

Checklist for an event

The Hall - (setup, lighting, temperature, sound, decorations, bathroom, clean-up)

Setup in the appropriate seating style - theatre, circle, horseshoe - with tables or with out. Reserved sections need to be marked. Seating charts are always a good idea in complicated sitting arrangements. Set up your room for 5% less than you expect and have a reserve of chairs for 10% more than you expect. It is always better to set up chairs than to have empty chairs. Setting up chairs gives the feeling that "everyone came because this is such an important event."

Lighting should highlight the platform area and someone needs to know where the switches are and how they work.

Temperature in the room needs to be slightly chilly. The audience body heat will bring it up to comfortable and the chill will help people stay awake.

Sound system needs to be checked. Someone needs to know how to work it. The volume should be slightly less than loud. It is best if the audience needs to strain just a little to hear rather than talk louder to their neighbor to overcome the system.

Decorations need to be in place well before the doors are opened. If they include signs, make sure those signs are in the primary languages of your audience. It is not difficult to build a more inclusive atmosphere for an activity by simply having a few of the signs translated into the major languages of your minority population.

Bathrooms need to be checked and unlocked and well marked.

Clean- up will need to know where the trash cans are and what is expected of them in terms of the chairs, tables, etc.

The Stage (Decorations, seating, blocking, props.)

Decorations should include the American and State Flags. (American goes stage left) and a banner or visual identifying the activity.

Seating for presenters and honored guests should be worked out ahead of time.

Blocking the movement on stage ahead of time can prevent major confusion later.

Awards tables on stage should be decorated and located near the podium. For mass awards the tables could be located in different corners of the hall to eliminate the confusion associated with large groups of uninformed people. In this instance, you will need large posters stating the certificates or awards that are being distributed in each location.

The PROGRAM (invitations, music, greeters, ushers, photographer, presenters, honorees.)

Invitations should be sent to each participant one week prior to the activity. RSVP provides an opportunity to teach the meaning of those initials and might offer an added air of importance to the activity.

Music as background for the audience arrival should be generic and tone setting. You can turn it up a bit just before the event begins and use its disappearance as a beginning cue.

Greeters should be nicely dressed and trained in the events activities and procedures. Smilingly they direct people to their seats as they highlight the seating restrictions and hand out the printed programs. You will need two greeters for each door. They ARE the school at that moment.

Ushers can make the difference in the seating accommodations. They can help people find a place to sit and they can protect the reserved areas. Their smiling faces and helpful attitudes also speak volumes about the school and this activity. They ARE the school at that moment.

A photographer can save time and energy and provide an importance nothing else can. With digital cameras, the cost of shooting an event is minimal. The photos can be used in a number of ways, not the least of which is to spice up next years printed program.

Training the Presenters can save time and improve your event. The training should include: using this particular microphone; the use of the technical equipment, if any; smiling; what to do and what not to do on the stage while you wait your turn at the mic; and entrances and exits from their seats (blocking). If they are presenting awards they should know - state the award title followed by a description of the award requirements and then the recipient's name. Any other order will be interrupted by applause too many times.

Honorees in an awards assembly should be trained in the proper way to accept their award, where the photographer will be, how they should stand, and where they should sit. When possible, it is best to have them assemble in a different location than the general audience and march in together. The audience came to see these people honored and marching them in is an honor.