

# How to host a Career Fair at your school!

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- Start EARLY! It is important to envision how you would like your school counseling program to run. I wanted to really focus on implementing more career exploration and awareness activities for my middle school students.
  - Our building implemented a CCAP (Career and College Awareness Program) afterschool program for students and wanted the career fair to be the final piece of the program and career guidance programming
- A career fair is WAY more than just an event! This is an amazing opportunity for your students to take the results of interest inventories, aptitudes, and career exploration and learn about the numerous career opportunities available to them (*IF you do guidance lessons and career activities with your students*)
- Get your Principal on board! It makes your job so much easier if your admin supports the career fair and are willing to help with any request your school needs to host a career fair.
- Work with your administration to pick a date that works with the master calendar of events. There are so many events that go on year-round that you may not be aware of.
- LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION! You will need to decide which location works best for your vision of a career fair. I picked the gym, so we would have plenty of space for tables and set-up. We were fortunate enough that there were two entrances to the gym, so students could exit out the back of the gym when finished, we had the next set of students coming right after they finished.
- Decide on the time frame. How long would you like it to last? How many students will need to go to the career fair? Will you have them in there all at once or rounds?
  - I highly recommend breaking up students into rounds or sessions. This allows for the representatives to not feel overwhelmed by the number of students AND your students will have the space to walk around without wanting to stop and talk with friends.
    - Example Time Frame: 9-11:15 am
      - Session 1: 9-9:30 am
      - Session 2: 9:35-10:05 am
      - Session 3: 10:10-10:40 am
      - Session 4: 10:45-11:15 am
- Inform the gym teacher that you will need to use the gym for the career fair. (OR custodian if you use the cafeteria) Do this as early as you can and remind them often.

- Email and request that your custodian or secretary request the amount of tables and chairs you need for the career fair to be delivered the day BEFORE the event. Keep following up and make sure they have it requested! (Do this as early as possible)
- Now you can decide the career representatives you would like to attend the career fair!
  - Look up local businesses, trades, and industries in your area.
    - Example-Inner City, find people that your students can look up to
  - Request firetrucks, police car, etc. if you want them to attend
- Pick up the phone and start dialing! I was able to get 40 representatives to sign up to attend.
- Make sure you give the representatives an idea of what to bring and prepare for. No one likes a table with nothing to look at or participate in.
  - They can decorate their table with a company tablecloth, posters, displays
  - Suggest they bring giveaways, candy, items they can touch or look at
    - For example-a photographer brought her camera, equipment, and photos.
- Call your local Educational Service Center and see if they have any local businesses, industry representatives, or connections that may be interested
- Make a flyer for the event. You can do this yourself or email your school advertising/social media person and see if they can help!
- Email your communications department and ask for a representative to come out to the career fair and take pictures. Our districts team made a video for Facebook.
- Invite your Superintendent and Board of Educations Representatives to attend (They really like attending fun events)
- Inform your school staff of the event
- Make a map of the career fair set-up with a list of career representatives. See attached example.
- Get the students excited! Hang up the flyers and talk with your students about the event
- Get student buy-in! I am the Student Council Advisor, so I had student council members help set-up the event, greet the career representatives, and clean-up the event and they LOVED IT!
- Set up the tables and chairs the afternoon before if possible. If you can't do it early the morning of is fine, but make sure you do it first thing. I asked students to set-up for me and showed them the map and directed them where I wanted the tables and chairs to go. Let the young people do the heavy lifting 😊
- Call and follow up with the career representatives the week before
- Buy thank-you cards and have the students fill them out with the greeting. The day of we set up a "thank-you station" and students simply signed their name when they left the career fair.

**The morning/day of:**

- Make sure you have a sign-in sheet
- Have enough copies of the map and career representatives list for students, staff, and representatives
- Students or staff to greet and welcome the representatives
- Have water to give to representatives
- Have a microphone to speak with the representatives, keep time, announcements, etc.
- Make sure you announce where the restroom is for guests
- Hand out signed thank-you cards to representatives when the career fair is finished 😊