

FACILITIES

Policy 701.12-G (previously Policy 901.12-G)

Official School Openings

The following information is designed to assist with the planning of the official opening of schools. Samples of invitations, correspondence etc. from schools which have officially opened in the past few years are available at the office of the Secretary-Treasurer. Please call to view this information, or if any assistance is required.

1. Speakers

There are seven elected School Trustees in Richmond, including the Chairperson of the Board; three Members of the Legislative Assembly; one Member of Parliament; plus a Mayor and eight City Councillors within the Richmond School District. Invitations should be sent a minimum of six to eight weeks before the planned event date under the official signature of the Board Chairperson, with a follow-up phone call to confirm closer to the date. The following should be invited to speak at the official opening:

- Minister of Education (also officially opens)
- Chairperson of the Board of Education (Richmond)
- Superintendent of Schools (Master of Ceremonies)
- Member of Parliament
- Member of Legislative Assembly (for the area)
- Mayor
- School Namesake or Relative (where appropriate)
- Dedicatory Official
- Architect
- Contractor
- Principal

The Minister of Education or designate is to be invited to officially open the school. Please see Appendix "B" Invited Speakers and Guests, for a complete listing of invitees to the ceremony. In addition, others of special involvement in the building of the new school can be invited. All official invitations are to be under the signature of the Chairperson of the Board.

Where a joint facility is being opened, the school opening should be arranged in consultation and in conjunction with the other partners. (e.g. school/community center)

2. Organization

A planning committee including representatives from staff, students and the Parent Advisory Council should be formed as soon as possible after the selection of the opening date.

3. Dedication Plaque and Ceremonial Key

A dedication plaque will need to be ordered through the Manager of Facilities at least five to six weeks before the opening event.

See Board policy 701.11-R Acceptance & Naming of New Facilities for inscription guidelines. The Master of Ceremonies calls upon individuals to participate in the unveiling of the plaque. An engraved ceremonial key is ordered from a local trophy manufacturer.

Please contact the Secretary-Treasurer's office to facilitate. The key is passed from the contractor to the architect to the principal to symbolize the process of completing the facility. Each is asked to say a few words - the contractor to the architect indicating he has completed the plans provided by the architect; the architect to the principal indicating the project is complete according to the design of the school district; the principal accepts the key on behalf of the school district in recognition of receiving ownership of the building.

4. Press Coverage

Invitations to the event will be sent to the local media to be included in "upcoming events" announcements under the Chairperson's signature. Although reporters/photographers seldom attend such events, a special theme or "twist" sometimes attracts media attention.

Press releases and pictures may be sent to the local papers and local cable television before and/or after the event by the school so that coverage may be achieved without attendance by the media.

5. Community Participation

Secondary schools may wish to invite elementary feeder schools and include them, perhaps, in their entertainment program. Consideration should also be given to local community centers and businesses. Elementary schools may wish to consider inviting local pre-schools/daycares.

6. Invitations and Programs

A variety of invitations and programs are available for viewing at the office of the Secretary-Treasurer. Examples range from formal letters to computer-designed or student-made cards. Event programs may also be made in a variety of styles often including student artwork. A school may want to have students draw a picture on each one to personalize the paper.

7. Agenda

The agenda for the event will be dominated by the speeches but this is also an opportunity to show off student achievement. Choirs, bands, drama, dance and slide or video presentations are all effective entertainment and promotion. Student-led tours of the facility prior to the commencement of the ceremony provide an opportunity to exhibit the new school.

8. Decorations

A theme for the entire event often helps determine appropriate decorations, although student work is always a popular sight. It is a nice touch when every student is represented in the decorations for the opening.

9. Refreshments

A cake and coffee/tea/juice provided after the ceremony is usually sufficient. A special treat and/or certificate for the students, provided in their classrooms, can also be added to the evening's events.

10. Photos/Video

A person may be assigned by the school to be the "official photographer" for the opening. However, it is a good idea to have several people contribute to the taking of pictures.

11. Budget

Don't be shy to stretch the budget with contributions from the business community. A local nursery may loan greenery for the decorations; the local bakery may provide a cake for the reception. As well, the dedicatory family, the architect and the contractor may be interested in contributing to the event. Please contact the Secretary-Treasurer's office regarding budget.

12. School Dedication

The following dedication is to be used at official school openings: -

Dear God, you who are the beginning and the end of all we are and all we see, we thank you for the opportunity to continually learn with and from each other. We pray for all who will be part of this school that they will be inspired by the knowledge available to them. We pray that the Principal and staff of this school will provide excellent and sensitive leadership, and be creative in their methods of teaching our children and youth. May they be good role models for the students to follow.

May this be a safe and secure place for our students to learn. We are thankful for those who work hard to continually provide good facilities and a good education for all in our community. We pray for protection for all the staff and students in the many activities and field trips in which they will be involved. May all those who pass through this school be better prepared and able to be a positive member of our community, as well as in society, wherever they will be.

The school is invited to suggest a ministerial representative from any religious denomination within the Richmond community.

The following Action Check List may be helpful as a guideline for preparations for the opening. The list is a suggestion only - some action items may not apply to a school or situation.

Enjoy the event!

Appendix "A"

Action Check List - School Openings

3 Months Prior

- Form Planning Committee
- Contact Secretary-Treasurer's office
- Determine budget
- Determine theme
- Determine location for ceremony and guest assembly

10 Weeks Prior

- Confirm guest list
- Begin planning program
- Begin planning decorations
- Begin planning of refreshments
- Arrange for chairs
- Arrange for podium and staging
- Arrange for plaque stand
- Cancel rentals
- Make initial contacts re: donations

8 Weeks Prior

- Send invitations to speakers and guests from Chairperson
- Order plaque through Manager of Facilities
- Order ceremonial key through Secretary-Treasurer's office

6 Weeks Prior

- Arrange and check sound system
- Designate hosts for parking, welcome, ushering and tours
- Create decorations
- Send invitations to community centers/feeder schools, etc.
- Letter of invitation for inclusion in school newsletters

4 Weeks Prior

- Arrange for volunteers for reception
- Order flowers and corsages (for namesake/relative)
- Order dishes and silverware

2 Weeks Prior

- Confirm plaque, and key
- Write Principal's Welcome
- Arrange for official photographer
- Plan parking strategy if required
- Confirm agenda/program with Board Chairperson

1 Week Prior

- Print programs
- Determine guest list from RSVP's

Administrative Guidelines

- Obtain platform seating arrangements from Secretary-Treasurer's office
- Check sound system
- Decorate gym
- Have podium, stage risers and plaque stand delivered from Maintenance Dept.
- Create name tags for invited guests
- Confirm refreshments
- Confirm dishes and silverware

2 Days Prior

- Hold dress rehearsal
- Evaluate and make necessary revisions to schedule
- Put up signs directing guests to the main entrance of the school
- Have students ensure that classrooms and hallways are clean and tidy

Day Before

- Set up gymnasium
- Check decorations
- Set up plaque and stand
- Pick up/have delivered dishes, napkins, silverware

Day of the Event

- Check sound system
- Pick up flowers and corsages
- Assemble refreshments
- Set out name tags

- Assemble event hosts
- Assemble and brief platform party

After the Event

- Thank you letters to speakers and platform guests from the Chairperson
- Write thank you letters to volunteers and contributors
- Send write-up and pictures to local press (optional)
- Write follow-up article for inclusion in school newsletter

Appendix "B"

Invited Speakers and Guests - School Openings

1. Podium Seating

1. Minister of Education
2. Chairperson of the Board of Education (Richmond)
3. Mayor
4. Member of Parliament
5. Member of Legislative Assembly
6. Namesake/family member
7. School Trustees
8. City Councillors
9. Other elected officials
10. Dedicatory Official
11. Superintendent of Schools and Senior Staff
12. Principal
13. Contractor
14. Architect
15. Manager of Facilities
16. Project Manager

Reserved Seating/Podium (as applicable)

17. Student Council President or student representative
18. Parent Advisory Council Chairperson
19. RTA President
20. CUPE President
21. RASA President
22. RDPA President
23. Other invited guests

In some cases, space is limited on the stage. The above list may be limited/restricted to speakers and Trustees. In the case of a joint opening, the guest list would be expanded in consultation with the other party.

Seating according to protocol will be arranged by the Secretary-Treasurer's office once the attendees have responded.