



# Fall Auction Planning Checklist: **The Home Stretch**

You've procured amazing items and sold tickets — now the final push begins. Use this general timeline as a guide and adapt as needed for your event.



## 6 Weeks Before the Event \_\_\_\_\_

### Auction Chair

- Review online bidding settings: bid style, schedule, and closing structure.

## 5 Weeks Before the Event \_\_\_\_\_

### Auction Chair

- Draft a timeline for the evening (“Run of Show”). Include everything: load-in, setup, check-in, cocktails, dinner, entertainment, games/raffle, Silent Auction closings, Live Auction, Paddle Raise/Fund-A-Need, cleanup, and load-out.

*💡 TIP: Include time for a pre-event “tech check” to test your A/V equipment. It can also be helpful to temporarily pause food and beverage service during your Fund-A-Need ask, then resume immediately after.*

- Determine volunteer needs, roles, and a volunteer coordinator. Begin recruiting volunteers now so you have time to fill key positions and adjust as needed.

*💡 TIP: Include cleanup and load-out volunteers so core event volunteers don't end up staying late and becoming burned out at the end of the night.*

### Auction Chair

### Theme/Decorations Chair

- Plan your event layout: stage, bar, guest tables with numbers, Live Auction display, Silent Auction tables, Wine Wall, Check-In/Out, and Item Pick-Up.

*Customize as needed. Space is provided for your notes and extra items.*



## 4 Weeks Before the Event \_\_\_\_\_

### Theme/Decorations Chair

- Procure non-perishable décor (banners, table runners, signage, etc.).
- Design and print directional and informational signage (entrance, restrooms, coat check, check-in, etc.).

### Auction Chair

### Co-Chair

- Meet with your auctioneer to review Live Auction items and event flow.
- Reach out to top bidders from last year to build excitement and begin identifying your Paddle Raise/Fund-A-Need anchor.
- Finalize standard email templates and draft any custom emails needed (a “last call for meal selection” can help wrangle stragglers).

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## 3 Weeks Before the Event \_\_\_\_\_

### Auction Chair

- If using Self Check-In, draft email templates and confirm invitation settings now—you'll be much busier later.

### Procurement Team

### Auction Co-Chair

- Finalize Silent Auction lots and raffle prizes, if any. Confirm item numbering, table placement, and closing groups.
- Create a plan for transporting auction items to the venue on the morning of the event.

### Ticket Sales Chair

- Review guest list. Link couples/households, gather missing guest details, and confirm meal selections if applicable.

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## 2 Weeks Before the Event \_\_\_\_\_

**Procurement Team**

**Auction Chair**

- Launch Online Bidding.

**TIP:** Offer Sign-Up Parties early to build excitement and encourage additional hosts while there's still time to add them.

**Ticket Sales Chair**

- Finalize seating (if using assigned seating) and floor plan with table numbers if needed.

**Front Desk Manager**

- Test venue internet reliability (Wi-Fi and/or wired).

**Auction Co-Chair**

- Confirm volunteer roles, arrival times, and breaks. Arrange volunteer food and beverages.

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# 1 Week Before the Event \_\_\_\_\_

## Auction Co-Chair

- Prepare print materials: bid sheets and/or QR codes, item descriptions, gift certificates, recording sheets, floor plan, etc.

**💡 TIP:** *If your budget allows, consider 2-part carbonless bid sheets so the top copy goes to data entry and the second stays with the item.*

## Auction Chair

- Review your Pre-Event Review email from SchoolAuction.net (typically sent 7+ days before your event) and resolve any flagged issues.
- Finalize seating (optional).
- Confirm final Live Auction order with your auctioneer.
- Prepare presentation/slides if using.

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# Event Week

## 5 Days Before \_\_\_\_\_

### Ticket Sales Chair

- Review new ticket sales *daily*. Update guest details and seating as needed. Contact buyers of unassigned tickets to collect guest names and emails.

**TIP:** *If your caterer has a guest count or entrée selection deadline, move this task to the appropriate point in your timeline and close ticket sales accordingly.*

### Front Desk Manager

- Send training materials to front desk volunteers or host a brief training session (in-person or online). Have volunteers practice checking themselves in and completing a mock purchase, then return items at the end of the session.

## 4 Days Before \_\_\_\_\_

### Front Desk Manager

- Send your first Self Check-In email to guests with assigned tickets and email addresses.
- Encourage guests to preview items and begin bidding, if enabled.

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# Event Week

2 Days Before \_\_\_\_\_

**Front Desk Manager**

- Send a second Self Check-In reminder to guests who haven't checked in yet.
- Organize bid paddles, name tags, and meal indicators, if applicable.

1 Day Before \_\_\_\_\_

**Theme/Decorations Chair**

- Procure perishable décor (flowers, etc.).

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# Morning of the Event

## Front Desk Manager

- Send a final Self Check-In reminder.
- Set up the Item Pick-Up area with bags, markers, tape, stapler with staples, organized gift certificates, and staging space.
- Set up the Front Desk for a smooth check-in and check-out:
  - Programs and bid paddles, notepads and pens
  - Laptops and printers connected and powered on (a surge protector, HDMI cable or appropriate projector cable, and an extension cord are helpful too)
  - Credit card readers attached (bring USB dongles if needed)
  - Backup supplies (paper, pens, thick black Sharpies, contingency printouts, blank bid paddles)
  - Internet backup plan (hotspot/cellular) or IT contact
  - Login credentials and contact info for the person with access to your credit card gateway in case payment issues arise
  - Dedicated troubleshooting station so other stations can continue with check-in/check-out if problems occur

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# Morning of the Event

## Theme/Decorations Chair

- Place all décor and signage.

## Auction Co-Chair

## Procurement Chair

- Set up Silent Auction displays (items, signage, QR codes if using mobile bidding). Provide pens if using bid sheets.

## Auction Chair

- Set up the Live Auction displays and presentation materials.
- Run a final A/V tech check.
- Share the floor plan and Run of Show with the caterer/banquet captain, including any planned pauses in food and beverage service during the Fund-A-Need.
- Save the SchoolAuction.net Event Night Support number in your phone (shown at the top of your event site on event day). Ensure 1–2 key people have it saved and volunteers know who to contact if help is needed.

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## Event Night

- Be sure check-in staff confirm an email address or phone number for each bidder number.
- Have raffle, game, and Silent Auction runners ready to deliver recording sheets to the data entry team when sales close.
- Prepare Silent Auction items for guest pickup while results are recorded. Add Live Auction items after the Live Auction concludes.
- Have raffle and Fund-A-Need recorders ready for last-minute sales.
- Ensure data entry begins immediately after Silent Auction closing, and that all data entry is completed onsite before leaving the venue.
- Assign staff or a board member to thank guests and say goodbye at the door.

***Wishing you a smooth, successful event — we're cheering you on!***

Checklist created by [SchoolAuction.net](https://www.schoolauction.net) in collaboration with Sue Counselman, Adopt A Family of Marin