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# ***CCSD GUIDELINES FOR NEW SCHOOL DEDICATION EVENTS***

A SUPPLEMENT TO THE GUIDELINES FOR EVENT PLANNING AND PROTOCOL

*Please refer to the separate [CCSD Guidelines for Event Planning and Protocol](#) as well as the [Event Planning Procedures and other resources](#) for support with planning, budgeting, and implementing all District events. Visit the Community and Government Relations Web page at [ccsd.net/departments/community-government-relations/event-planning-and-protocol](http://ccsd.net/departments/community-government-relations/event-planning-and-protocol).*

The dedication of a new school is an important way to honor a school namesake, celebrate the significant capital investment, and welcome staff, parents, students, and other stakeholders to join together as a new school community. This event should be treated as a formal ceremony, and will set the tone for future school events.

The school is responsible for planning, funding, and execution of the new school dedication event. Guidance and support resources are provided by the Community and Government Relations division.

An event planning committee can be designated to create and execute the event plan. Ideally, the team should allow a minimum of 12 weeks to plan and prepare for the event. The school namesake and the Trustee for the school's district can also be invited to be part of the school's event planning committee, as appropriate.

## **SCHOOL IDENTITY**

The school identity package should be complete prior to the dedication event. The Principal will lead development, with input from the School Associate Superintendent and support from the Academic Unit and CCSD Graphic Arts Center. These are important decisions that will stay with the school for many years to come, and thus adequate time and attention should be given to the process. Whenever possible, the school namesake (or family), school staff, and students should be consulted on decisions during this process.

The school identity package may include:

- School colors
- Mascot
- Logo
- Song
- Motto
- Web site
- Social media channels
- Stationery package
- Newsletter
- Etc.

The school identity should be incorporated into the dedication event as much as possible.

The school may also consider creating logo items to be used as gifts for the school namesake or other honorees, such as a t-shirt, watch, plaque, etc.

## **DEDICATION EVENT DATE AND TIME**

The event should be held once the school has officially opened, in the same school year, and after all construction work is complete. The event can be held mid-fall or even as late as spring.

In most cases, the school namesake (and/or their family) will be the guest(s) of honor. As such, they should be consulted to determine a date that works best for their schedule. The school may even want to consider timing that is special to the namesake, such as their birth date, which could then be celebrated in some way each year.

Consider the day of the week and the time of day that will accommodate the majority of guests. If it is important that all students be included, then the event could be planned for the last hour of the school day, before the normal transportation schedule begins. Depending on the school's community, a morning, evening, or even weekend event may work best. Be aware of statutory and religious holidays <http://www.interfaithcalendar.org/> and avoid school holiday time periods (e.g., winter, spring, and summer holidays) and other school events <http://ccsd.net/district/calendar/>.

Once a general timeframe is determined, Community and Government Relations staff will work with the school to help determine a final date for the event, considering the schedules of the Trustee for the school's district, key elected officials, Superintendent, other District leadership, and other new school dedication events planned for the same timeframe.

## **LOCATION**

The event should be planned to accommodate as many guests as possible. Possible locations could include the theater, gymnasium, multi-purpose room, or even an outdoor courtyard.

Consider spreading the elements of the event across multiple locations, such as the ceremony indoors and reception outdoors. Please also see School Tour section.

## **BUDGET**

The school is responsible for the cost of the dedication event; however, financial support can be garnered from the school namesake and/or school community partners as appropriate. The event planning committee should prepare a plan based on the school's available budget. The plan can then be shared with the namesake and other partners who may choose to supplement the plan with additional funds.

Examples:

- The school may plan punch and cookies as refreshments for guests, but a namesake may offer to provide additional funds if they prefer to have a more robust catering offering.
- A nearby florist may be willing to donate centerpieces or other floral arrangements, in exchange for promotional mention in the program.
- A nearby grocer may be willing to donate food or beverage items.
- A nearby casino may be willing to provide table linens.

Acknowledgements for financial support should be included in the program, and the school can consider other ways to recognize sponsors, such as small placards on the reception table, “Refreshments donated by [name].”

Recognition can be tiered based on levels of funding/involvement, such as Platinum, Gold, and Silver partners.

## **INVITATION LIST**

The school should consider a wide variety of invitees for this momentous occasion, as many as the facility and budget will allow. The planning committee should begin to build a school data base of contact names, addresses, and emails as early as possible. Community and Government Relations staff can help with outreach to key invitees as needed.

Suggested invitees might include:

- Elected Officials/Dignitaries
  - Board of Trustees member for the district
  - Elected officials for the district (City Council, County Commission, Mayor, State Assemblyman, State Senator, etc.)
  - Other important dignitaries who may have involvement in the school, such as judges, military leaders, etc.
- CCSD Executive Leadership
  - Superintendent
  - Deputy Superintendent
  - School Associate Superintendent for the Performance Zone
  - Chief Academic Officer
  - Chief Operating Officer
  - Chief Instructional Services Officer
- Facilities Team
  - Associate Superintendent
  - Director
  - CCSD Project Facilitator
  - Contractor
  - Architect
  - Landscaper
  - Other partners (Facilities Team can help identify the appropriate people to include).
- Other CCSD Guests
  - Communications (see Communications section)
  - Principals from nearby schools
  - School Police (chief and school officers)
  - Associate Superintendent of Community and Government Relations
  - Others as appropriate, such as leaders from the English Language Learners program, Student Services Division, etc.

- School Community
  - Staff
  - Parents (if space is an issue, consider limiting to specific groups of parents, such as the School Organizational Team, Parent Teacher Association, etc.)
  - Students (or at least student representatives – see Ceremony section)
- Community Partners (as appropriate for the school)
  - Nevada PTA representative
  - HOPE representative
  - Communities in Schools representative
  - Teach for America representative
  - Existing business partners
  - Surrounding businesses (the School-Community Partnership Program office may be able to help identify potential future partners to consider)
  - Other partners

The school namesake (or family) should be asked to provide their own list of invitees as well. Depending on relationships, these may include:

- Extended family members
- Business colleagues
- Other school namesakes
- Specific elected officials
- Other identified invitees

## INVITATIONS

The school may choose to do formal mailed invitations with RSVP cards, or if time and money are tight, an email invitation can be developed, using a Google form to track RSVPs.

The invitation should include:

- Official school name
- School logo and motto, if finalized
- Day, date, and time of event
- School address and map with clear directions to the school property
- Directions and deadline for RSVP
- Phone number (even if RSVPs are requested digitally).

The [Graphic Arts Center](#) can help with the design and printing of invitations. Examples of invitations from previous school dedications can be found [here](#) or visit the Community and Government Relations Web page at [ccsd.net/departments/community-government-relations/event-planning-and-protocol](https://ccsd.net/departments/community-government-relations/event-planning-and-protocol).

## **COMMUNICATIONS/MEDIA**

Coordinate the invitation of local media through the Communications Office. Submit a [communications request form](#).

If the event will be open to the majority of the school community, consider promoting the event in advance on the school Web site, newsletter, and social media channels.

Commemorate the event with video and photography. Plan and direct a variety of formal photo opportunities with the school namesake, elected officials and dignitaries, and even a school staff photo. The Communications Team can provide guidance and/or support as needed.

## **EVENT PROGRAM**

A printed program should be created for guests, as a guide to the ceremony and as a keepsake from this special event.

The program may include:

- Official school name
- School logo and motto, if finalized
- Day, date, and time of event
- Profile and photo of school namesake
- An outline of the ceremony (see Ceremony section)
- The names of all school staff at the time of the ceremony
- Acknowledgements (including sponsors, event planning committee, etc.)

The Graphic Arts Center can help with the design and printing of the event program. Examples of dedication event programs from previous school dedications can be found [here](#) or visit the Community and Government Relations Web page at [ccsd.net/departments/community-government-relations/event-planning-and-protocol](http://ccsd.net/departments/community-government-relations/event-planning-and-protocol).

In general, all CCSD programs, presentations, and other materials representing the District should include reference to the Board of Trustees. A simple “logo and leadership lockup” is provided in a variety of sizes and colors on the Graphic Arts Center Web site: <http://graphics.ccsd.net/NewFiles/GAC.2006.Site/Downloads.html>. This lockup can easily be placed on the back page of a program or as the last slide of a PowerPoint presentation.

For additional guidance on referring to the Board of Trustees, please review the [CCSD Guidelines for Event Planning and Protocol](#).

## **VIP SEATING**

Seating should be reserved for special guests, such as the school namesake, Trustee, Superintendent and other executive staff, elected officials and other VIP guests. Speakers can be provided with seating on stage, or in the first row for easy access to the podium.

A few helpful hints:

- Communicate seating provisions to VIP guests in advance, especially if they are expected to be on stage at the program start.
- Block reserved rows and/or individual seats with signage. Double-check name spelling and titles, if reserving seats for specific individuals.
- Assign member(s) of the team to greet attendees, specifically looking for VIP guests to direct to the VIP seating area and to manage a list of acknowledgements in the program.
- Depending on the needs of the school community, consider providing interpreters for the deaf and hard of hearing and/or ELL interpreters/translators.

## **THE CEREMONY**

Ideally, the ceremony should be planned to be approximately 30 minutes in length, followed by a school tour and time for reception. The event should include and feature the school's students wherever possible.

The program may include:

- Welcome by the Principal, including recognition of all VIP guests in attendance
- Presentation of Colors/Pledge of Allegiance (school ROTC program or Boy Scout Troop)
- Invocation
- Student musical performance(s), including a closing performance of the new school song
- Student video
- Address by the Trustee
- Address by the Superintendent
- Remarks by the school namesake(s) or other honoree(s)
- Special presentations (such as presentation of certificates by elected officials)
- School dedication (see School Dedication section)
- Closing remarks by principal, including recognition of any event sponsors.

"Many hands make light work." Students can also be engaged in event operations, such as:

- Parking attendants (managing VIP spots and directing traffic)
- Creation of welcome and directional signs
- Creation of table centerpieces
- Set up of chairs and tables
- Making refreshments (only if school or nearby school has a culinary program)
- Serving refreshments
- Helping with audio/visual equipment
- Greeters for guests, at school entrance and inside the event location
- School tour guides
- Teardown/cleanup
- If additional support is needed, consider reaching out to nearby schools for additional resources (refer to Student Support and Services section of the [CCSD Guidelines for Event Planning and Protocol](#)).

## **SCHOOL TOUR**

Guests will be excited to explore the new facility, and a simple school tour can be offered to guests after the ceremony. Designated student guides can lead small groups, or the tour can be self-guided, with clear signage leading guests along a designated route to specific manned “stops” within the school. Considerations for a school tour:

- Suggested tour stops could include classroom(s), lab, gymnasium, cafeteria, theater, school garden, etc.
- Plan short 2- to 3-minute student presentations at each stop, which are repeated for each new group that arrives. For instance, “This is our school garden. Thanks to our partners at [name], we will be able to grow a variety of fruits and vegetables all year. A special outdoor classroom allows students to enjoy fresh air and learn with hands-on experiences.”
- Display signage at each tour stop with a few key bullet points about what is special about that part of the school.
- Provide unique refreshments at each stop along the tour, such as punch in one location, cookies in another, popcorn in another.
- Create specific photo opportunities along the tour, at notable school features or even with fun props. Encourage guests to share their photos using the school’s social media channels.

## **RECEPTION**

The reception plan should include light refreshments and space for guests to mingle with each other. Some considerations:

- Consider the potential dietary needs of guests, such as offering gluten-free options.
- Provide easy access to refreshments, with multiple stations in different parts of the room and two-sided access to tables.
- Be sure to provide plenty of trash receptacles for guests’ convenience and to lessen cleanup.
- Suggest that the school namesake, elected officials, dignitaries, and VIP guests congregate in a specific area where it will be easy for guests to find and approach them.
- Consider creating photo opportunities and encourage guests to share their photos using the school’s social media channels (see School Tour section).
- You may also want to showcase existing photography at the event, such as photos from the school groundbreaking event (if one was done) or from the school namesake’s life.

## **POST-EVENT**

Extend the celebration with your school community. Considerations might include:

- Celebrate the event and engage your school community, by sharing photos of the event on the school’s newsletter, social media channels, and the school Web site.
- If there will be a significant number of floral centerpieces left at the end of the event, the school may consider sending a group of students to deliver them to a local hospital



or nursing home facility. Consider donating leftover refreshments to homeless shelters or distribution organizations for the needy.

- Send thank you letters, created by students as appropriate, to all of the VIP guests and event sponsors. A special thank you flyer could be created to send home to all parents.
- Create a physical photo album of the event through Shutterfly or a similar printer. Copies of the album could be provided as gifts to the school namesake, principal, and other honorees.

## **RIBBON-CUTTING EVENTS**

The dedication event is considered the premier event for a new school; however, there may sometimes be a special reason to consider a separate ribbon-cutting event as well. New schools may want to add pomp and circumstance to the first time students arrive on campus, such as orientation day or the first day of school. Existing schools may have the need to plan ribbon-cutting events for a new facility being added to the campus, such as a renovated theater or new gymnasium.

Many of the same guidelines outlined in this document will apply to a ribbon-cutting event. A few additional considerations:

- The invitation list should be much smaller for this type of event. Invite the school namesake and the Trustee for your school district, and a few other special guests, as appropriate.
- The ribbon-cutting event should be informal, fun, and student-centric. Involve students in a ceremonial cutting of a ribbon or even running through a large paper banner at the entrance of the school (perhaps one for each grade group). You could also consider a competition, such as an art contest or even a potato sack race on the lawn, to determine which student gets to be the very first student to walk through the doors.
- Consider the school identity in the event, such as creating a ribbon in the school colors, involving a mascot if possible, etc.
- Engage staff and parents to share in the experience with the children.
- Inviting media to a ribbon-cutting event is not generally suggested. Media outreach should be reserved for the dedication event.

## **OTHER SPECIAL DEDICATION ACTIVITIES**

Consider engaging students, either at the dedication event or at another time, in other special activities to commemorate this occasion for generations to come. Ideas might include:

- Creating and burying a time capsule
- Creating a special mural on a school wall or fence
- Creating a sidewalk segment or other cement structure with student handprints.

**If you have suggestions to consider adding to these guidelines, or if you items to share as examples for other schools, please contact the Community and Government Relations division.**

**Thank you, and good luck with your event!**