Talent show planning kit

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

Timeline

10 to 8 weeks out

- [ ] Pick a date and book the stage
- [ ] Decide the rules for acts
  Time limits, group sizes, music, and whether there are auditions or a run-through for everyone.
- [ ] Set the budget and decide on tickets
- [ ] Open act sign-ups and send the rules home

6 weeks out

- [ ] Find a sound and lights helper
  Ask whether the school's system works for music from a phone or laptop.

4 to 5 weeks out

- [ ] Share the volunteer signup link
- [ ] Close act sign-ups
- [ ] Collect each act's music
  One labeled file per act, in one shared folder, makes show night much easier.

2 to 3 weeks out

- [ ] Hold auditions or a run-through
- [ ] Send the flyer home and post it online
- [ ] Follow up on empty volunteer spots
- [ ] Set the running order and choose emcees

The final week

- [ ] Print programs and participant certificates
- [ ] Send a reminder to families
  Include call time for performers and the photo and video policy.
- [ ] Buy concession snacks and anything on the shopping list
- [ ] Hold the dress rehearsal

Show night

- [ ] Check sound, lights, and the backstage waiting area
- [ ] Count ticket and concession money with two people

After the show

- [ ] Thank performers, volunteers, and the school staff
- [ ] Record receipts and reimburse helpers
- [ ] 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, for a school of 300–600 students. The online version at pineboard.app/templates resizes it for yours. Add, cut, or rename spots to suit your school.

Spot	When	People
Audition Helpers Welcome acts, keep time, and cheer everyone on.	Auditions, 3 weeks before 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM	3
Dress Rehearsal Helpers Line up acts in order and help the rehearsal run on time.	Day before 3:00 PM to 5:30 PM	4
Backstage Crew Keep performers in order and ready for their turn.	5:30 PM to 8:30 PM	4
Sound and Lights Play each act's music and run the lights.	5:30 PM to 8:30 PM	2
Ticket and Program Table Sell tickets and hand out programs.	5:45 PM to 7:00 PM	3
Concessions Sell snacks and drinks before the show and at intermission.	6:00 PM to 8:00 PM	3
Cleanup Crew Stack chairs and leave the room clean.	8:15 PM to 9:00 PM	5

Sample budget

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

Item	Example	Our budget
Concession snacks and drinks	$120	
Sound system or microphone rental	$150	
Participant awards or certificates	$80	
Programs and tickets	$60	
Stage decorations	$50	
Total	**$460**	

Shopping list

Warehouse club

- [ ] Concession snacks
- [ ] Drinks and water
- [ ] Napkins

Party store

- [ ] Stage decorations
- [ ] Tape for stage marks
- [ ] Flowers or small gifts for performers

Office supply store

- [ ] Program paper
- [ ] Certificate paper
- [ ] Cash box
- [ ] Name tags for volunteers

Easy things to overlook

Music in one place
Collecting each act's music ahead of time, clearly labeled, saves a scramble at the sound table.

Supervision backstage
Agreeing who looks after performers until their families pick them up makes the end of the night smooth.

A photo and video policy
Some families prefer their child isn't posted online. Sharing a policy before the show helps.

Short acts
A time limit per act keeps the show moving, and keeps the youngest audience members happy.

Every performer celebrated
A certificate for everyone makes the night about trying, not winning.

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.