

School Playbook:

Coaching By Field Staff + District Volunteers for August School Sign-Up Nights

School Sign-Up Nights are often our best attended fall recruiting events. This is a summary of the tasks of Pack Volunteers and District Professionals in setting up School Sign-Up Nights for the benefit of District Professionals and District Membership Volunteers *as you coach your Pack leaders* – and also steps to get school support of *Pack Fun Sign-Up Events*. This Playbook is best used alongside the Plan and Script for Sign-Up Events posted at [our Sign-Up Events page](#).

1) Meet with School Superintendents (by May 1) – **by District Professionals and/or Field Directors**

- Find the right person in the Superintendent's office to work with – it may not be the Superintendent. Show the school system administration that our goals for the youth of our communities are the same.
- Thank for past cooperation and access, and seek to gain approval to recruit through schools and make specific note of any administrative needs they may have (flyer approval, facility approval)
- Request opportunity to speak at a system principals meeting or training.
- Deliver gift (mug) and invite to the upcoming Braves Game VIP experience.
- Confirm Open House/Meet the Teacher dates – share with District Teams to share with Packs.

2) Secure School Sign-Up Night Dates with Schools – **by Pack volunteers in coordination with District Professionals**. Schedule School Sign-Up Nights for when the Pack will be ready to launch their Pack Program! District Professionals coordinate with Pack volunteers to ensure these steps happen and that **Volunteer ↔ Professional communication** is solid. **Follow up with Pack Leaders!**

- **Benchmark Dates to Set School Sign-Up Nights** – 25% of Sign-Up Night dates set with Schools by May 1, 50% by June 1, 75% by June 30, and 100% by July 15.
 - If a school won't allow a School Sign-Up Night or you don't have one by July 15, confirm with the Pack that a Pack Produced Fun Sign-Up Event will be the primary August Sign-Up event.
- **Pick Pack Preferred Days and Dates:** Have the Pack identify preferred days of the week for School Sign-Up Nights, as well as weeks that work for leaders. *If a Pack and their Dens always meet on a certain night of the week, you can use that day for your School Sign-Up Night.*
 - School Sign-Up Nights work better with more leaders and parents and returning Scouts attending.
 - If you do School Sign-Up Night on the Pack's regular meeting night (as the Pack's regular meeting event), you should get better leader and parent participation from the Pack.
 - If new families are able to show up on *that* night of the week for School Sign-Up Night, they are more likely to be able to show up for future meetings on that night of the week.
 - *Maybe* don't do School Sign-Up Nights during the first week of school – that's a very hectic time.
 - **But if the Pack is ready to launch** a program (with activities and leaders), **don't wait too long** – a Pack doesn't want to lose families to other activities by waiting too long to recruit.
 - **Be realistic with the Pack: Are They Ready?** Do they have a [Calendar of Fun Activities](#) (not just "meeting dates")? Enough Leaders? A [Plan for More Leaders](#)? A [plan to promote Pack activities](#) like a "Pack Packet" and a [decent BeAScout profile](#) with online applications open?
 - **If by the end of July the Pack will not be ready** to launch Pack Program in August, the Pack has two choices: either (1) start an August Pack program launch with just *fun*simple*easy activities* like pool parties, cookouts, bike rides, hikes, field trips, game days, mini golf, and other fun – not complicated stuff like Den Meetings and Cub Scout Advancement, or (2) work with the School to postpone the School Sign-Up Night until a program and leadership are in place.

- If the Pack is ready to launch but needs the District Professional to be part of the Sign-Up Night, pick a date when the District Professional or a trained district membership volunteer can attend.
 - **Visit Principals (Staff) to Set Dates – by Pack volunteers in coordination with District Professionals.** Thank for support of Scouting and get a School Sign-Up Night on the calendar.
 - Visits should start in May and must finish before July 15.
 - Often, assistant principals, parent liaisons or other administrators can set these dates. In these cases, meetings with those administrators works (but thank the Principal for the good help!)
 - District Professional will (1) deliver a Principal gift (mug) and invite to the upcoming Principal Braves Game VIP experience, and (2) mail a “thank you” letter including Waffle House free waffle gift card. (Pack Volunteer thank you letters and baked goods are also welcomed!)
 - **Successful Scheduling Tips for School Sign-Up Nights:**
 - School Sign-Up Nights should start no earlier than 6:00 p.m. and no later than 7:00 p.m.
 - Don’t schedule School Sign-Up Nights **during** a PTA/PTO meeting, open house, or other times with conflicting meetings at the school. **Each School Sign-Up Night should be a standalone event.**
 - But ... Pack Leaders and parents should *attend* those other school events and promote.
 - If a PTA/PTO, open house, or other meeting allows the Pack to make a brief sign-up pitch and/or have a table or space to pitch people coming in or out, take advantage of it.
- 3) **Best Practices for Coaching Pack Volunteers on School Sign-Up Nights and Buzz Ups – District Professionals and Volunteers need to keep these ideas in mind to help Pack volunteers:**
- **Know THIS Pack’s Program – Not some other Generic Pack Program!!** Know *their* key leaders, their need for more leaders, *their* activity plans, and help them sell *their* activities.
 - If they don’t have an activity plan or calendar yet, [help them put one together](#).
 - Recruiting into a Pack with no plan will be a failure. Especially with higher entry costs!
 - Confirm with Packs that they have scheduled activities so families can *Get Out and Cub Scout*:
 - One or more fun activities within a week (maybe two) after School Sign-Up Night. Then More!
 - Packs can do second chance (or third or fourth chance) fun “*Get Out and Cub Scout*” sign-up options with fun events, perhaps in connection with a Pack orientation.
 - **Any fun activity can be a joining event** – if the Den/Pack can ***be prepared to welcome families***.
 - Coordinate with Packs to review [the Guide](#) and to edit the Plan and Script for Sign-Up Events they can download at [our Sign-Up Events page](#) to fit ***their*** Program, ***their*** Team, and ***their*** Needs.
 - They need to bring copies of their “[Pack Packet](#)” or Pack calendar/contact page, plus other items, including those described in the Sign-Up Event Plan and Script posted [here](#).
 - Do they need AAC printing assistance? District Professionals need to share that help.
 - **Ensure that Presentations Stay On Script and On Time.** Follow “Goldilocks Principles”: give parents the basic information they need to decide to sign-up. **Not too much** (use handouts to share more). **But not too little** (you have to give them enough to make a significant financial and time commitment). **Aim for “Just the Right Amount of Information”** (like, our activities and dues, not “*how to use ScoutBook*”!) Respect the precious time of families – be Helpful, Friendly, Courteous and Kind!
 - Presentation style School Sign-Up Nights should take 40-45 minutes and allow for Q and A with unit leadership if needed after application and registration collection is complete.
 - Station to station sign-ups should take a family around 20 minutes from start to finish.
 - **Because most Schools allow only a limited time for School Sign-Up Night, ensure that Pack Leaders understand that School Sign-Up Nights are not Parent Orientation Night.**
 - Packs should share a “[Pack Packet](#)” handout – a written parent orientation resource as a starter.

- A Pack Fun Sign-Up Event **separate** from School Sign-Up Night might have a parent orientation – you’ll have more time and flexibility – and works best if the Scouts do fun events away from the parents with extra leaders or an affiliated Troop. (Troop led fun is great for School Sign-Ups too!)
- **Every School Sign-Up Night **must have Professional Coaching** – Some Might Need Professional Leadership.** When you coach Packs and see that the leader team “gets” how to recruit – **let them run with it!** (It’s *their* Pack!) If they need more help, help them or get them help – but give them a part of the Script that will let them succeed even in a small way.
 - Sometimes, a trained district membership team member might lead a School Sign-Up Night ...
 - ... but the specific role of Council Professionals and district membership volunteers will vary depending on the strength of volunteer Pack and Den leaders at each event.
- **Assist Packs in Leadership Identification at School Sign-Up Nights:**
 - Ensure that every School Sign-Up Night encourages and welcomes new adult leadership.
 - Packs will want to be fun, organized programs – Packs need adult leaders to put on program.
 - Share a basic expectation that all adult partners participate to their ability.
 - Know the Pack’s leader needs – if they need many leaders, make a strong push on Parents to join.
 - Give an easy Adventure Plan to every parent – **let them see how they can lead and succeed.**

4) **What About Buzz Ups?** – **Most done by District Professionals. Maybe trained/tested Volunteers:**

- “Buzz Ups” are **very brief** announcements (ideally) in School Classrooms to get kids excited about this Pack and Cub Scouting (“**very brief**” like, *90 seconds top. Fast. In and Out!*).
 - *Why Must It Be Quick?* If not brief, **teachers will complain** and our relations with that school and the whole School District **will suffer**. That will hurt the Pack and hurt Cub Scouting in the District.
 - For that reason, District Professionals must ensure that any Volunteer (District or Pack) really “gets it” – best practice is to practice and get approval on a “tight 90 second” routine.
 - If your District Professional or a District Volunteer does a Buzz Up for your Pack, be sure they know about **your** Pack Program – District People should not sell activities that you don’t do.
- **Will Every School Sign-Up Night Get a District Professional Buzz Up?** Not necessarily.
 - If many Packs want to have School Sign-Up Nights during early weeks of School, there may be too many Schools for District Professionals to cover in Buzz Ups.
 - In that event, your School Sign-Up Night can either proceed without the benefit of a Buzz Up, or you can postpone your School Sign-Up Night and do a Pack Fun Sign-Up Event now.
- **Best Plan for Timing of Buzz Ups and School Sign-Up Nights** are below (because holding School Sign-Up Nights one day after a Buzz Up – not more than two days – gives families enough time to plan their attendance but not so much time that excitement is lost):
 - Tuesday Sign-Up Night? *Monday Morning Buzz Up.* // Wednesday Sign-Up? *Tuesday Buzz Up.* // Thursday Sign-Up? *Wednesday Buzz Up.* // Friday Sign-Up? *Thursday Buzz Up.*
 - Weekend Pack Fun Sign-Up Event? *Friday Morning Buzz Up.*
 - Monday Sign-Up Night? *Probably a Friday Morning Buzz Up. Maybe Monday morning.*
 - **Warning:** your “return” from a Friday Buzz Up to a Monday Sign-Up Night may be low – too many families will forget. But if Monday is the best night otherwise, go for it. Choose wisely!
- **Successful Buzz Ups lead to successful School Sign-Up Nights**
 - Call the school a week before to remind of your Buzz Up and School Sign-Up Night dates.
 - Ask for a classroom map and track your progress to ensure that we speak to every youth.
 - Do not miss youth at specials, grades that are not in their classrooms, classes testing or any other classroom that is not ready when you drop by.

- Tip: use the “Stopwatch” feature on your phone to chime after 60 seconds. Wrap Up! Bye!
- Maybe record your best Buzz Up pitch ... share with School, Parents, More!
- Thank the administration, secretary, parent liaison and anyone else who assisted you.

5) **Technical Tips for School Sign-Up Night Success** – District Professionals and Volunteers need to coordinate with Pack volunteers about these ideas (and know who is doing what and when):

- **Maximize School Access with the Strongest Advance Promotion Possible:**
 - In addition to Classroom Buzz Ups, can you get time/space at Assembly, Lunchroom, CCTV?
 - Flyers (Print and digital). Posters? Feather banners? Stickers? Yard Signs?
 - Supplemental promotion: school website calendar, social media, marquee, yard signs, etc.
- **Order Printed Materials and digital flyers as soon as School Sign-Up Nights are scheduled.**
 - **!!Make sure all flyer information is accurate!!** – date, time, contact information, **test QR codes.**
 - Add the lead unit volunteer as the primary contact number and Council new Scout interest number, or your own as secondary contact number on flyers.
 - Put Pack’s QR Code from my.scouting.org Invitation Manager on each flyer!
 - District Execs: Submit flyer orders on the AAC google doc as soon as information is finalized.
- **Deliver announcement flyers to every school:**
 - Know the School’s “take-home day” so flyers get to school in time to go home on time.
 - Make available to future Scouts two weeks before scheduled the School Sign-Up Night
 - Supplement with digital flyers.
 - Add posters, trifold, feather banners and yard signs to create as much visibility as possible.
- **Empower the Pack and Parents to do promotion too.**
 - Share the AAC Sign-Up Night flyer with Pack Leaders – email and invite them to share!
 - Be sure they see the ideas found at scoutingatl.org/promotingthepack.
 - Peer to Peer, Parent to Parent recruiting can be more powerful than a professional’s pitch.
- **Use Sign-In Sheets** (with parent contact phone/emails, and names/grades of children).
 - Include everyone, whether they sign up or not.
 - Many families will not be “sold” at Sign-Up Night – but will join if/when they are invited to another Pack or Den Event and take a “test drive” of Cub Scouting.
 - Keep notes on who might have leader potential, special concerns (like financial needs).
 - *If the District person holds this, share copies of all with Pack Leaders no later than the next day.*
- **Close the Sale.** Be sure it is easy to “say yes” and “Sign Up”.
 - That’s the final part (or final station) of a Sign-Up Event ... be sure you have enough help to make “check out” a success. [Print Paper Applications from Here](#) (Spanish too).
 - Have a Credit Card reader on your Treasurer’s Phone to easily “swipe” payments.
 - Train some parents to help new families with the steps needed to join.
- **Online Registration Option.** Sign-Ups can occur thru BeAScout.org. But not Council-Funded Packs.
 - All families still encouraged to completely register if using BeAScout.org before they leave.
 - Including the Pack’s QR Code from my.scouting.org Invitation Manager on each flyer helps!

6) **Last Minute Check-Ins Needed for Success** – District Professionals and Volunteers need to coordinate with Pack volunteers about these ideas (and know who is doing what and when):

- **District Professionals and Volunteers** contact Pack Leaders the week before School Sign-Up Night to confirm plans, script, speakers, and supplies; confirm again the day before that all is on course.

- **Who will contact the School** a week before Sign-Up Night to confirm the event timing and doors? Who will call the School on the morning of the event and ask for a reminder on afternoon announcements?
- **Supplies On Hand?** Ensure that all supplies for a successful sign-up event are on hand:
 - District Professional brings these – or supplies to Pack Leaders in advance:

Handbook Certificates	Orientation Guides	<i>If you want these, ask your DE:</i>
Slime for Kids	Braves Bookmarks	Credit Card Reader, Feather Banners
Waffle House Cards	Paper Applications	Stickers, Yard Signs, Peer 2 Peer Cards
Cub Scout Backpacks	Pencils / Stickers	Tabletop Standee

- Pack brings – click on links to download some of these:

Your Pack's " Pack Packet " of Information to Share	Print Paper Applications from Here (Spanish too)	Current Leaders + Parents + Scouts for "Peer to Peer" Recruiting
Your Pack's Revised Script	Financial Aid Forms	Treasurer's Credit Card Reader
Sign In Sheet and Pens	"How to Sign Up Online"	Maybe: Side Activity for Kids
Parent Skill Survey		Easy Den Adventure Plan

- **Testing ... Testing ... One Two (Wi-Fi).** Test your location for Wi-Fi – and post any Wi-Fi Password.

7) **Finish and Follow Up**

- **Say "See You Next Time".** Be sure the Pack volunteers greet people as they leave!
 - Say "goodbye" one by one and "*see you at the next event at ___ on ___*".
 - Be sure the Pack has everyone on the Sign-In Sheet so you can contact them.
 - Ask (if not obvious) if they submitted an Application tonight.
 - If "no", check the comfort level, and maybe follow up with an offer like "*maybe I can help ... can you share what questions you might have?*" and see if you can help solve it.
- **Huddle Up.** Before you leave, compare notes – especially about leader prospects, special follow up concerns, who will take the next steps, successes, challenges, etc.
- **Clean and Close.** Make sure the facility used is as clean or cleaner than we found it with any special instructions followed (lock up, lights, etc.); this will help ensure that we are invited back next year.
- **Thank You!** Thank the administration and let them know how many new Scouts were recruited and how that compares to the goal for that school (or how much that increases membership).
- **District Professional Reports.** District Professionals will report sign-up event results and families attending by reporting via Google Form on the day of the event – so if a District Professional was not in attendance to collect that data, a Pack volunteer needs to report that data.
- **Turn In Applications.** Follow up Paper and Online Applications:
 - Check (and fix glaring errors) Applications and turn in Paper Applications and \$\$ to the Council.
 - The Pack should keep copies for their Records. Process (accept) online Applications.
- **Reach Out To All.** Follow up with families – invite everyone to your upcoming events.
 - Email everyone on the Sign-In Sheets, not just "ScoutBook" contacts.
 - Follow up with all parents to encourage being on the leader team and to take Youth Protection Training. Start with Congratulations and "Thank You" for those who have signed up so far.

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