



West Lake Elementary School **SCIENCE FAIR**

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Science Fair?

The Science Fair is a PTA-sponsored event in which students complete a science project at home and create a project display board to exhibit at the fair.

What is the Science Showcase?

The Science Showcase is an event held in conjunction with the Science Fair. In the Science Showcase, teachers have an opportunity to display the great science work they are doing in their classrooms. Projects in the Science Showcase include teacher-led class and group projects. These projects are not judged.

Who can participate?

The Science Fair is open to all students in all grades and tracks.

Who can attend the fair?

On the day of the fair, classes will tour the fair during the school day. In the evening, all West Lake Elementary families and friends are invited to attend the fair (even if your child did not participate). Students can learn a lot about science (and be inspired!) by touring the Science Fair.

Are group projects allowed in the Science Fair?

Yes. Partners are allowed. Please assure both names are on the BACK of the project.

How much help should I give my child?

Parents should have their children do as much work as their children are capable of. The role of the parent should be primarily one of guidance. Help your children choose projects that they can complete themselves.

How are teachers involved with the Science Fair?

Your child's teacher will encourage all students to participate in the fair. However, the projects are to be completed at home under the guidance of a parent/guardian. Teachers also have the opportunity to participate in the Science Showcase.

What is my role as parent/guardian?

Your role is to:

- + help your child choose a project that is appropriate for his/her level and resources available,
- + help your child understand the project requirements,
- + purchase supplies for your child,
- + assist and supervise your child with difficult or dangerous parts of the project (e.g. stove), and
- + serve as a guide to help your child do his/her own work on the project.

What does the Science Fair look like?

Here's a photo of the spring 2013 Science Fair:



Where do I begin?

Start by reading the documents on the WLE website, especially focusing on project guidelines. Then choose a topic based on a research question and pre-register for the fair. Purchase supplies and have your child begin data collection. Finally, have your child create the display board.

Are there restrictions for project displays?

In addition to specific project requirements, the following items are not allowed with your child's display: liquids, animals, foods, or potentially dangerous items.

Can my child choose a project that requires electricity?

Yes. There will be a limited number of display locations with access to electrical outlets. Please indicate the need for electricity on your registration form.

Will the room be locked so my child's display can include a tablet device?

Please do not include expensive items in your child's display as there will not be additional security in the gym.

My child doesn't seem interested in participating. What should I do?

Ask your child what s/he is curious about. List areas of science that s/he might like to explore, for example, electricity, gravity, plants, animals, or foods. Then research possible projects that are related to areas that interest your child.

My child wants to build a volcano or a solar system for the Science Fair. Is that ok?

No. Projects should be based on a research question. Please see project guidelines for more information.

How expensive will this project be?

Projects will vary in cost. We ask that parents help their children choose projects with reasonably-priced supplies. Many projects can be done with household items. Display boards cost \$10-\$30.

How much time will this take?

Projects vary greatly in duration. A project that requires growing seeds may take several weeks. A project that uses gravity ramps can be completed in an afternoon. Typically the display board will take several hours to put together. Starting well in advance will ensure that your child has enough time to complete the project.

Should the project display be typed or handwritten?

Either one is fine, as long as the work is created by your child. Typing and hand writing are both great ways for your child to practice writing skills.

My child has poor handwriting. Should I type his project for him?

No. One educational goal of the Science Fair is to allow students to integrate their skills in reading, writing, math, and science (and sometimes art!) in a single project. Practicing *all* of these skills in the project will help your child benefit from participation. Consider having your child use stick-on letters for important titles.

Should my child's name or photo be on the project display?

No. Points will be deducted if the student's name or identifying information is on the front of the project display. Instead, your child's project submission form should be attached to the *back* of the display.

Who are the judges?

Judges will be selected from the community and network of parents, families, co-workers, and friends of West Lake Elementary families. We make every effort to choose qualified, fair-minded and impartial judges. Parents will not be permitted to serve as judges for their own child's grade.

I'm not happy with how the judging turned out. Can I appeal?

We make every effort to conduct blind, fair, consistent judging. In consideration of the valuable time and effort of our judges, their results are final and appeals will not be considered.

Will students be recognized for their work?

All participants will be recognized for their projects. Special recognition will be awarded to first, second, and third place winners at each grade level. See judging criteria for more information.

I have other questions. Who should I contact?

The 2020 PTA contacts for the Science Fair are Shannon Chase (shannon@chasenc.com) and Robin Higgins (rnh1979@gmail.com).

Please let us know if you would like to see additional information added to this FAQ.