

**My TSA chapter wants to attend a regional conference.**  
*A helpful guide for new advisors.*

If this is your first year as a TSA chapter, and first time preparing for a regional conference, then this guide is for you. We will walk through the general steps in getting your team ready to attend a regional TSA conference.

1. Collect your membership dues and submit your online TSA chapter affiliation  
<http://www.registermychapter.com/tsa/nat/>.

National TSA Dues are \$9 per student and Tennessee TSA Dues are \$6 per student. So you will need to collect this from your members and get a school check sent to National TSA in Reston, VA. Your online affiliation will not be active until payment is received.

2. Once Tennessee TSA receives an e-mail from National TSA that your school as an active chapter, you will be active in the registration website for Tennessee TSA regional and state conferences in 2012. You will go to [www.registermychapter.com/tsa/tn](http://www.registermychapter.com/tsa/tn) and click on your region.

The deadline to register for the regional conference is January 11, 2012. You will need to have your regional conference registration fees paid by school check to Tennessee TSA and mailed to the address on the invoice. The printed copy of your registration is your invoice. Keep a copy for yourself and give one to your bookkeeper. Payment is due before your conference date.

The username & password for the registration site are the same ones you have used to affiliate with National TSA. If you are unsure of your registration username and password, please contact the TN TSA State Advisor at [heather.henderlight@tn.gov](mailto:heather.henderlight@tn.gov).

3. So now that your dues are paid and you are an affiliated and active chapter, you will receive the Total TSA CD from National TSA. On this CD are the Membership Materials Manual, Leadership Lessons, and the Competitive Events Guide. The Competitive Events Guide is what you need to prepare for the regional conference. Put the CD in your computer, open up the .pdf file and look at the events. You will need to print copies of the event rules/guide for each student who has chosen an event. You may even want to print the entire guide and bring the copy along to the conference. Or, if you have a mobile device, like an iPad, you can save a copy to it and bring it along.

The regional conference planning team has chosen a selection of the middle and high school events to offer at your conference. Due to the time and space limits for a regional conference, Tennessee TSA cannot offer all the events. Make sure you look at the list of events offered at your conference found here <http://www.tntsa.org/2012-tn-conferences--events.html>.

You will only need to prepare your students for the events offered on the list for your region. If you and your students don't see an event you like, don't worry, more events will be offered at the State Conference. Additionally, participants do not need to win at the regional level to advance to the state conference. State conference is open to all members.

You will see that some events are individual events and some events are team events. The list of events for your region will tell you how many students from your chapter can compete in each event on the day of your regional conference. For instance, some regions are offering chapters the opportunity to enter two teams for Structural Engineering. This means you could enter 1 team of 2 or 2 teams of 2 from your school. Please be sure to carefully read your event list.

4. Once you have your registration submitted and your students have chosen events, you will need to make sure they have a copy of their event rules. Read over it with them. Make sure they understand what the contest entails. If there is a veteran chapter in your area, reach out to that teacher for advice if needed. Get parents involved at your afterschool meetings. They can also help students practice and prepare for their events. Reading the judges' rating sheet will help you see what is required and what will earn students the highest scores. The middle school rubric is now more detailed and useful than ever!
5. So once you have your student entries ready, be sure you have your field trip paperwork on file with your school system, permission slips are completed, and everyone has paid for their trip. You may wish to hold a parent meeting before the conference to make sure everyone understands the travel arrangements for the conference. Go over the TSA conference dress code. Are parents providing transportation, or will there be a school bus? What are the drop off and pick up times for students? Do you have lunch arrangements? How will the student projects be transported to the conference site? Invite parents along as chaperones. This will help build support for your program and allow parents to see what TSA is all about.
6. Visit the site <http://www.tntsa.org/2012-tn-conferences--events.html> again and look for updates for your regional. Has an agenda or updated schedule been posted for your event? If so, print it and give copies to your parents. Being prepared will help the day go smoothly. Veteran advisors usually bring a toolkit for the day. The toolkit can include things like, competition event rules, pencils, paper, index cards, band aids, glue, scissors, USB memory stick, anything that might be needed at the last second. Be sure your students know what they are responsible for bringing for their events.
7. On conference day report to the registration/check-in area. Generally this is the front lobby of the conference site building. Some events will be checked-in first thing in the morning. Be sure your students are on time for check-in. You will receive things like conference agendas, name tags, and any last minute instructions. You will be given directions for where your students should report next. You may want to find a "home-base" for the day. This is a place where you, or another adult from your chapter, will be all day and where students should report when they are not competing. This will help you keep your group organized

for the day. Your students should take some time to scout out their competition room(s). Plan to report at least 5-10 minutes early so that students are not rushed and can find a comfortable seat, or area, for their event. Some events have a set-up time for computers, or other items. Be sure to adhere to this time. If there is a problem, just talk to the advisor who is serving as the event coordinator, or the head judge.

8. So what happens if you bring students to their first regional who are not competing? Well, first be sure that they have proper supervision at all times, and are not running around and disturbing events in progress, or violating rules from your school system. Next, assign them events to observe for the day. Many times a student who is new, and unsure about TSA, will find an event he/she is interested in by attending as an observer. Observers will also need to pay the registration fee, as Tennessee TSA is required to provide liability insurance for all attendees and pay facility usage fees for participants.

If you have students who are between events, or have checked-in an event like dragster or promotional design and have no on-site events, assign them an event to observe or recommend that bring an activity like homework, card games, or something to occupy their time. Some students will have back-to-back to events while others have some downtime. The day will conclude with an awards ceremony at the time and place stated on your conference program.