



Reward the Best, Encourage the Rest

Based on feedback from judges and students, here are a few suggestions for judges to consider:

- Introduce yourself appropriately and expect the same from the students. Many entrants, especially the younger ones, are used to deferring to adults and may need varying degrees of encouragement to open up fully about their projects. You will be initiating the discussion, but help them assume the more active role, guided by your questions. You may be an expert in the field, but let them be the expert on their project.
- The exhibitors **will** be reminded of the expectations of polite behavior during their pre-judging orientation. For judges, our expectations are also clear. Please be polite and constructive, even while pointing out flaws in a project. When confronted with material that is scientifically controversial (or from a judging point of view just plain wrong), please respond with scientific rigor. Avoid emotional reactions to provocative hypotheses or conclusions and return the conversation to the fundamentals of scientific method. This is, after all, a science fair. Although they may not know it yet, the process of doing the project is much more valuable to the student than the project's outcome.
- Judge's opinions should be constructive and respectfully expressed. Criticism of specific schools, programs or teachers should be shared with the Judging Committee, not the students.

The reason most judges participate in the Fair is that they enjoy conversations with bright kids. Give them the advice of your experience and appreciate the energy of their ideas along with the unexpected directions they take. Rewarding the best projects is easy, but we ask that you leave every student with words of encouragement as well.

We are grateful for your time, your expertise, and your support of the exhibitors!