Information for New Judges

Overview

The student projects we will be judging this year are in grades 3 to 8 with most schools only having grades 3 to 6. We will also have a fair at Capital HS involving several grades. Projects can be broken into two tracks, judged and feedback. Projects in the judged track are expected to be organized around a clearly defined question that can be answered by doing tests/measurements that allow the question to be answered. A simple example would be trying several designs for a paper airplane to see which flew the farthest or stayed in the air the longest. Projects which are just demonstrations of some science related phenomenon/result such as making a baking soda volcano or putting Mentos in Coke are considered feedback projects. These projects are not eligible for awards but students do have a discussion with a judge and receive feedback from them about the subject including ideas for how the project might be modified to make it eligible for awards in the judged track. For both types of projects judges are expected to provide positive input to the student to encourage their interest in science.

At each school projects are grouped by grade and a team of judges will interview projects for that grade. Because we have a limited number of judges available each project will only have an interview with one judge. The winners (1st to 3rd + honorable mentions) in each grade are determined by a consensus meeting of all judges for that grade which takes place after interviews are complete. The consensus meeting is led by an experienced judge we call the "grade captain". In each meeting all judges can put forth any projects they think are potential winners for examination by the other judges. Ranking is done by a consensus vote after all proposed projects have been looked at by all the judges for that grade. I have attached copies of the scoring sheets we use. These are slightly different for grades 3-5 and 6-8 and high school. You should think of the scoring as relative to the projects you have judged personally to allow you to rank them relative to each other. Don't worry about absolute scales too much since winners will be chosen based on consensus and not on specific scores on the scoring sheet. Students are supposed to bring their scoring sheets pre-filled with their name(s), grade, project title and teacher's name on both pages along with their board when they come for their interview. You should check that they have put in needed info on both pages so that your comments can be returned to the student(s). The first page with the scores is never shown to any student or parent. Only the comment page is returned to the student. On that page you should record, reinforce and possibly add to points you make in discussion with the student(s).

All projects are expected to have a typical display board with their question, procedure, results and conclusions. Some students may have supplementary material on a Chromebook but the essence of the project must be included on the display board.

Logistical Issues

You will need to arrive at the school office at least 15 minutes before the start of judging. You will first need to sign-in and get a temporary badge using the Raptor system that is used by SFPS. This process takes a bit longer to get entered into the system initially. If you are not an official volunteer in the Santa Fe Public Schools you should sign into the Raptor system as a visitor not as a volunteer. You will then proceed to whatever room the judges are meeting in to get your grade assignment and meet the grade captain. A day or two before your fair you should receive an email update on last minute issues from the site coordinator including information on arrival times, parking etc. for your fair. This year's site coordinators are Sandra Shosahni (hezy23@gmail.com) and Jim Amann (jim.amann@sfafs.org). Schools will usually provide some refreshments (donuts, snacks) and coffee/tea/juice for us in the area where judges first meet although it is not guaranteed. Judges typically judge 5 to 7 projects each. We normally expect each project interview to take 10-12 minutes with a few minutes between interviews for judges to enter their scores and write comments for the students. We like to complete interviews in about 90 minutes leaving another 30-45 minutes for the consensus meeting although things may take a bit longer if we're short on judges. The site coordinator and grade captains will let you know of any constraints on time.

All project display boards will be set up on tables in the gym/cafeteria/library. As a health measure and to keep the noise level down in most cases judges will sit at a table/judging station and students will bring their project boards to the judge for their interview.

As we do with all new judges you will be paired with an experienced judge for a couple of interviews before you go off on your own.