



February 20, 2026

Dear Fair Participant and Parent:

Congratulations on your student's advancement to the 71<sup>st</sup> Northeast Indiana Regional Science and Engineering Fair to be held at Purdue University Fort Wayne (Purdue FW) on **Saturday, March 21, 2026**. We look forward to your participation!

Please note the following items pertaining to fair set-up and procedures:

1. **Parking:** Parents may use Parking Garage 2 (P2). Use the interconnecting walkway to access the appropriate fair location for your student. Signs will be posted. Campus maps can be found at: <http://www.pfw.edu/about/maps-directions/>
2. **Display Locations:**
  - Grades K-5:** Purdue FW Walb International Ballroom
  - Grades 6-12:** Purdue FW Walb Classic Ballroom
3. **Registration Tables:** Stop first at the Registration Table outside each display location to receive your table number and complete minor paperwork.
4. **Monitoring:** NEIRSEF is a non-custodial event, meaning that parents and teachers are encouraged to stay and watch their students from the designated seating areas. For the additional safety of our K-3 students, a parent, caregiver, or teacher will receive a wristband at check-in. At the conclusion of judging, K-3 students will be released only to the parent, caregiver, or teacher presenting the same wristband – NO exceptions.
5. **Display Set-Up:** There are TWO time options available. We strongly encourage students to set up their projects on Friday if possible, especially if you are local to Fort Wayne.
  - Option 1:** Friday, March 20, 4:00-5:30 PM
  - Option 2:** Saturday, March 21, 7:45-8:30 AM
6. **Table Display Information:** If your student *does not* need a table, please notify the Fair Director by email as soon as possible so that a floor display location can be identified. Team members will have multiple chairs at their display. There will be an electrical extension cord or placement of the table near electricity **only** for students who have provided this information when registering for the Regional Fair.
  - Grades K-5:** *Two* projects share a 6 foot display table; students may have to make adjustments from their local fair.
  - Grades 6-12:** *Each* project display will have its own 6 foot table. Middle and high school students, please refer to the ISEF size limitations on the Display Guidelines.
7. **Display Inspections: All Display rule violations will require Display alterations**  
**School fairs do not always have the same display rules as the Regional Fair however; all projects at the Regional Fair must follow Display Rules.** See: <http://www.neirsef.org/parents.html>.

The Regional Display Rules are established: 1) to protect ALL student projects from accidents (ex. spilling liquid); 2) for university safety reasons; and 3) to comply with the International Science and Engineering Fair. Rules with whom the fair is affiliated. Please review the prohibited items in advance to make certain your student's display is in compliance. **Prohibited items may not be at the display at any time.** Any required alterations to your student's display must be completed prior to judging.

- The use of pictures is as an acceptable alternative for prohibited items so that judges can visualize the experiment. **Use of a picture rather than the actual object will NOT have a negative impact on judging evaluations.** Judges are aware of display restrictions that may prevent your student from demonstrating all aspects of their experiment.
- If the project displays **photos** or **video of persons other than the student researcher(s)**, each person depicted (including family members) must sign a **Human Photo/Video Release**, available for download from the Regional Fair website. Additional copies will be available on the Registration Table during Project Check.

8. **Fair Table Documents:** The following items **will be on the display table** when you and your student arrive:

- **Display Inspection List** for student and parent to check items. This will be initialed by a Display Inspector **after the adult/student check off the list** and the inspector or fair official determines the student's project is in compliance.
- **Purdue FW Media Consent and Release** This form, also available on the Fair website, provides parental consent to the Regional fair to take pictures of students during their display time or at the award ceremony. It **must be signed by the parent or caregiver.** If a non-custodial adult is transporting your student to the Fair, please be sure to send a signed form with them.
- **Division-Related Items.** These documents pertain to advancement to the next level of competition.

**NOTE:** Students and the adults who accompany students must remain at the display until the project is cleared by an inspector for judging and all the required documents have been submitted. Inspection procedures will be reviewed when you arrive.

9. **Children at Displays:** It is acceptable for children to read, draw, play a game and talk to friends as they wait for their judge interview. Children using electronic communication devices are prohibited from sending inappropriate messages to friends. These messages can sometimes be seen by younger children and are then reported to parents and Fair officials. If a student is detected sending inappropriate messages, their electronic device will be removed and held at the information table.

10. **Parent Waiting Locations:** Parents may sit in the lobby, cafeteria, or lounge areas in Walb Student Union OR the designated seating areas in the International and Classic Ballrooms.

11. **Judging Procedures (UPDATED for 2026):**

- **Grades K-3:** Judges will interview students in **ONE** round between 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.
- **Grades 4-12:** Judges will interview students in **TWO** rounds between 9:15 a.m. and noon.

Students should remain at their display except when otherwise directed for a break or release. If a student must visit the restroom during judging, they may approach any fair official with a designated name badge about leaving the display area. For your child's safety, we need to be informed about anyone leaving the display area.

During each round of judging, each student is guaranteed at least **one** interview by a grade (elementary students) or category (middle/high school) judge or judge team. Some projects are interviewed by multiple judges because their project category has one or more special award sponsors.

Please let your student know **a project interviewed by multiple judges is no more important (or better) than a project visited one time and being interviewed by multiple judges does not necessarily guarantee an award.**

**NOTE:** Score sheets are **not released**. The Director collects and (as necessary) audits score sheets to ensure fair competition for all involved.

12. **Morning Break (Grades 4-12 only):** At approximately 10:30 a.m., there will be a morning break for students in grades 4-12 when students are released to visit the restroom and see parents.

Following the morning break, many students will be released if their grade or category judging is completed. Some 4-12 students will be asked to remain for additional judging after the break for any of the following reasons: their grade level judging was not completed or special award judges may still be judging and must visit a display, or grade/category judges will review the project a second time for further information.

13. **Food:** Students participating in the Fair will receive a coupon to redeem for a healthy snack (water + fruit, granola bar, or fruit gummies) on their way out of the judging area at 10:30 a.m. (4-12) or 11:00 (Grades K-3).
14. **Celebration of STEM:** From 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Fair sponsors AQUA Indiana as well as faculty & students from the Purdue Fort Wayne College of Science and College of Engineering, Technology, and Computer Science will set up demonstrations and information tables in the first floor hallway and atrium. At the conclusion of judging at noon, families and students are encouraged to walk through the Classic and International Ballrooms to view project boards. The public is welcome!
15. **Award Ceremonies:** There will be an award ceremony to honor students in **grades K-5 at 1:15 PM** in the Liberal Arts building, room LA 159. All K-3 students will receive a participation ribbon and a superlative award based on their research. All 4-5 students will receive a participation ribbon.

Student researchers in **grades 6-12** will receive awards at a ceremony in LA 159 at **5:00pm**. All students will come forward with their Division to receive a participation ribbon. Due to time constraints each name will not be announced. Students receiving a special sponsored award or a placement award will be announced individually.

We hope this information provides all the details needed for you and your student to have a positive Regional Fair experience at Purdue University Fort Wayne. Please do not hesitate to contact me with further questions.

On behalf of the entire NEIRSEF Committee, congratulations to your student and thank you for participating in the Regional Fair.

Best Regards,



Dr. Matthew Perkins Coppola,  
Director, Northeast Indiana Regional Science and Engineering Fair (NEIRSEF)  
Associate Professor of Science Education, Purdue University Fort Wayne  
scifair@pfw.edu  
(260) 481-6516