

# TEXAS FFA ASSOCIATION



## LDE Planning Guide

# **Introduction**

This guide has been developed to assist Texas Agricultural Science Instructors in planning their respective district and area leadership development events.

In the past, many teachers have been entrusted with the organizing and setting up of their LDE meets. Many of the individuals who accept this role are experts in all phases of the LDE program and masters of organization. However, when districts assign new people as coordinators, it creates the possibility of throwing a volunteer into unfamiliar territory—

and into a pressure situation in which there are specific performance expectations which the novice coordinator might not be equipped to meet. Others may be familiar with many event aspects, but are less familiar with some events or have never contemplated the logistical requirements to conduct a district or area meet. This guide is designed to assist teachers by giving them a time frame as to the what, whens and hows of planning a leadership development event competition to provide tools to ensure that the hours preparation invested by teachers and students to produce a quality entry is not undermined by a poorly run event.

The Texas FFA Association owes many thanks to the individuals that helped to put this guide together. Without their participation this guide would not have been possible.

## **TEXAS FFA LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT EVENT GUIDE** **ORIGINAL COMMITTEE**

***Paul Booth; AST Midlothian ISD – Chairman***

### **Committee Members**

**Mark McClure; AST Cleburne ISD**

**Kevin Sword; AST Diboll ISD**

**Rex Curry; AST Warren ISD**

**Wendy Meadows; AST Iowa Park ISD**

**Jeff Klose; AST Lubbock Cooper ISD**

## **Top Priorities**

This topic is one that is left to the last minute. Typically, agriculture science teachers are busy nearly every waking hour of every day. It is very easy to have the attitude, "I HAVE PLENTY OF TIME". Then you wake up one morning and say, "OH MY GOSH", or some other flowery statement, "THE CONTEST IS ONLY TWO WEEKS AWAY". You then try to locate judges, and hear the time worn phrase "I would like to come, BUT I am busy this year. Make sure you call me next year". Your thoughts then turn to "It will be somebody else's problem next year. I need you *this year*".

The following guide is designed to give you a time reference as to when you should be considering the items you need to conduct a successful leadership development event. **This timeline is constructed for those that have November LDE's. If your contest is in October, adjust this timeline to fit your specific schedule.**

### **□ 1. Date & Location**

- ★ The date and location of your contest should be confirmed at the ATAT Conference.
- ★ Some larger venues need at least a year notice to book.
- ★ **MAKE SURE THAT THE SITE YOU CHOOSE HAS APPROPRIATE SHOP SIZE FOR SKILLS EVENT.** There is no set size for a shop. You should ask the teachers who will be competing in the skills event, how much room they will need to properly conduct their skill. Use the largest area needed from this poll to determine the size needed. Take into account electricity.
- ★ **If the event site is a school.** The Agriculture Science Instructor should contact the school's administration to receive approval to host your LDE contest. The event should have the approval of the administration and the date should be entered on the schools calendar. The last thing you need is to be competing with other groups for contest space. Make sure that the school you have chosen has adequate shop facilities to conduct the skill demonstration events—greenhand and chapter divisions. If the event historically draws several skill teams, you might need to run both divisions concurrently. Schools with a small shop might not be a good choice.
- ★ **Rooms**
  - 4 Rooms for Creeds
  - 3 Rooms Big enough for props - Advocacy, PR, Issues
  - 2 Rooms Set for Chapter Conducting
  - 2 Shops for Skills
  - Quiz Room - Remember entry and exit has to be monitored
    - You will need one large room, such as an auditorium or library to conduct your quiz event. Ideally, this room should have enough area to allow for adequate student spacing.
  - 4 Rooms for Job Interview - Application, Phone, Interview, Follow Up
  - 2 Rooms for Radio
- ★ **Headquarters:** One room should be designated as the central meeting place for judges and event volunteers. Judges should know to bring results to this room.
- ★ **Environmental Conditions:**
  - In making room assignments, take into consideration possible noise and perhaps visual distractions outside windows. Having constant pedestrian traffic in and around contest rooms must be avoided. The utmost care must

be taken to ensure that these students have an ideal performance environment, free of noise and distractions which can undermine months of preparation.

- Protecting the integrity of the event should be considered as well. If there is considerable event-related traffic, something that is overheard in a hallway can give a team a competitive advantage and compromise the event.

## □ 2. Judges

- ★ Start early!
- ★ Create a spreadsheet for each contest with judges information listed. Do you need quiz proctors?
- ★ Know how many judges you will need to conduct your contest. People that are new to setting up a contest might not realize how many are needed. Also, if possible, you might secure a couple of extra to help in case of last minute no-shows. A good rule of thumb is *three for each event*. A consensus from the teachers in your district, as to how many in each they would settle for, would be a good idea.
- ★ Teachers in your district could be polled as to who they would like to see judge the different events. Several names should be submitted, and the names should be prioritized. Contact the people that you can at this time, this way you can get a jump on everyone else.
- ★ Remember, some of these teachers are asked to judge several contests each year. The earlier you can get your judges in place the fewer headaches you will have later.
- ★ Send a calendar invite through email, or set up reminder emails to out.
- ★ Utilize the [Corduroy Network](#)
- ★ When selecting your judges, make sure that you put a lot of thought into this process. By selecting the right people to judge your events, you will eliminate many problems.
- ★ Select judges who have had experience training the event you are asking them to judge. Also try to select people who have had success training a team for the contest that you are asking them to judge.
- ★ Current teachers are the best choice, but retired teachers or teachers who have moved into private business or administration will work as well.
- ★ Make sure that your judges know the current rules of the contest you are asking them to judge. Rules do change from time to time, and if you have been using non-teachers, they may not know what these changes are.
- ★ Make sure that you select judges who understand and will not have a problem working with you with their contest schedule. Make sure that they are aware that students can and do participate in more than one event. If you call them to judge and their first comment is, "WHEN WILL I BE THROUGH?" this might send up a red flag for you.

## □ 3. Materials

- ★ Get input from your district advisors as to whom they recommend to write the FFA Quiz, and who they recommend to write the chapter conducting problems.
- ★ Contact these people ASAP, and ask them to commit to supporting your event in these roles. Give them the times and dates of your contest and receive confirmation of their participation.

- ★ Many of the universities will help you by developing these materials for your contest. Sam Houston State University will post the order form if you would like to get materials from them. They will only provide materials on certain days.
- ★ Are you using eRubrics?
- ★ Quiz Scantrons
  - Do you need someone to scan the scantrons?

## 4. Deadlines

- ★ ENTRY DEADLINE AND FEES
  - If you are using JudgingCard, email them to get it set up as soon as you have a date.
  - This is a must! Without a deadline for your entries you open the possibility of last-minute entries, which can undermine your participation schedule, and create problems with your judges' schedules and your overall schedule. The district should have some policy which discourages late entries (such as double entry fees) or prohibits them.
- ★ Your district should also have a rule in place which requires chapters to pay for all entries made whether they bring them or not. This discourages schools from entering everything and bringing only one or two, which creates chaos in your scheduling and undermines the financial standing of the event.
- ★ JUDGES DEADLINE
  - It is recommended that you have your judge list final at least two months before your event. This will allow you to have time to secure judges if the first people you call decline. You need to make contact with your judges two weeks before your contest. This will ensure that they are still committed, and if you need to replace a judge, you have time to locate the replacement.
- ★ You need to make 100% sure that you have food for the judges and students, if you are committed to providing meals or snacks. Make sure that who is bringing this understands what to bring, when to have it in place, and for how many they should plan.
- ★ Providing Meals for the District/Area, set a deadline - A good rule of thumb is to add at least 10% to the total anticipated number.
  - If using a venue that serves this deadline may be earlier than the contest deadline.
- ★ Roster Deadlines. Some districts require that each competing team turn in an up-to-date roster to verify membership.

## *Timeline*

### **Two (2) Months Before Event**

- Send out an email to all the advisors in your district with all of the contest information. If your district has a website, it is always prudent to post all information to this site to account for lost mail or undeliverable email.
  - ★ Date and time
  - ★ Deadline for entries **(this date should be soon enough to see if Judges and space requirements need to be adjusted)**
  - ★ Entry fee amounts, to whom checks are made payable to and where to send entry fees and forms.

★ Include any additional information that your particular contest has. (**Such as Job Interview Documents, Statement of Originality**)

- Try to secure judges, send them a calendar invite or something to make sure it is on their calendar.
- Secure Quiz Scanner
- Make sure you secure your contest materials, **the less people who see the purchased materials the more secure the contrast will be.**
- Order Awards for Contest.
  - ★ Know what your budget is and what type of awards you will need. Make sure that the vendors(s) from which you are ordering are licensed to reproduce the FFA trademarks, know when your contest is, when you need your awards and where they will need to be sent.
  - ★ IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO HAVE YOUR AWARDS DELIVERED AT LEAST TWO (2) WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT. This way if there are mistakes, they can be corrected before the event.
  - ★ If you order pins for team or individual awards, it would be good to have them delivered earlier if possible. It takes longer to get these replaced.
- Get with the District/Area Officer COordinator and discuss any needs

### **One (1) Month Before Event**

- Send out a reminder email to advisors on entries, at least four weeks before the event.
- Start making a list of physical items that will be needed at your contest.
  - Chapter Packets
    - Map
    - Meal tickets
  - Chapter Conducting Materials
  - Radio Speakers & Mics
  - Judges Packets
    - Rules
    - Score Sheet/ Ranks Sheet
    - Critique Sheets
- Make a site visit to your chosen event location (if new) to make sure rooms and shops are adequate for each contest.
  - Location for students to wait to compete and to eat

### **Two (2) Weeks Before Event**

- Send out an email to the advisor of the district officer team, if they have a part in the awards ceremony, to make sure that the district officers know when to be there and what they are to do. If there is a formal awards program, provide a suggested agenda. The president may need to have prepared remarks for a welcome and other officers may need to prepare other speaking parts.
- Send out an email to the judges with information for judges meeting or check in

time. Include maps.

- Send and post online out a final schedule to each advisor letting them know:
  - When they are to compete.
  - Where event headquarters are and where each event will be held—performance and prep rooms.
  - Where to park.
- Print Rotations
  - 1 for judges packets
  - 1 for outside the room
- If a team drops out at the last minute, make sure that all advisors know that they should plan to move up. Making judges wait for an extended period of time between teams is not very considerate of your judges. Remember they are gratuitously giving their time to come judge your contest.
- Make sure that you have arranged for all of the paraphernalia that you will need.
  - Station Markers (two sets)
  - Gavel (two)
  - Portable screens, or rooms that have screens on a wall that will accommodate the LDE's that require them.
  - Podiums for chapter conducting rooms
  - Flags
  - Scanners for grading quizzes if deemed necessary
  - Scan sheets appropriate for your scanners (check this!)
  - Extra Pencils
- Make sure that your event site rooms have been cleared with the teacher that uses them, and that there will be PROPER and adequate seating and tables for the contestants and judges. Advise the teachers whose rooms you are using to clear any valuables or breakable things from the room. FFA contestants are normally very respectful of property, but having these things out of the room or put away alleviates any potential accidents or questions.

### **Contest Day!**

- Food Arrangements
- Have District/Area Officers organize awards
- Contest Rooms are set up correctly and unlocked
- Judges Packets are at check in or in the rooms
- Updates Rotations
  - Posted on the rooms
  - Given to Judges