

SENIA Conference Partner School Guidelines

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Purpose

SENIA is a worldwide association of educators, professionals, and parents whose mission is to advocate for and provide resources/support for differently abled individuals. Our vision is to live in an inclusive world where every individual is supported, resources are accessible, potential is maximized, and action is inspired. The SENIA Conference allows for all our stakeholders to come together as one to share resources, learn from each other, and form/strengthen our networks.

Please take 45 seconds to watch our [Introduction Video](#).

Conference Goals

- Deliver world-class content that is immediately applicable for practitioners and parents
- Foster networking among attendees
- Identify, utilize, and celebrate local resources, expertise, and programs
- Connect partner school with the local chapter in their respective country
- Advocate for individuals with special needs

School Partner

The SENIA board is grateful to each school that is willing to host a conference and understands the tremendous amount of work and energy required to make it a success.

Hosting the SENIA conference provides benefits to the host. These include global recognition, improved awareness of special education needs in the host's country, and in-house training for the host's faculty, staff and parents.

The document below outlines the expectations for all parties.

We are excited to work with you!

SENIA's Board and Role in the Conference

The SENIA Board of Directors is made of individuals who volunteer their time to work together to further SENIA's mission. The Executive Director of SENIA is the only paid member of SENIA. Lori Boll, SENIA's Executive Director, will be your main point of contact throughout the conference. The other members of the SENIA Board will be involved during the planning and on the conference days to provide support for the conference organizers, as their title roles indicate.

- **Lori Boll- SENIA Executive Director**
- **Tanya Farrol- SENIA Founder**
- **Shelley Hawkes- Director of Growth & Development**
- **Blake Roberts- Director of Professional Learning**
- **Gerald Anthony- Direct of Scholarships & Awards**
- **Jay Lingo- Director of Marketing & Communications**
- **April Remfrey- Director of Finance**
- **Lizzie Hudson- Director of Membership**
- **Priscilla Leighton- Board member**
- **Kate Balsamo- Board member**

SENIA's Executive Director acts as conference liaison between the partner school and board. This should help facilitate a close working relationship between both organizations.

SENIA's Executive Director and the Director of your region's chapter will be your main point of contact for any questions or concerns you may have during the course of planning for the conference.

The SENIA Board is tasked with ensuring SENIA stays true to its mission. As such, it has the final say in all matters related to the conference.

Financial Information

SENIA understands that hosting a conference comes with some financial responsibility. The following financial guidelines will provide clarity and help with planning the conference.

One of SENIA's core strategies is to create an organization that is viable and sustainable so that we can continue to accomplish our mission in the future. As a result, we will continuously monitor the budget and spending so that there will be a surplus at the end of each conference. This surplus is reinvested into our organization so that we can impact even more individuals. Usually, the surplus is used to plan smaller conferences and workshops, provide scholarships, and to support innovative special education/needs programs.

Conference Budget

SENIA will provide a working budget with the partner school once the school is selected.

Conference and Pre-Conference Registration Costs

SENIA recommends that the cost for each attendee is approximately US\$400 for the regular, 2-day conference, and approximately US\$200.00 for the pre-conference. Of course, slight

adjustments will need to be made depending on local circumstances. SENIA International will take care of the ticket sales through their conference platform, Whova.

SENIA will work together with the partner school to set the price of the pre-conference and conference. The goal is to make the conference affordable to SENIA members as well as ensure all financial obligations for the conference are taken care of.

The conference registration fees are waived for each member of the SENIA Board of Directors as well as the six members of the conference planning committee.

Discount for Partner School Attendees

One of SENIA's goals is to reach as many educators as possible. Past participants of SENIA conferences have included special educators, professionals, parents, and general educators. SENIA conferences provide participants with best practice instruction and strategies that benefit all members of a school. It is an expectation that the hosting school sends at least 20 individuals to the conference. We would like to offer the following ticket discounts to the partner school's faculty/staff that registers for the conference.

- 20-60: 25% discount
- Greater than 60 people: 30% discount

SENIA's mission is to make the world a more inclusive place for all individuals. In order to get resources and support to all educators, SENIA encourages schools to take advantage of the expertise provided by the keynote and invited speakers. In the past, several of our partner schools have scheduled a Professional Development Day for their faculty and staff around the conference schedule. This allows for all members of the school community to learn inclusive practices and strategies to support the learning of students.

Conference Expenses to Partner School

The conference committee and the SENIA Executive Director will work together to ensure that all conference expenses, such as food, transportation, etc. are paid in a timely manner. Depending on the policies of the partner school, this amount may be paid directly by SENIA or reimbursed to the partner school at a later date.

The Partner School will incur costs associated with the venue including electricity, support staff necessary for set-up and clean-up, technical support, etc.

Expenses for Conference Speakers and Workshop Presenters

The Conference Committee and the SENIA Executive Director will work together to determine the expenses that will be covered for keynote presenters as well as pre-conference speakers. More specific details can be found in the planning budget.

Workshop presenters are not compensated for their presentations and are expected to register for the SENIA conference and pay full registration fees.

SENIA Student Award Expenses (to be determined if we will have this at the Spring 2024 conference)

The SENIA Conference has included a [Student Award](#) since 2011. We are proud to celebrate what our students have accomplished. As a result, the following expenses are included in the conference budget. SENIA will take care of all below expenses.

- Economy airfare for the award recipient and one chaperone
- Three nights hotel accommodation
- Conference registration fees
- Cost for the plaque

SENIA Conference Award Expenses

SENIA will select two eligible participants and fund their conference registration. This is intended for conference applicants who require financial support and would not be able to attend the conference without this support. Click [here](#) for more information.

Registration

SENIA will coordinate the registration and payment process. The SENIA Executive Director will keep the Conference Committee up to date on registration for planning purposes.

Planning

Planning Committee

The partner school should appoint the following positions. SENIA recommends that the partner school works very closely with the local or regional SENIA Chapter, if at all possible.

- Conference Chair: Selected by partner school. The conference chair will work closely with the SENIA Executive Director/Regional Director to ensure the planning process is smooth.
- Coordinator for Keynote Speakers and Pre-conference speakers
- Coordinator for Workshop sessions
- Coordinator for Logistics: this includes snacks, meals, transportation, etc.
- Coordinators for Vendors/Local Organizations
- Coordinator for Facilities and Technology

The registration fee for these six members will be waived.

The partner school planning chairperson will need to meet with the SENIA board on a monthly basis, via conference call, to update on the planning process four-six months preceding the conference.

SENIA asks the partner school to reach out to the local/regional chapter in their country. We believe that the partnership between the local/regional chapter board and the conference planning committee strengthens the conference. The local chapter provides support with local resources/vendors, speakers, local publicity and additional planning/logistical support.

Timeline

To aid in the planning process, SENIA will provide a timeline to reference along the way.

Program

The conference program should include the following components: (more information for each can be found directly below this list.

- Pre-Conference - a total of 3-5 pre-conference workshops should be offered (this is dependent on number of participants).

- SENIA Board, Invited Speakers, and Conference Committee Dinner (evening of pre-conference)
- 2 Keynote speaker sessions
- 5 Workshop sessions - most workshop sessions should be presented by SENIA delegates.
- Conference Social - for all participants on first evening of the conference
- Job-Alike/Cohort sessions - at least once during the conference to allow delegates to share ideas
- Local Chapter meeting time
- Teacher Representative meeting time
- SENIA Awards -- please see more detailed description below
- SENIA Youth -- please see more detailed description below
- Adequate number and length of coffee breaks, so that attendees can connect informally as well
- New innovative ideas - SENIA is always interested in new, innovative ideas. Should you have a new idea you would like to try, (ie. Speed presentations/Ignite speakers), please present your idea for further discussion and approval.

In addition, the SENIA board will present several times throughout the conference. This includes, but is not limited to, the chairperson for SENIA delivering a welcome message, presentation of the SENIA Student Awards, and final thoughts at the close of the event.

Pre-Conferences

A total of 3-5 pre-conferences should be offered one day prior to the conference. Ideally, the keynote speakers are also able to hold a pre-conference session. No more than 3 pre-conference speakers should be invited that are not already attending the conference.

The pre-conferences have a separate budget. Every effort should be made to ensure that the pre-conferences are financially viable by themselves. All exceptions must be approved by the SENIA Board.

SENIA Conference Dinner

The partner school will arrange a dinner for the SENIA Board of Directors attending the conference, the invited keynote speakers, the head of the partner school and their guest, and the partner school planning team. This dinner is typically held the night of the pre-conference. The purpose of this dinner is to network and celebrate the start of the SENIA conference. This has traditionally been in a casual environment (either a restaurant or an administrator's home) and is not intended to be a financial strain for the hosting organization.

Keynote Speakers & Sessions

The purpose of the conference is to recognize resources and programs based in the region. Outside and keynote speakers should be kept to a minimum.

One to two keynote speakers may be invited to the conference, and the honorarium for the speakers should be kept to a minimum.

Keynote speakers are expected to give one keynote presentation as well as 2-3 workshop sessions. Ideally they will also be able to hold a pre-conference event/workshop.

Conference organizers, in collaboration with the SENIA Board's Executive Director, will make the final decision on the keynote/invited speakers.

Criteria for Selecting Keynote Speakers and Workshop Presenters at SENIA Sponsored Events

Prior to choosing keynotes and invited speakers, the conference organizers will receive approval from SENIA's Executive Director. SENIA has been putting on international conferences since 2002 and has a deep history of experience with keynote speakers. This will ensure that past keynote speakers are not duplicated often and that the keynote's values follow the mission and vision of SENIA.

Considerations in selecting speakers should include the following:

- Background / work experience is aligned with [SENIA's mission](#)
- Demonstrates understanding of special education in the context of the region
- Willingness to collaborate with conference organizers, including SENIA's Executive Director, to tailor fit the keynote address for the conference theme and audience

Workshop Presenters

Most workshop sessions should be presented by SENIA members. Presenters are not compensated for their presentations and are expected to register for the SENIA conference and pay full registration fees.

Presenting at a SENIA conference is considered an honor and a way to build up one's resume'. Many of our past SENIA presenters have gone on to be consultants throughout their region and internationally.

Conference organizers, in collaboration with the SENIA Executive Director, will make the final decision regarding which workshop presenters' proposals are approved.

The conference schedule will allow for five sessions during which workshops will be offered. Depending on the venue size and participant numbers, the number of speakers per session will vary and be determined by the conference planning committee.

The registration information will also include a call for workshop presenters. Proposal forms will be available on the conference website. The planning committee will have access to completed forms.

SENIA and the conference committee will work together to choose the most suitable presenters for the conference.

Required/Dedicated Room Requirements

Pre-Conference

The host school will provide space for the predetermined number of pre-conference speakers (traditionally 2-5).

The host school will provide a space for the participants to have refreshments and lunch.

Conference Days

The host school will provide as many meeting spaces as necessary to meet the needs of the conference [schedule](#). This will be determined by the conference planning committee.

The host school shall also provide:

1. Large venue or theater for all participants to gather for the keynote presentations and announcements
2. Classrooms or meeting rooms for all presentations
3. Area for refreshments
4. Space for a Happy Hour/ Social Gathering
5. A cafeteria or space to eat lunch

SENIA Board

The host school is responsible to provide a place for SENIA Board members to meet throughout the conference. This room shall be accessible throughout the entirety of the conference.

Technology needs: screen/projector/wifi.

Local Chapter Needs

The partner school is responsible to provide a place and time for local SENIA chapters to meet during the SENIA Conference. This place needs to hold at least 20 people and allow for technology to show the meeting agenda and notes. This meeting is typically held during a job-alike time slot.

In the vendor area, the host school is asked to provide a table at the conference for local chapters to advertise their chapters. This area will be manned by local chapter representatives.

SENIA Teacher Representative Needs

The host school is responsible to provide a place and time for SENIA teacher representatives to meet during the SENIA Conference. This place needs to hold at least 30 people and allow for technology to show the meeting agenda and notes.

Vendors/Exhibitors

Space near the conference venue to be provided for local vendors and exhibitors. Each exhibitor should be provided with a table and two chairs.

Conference Schedule

The Conference Committee will work with the SENIA Executive Director to set a conference schedule that will allow us to meet the conference goals in the most meaningful way. This includes determining the number of workshop sessions, choosing a conference host (emcee), starting times, etc.

Sample conference schedule template below:

| Time | Day 1 | Day 2 |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 8:00-9:00 | Registration and Coffee/Tea | Coffee/Tea Break |
| 9:00-10:15 | General Session | General Session (includes SENIA Awards) |
| 10:15-10:45 | Coffee/Tea Break | Coffee/Tea Break |
| 10:45-11:45 | Workshop Session 1 | Workshop Session 4 |
| 12:00-13:00 | Lunch | Lunch |
| 13:15-14:15 | Workshop Session 2 | Workshop Session 5 |
| 14:30-15:30 | Job-Alikes | Closing Session |
| 15:30-16:00 | Coffee/Tea Break | Coffee/Tea -- Informal Mingling |
| 16:00-17:00 | Workshop Session 3 | |
| 18:00-20:00 | Evening Social for all participants | |

Job-Alike/Cohort Session

The conference schedule should allow for cohort groups (job alike) to meet at least once during the SENIA conference. This enables work sharing ideas. This session needs to be well-organized so participants know where they will go during this time block.

Venue

The SENIA Conference should be held on the campus of the partner school. The host school will assume all costs of the venue.

Hosting the conference in a hotel or conference center can be cost prohibitive and would not allow local teachers to attend due to the increased cost of the conference.

If, for any reason, a conference center must be used, approval must be granted by the SENIA board.

Vendors

The conference will provide an area for local/international vendors to share their products. Non-profits will not be charged \$250 for display tables, while businesses will be charged US \$500.00 per table.

Conference Promotion

The SENIA Marketing team will be responsible for creating the materials to promote the event.

Creatives

SENIA Marketing Team will develop the creative materials. This includes Posters, Social Media Photos, Banners, Brochures, Save the Date, and more.

Hashtag

The hosting venue will do their best to promote the #SENIA(Continent)XXXX(Year of event) hashtag prior and during the event i.e. #SENIAAsia2024 . The host is welcome to add their own hashtag as well.

Resources

All SENIA conference and workshop speakers shall be asked to share their resources with participants. If permission is given, conference handouts and resources will be made available to participants on a post-conference section of the conference website.

This section will also contain other resources

- SENIA participant survey
- Certificates of attendance
- Photos from the event.

SENIA Awards

The SENIA Awards Coordinator will be in contact with the host school to support organizing accommodations, conference, and flights of the award winner and chaperone.

- The SENIA Awards promote individuals or groups that advocate and create awareness about special education issues around the world.

- The SENIA Student Award honors a student with a disability who excels. It celebrates the achievements of a child or youth with disabilities; encourages awareness of the abilities and aspirations of children/youth with disabilities; and advocates on behalf of exceptional children.
- The presentation of the SENIA Student Award at the conference is an important and integral part of SENIA's mission statement. As such, the award presentation should be held at a prominent and appropriate time to maximize the honor for the recipient. Time should be given to present the honorary recipients as well as allowing for the award winner a 10-15 minute speech.
- It is an honor for many of the SENIA award nominees to receive either an honorary award or be a recipient of the SENIA award. It may be the first time an individual is recognized for advocating and creating awareness about special education issues. For this reason, honorary award winners and their families will, at times, choose to come at their own expense to the award ceremony. The host should be aware of this and be able to accommodate an additional 20-30 people for the award ceremony.

SENIA Youth Chapters

During past conferences, members from SENIA youth chapters have been asked to attend and share a workshop or attend the keynote presentations. These students are not charged an entry fee. Should a youth chapter wish to attend a conference, the adult chapter advisor shall contact the conference host at least four months prior to the conference.

Conference Wrap-Up

The following surveys will help us to assess the effectiveness of the conference and will provide a helpful tool in planning future conferences.

- **SENIA School Survey.** The SENIA Board asks for this to be completed promptly at the close of the conference. This survey is intended to inform the SENIA Board and future partner schools about the requirements/logistics of hosting a SENIA Conference. Accurate information greatly serves in future planning.
- **SENIA Participant Survey** to all delegates (results will be shared with all parties - Partner School, and SENIA Board). This will be designed in collaboration in the weeks leading up to the conference. If the conference organizer plans to use an additional survey they will send to the SENIA Board a summary of the feedback for reference for future conferences.

The SENIA Board will design the **Certificates of Attendance** for both the pre-conference and main conference. The host school will be asked to supply their school/organization logo and the electronic signature of the primary contact of the host school.



Applicants to host the SENIA Conference should sign the Acknowledgement of Guidelines document in the Google folder.