

# Distribution Primer

By Elizabeth Braden

It is difficult to imagine in October, December or even March, but one day soon, not only will your entire book be submitted for publication, but the publication also will be delivered to your school – boxes and boxes of new-smelling books. You can't wait to hand them out, and see the joy on the faces of the students. To keep it a joyful occasion, it's time for you and your staff to do some prep work.

This primer breaks down the parts of delivery and distribution into minute details. That's because there are a lot of little things to think about. So first, read about the details, and then use our simplified checklist to stay organized. If you are organized, distribution will be a joyful day for you, too.

First — check your Members Only home page for the date your yearbooks are to be delivered to your school. If you have a discrepancy or a question, contact your yearbook sales representative immediately.

You can hand out your yearbooks in a variety of ways. Factors for this decision include the time of year, size of the student body and your method of distribution. No matter how you do it, this primer should include enough information to address your situation. The sections include:

- Distribution methods
- Storage and unveiling
- Buyers lists
- Advertise your distribution
- Prep for the big day
- THE day
- After distribution day

## Distribution methods

There are a number of ways to distribute your yearbook:

- A. Set up tables for students to pick up their yearbooks.
- B. Same as A above, but turn distribution into an autograph party.
- C. Hand out at registration in August or September.
- D. Deliver to home room or English classes.
- E. Hand out at an assembly where the staff is recognized for their work.

If you are not rolling books to classrooms, you will need to reserve a site, such as the gym, cafeteria, auditorium, main hall or commons area as soon as possible. Notify administrators of the day, time and location of distribution and get their approval. At least one administrator should be present during distribution.

Some fall delivery schools hand out the book to students in a common class, like English, or at registration. Some schools

have students come by the yearbook room to get their book. In these situations, the previous year's seniors are notified that books are in and can come to school to pick them up. Postcards, emails and the school's marquee sign can be used for this notification.

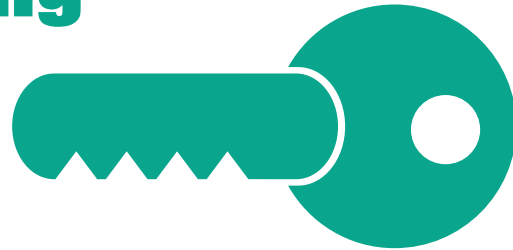
Consider providing the opportunity to let students pick up their yearbooks and have time to look through them and sign their friends' books. Signing is one of the cool, unique things about yearbooks, and should be a highlight of the school year. Use that to sell more yearbooks and get the kids excited about picking up their books and spending time with friends. The checklist in this primer will help you organize distribution with or without a party and at registration.

Please note that as a new adviser, you may need to work up to a signing party. Read here, and if it's not doable this year, plan for next year. *if*

# Storage and unveiling

Your books are valuable. They are a one-of-a-kind keepsake of this school year. Determine in your school where you can lock up the books when they arrive. Don't just set the boxes in your yearbook room – the books will begin to disappear.

As the adviser, you need to open one box, take a book and review it privately from cover to cover. Look for areas to praise your students and for any errors. This knowledge can help you deflect criticism and help your staff realize the overall great job they did.



Next, let your editors look at the book. They will find the mistakes too; it is your job to point out their successes. Then, create and hold an unveiling ceremony with the entire staff, and give them time to enjoy the fruits of their labor. *if*

# Buyers lists

A list of buyers will speed the process as books are handed out. How many lists you have will depend on how you distribute the books. If you are using Online Sales, your online purchases are created into lists for you, and it's easy to enter your in-school sales here.

Sales Central can be found in the middle of your Members Only home page. It includes detailed sales reporting, the ability to quickly enter in-school orders, an area to set school sales goals, and the ability to manage and submit Namestamp and iTag orders. See the Distribution List available to you in Sales Central > Sales Details > Print > As distribution list.

Set sales and refund end dates with enough time to allow accurate lists to be created. *if*

## These are some of the list types you might need:



- An alphabetical list by grade level if students are coming to a central location, split up by the number of tables needed to keep lines a reasonable length
- An alphabetical list by teachers' names if books will be delivered to specific classrooms
- A separate alphabetical list of name-stamped books, with the books in alpha order also
- An alphabetical list of students who have a balance due

## Other list considerations:



- Leave space for students to sign their names when they pick up their books. The signature will also give you a record of who picked up books for whom.
- Delete any students who have left the school. Put them on a new list for refunds or shipping books.



# Advertise your distribution

Remind students in a number of ways when, where and how to pick up their book. Use the daily announcements, posters, the school newspaper, your Facebook page, all-calls and emails to parents. And if it's going to be a signing event or a party, make sure to hype it. Tell them:

- Time, date and place
- To bring their receipt
- To bring their school ID
- If picking up for a sibling or friend, bring a note before or on distribution day.
- They will sign for the book when they pick it up
- What to do if there is a problem with the book
- If they can buy next year's book

Give the front office staff all the information about distribution, maybe in a question-and-answer format, so they can provide the details to parents.

Having students sign for books is great proof of who picked up a book and for whom. Also requiring a note from parents to allow a student to pick up a book for a sibling or friend goes a long way toward resolving any disputes. The yearbook staff should plan to keep these notes organized for quick reference.

If you are having an autograph party, add posters or buttons to your marketing. Walsworth also has a Big Event package of items, including posters, postcards, tickets and more. Help students feel like they will be attending the biggest event of the year at their school just because they purchased a yearbook. Go to [walsworthyearbooks.com/marketing-help](http://walsworthyearbooks.com/marketing-help) to see and order these items.

**Admittance into the party is another aspect you have to think about.**

- Is the party open to anyone who paid for a yearbook?
- How will you handle students who owe a balance?
- Will the party be free?
- Should you hand out or sell tickets when they purchase the book, or the week before as you advertise the party?
- If you sell tickets, is it to make a profit, or enough to cover expenses? *if*

## Prep for the big day

If you plan to go classroom to classroom to hand out books, you will need to find out how many carts or dollies you have access to so students can roll books to the rooms. You will need to divide buyer lists by class. Staff members will need pens, too. Make sure you let teachers know days or weeks in advance when to expect the disruption, and not plan tests that day.

If you plan to pass out books at one time in one place, you are going to need many more items, and these are included on the checklist. Also make sure you have enough staff members for each job, or recruit students to help; adult supervisors, such as teachers or parents, plus at least one administrator; and custodial staff to move books from the locked area to the distribution area, and back if necessary.

You, your editors or your marketing staff will need to assign staff members the following jobs:

- Sit at tables to hand out books
- Sit at tables to sell options such as pens or autograph supplements
- Keep distribution tables supplied with books
- Take photos

- Keep the lines moving
- Clean up
- Move leftover and unclaimed books back to the locked area, or enlist the custodians

If distribution is during school, get a substitute teacher for your classes. Your job should be to man the Answer Table, for anyone with questions, issues or lost receipts. *if*

**Do NOT sell extra books until a few days after distribution.** You may need those extra books on hand for possible exchanges or other scenarios. You do not want to run out for any reason on distribution day. And when you do sell them, do not sell them at a discount. In fact, sell them for \$5 or \$10 more. Otherwise, you are creating a pattern that may cause students and parents to wait to buy. *if*

## THE day

Now that you are prepared, make sure you and your staff have plenty of time to set up. If your distribution is a yearbook signing party, consider whether you want to decorate, have music, a slide show of photos not used in the yearbook, and plenty of pens around.

Review job duties with the staff. Have plenty of pens on hand. Assign a staff member to take photos to record the occasion and for Facebook posting. *if*



Kids and food go together like cookies and milk – but not necessarily at distribution. Some staffs will have hard candy or lollipops available. Others have found that food and drinks lead to spills on books or sticky fingerprints on pages. If you think food is a must, consider the least offensive in terms of mess. *if*

## After distribution day

Remaining books need to go back to their locked area. Then advertise when books can be picked up by students who missed the event. If you plan to sell leftover books, advertise that, too.

Some students who have moved will want their books mailed to them, while others may want a refund. In many schools, the building bookkeeper handles the refund and then notifies the yearbook staff. Yearbook staffs may want to set a date after which yearbook sales are no longer refunded. You may also want to set up a policy of whether postage to mail books comes from the yearbook budget or if students need to pay when they leave a forwarding address.

Most of the items in this primer, and many more, are included in the following Distribution Event Checklist. Print and use this list to help you keep track of all that needs to be done for distribution. This checklist is more complete because it includes items for a signing party. Just use what you need to tailor it to your situation. *if*

# The Distribution Event Checklist

## Plan

- ☐ Meet with staff and administrator to discuss your distribution plans.
- ☐ Determine event date, time and place; reserve location.
- ☐ Form decoration committee to make your event rock!
- ☐ Tell your student body at least three times about distribution. Include:
  - When and where to pick up their books.
  - To bring their photo ID and receipt.
  - If they can buy this year's book and its cost.
  - If signing time will be available.
  - If there is a signing party, and how much admission is (if applicable).
  - If they can order next year's book and its cost.
  - To bring a signed permission slip if they are picking up a book for another student.
- ☐ Give front office the event details to help answer questions.
- ☐ Buy pens to give away or sell at your event. Yearbook gel pens are available through the Kit Dept. at [kit.department@walsworth.com](mailto:kit.department@walsworth.com).
- ☐ Set up a sound system to play music from an iPod, internet or other music source. Test the system in advance.
- ☐ Get a cash box, cash to make change and receipt pads for recording sales. Receipt books are available through the Kit Dept.
- ☐ Develop plan to promote your event in school on daily announcements and school newspaper. Create a video. Consider fliers, signs in restrooms, posters, stickers, special event tickets, backstage passes. All are available in the Customized Marketing catalog through [walsworthyearbooks.com/marketing-help](http://walsworthyearbooks.com/marketing-help).
- ☐ Write news release using the 5 Ws and H (who, what, when, where, why and how.) Send to local newspapers and TV and radio stations.
- ☐ Assign staff members to distribution duties such as:
  - Direct students to the correct line and to keep lines moving
  - Check students on list and hand out books
  - Keep tables supplied with books and pull ordered options
  - Sell books for next year and collect money
  - Clean up and move leftover/unclaimed books to storage
- ☐ Recruit parent/teacher volunteers for supervision.
- ☐ Consider getting a substitute for your other classes on distribution day.
- ☐ Get custodians' help to move boxes and help with clean-up.

## Plan some more (for events that really rock)

- ☐ Consider setting up teams for: food, entertainment, promotion, and the actual distribution set up.
- ☐ Ask local businesses to donate food. Start with those that purchased an ad. Make plans for food to be picked up at a specified date and time.
- ☐ Can't find a business to donate food? Contact local food trucks and arrange for them to set up outside your event.
- ☐ Talk to school clubs that need a fundraiser and offer to let them sell food, drinks or any other cool items at your event.
- ☐ Buy paper plates, cups, utensils and napkins.
- ☐ Book DJ or band. This could be great publicity for them, so ask if they'll do it for free and let them hand out info.
- ☐ Reserve fun party activities such as a photo booth... or make your own!
- ☐ Secure a monitor and display a slideshow of great photos not included in the yearbook.
- ☐ Raffle donated items, such as gift cards and other small prizes. Plan how to distribute raffle tickets and announce winners.
- ☐ Print fliers to put in each book promoting next year's book. Consider including a discount or free option.

## Prepare

- ☐ Before books arrive, arrange a secure area such as a yearbook room closet for storage.
- ☐ Confirm your yearbooks and options delivery date with your sales rep.
- ☐ Take a moment to enjoy. When alone, open a box and look through a book. Set a time to look at the yearbook with your editors. Have a ceremonial unveiling of the yearbook with the entire staff. Help them enjoy their successes in this book.



- ☐ Follow through with your promotion plan. Hang posters, put up banners, hand out fliers, stick notes on cars, hang signs in restrooms, stuff lockers, and distribute any other items you created.
- ☐ Send emails to all parents and students reminding them of the event and providing all the needed information.
- ☐ Get everything you need for your distribution lines, including tables, chairs, pens, tape, distribution lists, highlighters, dollies/carts to move books, signs for alpha lines and trash cans.
- ☐ Create a large sign to designate an area away from the distribution tables for students to sign yearbooks. This will keep lines moving at the distribution tables and encourage students to sign yearbooks.
- ☐ Have a separate table for questions or problems and purchasing yearbooks.
- ☐ Have a separate line for purchasing extra options, such as autograph supplements, plastic covers and current events supplements.
- ☐ Pre-sell next year's book. These teens have already shown interest by purchasing this year!
- ☐ Post buyers lists at least one week prior to the event. This will give students who think they bought a book the opportunity to check with you.
- ☐ Confirm all volunteer commitments in writing.
- ☐ Stock the cash box with change.
- ☐ Remind staff to wear yearbook T-shirts on event day. Order T-shirts for key volunteers.

### Manage your list

- ☐ Consolidate your sales lists. If you sold books through different methods (online and at school), be sure your list includes all orders.
- ☐ Print an alphabetical student list. Make sure there's room for each student to sign when they pick up their book.
- ☐ Place a copy of the buyers list at each station. Tape the lists to the tables or put them in binders for easy name searching. Taping them to tables makes the lines move faster.
- ☐ Break the distribution into several lines, for example, create separate lines for last names starting with A-G, H-M, N-S, T-Z. You may need separate lines for personalized books.
- ☐ Organize your personalized books. Alphabetize the books by student name. Then be sure that your distribution list shows what each student had personalized on their book.
- ☐ Highlight students who owe a balance.
- ☐ Students who are picking up books for friends or siblings need to have a signed note granting permission. Make announcements closer to distribution time. Ask students to bring notes to the adviser or editor before distribution and keep with the distribution list to resolve discrepancies.

### Survive the big day

- ☐ Have markers, tape and extra paper for posters handy.
- ☐ Make sure your signs indicating alpha lines are large, the letters are bold and hung high for excellent visibility. They need to be seen from a distance.
- ☐ Have water and/or snacks available for your helpers.
- ☐ Review with each worker what their duties are.
- ☐ Savor this moment. Observe how happy students are to receive the book you worked all year to create! Designate someone to take pictures to share with the staff and post to Facebook later.

### Wrap up

- ☐ Box up and store extra yearbooks.
- ☐ Ask teachers if they would like the empty boxes.
- ☐ Inform the front office if leftover books are available to buy and where to purchase, in case they get questions.
- ☐ Announce where students who were not present on distribution day can pick up their book.
- ☐ Send thank you notes to anyone who helped, including volunteers, businesses that provided food or other items, faculty, administrators and custodians. Consider bringing the custodians a special treat for their help.
- ☐ Review the event with your staff and brainstorm ways to improve for next year. What worked? What didn't? What should you try next year?