

Hosting a Debate Tournament

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Hosting a debate tournament at your school site provides a wonderful opportunity to share your debate team's activities with the school stakeholders; administration, faculty, staff, parents, and community, in an actual competition. To make sure the experience is a positive one for all, it is important to start planning the event as soon as a date is chosen and approved by your administration. Review with your tournament director what are league costs and responsibilities.

BRAINSTORMING

Sit down with paper and pencil and begin to list everything you've seen at successful and unsuccessful events. Don't worry about keeping them in any order. Just jot them down on paper while you have the ideas. Spend at least 20 to 30 minutes brainstorming what you liked at tournaments or events you've attended and what you didn't think was successfully done. You're not judging any one. You're recalling pluses and minuses you experienced.

CATEGORIES

Once you've brainstormed your initial list. Review the items on your list for common elements, eg. Food, Volunteers, etc. Sort related elements together under topic headings. Look at the items in each category and determine what needs to be done in that area.

VOLUNTEERS

Look for volunteers to help you on and off your school site; school site teachers and students, parents, friends, and community members. Use your categorized list to match up volunteers by interests and ability. Don't hesitate to ask early so people can schedule their calendars accordingly. Plan on how and where you will need your volunteers. Schedule group training sessions for those individuals who've never worked a tournament and will be heavily involved. Make sure to delegate responsibilities to persons who will handle the organization tasks of their area but still remain in close contact with you. Offer community service opportunities for students.

FOOD

Food is one of the most important items for a successful tournament. Review your options as you decide your menu with your committee. What works best for your school site? Where will it be prepared? Who will prepare, serve, and clean-up the meals? Breakfast isn't mandatory, but it helps set the tone for the day and is welcome by the visiting teams who might travel a distance to attend. Make sure you plan an area just for the judges and adults to eat and gather during the tournament.

JANITORIAL AND ROOM PREPARATION

Discuss the tournament's needs with your school site administration to make sure the site is prepared to receive guests throughout the school. Make sure all faculty and staff are kept informed of the upcoming tournament. Talk to each teacher to address his/her concerns about using the classrooms for debate. Many teachers have no idea what happens during a debate and how the classroom environment impacts the enjoyment of the participants and spectators.

PUBLICITY

The more people know about your event, the more successful it will be for your school. Find out what your school district requirements are for hosting an event on campus. Open the tournament up to anyone who wishes to attend. Work

with your school site administration on a VIP list for your community. Use the tournament as an opportunity to educate and recruit.

MISCELLANEOUS

All good teachers borrow from each other. Don't hesitate to use what others have created or done. Have fun and enjoy the day. Remember the most important item is your Debate team.

Here's an example of a checklist that we used to communicate with our committees, staff, and volunteers.

Walton Wildcat Interleague Tournament Checklist – Update

Tournament Date: January 27, 2007 Location: Walton Middle School

Time: 6AM-6PM Number of Participants: Estimated 150 – 200 students

Tournament needs:

- Cafeteria, use as main meeting area for teams as well as lunch facilities
- Cafeteria access and banner for food prices
- Coaches and judges room, staff dining area off main cafeteria
- Power supply in cafeteria – for tournament organizers' computers, etc.
- Restroom facilities for students, parents, judges, and coaches (incl. cafeteria facilities)
- Campus maps with room clearly marked
M. Pearson will modify current campus map for visitors
- Security, notify Compton Sheriff's department and CUSD school police
- Copier access
- Paper – need five different colors, approx. 3 reams ea.
See Ms. Farrell for paper per Ms. Pearson
- Classroom access (23 available)
Approved by Mr. Lyles
- Student workers (Community Service) and Student Worker Coordinator
- Training session for student timers (Led by Debate advisors)
Student workers and training proceeding under Ms. Torres-Nusse & Mr. Gordon
- Banners – one for each competing school (Mr. Freeman's Art classes)
Mr. Freeman in process of preparing misc. banners, will receive names of participating schools by Wed. 1/24/07
- Parking for cars and buses
- District representative – Invite Clusters, Superintendent, School Board, etc.
- City representative – City mayor
- School marquee – Welcome participants
- Timers and/or stop watches (10) for judges (not Radio Shack brand)
- Food – donated to prepare and sell on site to cover tournament costs (Mexican food sells well, plate with enchilada, beans, rice, drink \$6), Complementary breakfast juice, milk, water, and doughnuts
Lunch menu in progress under guidance of Ms. Bazan. Mr. Nahrwold will supervise on Saturday 1/27/07
- Invitation – to tournament for participants and District/City representatives
- Principal and/or Assistant Principal on site to welcome participants
- Recycle – set up to use for \$