creativitylab

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SCHOOL MAKER FAIRE

A Guide from the Creativity Lab

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About This Guide

Purpose

This guide is to help schools and other organizations prepare for and bring their creativity to their own School Maker Faires.

In this guide, we will share guidelines on how to organize a School Maker Faire, so that future leaders at Lighthouse, or other schools who want to participate at local maker faires, can learn from our experience. We recognize that every school faces different constraints regarding time, space, and money; we hope that what we have learned over the past several years can help others bring making to their schools.

Our Story

At Lighthouse, we have a long tradition of recognizing and celebrating making. To first spread the word of what making looked like to people *within Lighthouse*, the school decided to have a *Prototype Faire* in Spring 2012. This first event was motivation for high school Making elective students to finish their projects in time for the larger Bay Area Maker Faire. Additionally, middle school and high school students had an opportunity to run activities and practice interacting with participants, again in preparation for the Bay Area Maker Faire

A Note about Naming

"School Maker Faire" branding is owned by [Maker Faire](). To call your event a "School Maker Faire" you MUST register at Maker Faire's website.

Getting Started

Gathering Your Team

As you assemble your team, here are some things to consider:
- ❏ Who are the **biggest advocates** for your making class/program in your community? Parents, teachers, administrators, makers, students? Would they like to help organize?
- ❏ How can you have **students involved in leadership roles**?
- ❏ Who is interested/available to participate and help organize?
- ❏ Is there a time where you can get the majority of team members together to meet? Or can you split the team into subcommittees?

Within the team, make sure there are members who can assume the following responsibilities:
- ❏ **Recruiting people**, at your site and from the outside, to attend your Maker Faire
- ❏ **Preparing students** from your school
- ❏ **Planning and setting up** the space before the event
- ❏ **Arranging for food and drinks** available to participants

We established a schedule of meeting every week for an hour check-in, where members could update the team on the progress of individual tasks and collaborate and make collective decisions. Please note that not everyone will be able to attend meetings. Make sure you have a plan to check in with team members who cannot attend.

Setting Goals

Once your team is together, start brainstorming the goals you have for this event. Keep in mind the following questions:
- ❏ **What do you want your students to get out of the event?**
- ❏ **What do you want guests to see or experience?**

Some examples of goals are:
- ❏ **Support making students** as they finish their independent projects
- ❏ Give making elective students a **chance to practice**:
  - ❏ **presenting** their independent making projects to guests
  - ❏ **facilitating** a hands-on making activity with guests
- ❏ **Celebrate making** within your school and community, and engage other local public schools and education nonprofits that are involved in maker education
- ❏ Give schools from around the area an opportunity to celebrate making and to share with you how they incorporated making and a maker mindset into the classroom

Planning a School Maker Faire - Logistics

Registering with MakerFaire.com

In order to call our event a School Maker Faire, we had to register our event at the School Maker Faire website. This is required to use the Maker Faire logo and to market the event to outside groups as a "School Maker Faire".

Choosing Your Date and Time

Date of Event: Allow yourself at least 3 months to prepare. Normally Lighthouse has its Faire in March/April. This leaves at least one month for students to prepare for the Bay Area Maker Faire in San Mateo. We held the event in the middle of the day to increase our students' participation; we were aware that this would decrease outside groups' participation.

Time devoted to the event: Participating K-8 students presented either in a morning or afternoon shift while 9-12 making elective students worked on their projects and presented for the full time. Visiting classes each stopped by for 30 minutes.

Lunch timing: Lunch for participants was served to afternoon shift people FIRST, followed by morning shift people, so that there was no disruption to the running of the overall event.

Consider the following questions:
❏ Who do you want to come to your event? How can timing increase the attendance of guests, internally and externally?
❏ What future events may conflict with your event or event planning?
❏ Who do you have to check in with at your school to schedule the event?
❏ How much time do YOU need to adequately prepare and organize the event?
❏ How much time can students and teachers, participating in or visiting the event, devote?
❏ When will students and participants have a break for lunch?

Transportation

If you have another school site or need to transport students to your campus, first think about how many students you are able to bring. Ideally, we want as many students as possible to experience a maker faire, but you should be realistic.

To keep costs down, it's best to have teachers and parents drive students from their school to the location and back. You should check with your school on what information is required to be on file for adult drivers on field trips (e.g. driver's license, insurance).

Arranging for Substitutes

During this event, our Making, Robotics and Programming teachers are absent from their normal classes, as they are supervising the Faire activities. Any teachers organizing the Faire will need to request a sub beforehand. Occasionally, if a number of their students are attending the Faire, participating teachers can combine classes, thus requesting only one sub. Please check with your administration beforehand.

Choosing Projects & Activities

When brainstorming projects, consider the following questions:
- ❏ What types of projects are students and teachers interested in?
- ❏ **How much time** will you need to complete this project?
- ❏ What projects might fit into the **curriculum**? What changes need to be made?
- ❏ How will you share what you have made with the larger community in an **engaging** way?

Again, for choosing activities, keep these guiding questions in mind:
- ❏ What types of activities are teachers and students **interested in facilitating**, respectively?
- ❏ Which activities will **engage** visitors?
- ❏ What can students do to make an activity more exciting or interesting?
- ❏ What questions should students be prepared to answer?
- ❏ What **materials** will students need to facilitate this activity or complete this project?
- ❏ What activities might fit into the curriculum?
- ❏ What changes need to be made?

Permission Slips

For students volunteering and running booths at your School Maker Faire, consider creating permission slips for them. Permission forms should include the following:
- ❏ Purpose of the event
- ❏ Date & time of the event
- ❏ Time requirement of students
    - ❏ Elementary school students - 2 hours
    - ❏ Middle and High School students - 3 hours
    - ❏ Students should help with pickup or setup
- ❏ Spot for parent/guardian signature and emergency contact information
- ❏ Spot for teacher signatures of the classes those students would miss

Planning a School Maker Faire - People

Stakeholders

It is important to communicate with important stakeholders and decision makers who would be directly affected by the space usage, including:

❏ **School principals/directors of instruction**
❏ **School operations associate**
❏ **School teachers and crew leaders who normally use the space for the event**
❏ **School teachers who have students who will be missing class**

When communicating with these stakeholders the details of the School Maker Faire, intentionally mention the following items:

❏ **How to sign up classes to see the event**
❏ **Which students were attending**
❏ **NOT to schedule any assessments for students that day, or to arrange for students who are participating in the School Maker Faire to take assessments at a later date**
❏ **NOT to schedule other large school events that day**

Inviting Outside Groups

Reach out early to groups so that they have time to plan for the event. Ask groups the following questions:

❏ *What activity or display are you bringing?*
❏ *What are you or your groups electrical needs?*
❏ *How many people will be at your booth?*
❏ *How many tables will you need?*

Things to Consider as You Invite Groups to Your Event
❏ *What might they bring to the overall experience of the Maker Faire?*
❏ *What other events/faires have they attended?*

Preparing Students

In order to give students and outside groups a chance to lead and exercise responsibility, teachers should work to **provide as much agency** to kids as they prepare for the School Maker Faire. Students will be asked to either bring a maker project to share with the school community or help facilitate an interactive activity.

Planning a School Maker Faire - Materials & Space

Choosing Your Space

Although there may be a limited number of spaces you can use at your school site, consider the following questions during your search.

- ❏ How many people/groups at any one time do you expect to have at your School Maker Faire?
- ❏ What is the maximum capacity of potential locations?
- ❏ What other groups might need to use your space?
- ❏ What types of activities and displays students and groups will be facilitating and showcasing, respectively?
- ❏ Who is invited? Students? Teachers? Parents?

Organizing the Space

As you begin to think about space and the location of different groups, consider the following factors:

- ❏ **What is the total space**: It must accommodate all student groups and visitors.

- ❏ **Electrical Outlets**: While power cords can be extended to any groups, they are also a hazard for guests and students walking through the space.

- ❏ **Space for walk-throughs**: There should be enough room for visitors to walk through the space and to effectively engage in all of the activity tables in the space. Activity tables require the most space, since attendees tend to gather around these spaces. Tables should be spaced accordingly.

- ❏ **Tables**: they are limited and are not always the same shape and size

In addition to the above, space usage depends on and affects what activities and projects are decided upon by teachers and students. For this reason, try to find out ahead of time which activities teachers and students want to bring to the fair and to draft a map to share with teachers for feedback. Groups will change ideas for their projects and activities, and your map will change accordingly. A map can go through through several iterations before a final plan is sent out to attendees and participants .

Event Materials & Equipment

As organizers of the school maker faire, we were responsible for making sure that the following materials were available.

Event Materials	Food Materials
Tables	Cups
Chairs	Napkins
Power cords	Plates
Gaffers Tape	Utensils
Speakers	Snacks
Computers	Meal
Butcher Paper	Drinks
Projector	
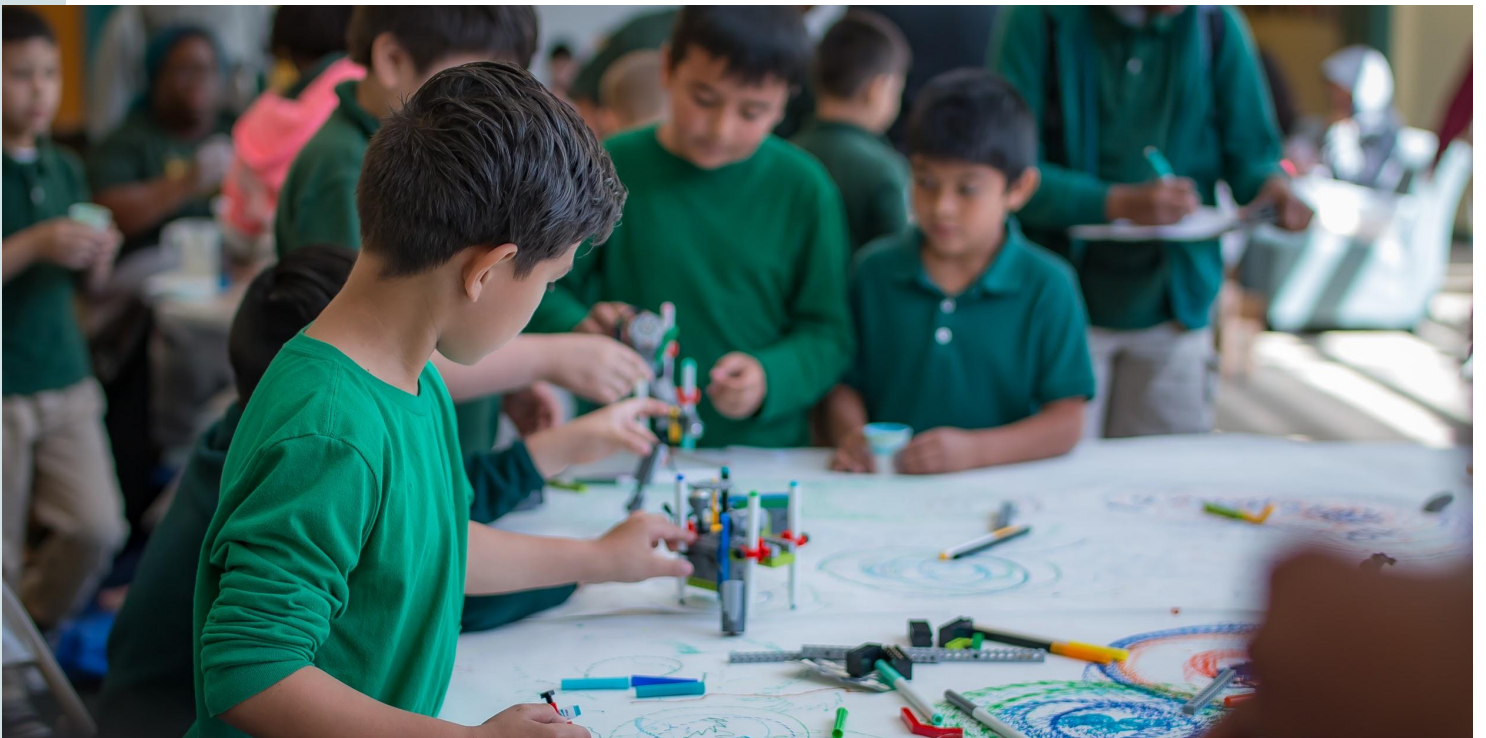
Timeline

3 Months Before Event
- ❏ Schedule school Maker Faire
  - ❏ Check with key Stakeholders
- ❏ Register event at Maker Faire website
- ❏ Send invitations/publicize about event to outside groups
- ❏ Schedule weekly meetings
- ❏ Reserve spaces
- ❏ Introduce event to students; begin brainstorming ideas for activities
- ❏ Brainstorm Activity Materials that are needed

2 Months Before Event
- ❏ Begin publicizing event to your site's community
- ❏ Begin registering teachers and classes to attend the Faire
- ❏ Make sure to have substitutes for class (only for teachers volunteering at event)
- ❏ Draft first prototype of event map
  - ❏ Send prototype of event map to participants for feedback

1 Month Before Event
- ❏ Scheduling classes to attend
- ❏ Order materials for different booths
- ❏ Continue publicizing event to Lighthouse community
- ❏ Finalize map of event and send to Lighthouse community and outside groups

2 Weeks Before Event
- ❏ Give students permission slips (so they can miss class)
- ❏ Meet with students to discuss expectations and brief them about each activity
- ❏ Finalize materials and table setup for the Faire

1 Week Before Event
- ❏ Give students permission slips (so they can miss class)
- ❏ Meet with students to discuss expectations and brief them about each activity
- ❏ Finalize materials and table setup for the Faire