



GWINNETT

SCIENCE, ENGINEERING + INNOVATION FAIR

INSPIRE · CREATE · EXPLORE · INNOVATE

GSEF/ISEF Affiliated Fair Structures, Participation, Exhibition & Judging Guidelines

Gwinnett Regional Fair structures and exhibition and judging guidelines will be reviewed and developed collaboratively between the Gwinnett Regional Science, Engineering + Innovation Fair Directors and the Gwinnett Regional Science, Engineering + Innovation Fair Advisory Team. These guidelines are aligned to the affiliated [International Science & Engineering Fair guidelines](#) and practices.

Gwinnett Regional Science, Engineering + Innovation Fair Structure, Affiliation & Leadership

As the largest public educational body in Gwinnett County (**Science Fair District USGA11**), the Gwinnett County Public Schools 6-12 Science Director and/or their designee(s) act as Director(s) for the Gwinnett Regional Science, Engineering + Innovation Fair. Regional Fair Directors will affiliate with ISEF/GSEF and will attend all appropriate training/meetings to ensure proper procedures are followed as an affiliated fair. We are proud to provide the district with a competition with direct access to state, national, international level advancement for MS & HS students and on-ramp for K-5 students to build toward the ISEF/GSEF affiliated fair opportunity in their future. As a self-designed and self-funded entity, the Gwinnett Regional Science Fair's K-5 Showcase will only be open to K-5 schools within Gwinnett County Public Schools.

As a public fair open to all 6-12 schools within Gwinnett County per affiliation rules and requirements, all public, private, charter, and other recognized schools will be able to affiliate with the Gwinnett Regional Science, Engineering + Innovation Fair provided their local school fair adhere to guidelines and processes set forth by the Gwinnett Regional Science, Engineering + Innovation Fair in accordance with state and international rules and guidelines. Notification of 6-12 affiliation will be posted on the public website (www.gwinnettsciencefair.com) by July 1 each year. Schools affiliating by the deadline and adhering to the guidelines, procedures, and processes outlined in the affiliation agreement will ensure their selected, 1st place winning students can advance and participate in the Gwinnett Regional Science, Engineering + Innovation Fair.

Each year, the Gwinnett Regional Science Fair serves over 150 schools in a large, urban, largely title I county which is recognized as one of the most diverse counties in the United States. The operational costs of the Gwinnett Regional Fair event will primarily be funded through community sponsorships (local, national, and international), donated through the GCPS Foundation, and thanks for our strong STEM stakeholder community. Additionally, sponsorships will make possible Grand Awards, and several Special Awards, and Scholarships. As GCPS makes up the largest percentage of students enrolled in K-12 schools in the county, and, due to the instructional implications science fair has for the system, some GCPS Science Office funds may be necessary

to supplement sponsorship funds. Gwinnett Regional Fair Directors reserve the right to enact a nominal participation fee from participating schools outside the GCPS district as external participant numbers and costs necessitate. This will be shared in writing with schools prior to the affiliation process as necessary.

Role of Advisory Team

The Advisory Team is composed of STEM community stakeholders with experience and expertise in the many disciplines and fields represented in the 22 ISEF categories. The role of the Advisory Team is to provide content expertise and technical feedback to ensure relevant evaluation criteria and support for projects across the 22 categories. Additionally, the Advisory Team will serve to assist in recruiting qualified judges, provide feedback on the judging process, and recruit opportunities for students through mentorship, scholarship, feedback, and awards.

GSEF/ISEF Affiliated Judge Recruitment, Requirements, & Training

- Judges shall be recruited from the Gwinnett Regional Fair community, including professionals who reside, work in, or engage with the greater Gwinnett County community.
- Community-based STEM profession judges provide the best measure for senior fair projects.
- Judges shall be considered qualified to judge in senior fair categories if the judge possesses two or more of the following criteria:
 - Degree in category or related field
 - Industry or Work-related experience in category or related field
 - Research experience in category or related field
 - Post-Secondary academic-related courses experience in category or related field
 - Community-related experience in category or related field
- Judges shall be provided optional asynchronous judge support ahead of the Regional Fair including training on the [Gwinnett Regional Science, Engineering + Innovation Fair Rubric](#) and the judging process
- Judges will receive training the day of the Regional Fair including training on the [Gwinnett Regional Science, Engineering + Innovation Fair Rubric](#), judging ethics, effectively and appropriately engaging with students, and the judging process

GSEF/ISEF Affiliated Competitive Judging Process / Scoring

- Regional Fair Judging consists of two key types: Place/GSEF/ISEF Judging and Special Awards Judging. Place/GSEF/ISEF winners will be determined by overall top scores in the Regional Fair.
 - For Place/GSEF/ISEF Judging, Judges will use the [Gwinnett Regional Science, Engineering + Innovation Fair Rubric](#). Judges are required to provide a numeric score from the rubric. Judges are encouraged to provide comments and/or feedback but this is not required. Beginning in 2024, judges will also select if they feel a project should advance to state and/or ISEF. This element will be used to help finalize advancing projects in conjunction with raw scores. It will also be used in the event of a tie as a tiebreaker.
 - GSEF and ISEF advancement will be determined based on top overall scores based on the number allotted to the Gwinnett Regional Fair. There may not necessarily be 1st place, 2nd place or 3rd place awards in every category. Categories only serve

to assign judges for judging purposes and may be used for special awards (not overall advancing awards) provided by community partners.

- GSEF - Top 35 Overall HS Projects; Top 18 Overall MS Projects
- ISEF - Top 6 Overall HS Projects
- Sponsors/community partners can offer to provide Special Awards, which will be included in the Regional Fair awards based on approval from the Director. The Special Award provider is allowed to select the project(s) to recognize with their award(s) based on their own criteria, which may or may not include consideration of the Gwinnett Regional Science, Engineering + Innovation Fair Rubric.
- Judges will be scheduled a number of projects to judge based on areas of expertise given the range and volume of project entries within categories and the range and volume of registered judges and expertise within the judge pool.
- Within the judging window, Judges will also be allowed time to choose projects to judge and select for special awards based on sponsor/organization award criteria designation.
- Though ISEF guidelines suggest a minimum of 2 scores per project, each HS project in the Gwinnett Regional Fair shall aim for 3 judge scores for Place/GSEF/ISEF. Projects may receive more than the 2-3 scores. Place scores will be averaged to result in the students final project score. Additional scores may constitute judge choice and/or Special Awards judgments.
- Scheduled judge interviews will be conducted in a judge panel format; Scheduled judge interviews may last up to 20-25 minutes each. Judge choice and special awards judging may be variable in length of time and judges may return to a previously scheduled project during this time.
- Judges within the panel structure may collaborate with one another on questions about the project, feedback, or rubric criteria as desired, but to maintain each unique judge's perspective, each judge will submit their own personal, independent score. Judges are not asked to reach consensus and scores may vary from one another. Judges' scores are final.
- If a single judge score is a statistically significant outlier or more than 20 points different than at least 2 other judge scores, the Director may use discretion to remove the outlier score from a project's average.
- Judges should consider the quality of the project and the quality of the presentation based on the Rubric components. Factors such as race, gender, ethnicity, disability, or physical appearance should not impact scores given on the Rubric.
- Judges should not judge projects where a conflict of interest may exist (eg: student exhibitor is a relative or student exhibitor has done research in the judge's lab/institute)
- Judges should not openly discuss student performance or scores outside of the scoring process.

GSEF/ISEF Affiliated Student/Project Guidelines

- Projects must abide by [ISEF rules](#) and approvals. Approvals must be obtained **BEFORE** research begins to ensure safe and ethical research and projects are conducted.
- All project [paperwork and approvals](#) necessary for the project focus/methods/type must be submitted to the Regional Fair in order to be eligible for competition in the Regional Fair. Should paperwork approvals not be obtained or submitted properly, the project will not be eligible for awards or advancement from the Regional Fair, but student researchers may

still be invited to participate in the activities of the Regional Fair at the Director's discretion.

- Students must select 1 of 22 [ISEF categories](#) for their project. The category functions to schedule judges by expertise and identify projects for special awards. Category does not influence overall place awards. Place awards are determined based on overall scores. This prevents students in larger categories from being at a disadvantage for place awards compared to students in smaller categories. (Ex: If the Animal Sciences category only has 2 entrants, those 2 entrants are NOT automatically guaranteed a 1st and 2nd place award because the category was small, compared to a larger category with 50 projects).
- Each student participating in the Regional Fair must sign and submit the Gwinnett Regional Fair [Permission/Rules/Ethics/Media Release](#) which states the following:

"I, my parents, and my sponsor agree to abide by all rules and regulations set forth in the GSEF/REGENERON ISEF Rules for Pre-college Science Research. We will not contest in any manner decisions made by the Gwinnett Regional Science and Engineering Fair staff or judges. We understand that when I participate in a competition of this nature, there will be a certain amount of subjectiveness in these decisions. We agree and understand that judges must evaluate certain aspects of my research that are objective, and they must also evaluate interpretive aspects of my entry which are qualitative in nature.

I, my parents, and my sponsor, we agree to abide by the decisions of the judges, which are final. We will not accuse, hold liable, or threaten in any way the Gwinnett Regional Science and Engineering Fair staff, judges, or Gwinnett County Public Schools.

Scientific fraud and misconduct are not condoned at any level of research or competition. Plagiarism, use or presentation of other researcher's work as one's own, and fabrication or falsification of data will not be tolerated. Fraudulent projects will fail to qualify for competition in all affiliated fairs, the GSEF, and REGENERON ISEF.

I have read the GSEF/REGENERON ISEF Rules for Pre-college Science Research 2025, agree to abide by them, and understand that failure to do so will result in disqualification."

- Judge scores may not be contested. In the interest of feedback and growth, a student/parent/guardian may request in writing/email their individual project scores and judge comments/feedback, which may be provided at the discretion of the Director. Scores/comments of other students' projects will not be released.
- Feedback or concerns may be shared with Regional Fair organizers via email to gwinnett.science.fair@gcpsk12.org. While the sharing of feedback, questions, and concerns is appreciated, please note that the decisions of the Director are final.

Safety & Security

The Regional Fair Event operates with strict safety guidelines and protocols. The event is not open to the public, though public releases of projects will be available on the website, through press releases, and through award celebrations. Only approved advancing students, selected judges, district volunteers, school and district chaperones/educators, and selected breakout session speakers will be allowed admittance to the event. Event organizers will provide SROs and on-site

medics to support a safe and secure environment. All projects must pass a safety review prior to competition, based on ISEF guidelines.

2024-2025 Gwinnett Regional Science Fair Advisory Board

Dr. J Marshall Sheperd, Director UGA Atmospheric Sciences Program

Dr. Jay Bassett, EPA & Gwinnett Clean & Beautiful Board

John Butler, Gwinnett Department of Water Resources

Chrissy Rubel, Gwinnett Department of Water Resources

Dr. Tyler Kinner, Georgia Tech Research Institute & American Chemical Society

Dr. Stan Perrine, Math Professor, Georgia Gwinnett College

Kim Lucier, PCOM Georgia

Dr. Ajay Mallia, Chemistry Professor, Georgia Gwinnett College & American Chemical Society

Kristan Vandenheuvel, The Water Tower

Dr. Kyle Jones, GCPS CTAE Director

Sallie Holloway, GCPS CTAE Director

Tim Hemans, GCPS CTAE Executive Director

Schelly Marlatt, Gwinnett Clean & Beautiful Executive Director

Logan Malm, Principal, GSMST

Sonya Glasper, LEGO Education

Dr. Sairam Tangirala, Physics & Robotics Professor, Georgia Gwinnett College

Dr. Adwoa Aduonum, Professor of Physiology and Neuroscience, PCOM Georgia

Karen Ewing, Jackson EMC

Scott Cummings, Computer Engineer, Broadcom

Kim Holland, Executive Director, Early Learning & School Readiness

Dr. Emily Coady, Director, Program Development & Improvement