

# SCIENCE FAIR CENTRAL

## HOW TO HOLD A SCIENCE FAIR OR STEAM EVENT FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Science and engineering projects are great interactive learning opportunities for young students! To ensure that the experience goes off without a hitch, consider using the following tips. They are designed to maximize and celebrate the curiosity and achievements of your young scientists!

- ✓ **Plan for small bodies!** Younger elementary students will have smaller hands to manipulate objects and will also be on the shorter side. When setting up their projects, make sure the tables are low enough for them to view their own project and enjoy others.
- ✓ **Reading levels will vary.** Consider having older elementary students volunteer to assist younger students with reading and interpreting projects around the room.
- ✓ **Having safety protocols in place.** Some of the projects might have water or liquids that could spill or someone might bump into a project. Work with your volunteers and building services to establish guidelines of how to keep your attendees safe if an accident occurs.
- ✓ **Does it have to be judged?** Some science fairs are simply hosted as a family event to celebrate science. They do not always need to be a competition. If your school is handing out awards, consider including multiple categories to encourage students to continue with science.
- ✓ **Define your goals.** What do you want students, parents, and your community to walk away with from this event? Include these goals in your advertisements and announcements.
- ✓ **Small school support.** If you are the only science teacher at your building, but want to host a science fair, consider working with other subjects to include it in a curriculum showcase night.
- ✓ **We have too many projects to fit in our space!** Theme your projects by classroom and open up a wing of your school instead of hosting them all in one space.



# Enhancing Participation

Family and community can play active roles in making the science fair or STEAM event fun and educational for students. Below are some ideas for involving parents and community members.

Hands On	Ask Questions
<p>Include opportunities for parents to work on STEAM-oriented challenges with their child.</p> <p>Tasks might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building a paper airplane and recording the distance thrown</li> <li>• Building a boat out of 15 straws, tape, and 1ft x 1ft of cellophane and see which can hold the most pennies while staying afloat</li> <li>• Constructing a tower out of spaghetti and gum drops</li> <li>• Coloring a critter to camouflage in the school</li> <li>• Creating a Grid Enlargement Tile Mural. Each family can contribute a square to build up the larger image.</li> </ul>	<p>Provide questions parents can ask their child while exploring the event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you show me a project that taught you something new?</li> <li>• Can you show me a project that used materials that interest you?</li> <li>• Can you tell me about your project?</li> <li>• Where did you get this idea?</li> <li>• What would you do differently next time?</li> </ul>
Read	Learn Together
<p>Recommend books and websites that parents can read with their child at home. Choose topics that showcase students investigating engineering and scientific challenges.</p>	<p>Invite science and engineering community members to lead small group explorations during the event. This can engage parents and students while alleviating parent concerns that they need to be the expert as they attend the event.</p>

