

PLANNING GUIDE

About Career Talks

This guide is intended to assist you with planning and recruiting professional speakers for a Career Talk.

What Is a Career Talk?

Career Talks are guest speaker events where a member of your community is invited to speak to students about their career, career path, and education. These events serve several purposes:

- Introduce students to new careers they may not otherwise have access to.
- Help elevate students' career aspirations and personal goals.
- Provide students with a road map to achieve those goals.

Guest speakers enrich learning by sharing about their careers and offering real-world insights and expertise.

Overview

This planning guide is intended to help you plan for and recruit a guest speaker and facilitate a Career Talk in your school.

Included in this guide are planning considerations, a planning timeline, and template emails for communicating with a guest speaker. You can use these resources as-is or modify them to suit your needs.

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Planning Considerations

Use these guiding questions to help plan your Career Talk.

Connection

What careers could students connect with? What connections could be made between student interests or academic content and specific careers?

Industry or Career

Are there individuals in your community who work in this industry or career who could visit your school in person?

- If so, brainstorm some local organizations or individuals you could contact.
- If not, brainstorm organizations or individuals you could contact who could present to students via videoconference (such as a Zoom meeting).

Date and Time

When do you plan to have your event? Would you like the speaker to present multiple times?

- Check with the speaker early to understand their availability.

School Policies

What is the process for hosting a guest speaker at your school?

- Check your district and/or site policies for obtaining approval for a guest speaker.
- Check your district and/or site policies for day-of procedures for a guest speaker, including identification requirements, check-in procedures, and supervision.

Location

Where in your school will you host the event? Consider space availability and the number of students who will attend.

- If you would like to host the event in a shared space, such as the library or auditorium, be sure to follow any school policies for reserving the space.

Event Preparation

Identifying Need

Career Talks are intended to be flexible with regard to the type of career speaker you would like to invite. You may want to choose a speaker to introduce or wrap up a curriculum unit, connect to club activities, or enhance an activity or project in your class or homeroom period.

If you are unsure what kind of speaker to recruit, it may be helpful to start by gathering data on which careers interest your students. If you do not have interest survey data available, you can have students complete one of the following interest surveys:

- Advance CTE Motivators: k20.ou.edu/8c
- Advance CTE Cluster by Cluster: k20.ou.edu/8d
- O*NET Interest Profiler: k20.ou.edu/8e

Recruiting

Once you have identified the type of professional you would like to invite as a guest speaker, consider using the following tips for finding a career speaker:

- Ask colleagues
- Ask members of your school's Parent-Teacher Association/Organization (PTA/PTO)
- Ask school community partners (i.e. local foundation, Rotary Club, etc.)
- Ask friends and family
- Post a request on social media

Other Considerations

You may want to consider hosting a career speaker via Zoom rather than in person. This can be a helpful approach when the career you want to share with students is not well-represented in your local area.

Consider creating plans for contingencies, including back-up dates in the event of a school closure or other unexpected circumstances.

Use the timeline and checklist provided on pages 4–5 of this document to help plan your Career Talk event.

Timeline

Use this checklist to guide your planning and execution of the Career Talk.

4 Weeks Before Event

- Review the “Planning Considerations” (on page 2) to begin the planning process of having a guest speaker.
- Inform your school administrators that you are looking to host a guest speaker event.
 - Make sure you understand your school’s requirements and expectations for hosting a guest speaker.

Once you have received administrative approval to host a guest speaker:

- Recruit a guest speaker. Use the guidance from the “Event Preparation” section (on page 3).
 - Send an introductory email following the Email 1 template (on page 6).

After receiving confirmation from the speaker:

- Send a confirmation email with preparatory materials following the Email 2 template (on page 7).

2 Weeks Before Event

- Send the speaker a reminder about completing the slides and offer support as needed.
- Confirm location for where Career Talk will be hosted (if needed).

1 Week Before Event

- Send the speaker a logistics email following the Email 3 template (on page 8).
- Remind school administrator(s) that you will be hosting a guest speaker and confirm procedures for having a visitor in the school, such as check-in, identification, and supervision.
 - If hosting virtually, confirm any procedures for having an external participant in a videoconference or Zoom meeting.

2 Days Before Event

- Send the speaker a reminder email following the Email 4 template (on page 9).
 - Consider sharing or confirming any information the speaker may need to know regarding check-in, parking, building processes and procedures, Zoom (videoconferencing) access, etc.
- Print the handouts for students and prepare any additional materials, such as any that the speaker requested be copied for students.

Day of (Facilitation of) Event

- Meet the guest speaker at the office or arrange an escort to your classroom or event space.

After Event

- Send the guest speaker an appreciation email using the Email 5 template (on page 10).

Email Templates

You can copy and paste the templates below and simply fill in the placeholder text designated by brackets and pink text ([example]), or you can modify them as you feel appropriate to reflect the professional you are communicating with and your individual school community.

Email 1: Introduction and Recruiting a Speaker

Use this email to make initial contact with a potential career speaker.

- Send this email from your school email address, even if you have a personal relationship with the person you are contacting. If your contact was provided by a peer, be sure to include them in the first email or allow them to reach out first and include you.
- Be sure to check your district's policy for corresponding with external email addresses and monitor email filters to make sure you do not miss the response.
- An optional line has been added to the second bullet point, highlighted in pink text, that is intended to be used if you would like the speaker to present multiple times in the same day. Delete this line if you prefer.

Subject: Seeking a Career Speaker for Students

[Greeting],

My name is [Name], and I am [role] at [school site] in [City, State]. I would like to invite you to be a guest speaker for a Career Talk event where students will learn about potential career options. This is a great chance for you to share your knowledge with students who are eager to know more about your career!

Event Specifics:

- You would share about your career in a 15–20 minute student-friendly presentation to our [Nth] grade students and answer some questions from the students.
- The event will take place from [time] to [time] on [date(s)]. **If possible, we would like you to give the same presentation [number] times.**
- I will provide a customizable slide deck for you to input your information.

Is this an event that you or a colleague would like to participate in? Please note that this is an unpaid event and you would be donating your time and expertise. If needed, we are happy to provide documentation of volunteer hours.

If you are interested in participating and would like to learn more about the event or have any questions, please email me back at [email] by [date].



Email 2: Confirming the Speaker

Send this email with the following attachments after a speaker has agreed to participate in a Career Talk.

- Guest Speaker Guide
- Guest Speaker Slides (Blank)
- Guest Speaker Slides (Sample)

Subject: Confirming [date(s)] Visit to [school site]

[Greeting],

Thank you so much for agreeing to be the speaker for our Career Talk at [School Name]. We are thrilled to have you on board!

Day of Participation:

To confirm, the event will take place from [time] to [time] on [date(s)].

Depending on your availability, you can either participate in-person at [school site] or via Zoom (or another videoconferencing platform, if you'd prefer). If you'd like to present via videoconference, I will send the link a week before the event.

Please let me know what date and presentation format (virtual or in-person) work best for you.

Presentation Slides:

Attached you will find template slides to help guide your presentation. These slides will help us share your background and career journey with the students in a more personal and engaging way. In addition to the presentation slides, I have also attached a guest speaker guide to help you prepare for your Career Talk presentation.

Please return your completed presentation slides at least one week prior to the event.

Let me know if you have questions and thank you again for volunteering!

Email 3: 1 Week Before the Event

Send this email about a week before the scheduled event. If your speaker will be presenting via videoconference, set up the videoconference event and provide relevant information and/or links for them to join. An example using Zoom is provided in the template below.

Subject: Details for Guest Speaker Presentation on [date]

[Greeting],

Thank you again for agreeing to be our speaker for the Career Talk. As we are getting closer to the event, I wanted to share a few final details to help you prepare.

I'm including an outline below so that you can be familiar regarding the flow of the event and when you'll be speaking.

Day of Event Outline:

- Please arrive at the school by [time].
 - The school's address is [address]. [If needed, include directions for parking].
- You will give your 15–20 minute presentation beginning at [time].
- After your presentation, students will have the opportunity to ask you questions for 5–10 minutes.
- You should be able to leave by [time].

[Since you will be participating via Zoom, here is the link to join with the details of the event:

Benjamin Franklin is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 867 5309 5555

<https://zoom.us/j/86753095555?from=addon>

Thank you so much for partnering with us. We are looking forward to the students getting to learn about you and your career!

If you have any questions as we get closer to the event, please let me know.

Email 4: 2 Days Before the Event

Send one of the following emails 2 days before the event.

In-Person

Subject: Final Details for Career Talk on [date]

[Greeting],

I hope this email finds you well! We are all set for the event on [date]. I wanted to check and see if there is anything else you might need from me before then. I also wanted to check in and see if you need any assistance finishing up the guest speaker slides.

Please make sure to arrive at [school site] no later than [time] to have time to check in at the office where [name] will meet you and escort you to the [classroom or event space].

Please don't hesitate to let me know if there's anything I can assist with to ensure everything runs smoothly.

Looking forward to seeing you soon!

Videoconferencing Presentation

Subject: Final Details for Virtual Career Talk on [date]

[Greeting],

I hope this email finds you well! We are all set for the event on [date]. I wanted to check and see if there is anything else you might need from me before then. I also wanted to check in and see if you need any assistance finishing up the guest speaker slides.

As we will be hosting your presentation via [videoconferencing platform], I want to ensure that you are comfortable and ready for the Career Talk. The link was included in last week's email, but I am also including it here for quick access.

[Benjamin Franklin is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 867 5309 5555

<https://zoom.us/j/86753095555?from=addon>

Please don't hesitate to let me know if there's anything I can assist with to ensure everything runs smoothly.

Looking forward to seeing you over [videoconferencing platform]!



Email 5: Thank You

Send this email within a day after the event. In addition to the email, you may consider inviting students to make or sign thank-you notes to be delivered to the speaker.

Subject: Thank you for your career talk!

[Greeting],

Thank you so much for partnering with us for the Career Talk. We are grateful for the time you took out of your busy schedule to help elevate our students' career aspirations and personal goals!

Your insights will support students in connecting their academic learning and school experiences with real-world careers. Opportunities like this allow students to envision their futures by thinking critically about potential careers and educational paths.

We hope you will consider partnering with us again in the future to provide additional career exploration opportunities for our students.

Sincerely,