School Science Fair Booklet

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Many Surrey schools organize both class and school fairs for the benefit of their students.

CLASS FAIRS

In many schools, teachers organize a class science fair in order to give a trial run for their students. As the science fair day approaches, they use regular review sessions to confirm the progress of each project, the topic of each project, and the partners that have been selected. They review with the class the criteria that will be used when the projects will be looked at, especially if the projects will be evaluated for marks, and set the date for the class fair. Many teachers set aside a series of periods that fall about three days before the school fair to organize their class fair.

If the projects will be graded for reporting purposes, it is important to take the time to review the objectives for science fair the school has adopted, in order to consider the reasons and the methods for the assessment. Keep in mind that it is necessary to review both the **scientific competencies** that were used as well as the **product presented**. Teacher assessment and student self-assessment are both appropriate when looking at the stages of the project development and at the final presentation.

After the students present their projects to their peers and answer questions, it is often useful to ask the class to identify areas for positive feedback. In doing so all of the pupils are asked to find ways in which the projects have been well done, and this information will provide ideas for all of the class for their future work.

If the size of your school means that the number of projects that can be included in the school fair must be limited, why not try having the class themselves select their representatives? The class is often then able to brainstorm suggestions to help their representatives to improve their projects in the time before the school fair.

SCHOOL FAIRS

Over the years, schools have developed procedures and timelines that have been useful for running a school science fair. As each school will have their own objectives for their participation in science fair, the details of organization and the criteria for recognition will differ from school to school. The details of the procedures should follow a clear set of objectives that have been agreed upon by the school. This booklet contains some suggestions and guidelines for running a school science fair.

Please ensure that your school fair is held before the registration deadline for the District Science Fair. It is strongly suggested to have your school fair completed the week before the District Science Fair in order to allow those students selected to represent your school time to rehearse their presentations for the judges. The District Science Fair is always held on the first Thursday of March.

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SUGGESTED DATES

January (first week)

- Introductory Staff Meeting
- Staff meets to discuss organization and associated issues: objectives, participation, communication, involvement, judging and awards
- Student and teacher information sheets provided to staff. Some staff duplicate this information for their students
- Volunteers recruited to:
  - make signs and bulletin board displays promoting the school science fair
  - make name tags for projects and any furniture used
  - set up and tear down tables and other furniture
  - clean the gym before and after the school fair

January (mid)

- Order ribbons and awards
- Reserve the gym for the day of the Fair
- Arrange for tables and other furniture as required
- Arrange for judges

February (last week)

Days Before the School Fair

- Projects brought to school, except for those with perishable projects.
- Class Fairs are conducted to determine representatives to the School Fair.

Day Before School Fair

- Gym clean-up in the morning. Gym organized in the afternoon.
- All projects completed and set up in gym by dismissal time

Day of the School Fair

8:30-9:00	Judges meet with coordinator and are briefed and supplied with necessary materials
9:00-12:00	Projects are judged; classes tour gym
1:00-2:00	District Science Fair representatives determined
2:15	Open House: parents and students circulate through gym
2:45	Finalists and District Science Fair representatives announced
6:00-7:00	Open House for those parents who couldn't make it earlier that day

Days After the School Fair

- District Science Fair representatives prepared. Projects perfected for visual impact, neatness, presentations practiced, further research, etc.
- District representatives demonstrate projects to teachers and parents.
- Other projects put on display around school.

March (first Thurs)

DISTRICT SCIENCE AND INNOVATION FAIR

March (second week)

- Thank-you letters sent out to Judges.
- **Deadline to enter South Fraser Regional Science Fair is usually mid-March** Please visit their site at https://sfrsf.wordpress.com/ for more information.

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SCHOOL SCIENCE FAIR PLANNING TEAM

1. Enlist support and assistance for the idea of a Science Fair from the staff.

2. Become familiar with the information in the Science Fair Booklets available on the Science Fair TEAM (join code: **v506624**) and on the District Google Drive.

3. Set a date and time for the school fair, and a timeline to complete the various steps necessary ensuring that the school representatives will be identified prior the registration deadline for the District Fair.

4. Determine what the objectives will be for your school fair.

5. Use the objectives to determine what kind of a fair it will be:
   - primary/intermediate/both?
   - optional/assigned?
   - competitive/participative?
   - class fairs/school fair?

6. Use the objectives to determine your awards system, and the judging criteria to be used. Will it be:
   - Gold/Silver/Bronze for every project based on judging criteria?
   - 1st/2nd/3rd for each grade?
   - the top six outstanding projects overall?

7. Use school objectives and judging criteria to estimate the number of participation ribbons and finalist ribbons that must be ordered. **Place your order early.**

8. Establish judging process for school fair. Points to consider:
   - Remember to arrange for judges well in advance.
   - How many judges will be required?
   - Enough judges should be provided so that all students have time for a thorough presentation.
   - Consider how much time will be provided for judging, how many projects there will be, and how much time will be spent on each project.
   - Where will judges come from?
     - from within the school?
     - from the school system?
     - from the community?
     - or a combination of these?
   - Many secondary schools have agreed to make some students available to act as judges. Please contact your local secondary school directly.

9. Decide on how school representatives to the District Fair will be selected.

10. Discuss how to encourage the appropriate extent of parental involvement at the school level - for judging, open house, support services, etc.

11. Consider how to encourage maximum communication with staff, parents and community about Science Fair.

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PLANNING CHECKLIST

PRIOR TO SCIENCE FAIR:

[ ] 1. Hold a committee meeting
[ ] 2. Appoint a coordinator/resource person
[ ] 3. Make a motion for a Science Fair date at staff meeting
[ ] 4. Develop a timeline for the day
[ ] 5. Inform parents in a newsletter (advertising) and on school web page
[ ] 6. Order ribbons
[ ] 7. Arrange judges (send confirmations)
[ ] 8. Order tables
[ ] 9. Cancel community groups for gym if necessary
[ ] 10. Cancel school classes for gym
[ ] 11. Have posters and signs made up
[ ] 12. Have name tags made up
[ ] 13. Have a P.A. system to use
[ ] 14. Confirm number of projects
[ ] 15. Confirm number of tables
[ ] 16. Pick up tables and label for return
[ ] 17. Pick up ribbons
[ ] 18. Arrange for refreshments
[ ] 19. Display case advertising
[ ] 20. Timely newsletters
[ ] 21. Arrange for parking attendants if necessary
[ ] 22. Staff bulletins showing times, information, expectations
[ ] 23. Set up gym the night before

SCIENCE FAIR DAY:

[ ] 24. Have mop and bucket handy
[ ] 25. Brief judges and supply with necessary materials
[ ] 26. Coordinate class visits to gym
[ ] 27. Awards/students going to District Science Fair selected
[ ] 28. Hand out prizes and acknowledgments
[ ] 29. Clean up

AFTER SCIENCE FAIR:

[ ] 30. Return tables
[ ] 31. Send thank you letters to judges, thank you notice to parents
[ ] 32. Report event in newsletter
[ ] 33. Meet with student representatives going to District Science Fair
    - [ ] compliance with District Fair rules
    - [ ] category selection for District Fair
    - [ ] improvement to projects and presentation
    - [ ] procedures at District Science Fair (times, etc.)
    - [ ] expectations at District Science Fair (behavior)
    - [ ] transportation to/from District Science Fair

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SAMPLE LETTER to PARENTS
(from your school)

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Our school is planning to hold a school-wide Science Fair. The Science Fair will take place on _____, during the (morning/afternoon/evening). Participation is voluntary, but we are expecting an enthusiastic response at all grade levels. The purposes of the Fair are:

- to create interest and enthusiasm for science,
- to help students develop good inquiry, research and organizational skills, and
- to show parents and community the scientific work of students

Attached is a copy of a letter from the District Science and Innovation Fair Committee and the rules which the students will have to follow. Please take a few minutes and read both of these with your child. You are encouraged to advise, direct and motivate your child, but he/she is to do the work.

At school, we will be providing lots of ideas and help about selecting and researching a topic. The children will be allowed to do some of their work at school, but much of the construction of the display and any models will need to be done at home.

Children should start planning for their project immediately. They may wish to contact experts or members from the community about their topic. The school encourages this but time should be allowed for making appointments. Most people are happy to help but are not pleased about being contacted in a rush the week before the Science Fair. Your assistance in helping the children plan these contacts is greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me. Thank you in advance for your assistance in helping to make this a memorable experience.

Sincerely,

School Science Fair Coordinator

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SAMPLE LETTER to PARENTS

(from District Science and Innovation Fair Committee)

Dear Parents/Guardians:

March is Science Month and along with it comes the Surrey District Science and Innovation Fair. We are sure your child will want to enter a project in your School Science Fair in preparation for the District Fair. Here are a few suggestions to help you guide your child as the project is prepared.

1. Your child should become familiar with the Science Fair rules, especially those of size and cost.

2. Encourage your child to make an early start to the project. Begin at least four weeks before the deadline, and earlier if doing an experiment, or if contacting companies or government departments for information.

3. The Student Science Fair Booklet contains suggested timelines, checklists and hints for staying organized as your child works on the project. Everybody feels good about being able to tick something off as it is being completed. It is also an indication that progress is being made.

4. Shorter, more frequent work sessions allow for slow but steady progress, and they are much more pleasurable than longer marathons.

5. Remember that quite often the most satisfactory projects are the simpler ones which have been well done. Make sure that the topic selected is appropriate for your child.

6. Projects should be inquiry based and reflect the "scientific approach" in some way. This includes forming a question, describing the method of answering the question, gathering and thinking about appropriate information, and forming an answer to the question. The information may be gathered in a variety of ways such as doing an experiment, reading books, magazines, pamphlets, internet searches or talking to authorities on the topic.

7. Making the display is an important step. Good displays are colorful, neat, easy to read, uncluttered, correctly spelled, and sturdy. Your child should decide on the most effective method of displaying the data. It could include posters, graphs, models, real samples, an experiment or any combination of these things.

8. Your child will be asked to explain the project to fellow students, teachers, judges and to the public, and should practice the presentation several times before the big day.

9. Your child should feel comfortable about asking for the help of teachers, librarians and other school staff, and of community resources such as libraries and industry. Assistance is there if it is asked for.

10. Please remember that the project is your child's and should reflect his or her capabilities. Your role as guide is an important one. There can be no more fitting place for learning to occur than at the hands of a loving, interested parent.

We sincerely hope you will both experience the satisfaction and the pride that come from the successful completion of the project. Good Luck!

District Science and Innovation Fair Committee