



Groundbreakings and Dedications

A Tool Kit for Ohio School Districts

Prepared by the Ohio School Facilities Commission
Rev. August 2007



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MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents

FROM: Michael C. Shoemaker, Executive Director

DATE: August 2007

SUBJECT: Groundbreakings and Dedications - A Tool Kit for Ohio School Districts

The Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC) is proud to be a partner in construction of new educational facilities across the state. The construction and celebration of a new school is an important milestone in the history of a school district and its community.

While every construction project is unique to the individual school and school district, there are some common ways to assure your celebrations are successful and memorable. This tool kit has been developed to help you plan and implement school groundbreakings and dedications for the best possible outcome. It includes guidance and helpful tips for:

- Creating a guest list
- Enlisting the participation of the governor's office or other state offices
- Assuring public participation
- Planning your event's agenda and program
- Working with the media

We hope this tool kit will be helpful to you as you plan your next event. We also welcome the opportunity to share in the excitement with your students, teachers, administrators and community members. While OSFC staff cannot always attend these events, we do attend as many as possible.

In the meantime, if you have more questions about scheduling groundbreaking or dedication ceremonies, please feel free to contact us at 614-466-6290.

About the Ohio School Facilities Commission

History: Established in May 1997 by the 122nd General Assembly.

Mission: To provide funding, management oversight, and technical assistance to Ohio school districts for the construction and renovation of school facilities in order to create an appropriate learning environment for Ohio's school children.

Makeup: Three voting members (the Director of the Department of Administrative Services, the Director of the Office of Budget and Management, and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction) and four nonvoting members (one Republican and one Democrat from each house of the Ohio General Assembly).

Funding: Appropriations to OSFC from 1998 to 2007 have totaled more than \$6.9 billion. To date, OSFC milestones include: \$5.5 billion disbursed to school districts; over 141 buildings under construction; over 150 buildings currently in active design; more than 480 new/renovated buildings have opened; and 114 school districts fully completed—affecting the lives of more than 182,000 Ohio school children.

Key Programs: Classroom Facilities Assistance Program (CFAP).
Established in 1997, CFAP is the oldest state-funded OSFC program. Ohio law requires the CFAP program to begin with the state's lowest wealth districts and provide funding for the entire facilities need within a district.

Exceptional Needs Program.

This initiative is a building replacement program for school districts whose buildings pose a health and safety risk to their students. The building involved must need replacement as opposed to expansion or renovation.

Expedited Local Partnership Program.

The Partnership program allows school districts to fund a distinct portion of their Master Facilities Plan through local monies prior to becoming eligible for the CFAP. Once a district enters CFAP, they receive credit against their required local contribution for the work completed under the ELPP.

Energy Conservation Program.

This program (frequently referred to as "the HB 264 program") allows school districts with older buildings to borrow funds, without a vote of the public, to make energy-saving facilities improvements.

Groundbreaking Timeline and Task List

When	What	Responsible	Status
90 days before	Determine possible dates based on construction schedule, school calendar and availability of project partners		
80 days prior	Finalize date and time		
60 days prior	Develop guest list		
	Contact vendors to reserve rental of tent, chairs, outdoor carpet, sound equipment, etc.		
	Order shovels		
	Develop media list for advisory		
	Develop community invitations		
	Develop and send letters of invitation to state and local officials		
	Notify OSFC		
45 days prior	Arrange for color project renderings and display easels		
Two weeks before	Send invitations to community groups		
	Finalize speakers and other participants		
	Draft and finalize news release and advisory		
	Draft and finalize script/agenda based on dignitaries in attendance		
	Develop fact sheet		
Week before	Send media advisory fax/e-mail with fact sheet attached		
Two days before	Follow up calls to stations/papers		
	Arrange TV interviews		
Day of	Hold event		
Immediately after <i>(day after, if event late in day)</i>	Send news release and building rendering to media not in attendance		
	Send thank you notes to dignitaries, participants and other significant attendees.		

Considerations for Invitations

Groundbreaking Ceremonies

Planning your groundbreaking ceremony should include consideration for those whom you plan to invite. The calendars for public officials are often set weeks or months in advance, so the earlier you contact your potential guests, the more chance there will be for their participation. Additionally, the more you can highlight aspects of the project that relate to their public mission, the more interest they will have in attending.

A few other things to consider are proper representation of:

- Partners involved in the project.
- Those who will use the building.
- Local and state officials.
- Appropriate representatives of the general public

Potential Invitees

Project partners:

- Ohio School Facilities Commission: Director, Project Administrators, and/or Planning Director
- Construction managers
- Architect
- School board
- Superintendent

Building users:

- Teachers
- Students
- Parents
- Non-teaching school staff (custodians, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, etc.)
- Sponsors of after-school programs

State and local officials:

- Governor
- Local State Representative and Senator
- Mayor or city council president
- County commissioners
- Township trustees

Community members:

- Neighborhood association president
- Parent-teacher organization
- Police or sheriff's department
- Local benefactors, such as businesses who sponsor or support programs for kids
- Children's agencies that are active in the school district
- News media

Contacting State Officials

It is appropriate to invite the Governor or another ranking state official, the Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC), and local members of the Ohio General Assembly to your groundbreaking. While state officials generally appreciate an invitation, they have complicated schedules and must choose from a number of competing events that may be occurring at the same time. Following a few simple guidelines will improve your chances that one or more of them will attend your celebration. For example:

- Provide at least 60 days notice to the Governor's Office, OSFC or other state department.
- Provide a cover letter that explains the significance of the project and its value to the state of Ohio.
- Include any facts that make your project historic or unique.
- Include the names of other key invitees.
- Keep the letter to one page.
- With the letter, include a draft agenda that indicates the role the invitee would play in the event.
- Include a formal invitation that notes the name of the event, its time, date and place.

Nearly all state officials have publicly posted contact information on the Internet. While they may provide a method for contacting them using e-mail, a formal invitation for your groundbreaking ceremony **should be made in a letter sent by U.S. mail**. Contact information for state officials includes:

Governor

The Honorable Ted Strickland
30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-466-3555
<http://governor.ohio.gov>

Lt. Governor

The Honorable Lee Fisher
30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614 466-3396
<http://governor.ohio.gov>

Ohio School Facilities Commission

Michael C. Shoemaker, Executive Director
Ohio School Facilities Commission
10 W. Broad St., Suite 1400
Columbus, OH 43215
614-466-6290
<http://osfc.ohio.gov>

State Superintendent of Education

Susan Tave Zelman
Ohio Department of Education
7th floor
25 South Front Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-466-7578
www.ode.state.oh.us

Ohio House of Representatives

<http://www.house.state.oh.us/jsps/Representatives.jsp>

Ohio Senate

<http://www.senate.state.oh.us/senators/>

Sample Letter to State and Local Officials

Groundbreaking Ceremonies

Chrisney Consolidated ***school district***

February 4, 2007

The Honorable []
[Address]

Dear [],

(Introduction, date and other key facts) On April 15, the Chrisney Consolidated School District will break ground on a new high school that, when complete, will provide a modern learning environment for 1,200 students in grades nine through 12. I am writing to invite you to this exciting celebration.

(Significance of school building, key facts about construction planning/process) This new school will be named Henry Sullivant High School after the first teacher in Spring Township in the early 1800s. Sullivant High will be our community's first new high school in more than 30 years, and was planned and designed with parent, student, teacher and community involvement over an 18-month period. When it opens for classes in August 2008, it will offer a number of new technology-related courses that will benefit our students as they enter the Ohio workforce in the coming years.

(Request for attendance and remarks) We would be honored if you would be our guest at the groundbreaking [if appropriate: and perhaps say a few words to attendees about the value of secondary school programs to Ohio's/our community's economy and workforce]. We have also invited State Rep. [name] and Sen. [name]; Chrisney's mayor and city council; some of our student leaders and a number of supportive businesses and community organizations.

(Enclosures and closing) I have enclosed a tentative agenda for the event, indicating where you would appear on the program if you are able to participate. I have also enclosed a formal invitation with the time and location. If you or a member of your staff should have any questions, I would be glad to answer them.

Sincerely,

Dr. Celeste A. Tarver
Superintendent
Chrisney CSD

475 Rice Street • Chrisney, OH 43215 • 555-555-5555 • fax: 555-555-5555 • info@ccsd.edu

Sample Groundbreaking Invitations



The Chrisney Consolidated School District Invites You

**To join us in celebrating the groundbreaking
For the new Henry Sullivant High School**

**10 a.m., Friday, April 15, 2007
1607 E. Studebaker St.
Chrisney, Ohio**

*Please RSVP to Tonya Twill at 555-555-5555 by April 5
(Map enclosed with parking instructions)*

Event Logistics: Groundbreakings

While groundbreakings and dedications have many things in common, they differ from each other in important ways that cannot be overlooked during the planning stage. Following are some things to think about as you plan your groundbreaking.

Dealing with the Elements and Initial Considerations

Because groundbreakings are scheduled around the construction calendar, flexibility is not always possible when setting a date. Weather is always a factor with groundbreakings, especially during cold weather. It's important that guests have protection from the elements if weather turns wet or windy.

Some things to include in your planning include:

- A tent or awning. This shelter will need to be big enough for all guests to stand under should weather turn bad, so you will want to consider both the size of the awning and the number of guests invited.
- Some kind of ground covering, such as outdoor carpet, to both soften the ground and protect guests from muddy conditions.
- Number of guests. Because you will need to provide protection from rain or snow, make sure you have invited no more participants than can be accommodated under a tent or awning.
- A "Plan B". Be prepared to move indoors if worse comes to worst. Because a groundbreaking is a purely symbolic event, it can be held anywhere – even in a nearby building where a sandbox can substitute for the real thing.
- U.S. and Ohio Flags. These should flank the podium where speakers will talk or the groundbreaking area, with the U.S. flag on the left (as the audience is looking at the podium) and the Ohio flag on the right.
- A way to involve students. After all, schools are built for the education of the community's children – involving students is key to a successful groundbreaking.

Type and Length of Program

Groundbreakings are the symbolic start of construction. As such, there is not much to see. The success of groundbreakings are measured by how well guests are able to visualize the future building and its importance to children and the community.

The superintendent should preside over both groundbreakings and dedications, though it is also appropriate for the school board president, the construction manager, an OSFC representative and others to participate. Visiting dignitaries, such as the governor, should also be offered the opportunity to speak. However, because of the weather factor, groundbreakings should be kept simple and brief, no more than a half-hour in length. Limit speakers to two or three minutes each, if possible, with no more than five for the main speaker.

Content of Remarks and Program

Comments should focus on the significance of the project. Plan to include the following:

- Cost and timetable for construction.
- How many children will be served.
- New educational capabilities that were not possible before.
- Interesting details about the new school, such as how many bricks it will take, how many gallons of paint, how many construction jobs it will support, etc.

Event Logistics: Groundbreakings (cont'd)

- Student entertainment or remarks – may include the pledge of allegiance led by an elementary student, participation in the actual “dig” by a student leader, or a musical number performed by a student group.

You will also need shovels and hard hats for each of the dignitaries participating in the official groundbreaking. Hard hats can be purchased from local hardware stores, or check with the construction manager (who oftentimes will provide these items on loan to the school) to get the name and contact information of a company from which to purchase hats. You can purchase regular shovels at the local hardware or home improvement store and decorate them by painting the handles and blades with your school colors using spray paint or tying bows at the base of the handle (top of the blade) with ribbons in your school colors.

You will also need to designate someone to line up the dignitaries, pass out hard hats and shovels and take photographs. The superintendent, board president or student leader should lead the dig once all dignitaries are lined up by saying “one...two...three...dig.” At that time, all dignitaries place their shovels into the dirt and dig at the same time.

Be sure to include color renderings that are large enough for a TV camera to get a good shot of it. Plan to distribute smaller renderings to print reporters and guests, along with a fact sheet listing key elements of the project.

Chrisney Consolidated
school district

TODAY'S AGENDA

- 10:00 a.m.** Welcome and special acknowledgements: Superintendent
- Pledge of Allegiance or Star Spangled Banner by student or student group (note: *be sure to have a flag visible from groundbreaking location*)
- 10:05 a.m.** Welcome by School Board President
- 10:10 a.m.** Welcome from the Mayor
- 10:15 a.m.** Remarks by visiting dignitaries, OSFC director (or another OSFC representative) and student leader(s) – Shovels and hard hats distributed
- 10:25 a.m.** Groundbreaking and photographs (“one...two...three...dig!”)
Marching Band plays “On the Campus” by John Phillip Sousa
- 10:30 a.m.** Closing

Inviting the Media

If your building project is important enough to hold groundbreaking ceremonies, you should consider inviting the local media. However, an invitation is not a guarantee that reporters will attend. Competing news of the day, staffing issues, time of your event and other factors all will influence news coverage.

Identifying the News

Because groundbreakings are symbolic, and because no building yet exists, the media do not always consider groundbreakings to be news. That's why it is important to spell out the significance of the project and to provide a "news hook" that the media believes will be of interest to their viewers and readers.

When inviting media, be sure to emphasize the significance of the project itself: the "firsts" it represents, the new capabilities it will provide, the benefits to the community.

While the most important thing is the project itself, an interesting groundbreaking or dedication program – especially one with a strong visual component – will improve your chances of media coverage.

For example, some kind of student participation activity – a musical performance, perhaps – is more interesting than a talking head at a microphone. By including children, your event will also call attention to those whom the project will ultimately serve.

Because no building yet exists when groundbreaking ceremonies are held, be sure to provide large color renderings of the building that TV cameras can focus in on. Distribute to print reporters smaller renderings of high enough quality to be reproducible.

To communicate with the media efficiently and succinctly, two tools are essential: the media advisory and the news release.

Media Advisory

A media advisory is a one-page invitation to reporters. It contains the “who, what, where and when” information about the ceremony you are planning. The media generally do not need as much lead time as state and local officials who are asked to participate. But you should be mindful of their deadlines and make sure they have a day or two of warning.

The advisory is intended to entice the media to cover the ceremony as news. A sample media advisory follows.

Chrisney Consolidated
school district

Chrisney Schools to Break Ground for New Building

WHO: Name of your school district

WHAT: Description of event

WHEN: Day, date and time of your event

WHERE: Location of your event, including address, suite/floor number, parking information and any other pertinent details

PROGRAM INFORMATION: Include a general overview of what media can hope to learn by attending the ceremony. Tell them why the new building is important, who is planning to be there and any photo opportunities

CONTACT PERSON: Who will be the key contact for media interested in attending the news conference? Also, whom can they contact for interviews if they are unable to attend?

475 Rice Street • Chrisney, OH 43215 • 555-555-5555 • fax: 555-555-5555 • info@ccsd.edu

News Release

The news release contains the central announcement of the event. It is distributed the day of the event to attending media, and it is also distributed to those media who were unable to attend the event. ***The release should only be distributed at or following your event – never beforehand.*** News releases should be formatted using double spaced type.

The news release should lead with the announcement that warranted the ceremony, capture key background information about your project and provide a contact for additional information. A sample news release format follows.

Chrisney Consolidated *school district*

NEWS RELEASE

March 21, 2007

Lt. Governor, Community **Kick off Sullivant High School Construction** *More than 200 on hand for groundbreaking ceremonies*

CHRISNEY – *(Introductory paragraph featuring the announcement taking place)* More than 200 community residents and state officials Friday celebrated the start of construction for Henry Sullivant High School, Chrisney’s first new high school since 1973.

(Set up quote by superintendent or other school district leader) Flanked by Lt. Gov. Lee Fisher and 75 members of the Chrisney High School marching band, Superintendent Celeste A. Tarver called the school a milestone.

(Quote from superintendent designed to focus on the significance of the project) “Henry Sullivant High School is the product of parent, student, teacher and community involvement over a year and a half process,” said Tarver. “It will provide a modern learning environment in which 1,200 students will find new opportunities in the areas of high technology, the arts and sports. This is a landmark event for Chrisney and its educational system.”

(Provide more detail about the school, expected completion date, size and cost) The new school is named after Henry Sullivant, the first teacher in Spring Township in the early 1800s. When completed in August 2008, the \$58-million, 355,000-square-foot school on East Studebaker Street will become the district’s second four-year high school. Extensive renovations at Chrisney High School, built in 1973, will begin this summer.

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(Quote or paraphrase from dignitary) Lt. Gov. Fisher welcomed the opening of the school as a model for community-wide cooperation and the recognition that good local education programs produce positive ripples throughout Ohio's economy.

“The fact that even elementary school students were consulted in the planning of this facility shows that the administration and the community are serious about meeting local needs,” Fisher said. “What those elementary students may not have realized is the extent to which Sullivant High School will benefit the workers of tomorrow and the entire Ohio economy.”

Thirty percent of the funding for the construction of the school will be made possible through the Ohio School Facilities Commission, which will also assist with the planning and construction of the new building.

(More details about the event) Also attending were Chrisney Mayor James “Chuck” Jorgensen, State Rep. [name], members of the Chrisney City Council and the Chrisney High School Marching Band, which played Sousa's “On the Campus” as guests officially broke ground.

###

CONTACT: Name of organization media contact
 Telephone number where contact can be reached

Dedication Timeline and Task List

When	What	Responsible	Status
90 days before	Determine possible dates based on construction schedule, school calendar and availability of project partners		
80 days prior	Finalize date and time		
	Determine gifts or takeaways, if any, for participants or attendees (for example, framed photo of new building, commemorative plaque,		
60 days prior	Develop guest list		
	Contact vendors to reserve food, banners, etc.		
	Develop media list for advisory		
	Develop community invitations		
	Develop and send letters of invitation to state and local officials		
	Notify OSFC		
45 days prior	Determine tour details: building features to highlight and who leads		
Two weeks before	Send invitations to community groups		
	Finalize speakers and other participants		
	Draft and finalize news release and advisory		
	Draft and finalize script/agenda based on dignitaries in attendance		
	Develop fact sheet		
	Produce building photos for media		
	Take delivery of gifts or takeaways		
Week before	Send media advisory fax/e-mail with fact sheet attached		
Two days before	Follow up calls to stations/papers		
	Arrange TV interviews		
Day before	Set up for event		
Day of	Receive food deliveries		
	Hold event		
Immediately after <i>(day after, if event late in day)</i>	Send news release and building rendering to media not in attendance		
	Send thank you notes to dignitaries, participants and other significant attendees.		

Considerations for Invitations

Dedication Ceremonies

Planning your building dedication should include consideration for those whom you plan to invite. The calendars for public officials are often set weeks or months in advance, so the earlier you contact your potential guests, the more chance there will be for their participation. Additionally, the more you can highlight aspects of the project that relate to their public mission, the more interest they will have in attending.

A few other things to consider are proper representation of:

- Partners involved in the project
- Those who will use the building
- Local and state officials
- Appropriate representatives of the general public

Potential Invitees

Project partners:

- Ohio School Facilities Commission: Director, Project Administrators and/or Planning Director
- Construction managers
- Architect
- School board
- Superintendent

Building users:

- Teachers
- Students
- Parents
- Non-teaching school staff (custodians, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, etc.)
- Sponsors of after-school programs

State and local officials:

- Governor
- Local State Representative and Senator
- Mayor or city council president
- County commissioners
- Township trustees

Community members:

- Neighborhood association president
- Parent-teacher organization
- Police or sheriff's department
- Local benefactors, such as businesses who sponsor or support programs for kids
- Children's agencies that are active in the school district
- News media

Contacting State Officials

It is appropriate to invite the Governor or another ranking state official, the Ohio School Facilities Commission (OSFC), and local members of the Ohio General Assembly to your dedication. While state officials generally appreciate an invitation, they have complicated schedules and must choose from a number of competing events that may be occurring at the same time. Following a few simple guidelines will improve your chances that one or more of them will attend your celebration. For example:

- Provide at least 60 days notice to the Governor's Office, OSFC or other state department.
- Provide a cover letter that explains the significance of the project and its value to the state of Ohio.
- Include any facts that make your project historic or unique.
- Include the names of other key invitees.
- Keep the letter to one page.
- With the letter, include a draft agenda that indicates the role the invitee would play in the event.
- Include a formal invitation that notes the name of the event, its time, date and place.

Nearly all state officials have publicly posted contact information on the Internet. While they may provide a method for contacting them using e-mail, a formal invitation for your dedication ceremony **should be made in a letter sent by U.S. mail**. Contact information for state officials includes:

Governor

The Honorable Ted Strickland
30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-466-3555
<http://governor.ohio.gov>

Lt. Governor

The Honorable Lee Fischer
30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614 466-3396
<http://governor.ohio.gov>

Ohio School Facilities Commission

Michael C. Shoemaker, Executive Director
Ohio School Facilities Commission
10 W. Broad St., Suite 1400
Columbus, OH 43215
614-466-6290
<http://osfc.ohio.gov>

State Superintendent of Education

Susan Tave Zelman
Ohio Department of Education
7th floor
25 South Front Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-466-7578
www.ode.state.oh.us

Ohio House of Representatives

<http://www.house.state.oh.us/jsps/Representatives.jsp>

Ohio Senate

<http://www.senate.state.oh.us/senators/>

Sample Letter to State and Local Officials

Dedication Ceremonies

Chrisney Consolidated ***school district***

July 21, 2007

The Honorable []
[Address]

Dear [],

(Introduction, date and other key facts) On September 21, the Chrisney Consolidated School District will dedicate Henry Sullivant High School, our first new high school in more than 30 years. We are excited to offer this modern learning environment to 1,200 students in grades nine through 12, and would like you to attend as our guest, should your schedule permit.

(Significance of school building, key facts about construction planning/process) Sullivant High School is named after the first teacher in Spring Township in the early 1800s, but is solidly focused on the future of our young people. When it opens in late August, it will offer a number of new technology-related courses that will benefit our students as they enter the Ohio workforce in the coming years.

(Planned agenda for event) We have invited State Rep. [name] and Sen. [name], Chrisney Mayor Jorgensen and the City Council, our students and faculty, and a number of supportive businesses and community organizations to share in this celebration. The dedication will consist of a short opening program, guided tours of the facility and a closing ceremony that will feature the Forest Center Elementary School choir, incoming members of the Sullivant High School Marching Band and the presentation of an American flag by the Chrisney Evening Optimists.

(Enclosures and invitation/remarks request) We would be honored if you would be our guest at the groundbreaking [if appropriate: and perhaps say a few words to attendees about the value of secondary school programs to Ohio's/our community's economy and workforce]. I have enclosed a tentative agenda for the event, indicating where you would appear on the program if you are able to participate. I have also enclosed a formal invitation with the time and location.

(Closing) I certainly hope you will be able to attend this milestone event for our community. If you or a member of your staff should have any questions, I would be glad to answer them.

Sincerely,

Dr. Celeste A. Tarver
Superintendent

475 Rice Street • Chrisney, OH 43215 • 555-555-5555 • fax: 555-555-5555 • info@ccsd.edu



The Chrisney Consolidated School District Invites You

***To join us in dedicating
Henry Sullivant High School
1607 E. Studebaker St.
Chrisney, Ohio***

***Wednesday, September 21
5:30 p.m. ribbon cutting
5:45 p.m. remarks by state and local dignitaries
6:15 p.m. tours and reception***

Please RSVP to Tonya Twill at 555-555-5555 by September 12

GO HAWKS!

Event Logistics: Dedications

Dedication programs have a big advantage over groundbreaking: you have a great visual – a new building. You can plan the entire program inside, or hold part of it – such as a flag-raising or ribbon cutting – outside.

Numbers of Guests

Because most schools have enough seating for large groups, it's usually possible to invite a larger portion of the community than for groundbreaking. Invite as many people as can comfortably sit in a common meeting place and as many as can be accommodated on tours.

Type and Length of Program

The dedication is an opportunity to thank those who have made the new building possible and to show it off to the wider community. You might begin your dedication on the front steps with a ribbon-cutting, or a special flag raising. You might then move indoors for remarks by the superintendent, school board president, OSFC representative and any special guests. Comments should acknowledge:

- The new possibilities the school represents
- The role of the school board in planning the project
- The architects, construction manager and the State of Ohio
- Community leaders who have supported the school
- The school's new principal, if one has been named
- The support to the project by the local community

Because schools are first and foremost for students who will attend them, the programs should include students. A short musical performance or demonstration of school resources are a good way to get kids involved. Including remarks by a well-poised student leader is also appropriate and a good way to show the community how great your students are.

Tours

Dedications or grand openings are meant to show off the new building to those who have eagerly anticipated the end of construction. If possible, the program should include a tour (or if a very large group, more than one tour) to give the public a better idea of what the new building provides.

To make the tour more engaging for participants consider the following ideas – or come up with a creative one of your own:

- Have teachers and/or student groups “host” certain areas of the school, giving a short talk to the tour groups about what their assigned area of the school is for and how it will benefit them directly. For example, the basketball team hosts the new gym, student council hosts the new auditorium/cafeteria, band members and director host the new band room.
- Have a scavenger hunt where participants can win inexpensive prizes with the school logo (mugs, pennants, t-shirts, etc.). List different parts of the building and facts that can only be discovered by visiting that part of the building.
- Giving a commemorative item noting the school name, date and dedication event at the end of the tour to all attendees.

Media Considerations

To increase the chances of media coverage for your event, offer to give reporters a private tour just prior to the dedication ceremony. During the tours, try to have one or two examples where students or teachers explain or demonstrate the school's new features.

Refreshments

It is customary to provide refreshments for guests after the formal part of the program. Depending on the time of day, refreshments may include finger foods, a continental breakfast, cake and cookies or a light lunch.

You might also consider enlisting the help of the culinary arts classes or cafeteria staff to make ice cream or other refreshments for the guests to enjoy.

Chrisney Consolidated
school district

TODAY'S AGENDA

- 5:30 p.m.** Ribbon cutting on front steps, Superintendent presiding
- 5:35 p.m.** Parade of attendees and students by grade level, led by the marching band to multi-purpose room
- 5:45 p.m.** Welcome and acknowledgments from Superintendent; introduces School Board President
- 5:50 p.m.** Remarks by School Board President: introduces Ohio School Facilities Commission director or another OSFC representative
- 5:53 p.m.** Remarks by OSFC director
- 5:56 p.m.** Remarks by Mayor: introduces student leader
- 5:58 p.m.** Remarks by student leader: introduces Governor
- 6:00 p.m.** Remarks by Governor
- 6:10 p.m.** Presentation of American Flag by local civic organization; singing of America the Beautiful by the Chrisney Consolidated Schools combined
- 6:15 p.m.** Superintendent thanks guests and dignitaries; begin tours and reception

Inviting the Media

If your building project is important enough to hold dedication ceremonies, you should consider inviting the local media. However, an invitation is not a guarantee that reporters will attend. Competing news of the day, staffing issues, time of your event and other factors all will influence news coverage.

Identifying the News

The media are often more likely to cover a building dedication than they are groundbreaking, simply because there is more to see and show. However, you still need to convince reporters that the event is newsworthy. Just as with groundbreakings, it's important to spell out the significance of the project and to provide a "news hook" that the media believes will be of interest to their viewers and readers.

When inviting media, be sure to emphasize the significance of the project itself: the "firsts" it represents, the new capabilities it will provide, the benefits to the community. Demonstrate the building's capabilities or programs, including those with a strong visual component. For example, some kind of student participation activity – a musical performance, perhaps – is more interesting than a talking head at a microphone. By including children, your event will also call attention to those whom the project will ultimately serve.

Offer reporters a preview of the building the day of the dedication ceremonies – before the rest of the community has had a chance to tour it. All of these things will improve your chances of media coverage.

To communicate with the media efficiently and succinctly, two tools are essential: the media advisory and the news release.

Media Advisory

A media advisory is a one-page invitation to reporters. It contains the “who, what, where and when” information about the ceremony you are planning. The media generally do not need as much lead time as state and local officials who are asked to participate. But you should be mindful of their deadlines and make sure they have a day or two of warning.

The advisory is intended to entice the media to cover the ceremony as news. A sample media advisory follows.

Chrisney Consolidated
school district

Chrisney School to Dedicate New Building

- WHO:** Name of your school district
- WHAT:** Description of event
- WHEN:** Day, date and time of your event
- WHERE:** Location of your event, including address, suite/floor number, parking information and any other pertinent details
- PROGRAM INFORMATION:** Include a general overview of what media can hope to learn by attending the ceremony. Tell them why the new building is important, who is planning to be there and any photo opportunities
- CONTACT PERSON:** Who will be the key contact for media interested in attending the news conference? Also, whom can they contact for interviews if they are unable to attend?

475 Rice Street • Chrisney, OH 43215 • 555-555-5555 • fax: 555-555-5555 • info@ccsd.edu

News Release

The news release contains the central announcement of the event. It is distributed the day of the event to attending media, and it is also distributed to those media who were unable to attend the event. ***The release should only be distributed at or following your event – never beforehand.*** News releases should be formatted using double spaced type.

The news release should lead with the announcement that warranted the ceremony, capture key background information about your project and provide a contact for additional information. A sample news release format follows.

Chrisney Consolidated *school district*

NEWS RELEASE

September 21, 2007

Governor, Community Dedicate Sullivant High School *More than 400 on hand for ribbon cutting, tours*

CHRISNEY – *(Introductory paragraph featuring the announcement taking place)* More than 400 community residents, local leaders and state officials on Thursday dedicated the new Henry Sullivant High School, Chrisney’s first new high school since 1973.

(Set up quote by superintendent or other school district leader) Flanked by Governor Ted Strickland and the combined choirs of the Chrisney Consolidated School District, Superintendent Celeste A. Tarver thanked the school board for its leadership and the community for its support of all the district’s schools.

(Quote from superintendent designed to focus on the significance of the project) “Great things are happening all over the Chrisney Consolidated School District,” Tarver said. “This new school, which presents opportunities for students, teachers and members of the community at large, is representative of the progress we are making in preparing our young people for the future.”

(Facts about the school) Designed by Wilmont & Root architects of Youngstown and built at a cost of \$58 million, the 355,000-square-foot school on East Studebaker Street opened August 26 to 1,232 students in grades 9-12. It will provide a modern learning environment in which 1,200 students will find new opportunities in the areas of high technology, the arts and sports. communities should work together on common goals.

– more –

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Sullivant High school is the district's second four-year high school and the first new school built since the early 1970s. Extensive renovations at Chrisney High School, built in 1973, concluded last spring. The new building was 30 percent funded by a grant from the Ohio School Facilities Commission, which also helped the district with planning and construction of the new building.

(Quote or paraphrase from dignitary) Saying nothing is more vital to Ohio's economy than the strength of its school system, Gov. Strickland called the project an example of how schools and communities should work together on common goals.

"The teachers, administrators and parents in Chrisney understand that education is a gift to their children and to the state of Ohio," Strickland said.

(More details about the event) Also attending were Chrisney Mayor James "Chuck" Jorgensen, State Rep. [name], and members of the Oktibbeha County Board of Commissioners.

James McDonald, president of the Chrisney Evening Optimists, presented an American flag to the officers of the Sullivant High School Student Council as the Chrisney Schools Combined Choirs sang "America the Beautiful."

The event concluded with a reception and guided tours.

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CONTACT: Name of organization media contact
 Telephone number where contact can be reached

Contact Information

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