



TIPS FOR HOSTING A CAREER FAIR

Several Months in Advance of the Career Fair

- Choose a venue that will be large enough for many companies to set up booths and for students and their parents/guardians to have space to move between booths. The school's gymnasium, library, cafeteria, auditorium, or a combination of those places may be good options. If the weather is expected to be nice, you can use an outdoor venue, but plan on an indoor space as a back-up option.
- Choose a date and time frame that will allow for both students and their parents/guardians to attend.
- Reach out to local companies to invite them to the career fair. Seek companies from many different industries: healthcare, hospitality, manufacturing, civil service, technology, communications, sales, dining, automotive, etc.
- Reach out to local colleges, universities, and technical schools. Their representatives can help students determine what programs of study they will need for their career choices, and they can help students apply and begin signing up for courses.
- Invite staff from a local career center to attend. They can assist students with career services such as building a resume and applying for jobs.
- Ask participants if they would be willing to prepare a brief presentation to share in a separate room. Prepare a schedule of speakers giving presentations. Plan on each speaker sharing for 10 minutes and then having 10 minutes of question and answer time from the audience.

Shortly Before the Career Fair

- One week before the career fair, confirm attendance with all participants. Email or mail them a hard copy of information, including locations and times to know. Encourage all participants to bring something interactive for students. Participants who have a simple challenge for students to complete that relates to that career can more easily connect with students. Another option is for participants to bring objects that represent their career for students to observe and prompt discussion. Inform participants if there are any expectations or restrictions about items they could provide to students, such as restrictions on candy, peanuts or other allergens.
- Find out which participants will need access to electrical outlets, and plan an arrangement for booths and power strips.
- Advertise the career fair to students and their families. This may be in the form of posters to hang in hallways, announcements, and promotions by classroom teachers. Advertise the career fair through whatever method the district communicates with families: social media, email, physical mail, etc.
- Make the schedule of guest speakers available to students: post the schedule in the counseling office and in available classrooms. Students can choose which speakers they are interested in hearing from in this setting.
- Encourage students to dress professionally and act respectfully during the career fair.



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During the Career Fair

- Ensure that company participants are aware of locations of restrooms, water fountains, and vending machines.
- Provide attending students with a handout with ideas of types of questions to ask at booths of careers in which they are interested.
- Consider doing a raffle drawing towards the end of the event. Students can get raffle tickets by showing evidence of participation, such as hand-written notes from conversations with company representatives.

After the Career Fair

- Send company participants follow-up surveys to get feedback on what went well and any suggestions they have for improvements.
- Send thank you cards to company participants.
- Send participating students a survey to gain feedback from them about which companies they were most interested in and ask for suggestions of other types of careers they would like to see represented in the future.

REFERENCES

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