Book fair planning kit

A head start for your PTO or PTA board. Take what's useful and change the rest.

Timeline

12 weeks out

- [ ] Choose dates with your librarian
  Look for clashes with testing, conferences, and field trips.
- [ ] Choose a book fair company, or decide to run your own
  Ask how delivery, pickup, payment, and your share of sales work.

10 to 8 weeks out

- [ ] Set a goal and decide how proceeds will be used
- [ ] Reserve the library or gym
- [ ] Decide whether to hold a family night

6 weeks out

- [ ] Share the volunteer signup link
- [ ] Add the dates to the school newsletter

4 to 5 weeks out

- [ ] Invite teachers to make wish lists
- [ ] Send the flyer home and post it online
- [ ] Decide how families can pay
  Cash, card, online credit, or a mix. Your book fair company may offer options.

2 to 3 weeks out

- [ ] Follow up on empty volunteer spots
- [ ] Build the class visit schedule
- [ ] Confirm delivery and pickup times
- [ ] Share the schedule with teachers

The final week

- [ ] Send a reminder to families
- [ ] Buy decorations and volunteer snacks
- [ ] Print signs and price lists
- [ ] Get change and set up cash boxes
- [ ] Unpack and set up

The first day

- [ ] Walk the cashiers through checkout

After the book fair

- [ ] Pack up unsold books for pickup
- [ ] Count the money and match it to sales
- [ ] Thank volunteers, teachers, and families
- [ ] Spend any credit with your librarian
- [ ] Write down what to change next year
  A few quick notes while it's fresh can save next year's board a lot of time.

Volunteer spots

A sample to adapt. Add, cut, or rename spots to suit your school.

Spot	When	People
Setup Crew Unpack cases, set out books, and hang signs.	Day before 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM	4
Morning Cashier Help students and ring up sales.	8:00 AM to 12:00 PM	2
Afternoon Cashier Help students and ring up sales.	12:00 PM to 4:00 PM	2
Class Visit Helper Help classes browse, and tidy the shelves between visits.	9:00 AM to 1:00 PM	2
Family Night Helper Welcome families and help at checkout.	Day 3 5:00 PM to 7:30 PM	3
Pack-Up Crew Pack unsold books and get the cases ready for pickup.	Last day 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM	4

Sample budget

Placeholder amounts to help you get started, not real prices. Swap in your own numbers.

Item	Example	Our budget
Teacher wish list gift cards	$100	
Family night treats	$75	
Decorations	$60	
Volunteer snacks	$40	
Flyers and signs	$25	
Total	**$300**	

Shopping list

Party or dollar store

- [ ] Decorations for your theme
- [ ] Tablecloths
- [ ] Balloons and streamers

Office supply store

- [ ] Cash box
- [ ] Calculators
- [ ] Pens and sticky notes
- [ ] Tape and scissors
- [ ] Name tags for volunteers

Grocery store

- [ ] Snacks and water for volunteers
- [ ] Family night treats

Easy things to overlook

A class visit schedule
A shared schedule means no two classes arrive at once, and teachers can plan around it.

Students without money
Some schools set aside funds so every child can take a book home. It may be worth a conversation.

Payment reporting
It helps to learn before the fair how your company wants sales counted and reported.

Teacher wish lists
Families often like buying a book for a classroom, and a list makes that easy.

Pickup time
Cases usually need to be ready on time, so a pack-up crew on the last day helps.

Want it all in one place?
PineBoard can hold your tasks, volunteers, shopping, and budget together, and copies the plan to next year. Try it free for 60 days at pineboard.app.