

Handbook Table of Contents

[Important Dates to Know](#)

[Introduction](#)

[What's New & Important in 2024](#)

[Registration Information](#)

[Project Information](#)

[Palmer Event Center Information](#)

[Sponsor Checklist](#)

[Student Checklist](#)

[Day of FairFAQ](#)

[Judges and Volunteers](#)

| Important Dates to Know | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Before Fair | Sep 7, 2023 3:00 - 4:30 pm | Teacher orientation on-line. It is critical that at least one person from each participating school attend this orientation. |
| | Dec 1, 2023 | School Registration opens. |
| | Jan 5, 2024 | All elementary schools should be registered by this date. |
| | Jan 19, 2024 | Ideally, all school fairs should be completed by this date |
| | Jan 25, 2024 | Deadline for teachers to submit student projects to GARSEF. All requirements for each project should be complete. |
| Friday Fair Setup | Feb 23, 2024 2:00 - 7:00 pm | Check-in and set-up of all projects at Palmer Event Center This can be done by student, parent, or teacher |
| Saturday Fair! | Feb 24, 2024 9:30 - 1:30 am | Exploring Science Open! <i>All students need to be supervised while in the Exploring Science area.</i> |
| | Feb 24, 2024 8:30 - 10:15 am | 5th - 6th grade judging of students <i>Students should be at their projects 15 minutes early</i> |
| | Feb 24, 2024 11 - 12:45 am | 3rd - 4th grade judging of students <i>Students should be at their projects 15 minutes early</i> |
| | Feb 24, 2024 2 - 4:30 pm | Public viewing of all projects. |
| | Feb 24, 2024 3 - 4:30 pm | Elementary Award Ceremony for everyone. All students will be called to the stage by Grade, District, and School for group photos. |
| | Feb 24, 2024 4:30 pm | Project boards are taken down and discarded. Please remove any project boards you wish to keep before this time. |

Introduction

A science project integrates many diverse skills, including reading, writing, math, statistics, ethics, critical thinking, and use of computers, graphics, scientific methodology, and public speaking.

The journey to and through the Science Fair is one of self-discovery. It teaches children to develop questions into formal, testable, and solvable problems. It helps prepare them to approach life's challenges systematically. Learning outcomes and finding answers offer powerful self-validation.

The GARSEF Elementary Division is a non-competitive event where students are judged based on specific, age appropriate criteria rather than against other students. Judging sheets align with TEKS so that teachers should find it beneficial to promote the Science Fair in their learning environment. Verbal feedback is given to each student during judging and each student receives a first, second, or third place ribbon. The elementary division also has a few special awards given to projects fitting the presenter's criteria.

The Elementary Division does not advance to additional fairs.

How can I help my student(s)? Encouragement and guidance are the most valuable contributions an adult can give, along with ensuring the young scientists conduct their experiments in a safe manner. Each project should reflect your child's individual effort and design. The project's performance at the Science Festival is less important than what your child accomplishes and learns in the discovery process.

Your child might need help with:

- selecting an age-appropriate project
- planning and managing the project timeline - watch out for registration deadlines!
- getting to libraries, museums, nature centers, universities, and more
- technical work, such as construction or photography—or, for the youngest, drawing straight lines
- explaining the project to an audience. You might, for example, play the role of a Science Festival judge and ask probing questions

REMEMBER: The most important possible outcomes of your child's project are the joy and learning that come from scientific discovery.

Opportunities to help with volunteering and judging the week of the fair can be found on our [website](#).

The Elementary Division Science Fair is held separately from the Junior and Senior Divisions. The competition is for elementary school students who are currently attending grades 3-6.

Note: If a sixth grader is attending school with older students, they should enter the [Junior Fair](#).

What's NEW in 2024

- **NEW! We have a new name!** Our fair is now named the **Greater Austin Regional Science and Engineering Fair** or [GARSEF](#) for short.
- **We will no longer give participation certificates to each student.**
Each participating student will continue to receive a first, second or third place ribbon.

Old News but Still Important

- **Our Project registration deadline is January 25, 2024.** All school and project submissions need to be completed by this date. It is the school sponsor's responsibility to see that these items are completed.
- Registration process involves completing each of these four steps. More details will be provided in the [Registration](#) section.
 - Register your school.
 - Register each project.
 - Submit an online Research Plan for each project.
 - Pay your school's invoice.
- We recommend you plan your school fair (if you have one) on or before January 19, 2024 in order to meet our Regional Fair deadline requirements.
- The **number of projects allowed from each school** is based on school size and is the same as last year.
- **Fees** - The entry fee is \$25 per project. School invoices with instructions on how to pay can be found on each school page. Schools will be charged for every project registered on January 25, 2024.
- The 2024 fair will be held in person at **Palmer Event Center**: 900 Barton Springs Rd, Austin, TX 78704.
- **No Media Releases** are required this year. Parents can request a *No Photo Badge* at Check-In. (this was started in 2023)
- **Students will need a physical display/project board for the Regional Fair.** Please review our updated [Display and Safety Guidelines](#) before creating your Project board to see what might have changed from previous years.
- On the day of the fair, students need to have a responsible adult on site at all times.
- More information can be found online: www.austinscience.org

Registration Information

For Schools (public, private, charter, and home)

School Sponsors (second in importance only to our students!)

The School Sponsor is responsible for registering your school and projects, ensuring students complete the online Project Research Plan, making school payment, and communicating with other teachers and parents. The sponsor is not required to attend the fair. If you would like to be placed on our elementary mailing list, please email susan@austinscience.org. Monthly reminders will be sent out through November and weekly reminders will be sent out December through January.

Home schools

Each homeschool will need a Sponsor to register as a school and register a project online. A private and public-school student can register under homeschool only if they are the only student from their school wishing to participate. If more than one student from a school wishes to participate, they will need an approved school sponsor to represent the school in the Science Fair. This sponsor can be a parent, teacher, PTA member, or someone on staff at the school. [Contact me](#) if this is an issue for your child and I can help you through this process.

Maximum projects allowed per school

The number of projects allowed per school is limited by school enrollment. You can email us to request additional projects, but we cannot guarantee places beyond what is listed below.

| School Enrollment | Max Projects Allowed |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 0–499 students | 12 projects maximum |
| 500–699 students | 14 projects maximum |
| 700–899 students | 16 projects maximum |
| 900+ students | 18 projects maximum |

Fees

The entry fee is \$25 per project. These fees need to be paid by the school in one check or credit card. Invoices can be retrieved from your school page.

Deadlines (see [Important Dates](#))

Incorrect and incomplete school documentation, as well as missed deadlines, cause a great deal more work for teachers, parents, and GARSEF organizers. Due to space and time limitations, late registration will not be permitted.

Online Registration - Schools (registration opens the first week in December)

Navigate to the registration button on the [elementary page](#) of our website to access the school registration page. You will need to fill out or verify your school information and submit the number of expected projects sent from your school. This can be changed before the registration deadline. Please register your school before the first of January to assist us in our preparation. We will also request email contact information for the principal of the school. You have until the registration deadline to cancel completely.

Online Registration - Projects (Must be completed by January 25, 2024)

Part 1 - Project Registration

Once your school is registered, you will receive a link to your school page - Bookmark it! On this page, you can register projects, view/print your invoice, and see your submitted Research Plans. If you lose your link, please [email](#) me and I will send it to you.

You will need basic project information: Project title, students, grades. It is important that you type the name and grades correctly.

You can also put in other information as you register projects online.

- If there are language issues or special needs that judges or science fair staff would need to know about, you can enter it at that time.
- We will have a few Special Awards given to elementary students. You can nominate your students for an award when you register the projects. Criteria for these awards can be found on our [elementary page](#).

Part II - Research Plan

Every project needs to complete an online Research Plan. Sponsors will be given a link to share with participating students on their school page. This form can be filled out by the teacher, student, parent or adult volunteer, but the words need to be from the student. **It is the responsibility of the School sponsor to see that all Research plans are completed.**

Sponsors will have a link on their School Page to verify Research Plan completion. Teams only need to submit one Research Plan per project.

We have made a [template](#) available on our webpage for students to write a rough draft of their Research Plan before submitting it online. The questions on the template are identical to the online Research Plan so students can just copy/paste information from the template onto the online form. Please note, filling out the template is not the same as filling out the form. Use the link provided on your school page to fill out the online Research Form.

Project Information

Project Categories (2 categories)

3rd - 4th grade

5th - 6th grade (*A sixth-grade student attending middle school must enter the Junior Division.*

A sixth-grade student attending an elementary school may instead choose to enter either fair. The Junior Division (judged on a different day) follows modified ISEF rules and students need to register using STEM Wizard **before** December 1, 2023. A parent/teacher should attend the Junior/Senior Orientation in September. Please contact us in the Fall of 2023 if you have questions about this.)

Individual and Team Projects

Students may conduct a science project individually or in teams (max 3 students/team.) If team members are in different grades, they will be judged according to the grade level of the older student. Only one project per student is allowed.

Types of Projects Allowed

- **Experiments** - a student asks an experimental question, forms and tests a hypothesis, and makes conclusions. Example: I tested batteries to see which brand lasts the longest in a flashlight.

- **Engineering Designs** - a student sees a need, and then designs and creates a product to fill that need. Example: I tried to design a stronger bridge and here is how I did it and I learned this....
- **Exhibits** - a student has an item or items that they ask a question about or study in order to answer a question. Examples: Here is a toy windmill I bought and this is how it works. My question was "How does a windmill work?". Then by doing research and playing with it I learned this....Or This is my rock collection, this is how I organized it and why, this is what I learned about rocks.....
(*Exhibits or research papers are not encouraged in older grades, 5th - 6th.*)

Disqualified Projects

No Elementary Division student project can involve:

- Firearms, explosives or discharge air pressure canister devices (i.e. potato guns)
- **Growing bacteria or mold of any type**
- Causing pain, suffering, sickness or death of an animal
- Breaking Local/State/Federal Law
- Production of ANY amount of consumable alcohol
- Any activity or substance that presents a danger to the student, other people or the environment, including hazardous chemicals or radioactive materials

Project Board Guidelines

All student project boards must follow the guidelines in order to be allowed in the exhibit hall.

Display Board

- Project display should be on sturdy tri-fold board available at local craft and office supply stores. Written material, drawings and pictures should be securely attached to the display board with glue or tape. **Do not use staples:** they will poke out the back of the board.
- Projects will be displayed on tables that are 36 inches high. **Size of display area may not exceed the following measurements: 15" deep, 48" wide, and 72" high.** Due to space limitations, displays that exceed these measurements cannot be accepted.
- Electricity for your display will not be available but you can use household batteries to power your project.

Allowed Items

- Photographs, drawings, stuffed animals/artificial plants or imitation (play) food should be used to depict the prohibited or discouraged items.
- Students should take photographs of project steps as a visual explanation of their effort. Students must ask permission before photographing other individuals for the display board.
- **Be sure to properly credit/list all sources of graphics and photographers on the display board ("Photograph/Visuals by . . .")** This includes images from websites.
- Students may use a computer and printer for written parts of the project.

Discouraged Items

- **Items for demonstrations.** This is not a demonstration fair. Judges want to hear what the student has learned. Photographs of the project will suffice.
- Expensive, breakable or fragile items

Items Not Allowed:

- **No organisms; living, dead or preserved** (no plants or animals)
- **No water or chemicals, crystals, liquids**
- No human/animal parts or body fluids (for example, blood, urine)
- **No human or animal food**
- No poisons, drugs, controlled or hazardous substances
- No sharp items (for example: syringes, needles, pipettes, knives, tacks, nails)
- No pressurized tanks or containers
- **No glass** or glass objects unless part of a commercial product (eg: a computer screen)
- No batteries with open top cells (so that battery acid can be seen)
- **No dirt, soil, gravel, rocks, sand, waste products**, etc.
- No project, device, activity, or substance deemed hazardous to student health or safety
- No photographs or pictures of animals or people in surgical techniques, dissections or necropsies

Palmer Events Center Information

The entire event is held at the Palmer Events Center in Austin, TX.

Parking is free to volunteers, judges, teachers, and parents during the Science Fair.

Schedule Overview (see [Important Dates](#))

Friday Check-in and Board Setup

All project boards should be checked in to Palmer Events Center the night before the Fair. A teacher or school representative may bring all project boards to the Center, or parents may bring the boards individually. If one person brings multiple projects, have them take pictures of the registration cards they will receive at the registration table to send to participating students.

Check-in is a 3 step process:

- Check project board in at the registration tables to receive your card and board sticker,
- Pass through Display and Safety to get your board and project approved to see that there are no rule violations (see above).
- Set up your project board at your assigned booth number.

What Students can expect during judging

- **Students should arrive 15 minutes prior to their judging period.**
- **Students should remain by their projects until they are judged.** This may take 30 minutes to 2 hours. Talk to your students about how long they may have to wait so they are prepared..

- **Students should be prepared to provide a brief presentation of their project and answer questions from the judge.** Once judging is complete, the judge will place a sticker on their table and the student will be escorted by a volunteer to the stage in the Awards Hall where a parent or guardian will pick them up.
- A few projects will be selected by judges Friday night for an additional interview. These students may be asked to remain until a Special Awards judge interviews them. The student can choose to remain for consideration or leave after the primary judge concludes their interview.
- **No food or drink is allowed in the exhibit hall.**
- **Bathroom Breaks.** Bathrooms are available inside the Exhibit Hall. A volunteer will escort students there and then back to their projects.
- If a student has an important question or a sudden need, there are dozens of volunteers positioned throughout the Exhibit Hall. They can ask for assistance.

What Teachers and Parents can expect during judging

- Parents and teachers can escort their students to the correct booth in the exhibit hall 15-20 minutes before judging begins. If you forgot your booth number, visit the Registration Table or Information Booth for assistance. **Do not bring food or drink into the exhibit hall.**
- The Exhibit Hall is staffed with numerous GARSEF staff and dozens of volunteers. They will monitor the Hall throughout the judging sessions, escorting students to the Awards Hall when their interviews are complete.
- About ten minutes before Judging, parents and teachers will be asked to leave the Exhibit Hall and wait in the Awards Hall (the room next door). Judging cannot begin until all parents and teachers leave the Exhibit Hall. Parents or responsible adults are expected to remain on-site during judging.
- Once a student has been judged, s/he will be escorted to a holding area near the Awards Hall. They will then be called on stage in the Awards Hall, their name will be announced, and parents or teachers can approach the stage to pick up their child. *Each child will need to verify their own adult before they will be released.*

Exploring Science!

Exploring Science is a free community event for elementary students and their families held at Palmer Events Center on the morning of the GARSEF Elementary Division judging day. Local organizations and City Departments provide hands-on, interactive activities and demonstrations in STEM fields ranging from animal to behavioral and plant sciences as well as chemistry, engineering and robotics. Students and their siblings who have visited booths will receive a stamp in their "passport" which can earn them prizes. 3,000 - 4,000 people visit Explore Science each year. **Children need to be supervised by a parent or guardian in the Exploring Science area at all times.**

Awards and Awards Ceremony

- Placement Ribbons will be put in front of the project board between the close of the final judging period and the beginning of Public Viewing. Students should take their ribbon once they arrive at their board (one ribbon for each team member).
- During the Awards Ceremony, Special Award winners will be announced and all participating students can go on stage. They are called to the stage in groups (by district, school and grade level). Students should be encouraged to take their ribbons from their projects onstage with them. You will have an opportunity to take a quick photograph at this time.
- Students, teachers, and families are encouraged to attend the Awards Ceremony. If you cannot stay for the ceremony, you can pick up your project board during the Public Viewing time or have a friend pick up the board as they leave the ceremony. Boards not picked up will be discarded by Palmer Staff immediately after the ceremony.
- Awards will also be listed on our [website](#) after the Ceremony. If there is a missing award, please ask your child's teacher or sponsor to contact GARSEF staff.
- This is a non-competitive event. Judges' decisions are formulated using TEKS-based criteria and are final.
- Photos will be uploaded to the [web page](#) in the days following the event. If you know a family who does not want photos publicized, they may request a NO PHOTO badge at the registration table before the judging period. These students should not go on stage during the awards ceremony as these photos will be taken and published.



ELEMENTARY SPONSOR CHECKLIST

Registration Deadline:

January 25, 2024

Project Fee:

\$25.00 per project

September 2023

- ❑ **Attend the Online Science Fair Elementary Division Teacher Orientation.** Thursday, September 7th, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. on-line
- ❑ **Read the [Elementary Handbook](#)** found on our website.
- ❑ **Plan your School's Science Fair** so that you have time to prepare for our fair by the deadline; we recommend no later than January 19, 2024.

School Fair

- ❑ During your school fair, make sure the winning projects do not [violate our rules](#) before advancing them to the Regional Fair. A project that violates our rules can still be a winner at a school fair, but will not be allowed to participate in the Regional Fair.
- ❑ After your school fair, provide winning parents and students with the Regional Display and Safety Parent Information and make sure they have the information needed to participate in the Regional Fair. Feel free to share any of our [online documents](#) with parents of advancing students.

Before Deadline

- ❑ **Register your school online** at <https://austinscience.org/elementary>. It is best to register your school shortly after Elementary Registration opens on December 1, 2023. You will be asked for an estimated number of projects from your school. This number can be changed once you finalize and register the actual projects your school is sending. Once you register your school, you will receive weekly emails with more detailed instructions.
We strongly urge you to complete this step by January 6th at the latest. That way, you will be guaranteed project slots at the fair.
- ❑ **Register your winning projects online** at <https://austinscience.org/elementary>. This ensures project data is in our system and gives teachers an opportunity to indicate special circumstances for consideration such as:
 - You will be asked if you wish to recommend a project for a **special award consideration** when you register them. Sponsors need to be familiar with the winning projects and the Special Awards offered to make this determination.
 - If there are any **special needs** judges or staff need to be aware of, please enter that information when asked. We have judges who can accommodate most special needs, but we need to know about them beforehand.
 - If a student's primary **language is other than English**, please note that language.
 - **Double check all name spellings and grade levels.** Errors of this kind often distress the

children and will not be corrected once registration closes.

- **Make sure ALL advancing projects from your school are registered.** We will not add projects from your school without your approval.
- **Please check each project for rule violations.** These will also be checked by the Regional Fair before Judging day.

Projects that violate the rules will not be allowed in the Fair. No exceptions.

- **Have students complete the online Project Research Form (NEW LAST YEAR!)**
You should have received a link after registering your school. **We need each project to submit their Project Research Form online.** We will use this information to review each student project to ensure they qualify for the Greater Austin Regional Science and Engineering Fair.
- **Submit Payment.** Download your invoice from your School page. You can pay by check or with a credit card.. (You will have access to your school's page once you register your school online.)

After the Deadline, Before the Fair

- **Collect Project Boards.** You may choose to safely keep the Regional project boards together until Check-in at Palmer or may send them home for parent care. Students may update their boards before the Regional Fair if they choose. They cannot, however, change their project.
- **Communicate** to those checking boards into Palmer the Friday before the Fair. Make sure they have the information needed to get all projects checked and set up in the correct booth. If one person is checking in multiple boards, they should record the booth number of each project for parents.
- **Communicate** information to parents about the Saturday event. You can share any documents you think might help parents. The most useful are the [Day of Fair FAQ](#) and [Display and Safety Checklist](#).

Friday, February 24, 2023

- **Check in at Palmer Events Center**, 900 Barton Springs Road, South Lobby, 2:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Parking is free.
- **Clear your project(s) through Display & Safety** ([find rules here.](#))
- **Set up the project(s) in the assigned booth(s).** Be sure to save the Row:Booth number to send to the student(s) for Saturday's judging. We suggest taking a picture of the card(s) you will receive at registration with this information. This photo can be emailed to parents.

Saturday, February 25, 2023

- **Students should be at their project 15 minutes before judging.**
Judging begins at 8:30 a.m. for grades 5–6 and 11:00 a.m. for grades 3–4.
- **A parent or guardian or teacher must remain on site during judging.**
- **Attend the Awards Ceremony**, 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., to celebrate your students' achievements and the accomplishments of other Central Texas students. Encourage students to take their ribbons with them when they go onstage.

- **Pick Up Projects** after the awards ceremony. Projects not picked up will be discarded. If a student is not staying for the awards ceremony, we recommend taking the project board when parents are allowed back into the exhibit hall.

After the Fair

- Once the award ceremony is completed, you can review the results of the elementary fair [online](#).
- Every school sponsor will receive an email with instructions for getting ribbons for students who did not get theirs. Once you determine how many ribbons you need, reply to the email with details of that request. We will work to get the awards out before Spring Break.

Sponsor Reminders:

Sponsor Selection: The school sponsor is the person responsible for working with winning students, completing registration steps online and communicating with parents. Only one person should register as a school sponsor. If the School sponsor needs to change because of an emergency, please contact [Science Fair Staff](#) so that we can get the new sponsor added to our email list.

Sponsor Phones: We communicate by email; phone contact is rare. You will not be contacted by cell phone except during our event when schools are closed. When registering, please provide a cell phone number where you can be reached Friday evening and Saturday morning so that we can resolve issues quickly. Please include your principal's phone in case we cannot get in touch with the sponsor.

School Discretion: The local public, private or charter school has sole discretion to determine who can attend the Regional Fair. The school can choose participants in any matter they see fit. Although beneficial for students, a school-wide fair is not necessary to select students to participate in the Regional Fair.

If a school chooses to participate in the Greater Austin Regional Science and Engineering Fair, only students assigned by that school can attend the Regional Fair. If a school chooses not to participate in the Regional Fair, a student may be registered for the Regional Fair as a homeschooled student. If more than one student from a non-participating school wishes to participate in the Regional Fair, they **must** participate under a single sponsor (parent or teacher.) Although it seems there is quite a bit of time between the close of registration and the elementary fair, please keep in mind the Science Fair staff is preparing for three separate fairs (Elementary, Junior, and Senior) and it is a mad rush to get everything ready for the week of the fair. We will do our best to communicate in a timely manner, but we may not be able to answer every question immediately.

Thank you for all your work with your students!

It is a big job and we appreciate your efforts.



ELEMENTARY STUDENT CHECKLIST

Welcome and Congratulations!

Please use this checklist to help complete the registration and check-in process for the Austin Energy Regional Science Festival.

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING.

Your teacher will need this information **before** the deadline: January 26, 2024. Follow your teacher's instructions.

- Complete the Project Research Form on-line. Your teacher will have a link to enter your information.
- Check with your teacher to be sure registration of your school and your project has been completed by the deadline.
- Make any changes to your project board to get it ready for GARSEF. See the [Display and Safety Rules](#) on the elementary page to make sure you qualify.

Friday, February 24, 2023

- Check-in your project at the Palmer Events Center between 2:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
- Clear Registration, Display & Safety, and set-up your project in your booth.
(Your teacher may have someone check your project in for you.)

Saturday, February 25, 2023

- Arrive at your project 15 minutes before judging.**
Judging begins at 8:30 a.m. for grades 5–6 and 11:00 a.m. for grades 3–4.
- If possible, **attend the awards ceremony** from 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. to celebrate your achievements and the accomplishments of other Central Texas students.
- Dismantle your project** by 4:30 p.m. Projects not picked up by that time will be discarded by Palmer Event Staff.

Schedule:

| | | |
|----------|---------------------|---|
| Friday | 2:00 – 7:00 PM | Check-in and Board Setup at Palmer Event Center |
| Saturday | 8:30 – 10:15 AM | 5th - 6th Grade Judging (students arrive 15 minutes early) |
| | 9:00 AM – 1:30 PM | Exploring Science Open (all students need to be supervised) |
| | 11:00 AM – 12:45 PM | 3rd - 4th Grade Judging (students arrive 15 minutes early) |
| | 2:00 – 4:30 PM | Public Viewing |
| | 3:00 – 4:30 PM | Award Ceremony |

Parking will be free of charge for all participants at the Palmer Events Center Garage. No vehicles may be left unattended in the circular drive; this is for multiple project drop-off only.

DAY OF JUDGING - SATURDAY MORNING

ALL students need to have an adult on site at all times. This could be a parent, teacher or friend.

Please note the judging time assigned to your child's grade. Judging times cannot be moved to accommodate specific requests.

Students need to be by their projects 15 minutes before their judging period begins. Find your child's project board in the Exhibit Hall with the card provided during project check-in and get them ready for judging. If you do not know where your child's project is, you can get this information from Registration or the Info Booth in the Exhibit Hall. Just before judging, parents will be asked to leave the Exhibit Hall and wait in the Awards Hall next door.

Once the child's project is judged, each child will be escorted to the stage area where the adult-in-charge may pick them up. Judging could take anywhere from 30 minutes to 2 hours, depending on how quickly the judge gets to the project.

Exploring Science Booths and Activities will be provided throughout the morning for those students who are not currently being judged. Students must be supervised in this area.

PARTICIPATION CEREMONY - SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Once all judging is complete, ribbons are placed in front of the project boards so that students will know how they did. Sometime around 2 PM, the dividing wall will be opened and students and the public will be allowed back in the Exhibit Hall to view projects.

The Awards Ceremony will begin at 3 PM. Special Awards will be presented at this time and all students will be called forward in groups by grade and school and district for group photo opportunities. Watch the screens to see when your child should go on stage. **Encourage students to take their ribbons from their projects onstage with them!**

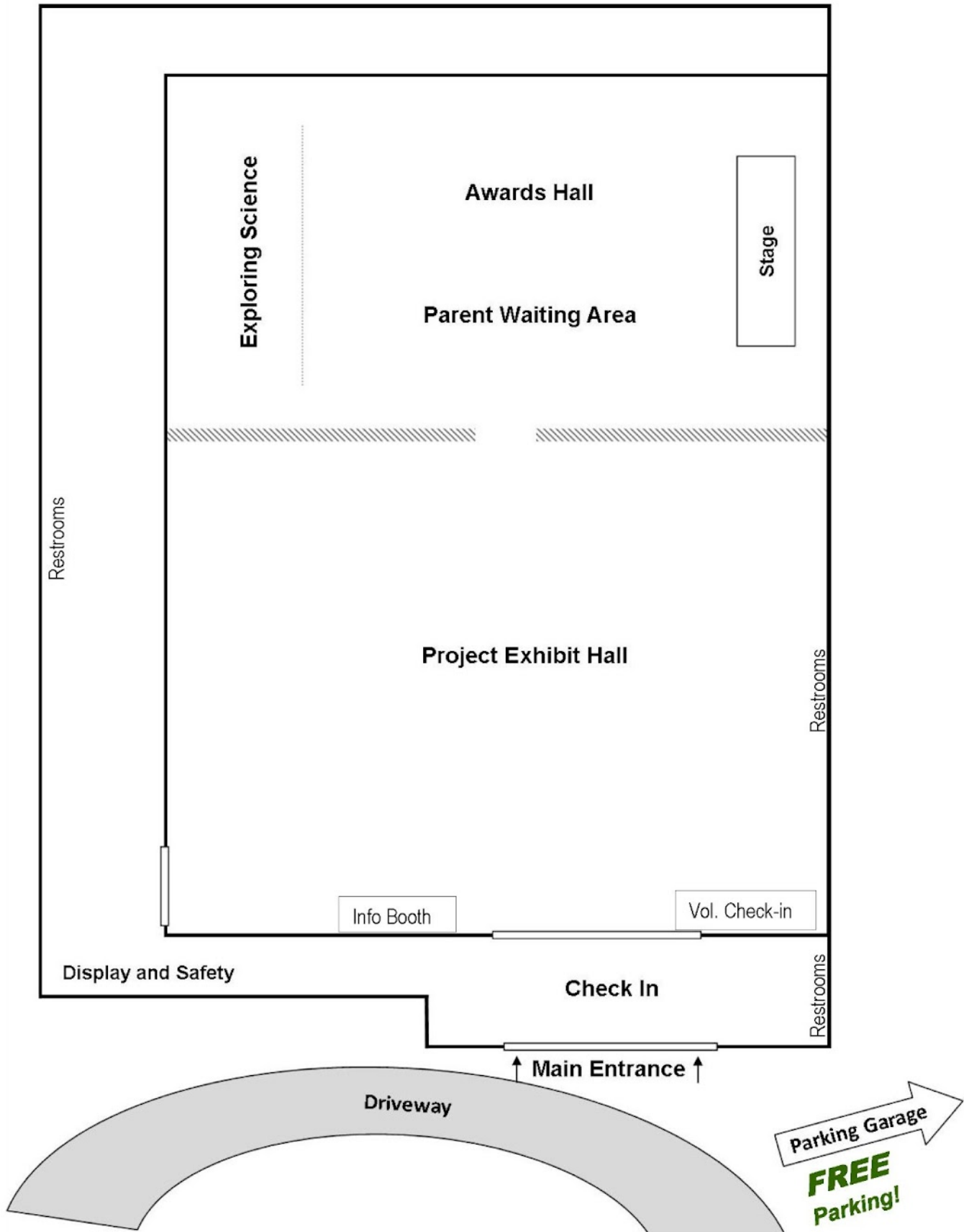
If your child didn't receive the proper award, contact your child's teacher. Instructions will be sent to the school explaining how to request missing/replacement awards.

If you are unable to attend the Ceremony, you can view the results by school on the awards page of the GARSEF website after the fair.

ELEMENTARY FAIR SCHEDULE

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 8:30 am - 10:15 am | 5th - 6th Grade Judging (Parents must remain in Waiting Area) |
| 9:00 am - 2:00 pm | Exploring Science Booths Open (Please supervise children) |
| 11:00 am - 1:00 pm | 3rd - 4th Grade Judging (Parents must remain in Waiting Area) |
| 2:00 pm - 4:30 pm | Public viewing (Exhibit Hall) |
| 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm | Elem. Awards Ceremony (Awards Hall) |
| 4:30 pm | Project Dismantle & Pickup (Projects will be discarded after this time) |

See Fair layout on next page...





Elementary Judges and Volunteers

The Greater Austin Regional Science Fair could not happen without our volunteers and judges. We appreciate any time you can give to help promote scientific discovery in our young learners.

Judges and Volunteers can find registration information on our website: www.austinscience.org.

Judges are expected to attend one of our online orientations
Unless you are notified otherwise, **Volunteers** will be trained onsite.

The 2024 schedule is below. The volunteer schedule will depend on which shift you selected.

Judge Orientation

There are two possible orientation dates for judges. Please choose the one that best fits your schedule.

| | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|---------|
| Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2024 | 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. | On-line |
| Thursday, Feb. 15, 2024 | 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. | On-line |

Science Festival Event Schedule at Palmer Events Center

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Friday, Feb. 23, 2024 | 1:30 p.m. | Volunteer Check-in Opens |
| Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024 | 7:30 a.m. | Volunteer Check-in Opens |
| | 8:00 – 8:20 a.m. | 5 th – 6 th Judges Check-In (upstairs) Review Requirements & Assignments |
| | 8:30 a.m. – 10:15 | Grades 5 and 6 Judging |
| | 10:30 – 10:50 a.m. | 3 rd – 4 th Judges Check-In (upstairs) Review Requirements & Assignments |
| | 11:00 – 12:45 p.m. | Grades 3 and 4 Judging |

The Judging Rubric can be found on the next page or downloaded at [this link](#).



Elementary Judging Criteria

| RIBBON AWARDED (mark only one box) | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----|
| | 16 – 18 points | 1st |
| | 10 - 15 points | 2nd |
| | 5 - 9 points | 3rd |

Project # _____ Judge # _____ School: _____

Student: _____ Grade: _____

Remember to give **POSITIVE VERBAL FEEDBACK** to the student!

| Judging Criteria | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|-------|
| Criteria | Basic | Average | Excellent | Score |
| Question <i>Indicates variables tested / changed and observed / measured effect</i> | <i>Minimal information about what was tested/researched and effects (outcome)</i> (1 point) | <i>Incomplete information about what was tested/researched and observed effects (outcome)</i> (2 points) | <i>Detailed information purpose of research, specific change, and how will determine effects (outcome)</i> (3 points) | |
| Independence <i>Evidence the student generated and performed processes of project</i> | <i>Displayed in academic/adult language, shows little understanding of topic</i> (1 point) | <i>Mostly student-generated, understands general topic</i> (2 points) | <i>Displayed in student language, understands connections / details</i> (3 points) | |
| Project Organization <i>Includes all details needed to replicate testing and/or design process</i> | <i>Minimal Information Lack of materials and steps of test/design procedures; cannot be replicated</i> (1 point) | <i>Incomplete Information quantities of materials and general details of procedures limit exact replication</i> (2 points) | <i>Detailed information quantities of materials and procedures support replication of project</i> (3 points) | |
| Presentation of Data <i>Critical sections are labeled and in logical order</i> | <i>No organized testing process, missing lists and needed sequence, no graphics used</i> (1 point) | <i>Steps of process shown using sequenced lists, labels, data in written and graphic forms</i> (2 points) | <i>Student created graphics indicating details of measured /observed outcomes</i> (3 points) | |
| Verbal Presentation <i>Communicates and presents verbally to a judge</i> | Student not Present (0 points) | Not all team members participated in interview or were able to answer questions (0 points) | <i>Student described and related achievements, answered judge's questions; if applicable: all team members participated in interview</i> (3 points) | |
| Conclusion / Lessons Learned <i>Answers the testable question or problem supported with relevant evidence.</i> | <i>General results difficult to relate to question and/or problem</i> (1 point) | <i>Results relate to question or problem without much evidence</i> (2 points) | <i>Student restated question or problem with supporting evidence and applied it to real world</i> (3 points) | |
| Total | | | | |