



Hosting an AASG Conference Tips and Recommendations

Conferences are an exciting opportunity for both the students that attend and the schools that host them. Schools both small and large from throughout the state have hosted past conferences. There have also been schools who have teamed up to co-host conferences. A conference is a major event for your school and community and a great way to show off what makes them great! Plus, the host school receives 10% of the profits from the conference.

Below are some tips and recommendations from past conference organizers.

Establish a conference committee

A conference committee, of between five and ten people, should be formed early in the conference planning process. It is important to check in weekly and then daily as you get near the conference

Pre-Conference

There will no doubt be people who arrive at your conference early. Through you are not required to entertain them, it is a good idea to have some things for them to do.

Food

Budgeting for the food and planning the menus need to be done far in advance of the conference. You can get the food costs figured out using a menu plan. You may have to work around school being in session and not be able to use the school kitchen. If you are using your school's food service, be sure to budget for cafeteria workers.

Opening Ceremonies

Your opening ceremony sets the tone for your conference. It is important to make sure there are people who are responsible and in charge of making things run smoothly. These people can contact all the people who will perform and speak as well as create the schedule.

Meet and Greet

When people arrive in your city it is always great to have someone there with a smiling face to guide them in the right direction. This group of people might also be in charge of organizing the arrival and departure dates of all the groups and organizing transportation to and from the airport if it is needed.

Choosing the Theme

Every conference has a theme. The earlier you select the theme, the more organized your committees will be with logo, t-shirt designs, etc. When thinking of a theme remember that themes that are tied-in throughout the conference—in your workshops, pods, and keynote speaker—are often the most successful. The theme could be pretty much anything, but when narrowing down the ideas think about what makes your town unique and what you can highlight about it. The most successful themes tie the conference together. The main speakers build around it, your dance uses the theme, your logo carries it, and signs and programs use it. Some past themes include:

Fall 2012 – A Conference of Olympic Proportions – Wasilla

Fall 2013 – 8 Stars of Leadership – Juneau

Spring 2013 – Be the Change! – Mt. Edgecumbe

Spring 2016 – Start Small, Finish Big – Kodiak

Fall 2016 – Growing Dreamers Into Leaders – Wasilla

Spring 2017 – Unity Through Diversity – Thunder Mountain, Juneau

For more ideas check out the [Conference History](#) on our AASG website.

Logo

The logo is something that will be carried with your conference from beginning to end. It will be on your shirts and pretty much everything else. This is a great opportunity to get people from your conference involved; ask them to help design the logo. The logo could be as simple as clip art or as intricate as a hand drawn sketch. Get the logo to the Executive Director as soon as possible before the conference for PR purposes such as posting on the web page, etc. Some recent examples include:

Registration

Registration is handled through the AASG website. Registrations are submitted on-line and the AASG accountant keeps tracks of the registrations and the billing with the schools. Conference organizers can get weekly updates from the AASG accountant.

Connecting to Your Community

The great thing about each AASG conference is that you get the opportunity to learn about communities around Alaska. Your school and community are unique. Make sure to give the delegates a glimpse of what it is like to live in your town. Pre-conference tours are a great way to do this, also think about organizing your workshops to highlight your community. Its culture, arts, people who have contributed, history, and geography, are just some ways to incorporate your community into your conference.

Workshops

Every conference has workshops. Those in charge of the workshops (perhaps a small committee) need to establish the schedule and coordinate the workshops and the times. They would also be responsible for designing the method in which people signed up for the workshops at registration and gathering bios from each of the presenters.

Schedule

The schedule is what your conference centers around. It is bound to change many times from the day you create it until the day your folders are printed. Many recommend creating the schedule early in the process; it creates an outline for your thoughts. Be sure to look at the AASG By-Laws and Constitution and keep in mind what elections and other things are happening at your conference. It is important to think about the amount of General Assembly time that has been used in recent conferences. Some conferences have had to add an hour of GA time just to get through the many resolutions. Stay in contact with the vice president, that person should know the approximate number of resolutions.

Donations

The more you can get donated for your conference the better. Everything that is donated reduces your expenditures. Talk to everyone you can. Past conference organizers have gone to their Chamber of Commerce in order to talk to a number of businesses at once. Most companies will donate, you just have to ask. When going to find donations, have a letter that gives your school contact information, some information about AASG and what you are asking them to donate. Most businesses won't be able to give you an immediate answer, so leave the letter and figure out when a good time would be to revisit or call back to talk to the correct person or to pick up their donation. While collecting donations, keep your school tax exempt number handy, some businesses will ask for that information.

Housing

Make sure to put someone in charge of organizing housing, especially if the delegates are housing in your school. When housing people, pay attention to those who are opting to stay in locations other than the school, make sure they are aware of whether you will provide transportation for them.

When allocating the rooms, keep in mind that people like space so don't put too many people in one room. A chaperone needs to be in every room.

Workers

Before the conference begins, make sure that everyone on your student council knows what is happening. Make sure that everyone has jobs and that they know everything that is going on. Be sure the host workers are identifiable to everyone. The t-shirt, a special hat, a vest... some way your helpers can be found. Remember that most of the people at your conference are new to AASG conferences and new to your school. Be sure the workers all know what is going on and can answer questions.

Speaker

Your keynote speaker can either enthuse the audience or bore them. When deciding on the speaker, think of people who you have heard speak before, people who you know are interesting to listen to.

Plan for an exciting fun time!

More information on hosting a conference and the application forms can be found on our AASG website at: [Hosting a Conference](#).

If you'd like to discuss the idea of hosting a conference, you can contact past conference hosts Elizabeth Bender (ebender01@kibsd.org) or Danielle Lewis (Lewis_Danielle@asdk12.org) or write to the AASG executive director, Kathleen Navarre (kathleen@asaa.org).

We're sure you'll find that hosting a conference is a rich and rewarding experience for you, your students and your school.