schools within the district can sell advertising space on anything that is not inside a classroom. This means that the schools can place advertisements on the hallway walls, floors, bulletin boards, napkins, instruments and even trophy cases.

"We've got to look for alternative funding," said school board member Mike Miller. "If done right, this could be a win-win for the system, for our children and for business."

Cobb County, in Georgia, has sold advertising space on its schools' signs outside the buildings as well on the schools' websites to make money. The school board in Atlanta just approved advertising for its schools' athletic fields.

"It's troubling to see advertising have a greater space in children's lives than it already does, especially in schools which should provide some kind of sanctuary from the onslaught of advertising kids face everywhere they go," said Elizabeth Ben-Ishai with Public Citizen, a consumer protection nonprofit in Washington. "It's a place where kids are supposed to learn critical thinking skills."

The chief financial officer of Douglas County, Kay Turner, claims that there are no concrete numbers as to how much the school district could make from selling advertising space. She did say that the district will only sell space to those companies that will have a positive influence on the students. The district is located just west of the city of Atlanta with 25,000 students.

Florida, Tennessee, and Arizona are a handful of the six states in the country that allow buses to place advertisements on them in an effort to make money. This has occurred more recently because of the lagging economy and the need for schools to raise funds. One teacher at Pocatello High School in Idaho has sold advertisements to a local pizza parlor and has placed those ads at the bottom of his worksheets and handouts. The teacher gets money for the paper used from the pizza parlor.

There has been more than \$67 million in state cuts to schools in Douglas County since 2003 and \$775 million decline in property tax digest. This has caused parents to support the idea of advertising on school property.

"I have great confidence in our leadership that they would target companies and brands that support education," said Barr, a Villa Rica resident whose son is a second-grader in Douglas County. "Parents know they would not put any advertising in front of our kids that would be inappropriate."