YAC FAQ

1. **Why do we have to register for the Young Authors Conference so early in the school year?**
    - SBC needs to book our talented presenters many months ahead of time.
    - SBC needs to tell Bethel early on how many classrooms we need to use.
    - It takes time to match schools with their preferred date of attendance.

2. **If I am registering students from across my district, why do I need to list each of the schools the students are from?**
    - We may need to split a large group up between the two lunch/book fair sessions, and we need the schools' names and student count to do that.
    - It is helpful for our volunteers to have a list of school names when they are checking in lunches.
    - If requested, SBC can generate tickets by school name rather than by district count, which makes it easier for the district contact person to divide tickets between schools.

3. **How are tickets distributed to schools?**
    - Our ticket database program generates tickets in such a way that two things happen: (1) students from one school do not travel together to the same sessions at the same time ***** and (2) as much as possible, at the end of the day, a school finds that they had at least one student in every breakout choice. SBC staff tweaks what the computer cranks out so that groups have as much variety as possible.

      ***** *In our experience, students are more focused and more willing to share their thoughts when they do not attend sessions with their friends. In fact, one student wrote on his/her evaluation, "When you are away from your friends, you have a whole new type of focus that you never knew you had."*

4. **Why don't we get more tickets for XYZ sessions?**
    - We want to give the students at your school a wide variety of sessions to attend so they can share what they learned with each other.
    - Some sessions are limited by space constraints.

5. **Does it work for students in grades 4-8 to learn together?**
    - Yes. All participants have in common a passion for writing and a desire to hone their writing skills regardless of grade level. In addition, our presenters are prepared to differentiate their session. During the free write portions of the sessions, students have the freedom to write to their ability.
    - Often, schools cannot afford to bus different grades on different days.

- For teachers who prefer that their older students attend with students of similar age, we designate one of the days for grades 6-8.

6. How do I choose students to attend YAC?

- Choose students who have a passion for writing.
- We encourage you to choose all kinds of learners. This is not a conference just for students identified as gifted and talented. It is a conference for *all* students interested in improving their writing skills.
- Keep in mind a gender balance – sometimes boys think "writing is for girls." We don't want to promote that stereotype.

7. How should I distribute tickets to my students?

- We suggest that you give students some say in their choices. For example, you could share the session descriptions with your students and ask them to identify their top ten choices. Then hopefully you can give your students at least one of their top choices.

8. Why can't each student choose his/her sessions upon registration?

- With 900-1,000 students attending each day of YAC, it is impossible for us to manage individual requests.
- Please keep in mind that we've received feedback from students that the session they enjoyed the most is the one they never thought they would like. We take great care to hire quality presenters. Please be assured that there is no "bad" YAC session.

9. How can I help my students stay organized at YAC?

- Distribute tickets to students <u>before</u> arriving at Bethel.
- Be sure students know when they are going to lunch and the book fair (Session 2 or Session 3; Group A or Group B) and where you will meet at the end of the day.
- Make sure students wear nametags with their name and name of their district and school.
- Bring a large/silly item (a big hat, for example) to hold up in the air (think tour guide) so that your students can easily find you at the end of the day.
- We've seen many creative methods for helping students keep track of their tickets:
    - Staple or tape tickets to students' notebooks or nametags.
    - Have students write their sessions and room numbers in their notebooks.

10. Why do students and adults need to wear nametags?

- In the event of an illness or an emergency, we need to be able to identify a person by his/her name, school, and district.
- Presenters appreciate students wearing nametags so they can call on them by name when they raise their hands.

11. How does SBC keep kids safe in such a large environment?

- YAC sessions are spread out over Bethel's campus, but we are skilled at helping students find their way with the help of SBC staff, our 25+ "red shirt" volunteers and ample signage.

12. Can teachers and chaperones attend the sessions too?

- Yes, we encourage them to attend sessions. We do ask, though, that they make sure every student in the class has a seat before taking an empty chair.
- Adults should also remember that the sessions should be driven by the students and the presenter. Adults are observers!

13. Why is lunch/book fair 50 minutes long?

- Due to the number of participants per day, a split lunch arrangement must be used. What this means is that while some groups are at lunch, other groups are in sessions. Sessions last 50 minutes.

14. How are YAC presenters chosen?

- SBC works with a variety of talented authors, illustrators, poets, playwrights, and more –professional folks who are passionate about sharing their love for writing with young people. Presenters must not only be great writers but great teachers and are selected based on their ability to excel at both – writing and teaching.

15. Why does YAC always take place at the end of May/early June?

- Occasionally YAC is offered one day in the winter months and always at the end of May/early June. In either case, SBC feels there is great value in offering programs on a college campus. However, our policy is to never use a college campus while college classes are in session. YAC is therefore scheduled at Bethel either during Bethel's January hiatus or once Bethel's spring semester has ended.

16. How can I secure funding to attend the conference?

- Ideas gleaned from teachers include:
    - Apply for a grant (for example, Target Field Trip Grants).
    - Ask the PTA to fundraise.
    - Ask a business in the community to provide scholarships.
    - Ask families who can afford to pay for a student's ticket to donate something extra towards a scholarship fund.
    - Share a bus with another school in your district.