

LEARNING THROUGH REINVENTION THE TRADITIONAL SCIENCE FAIR

Overview

The ultimate goal of a school wide Science Fair is to provide the student with an exciting and meaningful learning experience while also developing scientific literacy. Through prior knowledge and critical thinking students begin to answer questions and solve relevant problems. Noncompetitive Science Fairs can provide a wide range of learners with a broad appreciation of where scientific knowledge comes from and also connect how we can use it in our daily lives. Parents can be involved by taking on various roles. They can be involved in a variety of ways.

Materials and General Rules

- One or two students can work on a project
- Questions/investigation will be presented to teacher before beginning project
- School will help provide necessary supplies
- School will allot Science time on a regular basis, allowing for students or projects that require more time.
- The complete project will be completed during school time with the assistance of school staff and peers.
- The Science Learning Fair will not be competitive but will be somewhat open ended, changing the focus of the traditional science fairs from winning to learning.
- The non-competitive format encourages the learner, with an emphasis on understanding and improving skills and knowledge
- Teachers need to be involved at all levels to help students stay on track.
- Projects require support in the form of supervision, oversight and ongoing assistance.
- It should be emphasized that process is more important than product.
- There is no such thing as failure in the process.
- The actual celebration should be fun and a positive sharing time between student/parent/community

Purpose

- To celebrate the Scientific Process
- To engage, educate and stimulate parent interest in through Science
- To stimulate interest in scientific investigation beyond the classroom
- To recognize and celebrate scientific talent and ability
- To provide another opportunity for parental engagement in their child's learning
- To increase interest in Science in general
- To encourage intellectual curiosity about how things work
- To help students understand how Science is relevant to the real world

Job of parents in the New Age Science Fair

- Parents could assist in various ways by helping the class rather than their individual child.
- A call for materials to assist could be made by the teacher in a letter home
- Some parents may have the means to donate funds to assist in purchasing additional supplies.
- Parents could be used in the physical set-up and takedown to assist teachers and other school-based staff
- Parents can be encouraged to provide both verbal and written positive feedback to all projects
- Parent attendance should be stressed so making the experience pleasant/positive is critical
- If parents cannot attend, the teacher could make a short-video and parents could comment remotely