



# Student Technology Showcase Planning Tips

Advocacy Toolkit

The information in this document can be used to help you plan a Student Technology Showcase for governmental leaders, local leaders or the community. A showcase can be a stand-alone event or part of a conference or any meeting/event. Use this information as a baseline guide for creating a showcase and then plan to customize it to fit the individual needs of your affiliate.

This doc includes the following components:

- Planning the event
- Considerations for a showcase that includes governmental officials
- Tips for hosting a showcase for local school officials and community members

## Planning the event

No matter the size of the event or whom it is for, it is important that you take the time to identify who in your organization will be responsible for what. These responsibilities can be assigned to paid positions or positions filled by volunteers. It will be important to ensure that these key people have a means for sharing information and holding planning calls with team members.

### Before the event

#### General

- Identify the intended audience (e.g., legislators, school board, professional organizations)
- Select an event date
- Solicit and/or secure funding
- Secure Department of Education endorsement

#### Facilities

- Reserve facilities
- Identify any facility restrictions
  - Do they allow you to tape things to the walls?
  - Do they allow you to bring outside food?
  - Are there any restrictions on bringing things in or taking things out?

- Make arrangements for parking
- Book table/chair rental

**Operations**

- Develop event website
- Solicit school teams
- Order student t-shirts
- Order lunch coupons for students
- Send confirmations and details to teams
- Secure liability insurance for event
- Arrange catering
- Solicit volunteers
- Publish event directory of teams and project descriptions
- Make table signs for teams
- Make signs for hallways for legislators to find teams
- Finalize legislator check-in table

**Public relations**

- Secure public relations firm
- Finalize public relations plan

**Special guests**

- Select legislator honorees
- Confirmations and details regarding honorees
- Contact opening ceremony speakers
- Order honoree plaques
- Solicit volunteers

**During the event**

- Coordinate set up
  - Facilities manager and/or personnel
  - Arrival/welcome of school teams

- Beginning speeches/welcome
- Awards
- Food
  - Snacks
  - Lunch
- Make sure hosts are available to shepherd any special guests
- Media coordination
- Ending speeches

#### **After the event**

- Clean up
- Send thank you notes
  - School teams and their administration
  - Guests
  - Facilities coordinator
- Pay bills
- Media follow up

### **Considerations for a showcase that includes government officials**

#### **Awards as gifts**

- **U.S. Affiliates:** Each state has restrictions on gifts that can be given to a legislator. When thinking about awarding a plaque or some other award, you should make yourself aware of these restrictions. The [National Conference of State Legislatures' Legislator Gift Overview](#) provides the statutes relevant to giving in a specific state in the U.S.
- **International Affiliates:** A search of the internet shows that gift-giving customs to governmental officials vary around the world. This is likely to be true with restrictions on giving gifts such as an award. You should familiarize yourself with any appropriate restrictions in your area.

### **The showcase as an educational opportunity**

It is important to remember that the showcase should be an opportunity to educate government officials on the importance of digital technology in learning. While you may have a specific political agenda, this is not the time to overtly promote your agenda. Consider the following instead:

- Have a folder prepared that, along with other information about the showcase, contains information on the issue.
- Be ready with a few key talking points that 1) illustrate the importance of the issue, and 2) discuss why the government official should take action. It is helpful if these talking points are in the form of a succinct story.

### **Tips for hosting a showcase for local school officials and the community**

The recommendations and suggestions for planning your showcase can easily be scaled down for a local event.

Helpful tips for planning a local showcase:

- Conduct one for your fellow educators as part of a school board meeting or as a professional development event
- Conduct one for your community by holding it at one of the following venues
  - Community event such as a local science fair
  - Shopping mall
  - Service organization
  - Employer