

11th Annual SDMC Elementary Science & Engineering Fair 2024 - 2025



Elementary Science & Engineering Fair Committee Members

Ms. Brittany Devlin- Teacher at Dr. Mona Jain Middle School – devlinb@manateeschools.net

Mr. Steven Craig - Teacher at Southeast High School – craigs@manateeschools.net

Ms. Lynne Johnston - STEM Coordinator – johnstonl@manateeschools.net

Ms. Susan Smucker – Math/Science Coordinator - smuckers@manateeschools.net

Ms. Alison Nichols - Director of Elementary Curriculum and Instruction - nicholsa@manateeschools.net

Table of Contents	1
Elementary Science & Engineering Fair (SEF) Guidelines.....	2
Guidelines for Approving Research Plans.....	3
Board Requirements and Suggestions	4
Category Descriptions.....	5
Duties of the School Contact	5
Judging Criteria.....	6
Elementary SEF Competition Forms	
Science Project Research Plan and Approval Form.....	7
Designated Supervisor Form and SEF Committee Pre-Approval Form.....	8
Informed Consent Form.....	9
Verification of Informed Consent Form.....	10
Elementary SEF Entry Form (3 rd – 5 th grade).....	11
Elementary SEF Entry Form (Class project)	12

Schedule of SEF Activities

August – Information and guidelines about Science & Engineering Fair (SEF) is distributed to all elementary principals and school contacts. Documents can also be found in the STEM Schoology group. Informational sessions and training will be provided via Microsoft Teams in September, October, and November.

August 2024 – December 2024– Projects supported in classrooms by classroom teachers. Teachers submit forms to the Competition Committee PRIOR to experimentation for all projects dealing with hazardous materials, humans, molds, or vertebrates **by October 11, 2024, for approval**. The forms will be reviewed, approved/ denied, and returned in a timely manner.

The School Science & Engineering Fair must be completed by January 17, 2025.

January 24, 2025 – Deadline to register student projects for the district competition (**by 5 PM**).

February 14, 2025 – Deliver projects to Manatee Technical College.

February 15, 2025 – District Science & Engineering Fair at Manatee Technical College

- Judging 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
- Gallery of Projects – open to public viewing between 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm.
- The awards ceremony will take place in the auditorium from 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm.

Who can participate?

All elementary students in the Manatee School District may participate. **Teachers** coordinate class projects in kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd Grade. These projects are **not** eligible for the School District of Manatee County SEF but may enter the individual School SEF.

Group projects (with 2-5 students) may be completed by 3rd and 4th grade students. 4th and 5th grade students conduct individual projects. The following projects are eligible to enter the School District of Manatee County Science & Engineering Fair:

- Group Projects (3rd & 4th grade combined) - best two projects overall!
- Individual Projects (grade 4) - 1st and 2nd place ONLY in each category!
- Individual Projects (grade 5) - 1st and 2nd place ONLY in each category!

A maximum of 18 projects per school may enter the School District of Manatee County SEF. 3rd place for group projects, 3rd place and Honorable Mention for individual projects may be considered after registration for the County SEF has taken place (based on participation numbers).

Home Schooled or Virtual students are eligible to submit their entries to the public school where the child would attend classes, according to the Office of Student Assignment. The home school/virtual entry must contact the public school about their intent to participate, submit the project, and then be judged along with all the other entries from the public school. If the project places 1st and 2nd in one of the four categories, the winning entry from the public school may be registered for the School District of Manatee County SEF.

Elementary Science & Engineering Fair Guidelines

- 1. BEFORE EXPERIMENTATION:** Students' research plans and testing procedures must be reviewed and approved by their teacher. A suggested form is found on page 7. Teachers, students, and parents must work together to review and complete this form, so everyone understands the project and is aware of any potentially dangerous or unethical situations before the student begins any testing.
Any changes to the research plan must be reviewed again before conducting the revised experimentation.
- 2. Students are NOT ALLOWED to experiment with the following:**
 - firearms, knives, or other items that could be considered weapons
 - fireworks or other explosives
 - controlled substances including prescription drugs, alcoholic beverages, and tobacco
 - bacteria
- 3. The use of hazardous chemicals, devices, or activities; human participants, molds, and vertebrate animals REQUIRE** review by the STEM Competition committee **PRIOR** to experimentation AND the direct supervision by a Designated Supervisor. Suggested forms are found on pages 7-10.
All animals **MUST** be treated humanely. Projects must **NOT** be designed to harm humans or animals, whether invertebrate or vertebrate.
- 4. An optional logbook, or notebook, can be used to record all of the important information. The Elementary Research Pan Template, which can be found on Schoology, may also be used.**
 - Question and Hypothesis
 - Independent (changed or manipulated), dependent variables (measured or responding), controlled variables (conditions that are held constant) are listed.
 - Data tables, charts, and observations accurately describe the experiment.
 - Students have repeated the experiment (multiple trials) and/or have multiple samples.
- 5. Group and individual projects must be developed by the students with the help of teachers to make sure they are safe and can compete.** After approval, parents and teachers supervise as needed but the project and display board **MUST** be the work of the student(s).
- 6. Pictures** are taken throughout the experimental procedure. The student(s) can be in the pictures but **NOT** other people without written permission (avoid faces if possible).
- 7. After experimentation:** Student(s) analyze their data in the form of completed graphs/data tables and state whether or not the data supports the hypothesis.
- 8. The Display Board** must include the following items: (See page 3 for more information)
 - Problem – write as question
 - Hypothesis – predict results before experimentation
 - Materials – list all items/materials used
 - Procedure – steps followed to test predictions (pictures are helpful)
 - Results – what happens during the experiment (data tables, charts, and graphs)
 - Conclusion – compare results to the hypothesis
- 9. After the School SEF has been completed,** each school may submit up to 18 projects to the SDMC SEF.
Group Projects (3rd & 4th grade combined) - best two projects overall.
Individual Projects (grade 4) - 1st and 2nd place **ONLY** in each category.
Individual Projects (grade 5) - 1st and 2nd place **ONLY** in each category.

Guidelines for Approving Research Plans

It is the teacher's responsibility to help the student develop a research plan that would keep all involved safe and the student would be able to compete at both the school fair and the SDMC fair. The teacher **MUST** be knowledgeable of these guidelines and may receive clarification by contacting the SEF Advisor at his/her school or a member of the SDMC Science & Engineering Fair Committee.

Projects involving the following items require a ***Designated Supervisor and approval*** by the SDMC Science & Engineering Fair Committee **before** the student begins experimentation:

Hazardous Chemicals, Activities, or Devices: All of these require direct supervision by a Designated Supervisor, which may be a parent, familiar with the safety risks and precautions.

- ***Hazardous Chemicals:*** Many household chemicals are hazardous including 3% hydrogen peroxide, 70% isopropyl alcohol (rubbing alcohol), fingernail polish remover, dishwasher/laundry detergent, fertilizers, and others. A Materials Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) or Safety Data Sheet (SDS) should be read to ensure that safe procedures are followed, and the chemicals are disposed of properly or properly stored for later intended use.
- ***Hazardous Activities:*** The use of fire, electricity around liquids (water), riding in a boat, and others require safety precautions identified in the research plan and a Designated Supervisor.
- ***Hazardous Devices:*** ALL power tools, laser pointer, light sources (heat, halogen, UV), etc. require that safety manuals should be read. Parents or the Designated Supervisor can perform all procedures requiring the power tools to make sure the student is safe.
- ***Human participants:*** Students should describe how they will contact the potential participants **AFTER** approval by the SDMC Science & Engineering Fair Committee.
 - No names or other private information can be collected.
 - Pictures can NOT be taken of the participants.
 - ALL projects require an Informed Consent Form (see page 10) which includes signatures of the participants **and** their parent/guardian if the participant is 18 years old or under.
 - **AFTER EXPERIMENTATION:** The teacher must help the student complete the Verification of Informed Consent Form (refer to page 11). Only the Verification of Informed Consent and a copy of one of the signed and dated Informed Consent Forms with the printed and signed names blacked out should be included with the forms submitted before the SDMC Fair.
- ***Mold:*** Students can grow mold for their project as long as the food items are placed in one sealed freezer-strength baggie and then inside another sealed-freezer strength baggie at the beginning of the experiment and **NEVER** opened. As soon as mold is seen the **SEALED** baggies **MUST** be thrown away.
- ***Vertebrate animals:*** Experiments can NOT be conducted that put vertebrate animals at risk to stress or pain. The normal food and feeding schedule can NOT be changed. If a vertebrate animal gets sick or dies the student's family is responsible to take the animal to a veterinarian and pay for the visit.

Project Display Board Hints

The board and any additional items must fit within the following **MAXIMUM** dimensions:

- 3 feet wide when the board is open, 4 feet high, and 1 foot deep.
- Items used in the experiment may be displayed but must adhere to all safety guidelines. Please see suggestions for the board design and restrictions below.

Problem/Question	Title	Analysis/Results
Hypothesis	Data Tables/Charts	Conclusions
Materials	Graphs	
Procedure	Photos	

*The following items may **NOT** be displayed or brought to the SEF:*

- Living or dead organisms, including plants, shells, fossils, insects.
- Human or animal food
- All chemicals including water, dry ice, etc.
- Awards and/or acknowledgments (graphic or written).
- Photographs of vertebrate animals in other than natural conditions. Photographs of other people without a signed permission form from the individual. Human participants can NOT be pictured.
- Glass or glass objects
- All hazardous substances or devices
 - ✓ Sharp items
 - ✓ Flames or highly flammable materials
 - ✓ Batteries with open-top cells

Any apparatus or pictures considered unsafe or inappropriate by the SEF Committee will be removed before judging. The committee's decision is final.

All materials brought to the fair will be removed by the committee after the judging process EXCEPT for the board. These items will be organized by school and available after the Awards Ceremonies. The school contact is responsible for gathering all materials from the location.

Projects dealing with hazardous chemicals, activities, and devices; humans, molds, or vertebrate animals MUST submit the research plan and approval forms, or they will NOT be judged or allowed to display.

Category Descriptions

Earth and Environmental Sciences

These projects should focus on biological or physical interactions with the natural surroundings. Projects may include studies of the ocean and atmosphere in addition to human interaction with the Earth and its resources.

Engineering

These projects evaluate the efficiency of different devices or try to improve their function. It should be more than "Can I build...." but instead, "How can I improve..." Engineering goes beyond gadgetry. All prototypes should be tested for their intended purpose, data should be collected, the prototype should be revised based on data and then retested.

Life Sciences

These projects deal with processes of living organisms: plants, molds, and animals (including humans). Processes may include growth, maintenance, breathing rate, pulse, learning, memory, vision, etc. Animals (including invertebrates) must be treated humanely. Additional forms and reviews are required for any project dealing with humans, molds, and vertebrate animals. These **MUST** be reviewed and approved by the SEF Committee **PRIOR** to experimentation.

Physical Sciences

These projects involve chemistry, math, physics, and space sciences which deal primarily with non-living materials. Topics may include properties of matter, physical and chemical changes, various forms of energy, forces, motion, etc.

The student must discuss the proper category with the teacher. The SEF Committee is available to assist with this decision.

Duties of School Contacts

1. Communicate information from the district to teachers.
2. Provide guidance to all teachers involved with projects. Make sure that the forms of projects dealing with hazardous chemicals, activities, or devices; humans, molds and vertebrate animals are forwarded to the SEF committee for approval **PRIOR** to experimentation.
3. Review class project research plans.
4. Plan and hold a school Science & Engineering Fair.
5. Submit student registration by January 24, 2025. (Registration Link will be provided at later date.)
6. It is critical that the **EXACT title** on the board is typed into the form.
Make sure that the forms of winning projects dealing with hazardous chemicals, activities, or devices; humans, molds and vertebrate animals are forwarded to the SEF committee. Otherwise, these projects will **NOT** be judged.
7. Communicate details about SDMC SEF at the MTC on February 15, 2025.
8. Make sure projects have Entry Forms (page 11) secured to the center back of the board and the labels are attached to all additional materials present at the SDMC SEF.

Judging Criteria (separate rubric available).

I. Testable Question & Design Process

Can the question presented be answered through experimentation?

- The question is scientific and can be investigated.
- The approach to solving the problem is appropriate.
- The experimental design process follows the guidelines.
- The analysis of data is accurate and visually represented.
- Metric measurements are used.

Projects are not scientific unless they are used to support an investigation and help answer a question in an original way.

Engineering projects should have a goal or objectives and not the production of gadgets – the most efficient way to solve a problem, etc.

II. Scientific Thought

- Is the problem clearly stated?
- Is the problem limited so that it was possible to attack it?
- Was there a procedure for reaching the solution?
- Are the variables recognized and defined?
- Are there adequate data to support the conclusions?

III. Thoroughness

- Was the project carried to completion?
- Were there enough samples or repetitions
- How complete is the student's daily log?
- How much time was spent on the project?

IV. Clarity

- Does the display board explain its purpose, procedure, and conclusions clearly?
- Do the Data, Results, and Display tell the whole story?

V. Knowledge Gained

- What knowledge has the student gained as a result of doing this project?
- How would the student change the project if starting over?
- What would the student do differently?
- What were the most interesting and exciting things about the project?
- How can this project be applied to a "real life" situation (direct scientific application)?

****Important:** All Judges' decisions are final.

First Place & Second Place for individual projects are awarded by the judges in each category and type. The number of awards will be determined by the number of entries and the quality of the projects. All students will receive certificates for their participation in the SEF.

Elementary Project Research Plan and Approval Form

This form is completed by ALL students conducting either a group or individual project.

Students, teachers, and parents **MUST** work together to complete and review this form, so everyone has a complete understanding of the intended project and is aware of any potentially dangerous or unethical situations *before* the student begins any testing. Any questions concerning this form or experiment should be referred to the SDMC Science & Engineering Fair Committee.

Student(s) Name(s): _____ **School:** _____ **Grade:** _____

Testable Question OR Problem to Solve: _____

Hypothesis (Use If _____, then _____, because _____ format): _____

Materials needed for the experiment: _____

Procedure (Each step is listed separately and gives enough detail to ensure safety. Add additional pages if necessary.):

- Teacher Approval.** I have reviewed this research plan and approve this project as it is written.
- This project involves humans, mold, vertebrate animals, or hazardous chemicals, devices or activities and will be sent to the district committee for approval before student experimentation.

Printed Teacher's Name

Signature

Date

Elementary Designated Supervisor Form and SEF Committee Pre-Approval Form

This form MUST be completed for projects involving humans, molds, vertebrate animals and hazardous chemicals, devices or activities which REQUIRE direct supervision. Submit this form with the completed Elementary Research Plan and Approval Form to the SEF Committee.

The Adult who will directly supervise the student during the experiment should assist the student with the completion of this form and **train the student in appropriate safety procedures.**

Identify all *chemicals, devices* or *activities* that can put the researcher, participants, or vertebrate animals at risk:

Describe the *precautions* that must be taken to reduce the risk to the researcher, participants, or vertebrate animals.

Describe the *methods to dispose* of any chemicals or organisms (mold). For vertebrates describe what will happen to the animals after experimentation.

I certify that I have been trained or am experienced in the techniques listed above and will **DIRECTLY** supervise the student when the student conducts the experiment.

Printed name of Designated Supervisor

Signature

Date

After reviewing the Research Plan and Designated Supervisor Form, this project dealing with
 Hazardous chemical, activities, or devices humans molds vertebrates
has been approved. Any changes to the approved plan should be resubmitted for review.

STEM Competition Committee

Signature

Date

Elementary Science & Engineering Fair Informed Consent Form

Student(s) Name(s): _____

Teacher Name: _____ School: _____

This form is required for any projects using human participants. The UNSIGNED form is submitted with the Research Plan BEFORE contacting potential participants.

All potential participants for this student's experiment MUST complete a copy of this Form BEFORE participating in the research. To protect the participant's privacy NO names will be recorded. Identifying information visible within the data will NOT be attached to any data collected during the investigation.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the district as designated by the coordinator's signature below.

SEF Committee member

Date

What will the participants do in the experiment?

How long will the procedure take for each participant?

What are the potential discomforts that participants may experience?

How will the participant benefit from participating in the experiment?

If you have any questions you can contact _____ (Teacher) at _____@manateeschools.net or the district's STEM Coordinator at johnstonl@manateeschools.net.

I/we have read and understand the information above and consent to participate in the procedure. I/we realize that we are free to withdraw consent at any time.

Participant's printed name

Participant's signature

Date

If the participant is 18 or under this form must ALSO be signed by the parent or guardian.

Parent's/Guardian's Printed name

Signature

Date

Elementary Science & Engineering Form Verification of Informed Consent

This form confirms the number of human participants involved in the study conducted by

_____ during the 2024 - 2025 school year.

Student Name

(The teacher initials the first blanks below signifying verification of each statement or writes "NA" if the statement was not applicable to the student's project.)

_____ I verify that the identified student collected _____ appropriately completed Informed Consent Forms signed by both the minor and the parent dated from _____, 2024 to _____, 202__.

_____ I verify that the identified student collected _____ appropriately completed forms that were signed by the adult participants dated from _____ to _____, 202__.

_____ A **copy** of one of the completed Informed Consent Forms is attached with the printed and signed names blacked out. These two forms will remain with the Research Plan.

_____ The student understands that they must keep the original forms for a period of no less than 3 years in a secure location.

Teacher Name

Signature

Date

Student Researcher Name

Signature

Date

Parent Name

Signature

Date

Elementary Science & Engineering Fair Entry Form
3rd – 5th Grade
(Secure to the back of the board)

Student Name(s): _____

School: _____ **Teacher:** _____

Circle Category: Earth/Environmental Engineering Life Physical

Circle Type: Group (3rd – 4th) Individual 4th Individual 5th

By signing below, you agree that:

- All work on this project, including experiment and production of the display board, was completed by the student(s) and NOT adults.
- Proper supervision was provided to ensure the safety of the student(s).
- Projects were pre-approved by teacher and if the experiment used humans, vertebrates, molds or hazardous chemicals, activities, or devices the SEF Committee had approved the project BEFORE experimentation.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Teacher Signature

Student(s) signature(s)

Elementary Science & Engineering Fair Entry Form
Class Project – K – 2nd
(Secure to the back of the board)

Teacher's Name: _____

School: _____ **Grade:** _____ **# in Class:** _____

Circle Category: Earth/Environmental Engineering Life Physical

By signing below, you agree that:

- All work on this project, including experiment and production of the display board, was completed by the students.
- Teacher provided supervision to ensure the safety of all students.
- Project was pre-approved by the school contact and if the experiment used humans, molds, vertebrates, or hazardous chemicals, activities, or devices the SEF Committee had approved the project BEFORE experimentation.

Teacher Signature