Helpful Pointers for Holding a School Inventors Fair

The variables: Time Constraints, Judging Resources, Virtual vs Live, Scoring methods

1. Determine the scale of your school's involvement. Will one or more classes or grade levels participate?

2. Review and share the inventor fair information on our website (www.edisonfairs.org) to help raise awareness and sponsorships for student materials, awards, and volunteers.

3. Select an invention fair site based on the projected number of participants. With a little planning, classroom(s), cafeterias, gymnasiums, or multipurpose rooms can serve well. Consider the time of day for set up and judging. Most school fairs have been conducted during the morning hours, with setup completed the afternoon before the judging.

4. Arrange for student exhibits to be placed on tables or counters, preferably not on floors. Floor-level displays are hard on judges and should only be used when space is unavailable. Displays should be 36" X 48"

5. Grade, teacher, and an ID number should identify all exhibits.

6. Individual school 'Certificates of Participation' are suggested to recognize each student's effort.

7. Judging options: With limitations on visitors to schools, consider student judging. Review the judging rubric with students. This is not a popularity contest and is more than just a 'great idea'. It's about completing the invention process successfully and thoroughly. Students can learn from each other. Take full advantage of the educational value of understanding the invention rubric by having students turn in judging forms! The teacher(s) should approve of all finalists.

8. Limited student participation may allow for every student to share in judging one another. Larger participation numbers can utilize Judging Circles. Classes can swap judging each other.

9. Judging Circles are formed, consisting of 4-6 students each. Students take turns presenting their invention and having questions asked by their peers. The supervisor (teacher, colleagues, or judges) may ask questions before moving on to the next project, as well as at the end of all presentations in the circle. Promote learning through networking, offering only positive comments.

10. Students select the top one or two invention projects in each judging circle to advance to the next 'round' if necessary. The teacher advances the number of students allotted per grade/school to the Regional Fair.

11. The teacher has the discretion to advance students deemed most qualified.

12. Multiple class participation: Keep one student allocation open for the best in each class. This allows for all classes to have at least one student represented at the Regional Fair.

13. Place all class winners together in sequential order, from highest to lowest. Determine the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners overall. Keep in mind, it is not unusual to have to go back over the top-scoring exhibits to break ties and select the final order of winners.

14. Online platforms enable VIRTUAL judging. Edison Fairs may use zFairs.com. or another virtual platform, in the case of an emergency. An individual school fee for this additional capability should be expected. Students register and upload their inventors' project files, including a presentation video. The score sheet can be utilized for 'live' or virtual judging. Algorithms may be selected to create the Winners List.

15. Optionally, consider an opportunity to recognize students worthy of special recognition.

16. Give school-wide recognition to winners advancing to the Regional Fair Competition.

Questions? Contact Us! inventors@edisonfairs.org