

Inviting the Lieutenant Governor to an Event

Goals:

- To learn how to write a letter of invitation to the Lieutenant Governor of your Province.
- To assess the special aspects of your school which might cause the Lieutenant Governor to accept an invitation to visit.
- To collaborate in an efficient way with the Principal and/or other school officials in sending the invitation and planning the program for the vice-regal visit.
- To acquire basic skills in event organization such as planning, publicity and logistics.
- To develop presentation skills by an after-event report on the project.

Lieutenant Governors act as the chief executives of each province in the name of The Queen. During their time in office, they travel widely throughout their provinces to give vice-regal support and draw attention to people and institutions which help to make our communities and province better places to live. All the good things your school accomplishes by the hard work of you, your classmates and teachers might well be a reason for your Lieutenant Governor to celebrate your achievements through a visit.

Do you know who your Lieutenant Governor is? Most of the Lieutenant Governors now have websites and even twitter and facebook accounts! See if you can find your Lieutenant Governor on the web.

STEP ONE

Drafting the invitation and tentative program

BEFORE DEVELOPING OTHER ASPECTS OF THIS PROJECT, you need to sit down with your Principal, present your idea and obtain “official” support for the invitation you hope your school will extend to your Vice-Regal representative. You will more likely attract your Principal’s enthusiasm if you show you have put in organized thought and carefully prepared some ideas which will:

1. Reflect well on the school
2. Make less work for the administration
3. Be more likely attract a positive reply from the Lieutenant Governor.

Brainstorm as to what elements of your school you would be particularly proud to show to the Lieutenant Governor (and so, raise community attention and pride, as well)¹. Think widely, and think diversely. The more people who become involved in the visit, the

¹ Have students worked on a energy audit and “green team” which have made the school more energy efficient, have a smaller carbon footprint, and save money? Is there a new building or wing that could be officially opened? Has the gymnastic team won tournaments and would like to give a brief performance to the Lieutenant Governor? Did students excel in science fairs or mathematics competitions? Public speaking or debate? A poetry-writing seminar?

more you will find support for the visit and make your job a lot easier. After this brainstorming, you will want to draft a proposal to give to the Principal². It needs to contain a brief introduction describing who you are and why you think the Lieutenant Governor should visit, a date for your proposed visit, and a detailed itinerary for the visit. Pay attention to detail – it is always better to consider everything than to forget something important! Also note that it is better to have a number of short stops on the itinerary than to propose just two. In the limited time available, you will want to give the LG a good overview of your school. Your draft proposal will go through many revisions as the Principal reviews it with you and with his staff. If the invitation is accepted, further revisions will likely be made in conversations with the Lieutenant Governor's office.

² See an example draft proposal in the *Resources* section of the Monarchist League of Canada's education site. The details in each section should be your own, but it needs to contain all of those elements!

STEP TWO

Inviting the Lieutenant Governor

THE GREATEST CHANCE FOR ACCEPTANCE of the invitation is for it to be sent on school letterhead, signed by the Principal (and possibly, by a student as well) with the proposed draft program attached, and the direct telephone and email contact of the Principal. The address for your Lieutenant Governor can found on their official website – it may even have a name of a staff member to which it should be directed. The salutation for such a letter is "Your Honour" and the close simply, "Yours sincerely".

Detailed instructions for writing to the Lieutenant Governors can typically be found on their websites

It is often wise for an informal discussion to take place before the formal invitation is extended. Every Lieutenant Governor has a staff member who acts as program coordinator, and is happy to receive a phone call of general inquiry. This call could, for instance, reveal that the date chosen is not suitable and give suggestions for one/ones more likely to be convenient; that His Honour might prefer a shorter or longer visit; that the spouse usually accompanies the LG and is happy to visit some sections of the school separately, thereby doubling the impact and scope of the visit, and so on.

STEP THREE

Organising the Visit

SINCE EVERY VISIT IS DIFFERENT, this document cannot possibly advise you as to each detail. Once an invitation has been accepted, you

will doubtless have frequent meetings and exchange many emails amongst those responsible at the school and the vice-regal office. You may find the security detail wishes to visit the school ahead of time. At the same time or a separate occasion, the Aide-de-Camp³ will want to meet with those involved for a walk-through and discussion of the program. These people will focus on nuts-and-bolts issues ranging from their thinking more time needs to be allowed for the LG to get from point A to point B, asking about crowded halls en route, noticing a loose stair rail and pinpointing a bathroom that can be reserved for vice-regal use. They are experts, having been involved in many such visits; they will both point out details that might have escaped you and at the same time calm your nerves! They will also tell you that the LG wants to see the school and students as they are, not dressed up for the day – so, for instance, no need to tell students to dress up⁴. And of course, though the school is regularly cleaned, you can't remove every piece of graffiti overnight, and there probably will be a gum wrapper en route. That's life! The LG is not a delicate piece of china to be protected in bubble wrap.

³ An Aide-de-Camp is a military officer who travels with the LG to make sure all goes smoothly

⁴ Although the general student body need not dress up, the committee escorting the vice-regal might do so, out of respect for Her Majesty The Queen's representative

You will also want to discuss with the organizing committee and vice-regal office whether local media – beyond the school newspaper – should be invited to cover the visit. If so, there is a standard form of press release to be prepared, someone detailed to greet and accompany reporters (does your school require visitors to wear an access badge?) and consideration given as to whether they should be given access to every event or only invited to the larger and more formal part of the program. Especially in larger cities, media can be aggressive and intimidating and perhaps best handled by a pleasant but firm adult member of the school administration.

On the day, relax! Despite all your planning, it's very likely that something will not go according to plan. The Lieutenant Governor may be held up in traffic. Your student emcee will fall sick (always good idea to have back-ups for everyone). You'll notice a button missing on your jacket (take it off!).

STEP FOUR

After-event action and report

THE TASKS AFTER AN EVENT are typically never as appealing as the one leading up to it, but should include the following:

- A letter of thanks to the Lieutenant Governor, signed by the same people who sent the original invitation

- Notes of thanks (preferably hand-written) to the adults who made the event run smoothly, such as the gymnastics coach, the chief custodian, the cafeteria manager, the band leader
- A report from the student committee to your teacher, copied to your Principal. This should summarize what you learned from the experience. What went really well? What could have been improved? How did students react?