

Step-by-Step Instructions for Running a School Science Fair

1. How to Set Up Displays

Step 1 – Prepare the Space

- Identify the room(s) to be used (gym, library, multipurpose room).
- Plan traffic flow: entrance, exit, and judging paths.
- Divide the space by grade or class if helpful.

Step 2 – Arrange Tables and Power

- Set up tables in rows or clusters with wide walking lanes.
- Reserve wall or corner areas for large or special projects.
- Identify electrical outlets and tape down extension cords safely.

Step 3 – Number and Label Display Spots

- Assign a project number to each student or team.
- Place a number card on each table location.
- Create a master list linking project number, student name, grade, and project title.

Step 4 – Communicate Display Guidelines

- Provide maximum board size and height.
- Clarify rules for liquids, chemicals, electricity, and fragile items.
- Require each display to include:
 - Title
 - Question
 - Hypothesis or design goal
 - Method
 - Results
 - Conclusion

Step 5 – Supervise Setup

- Schedule a setup period (morning of the fair or day before).
- Have staff or volunteers available to help students.
- Check each display for safety, clarity, and visibility.

2. How to Schedule Judging

Step 1 – Choose a Judging Format

- Decide between:
 - Single-round judging (each project judged once), or
 - Multi-round judging (different judges, different criteria).
- Assign judges to specific grades or categories.

Step 2 – Recruit and Prepare Judges

- Determine how many judges are needed (usually 2–3 per grade group).
- Provide judging rubrics and scoring sheets.
- Review expectations, timing, and safety rules.

Step 3 – Build the Judging Schedule

- Estimate time per project (5–10 minutes).
- Group projects by grade or category.
- Create time blocks (example: 9:00–10:30 Grade 4–6).
- Assign judges to each block and project range.

Step 4 – Prepare Judging Materials

- Print judging sheets with project numbers and titles.
- Provide clipboards, pens, and a master project list.
- Include space for scores and comments.

Step 5 – Manage Judging on Event Day

- Have a judge check-in table.
- Track which projects have been judged.
- Collect and verify all judging sheets.
- Set up a quiet area for score tallying.

3. How to Prepare Students

Step 1 – Introduce the Science Fair

- Explain goals, timelines, and expectations.

- Show examples of past projects.
- Review judging criteria.

Step 2 – Guide Topic Selection

- Help students choose a safe, testable, age-appropriate topic.
- Approve each project idea before work begins.

Step 3 – Teach Project Structure

- Review the scientific method or engineering design cycle.
- Show how to organize question, hypothesis, method, data, and conclusion.
- Discuss honest reporting of results, including unexpected outcomes.

Step 4 – Support Project Development

- Provide checkpoints for progress.
- Offer class time for planning, data analysis, and board design.
- Review safety expectations for home experiments.

Step 5 – Practice Presentations

- Have students rehearse a 2–3 minute explanation.
- Encourage clear, confident communication.
- Remind them to focus on what they learned.

4. How to Select Finalists

Step 1 – Define Selection Criteria

- Decide how many projects will advance to the regional fair.
- Use criteria such as:
 - Scientific or engineering quality
 - Creativity
 - Clarity of communication
 - Display quality
 - Safety and ethics

Step 2 – Use Judging Scores and Comments

- Tally scores from all judges.
- Identify top projects in each grade or category.
- Use judge comments for tie-breaking.

Step 3 – Ensure Balanced Representation

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- Include a variety of topics (biology, physics, engineering, environment).
- Ensure representation across grades and classes.
- Avoid selecting only visually impressive projects.

Step 4 – Confirm Finalists

- Create a list with student names, grades, project titles, and teacher names.
- Verify eligibility and ability to attend the regional fair.

Step 5 – Communicate Results

- Inform students and families in writing.
- Provide next-step instructions for the Quinte Regional Science and Technology Fair.
- Celebrate all participants, not just finalists.

