



Dear Parent,

There's a lot of concern about maintaining the scientific and technological capabilities of the U.S. in the 21st century because fewer Americans are graduating in these fields. This situation gives our children the opportunity to pursue a career that not only pays well but allows them to express their curiosity, creativity and any desire they may have to help improve the world in which we live. Even if your student isn't destined to be a biochemist, engineer, medical researcher, etc., the skills they take away from the study of science can be transferred to many other fields.

Our STEM fair is meant to be an enjoyable learning experience that provides a forum for exploration and self-expression. We encourage all our 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students to participate. This year we have opened topics up to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Since your child has the chance to pick his or her own science project question, from the physics of making music to the biology of tide pool animals, he or she will have the chance to experience the joy of discovery.

When starting a STEM project, a student chooses a question he or she would like to answer. Then does targeted library and Web research to gain the background information needed to formulate a hypothesis and design an experimental procedure. After writing a report to summarize this background research, the student performs the experiment, draws conclusions, and communicates the results to judges, teachers and classmates.

Through time management and project planning, your child will take on the responsibility of completing a project over at least a six week period. Your child will discover his or her creativity by brain storming science project questions and figuring out how to display the process and results. A science project, through its challenge to ask questions and discover, is truly a real-world experience in innovation, similar to what scientists do in their careers.

Your child's teachers including media, science, technology, and AG specialists will try to provide your child with sufficient support to succeed, so that he or she develops enthusiasm for scientific discovery. The STEM Mentor program has been designed to help children that do not have sufficient parental support at home or financial means to complete a project independently. The numbers of students helped in the mentor program is totally dependent on the number of volunteers able to help. Please consider filling out an application to serve as a mentor. Even one hour a week between March 12th and April 19th will help with this new mentoring program.

STEM professionals from our community are volunteering their time to serve as impartial judges for the STEM Fair, in addition to the time and expertise of our own Root specialized teachers. This ensures both a fair assessment as well as a new experience for our students to interact with real scientists, engineers and other specialists in their field. We want every student who enters the STEM Fair to *know* he or she is a winner. Every student that participates will receive an exclusive STEM @ Root Mood pencil and will be eligible to win a grand prize. The drawing will be on STEM Friday @ Root on April 20th. In addition to 1st, 2nd and 3rd places, special awards in many different categories will be given out.

Please read the STEM Fair Project Guidelines carefully and reference it often. Mark your calendar with all important dates. The Guideline packet should have all the information and resources you need to help your child complete a successful STEM fair project by Thursday, April 19th.

Sincerely,

STEM @ Root Committee