

2021 District Science Day
2021 State Science Day
2021 Buckeye Science & Engineering Fair

At the end of August it remains unclear just how school districts and private or charter schools will address the 2020-21 school year. Remote learning, blended approaches, and 5-day plans are all being adopted to varying degrees and there are still a significant number of schools that have yet to establish a specific plan. Suffice it to say, the academic calendar will remain very fluid throughout the school year and success will be defined by the ability to adapt to change and the discipline to follow safety protocols to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Recently, a growing number of teachers, parents, and curriculum coordinators have expressed concern about their ability to support and host a Local Science Day program. The ability to gather, budget issues, recruiting external volunteers and judges, scheduling uncertainties that create planning conflicts, and the potential inability for many schools to offer even a virtual Local Science Day program as a safe and viable option are just some of their key concerns.

Ohio's colleges and universities are also undergoing an upheaval and are being consumed with the pressing issues that include planning for in-person/remote learning, student housing, athletics, and hosting events or functions. Unfortunately, the Ohio State University cannot offer an in-person commitment for State Science Day 2021 and there is no clear indication that any in-person District Science Day will be permitted to happen.

To address these issues, The Ohio Academy of Science will once again provide a **Virtually Judged District Science Day** followed by a **Virtually Judged State Science Day**. In addition, students who complete an inquiry-based science project or design and build a prototype solution will be able to participate in the 2021 District Science Day without having competed in a Local, County, or other Independent Science Day. **In this way, teachers can focus on assisting students with their projects and not be concerned about scheduling facilities, recruiting judges, or setting-up a virtual fair if necessary.**

This will not prevent schools or independent fairs from hosting a Science Day. If their resources permit and if safety protocols can be met, then a Local Science Day provides a great opportunity to unite stakeholders and communities to celebrate "hands-on" STEM learning. **The District Science Day is the only pathway for students to participate in the State Science Day 2021, Virtual 2.0.**

The Ohio Academy of Science will also host a **Virtually Judged Buckeye Science & Engineering Fair** with the Finalists eligible to compete at the International Science & Engineering Fair in May 2021. BSEF Registration will be open to all projects, grades 9-12. It is recommended that teachers review projects of those students considering the BSEF and explain to them the increased rigor of the BSEF judging process.

District Science Day and State Science Day 2022 & Beyond

While the effects of COVID-19 have necessitated a call for action in 2020-2021, the goal is to return to a traditional, in-person District Science Day and State Science Day in the spring of 2022. Plans are currently underway to create a new look with an enhanced experience for both District Science Days and State Science Day in 2022.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will a student need to participate in a local science fair or other independent fair (county) and receive a Superior Rating in order to advance and register for the 2021 District Science Day? No, any student(s) with a completed project may register for the 2021 Virtually Judged District Science Day.

How will the 2021 District Science Day operate and what is expected of the student? It will work largely the same as the virtual District Science Days and State Science Day in 2020. Using the STEM Wizard platform, students will be required to present their project through a private, linked, YouTube recording, including answering questions about their project, and to provide all other necessary information including completed ISEF Forms.

Will judges have the opportunity to interact and ask questions? With changes in technology and software this may be possible, but this is yet to be determined.

Can a student directly register for State Science Day from a Local Science Day program, or other independent fair? No, they must be promoted from District Science Day by receiving a Superior Rating.

Will there be a cost or registration fee? Yes, the registration fee for the District Science Day will be \$25 per student and the registration fee for State Science Day remains at \$60 per student.

For independent students or home-schooled students, will there be an SRC and IRB to approve Research Plans and ISEF Forms? Yes, the Ohio Academy of Science will have both an SRC (Scientific Review Committee) and an IRB (Institutional Review Board). Independent students who need an SRC or IRB approval can send an email to forms@ohiosci.org

Will there be sponsored awards for both the District Science Day and State Science Day? A District may provide sponsored awards for students from that District. Those sponsored awards will be judged separately by designated sponsored award judges. State Science Day will have sponsored awards open to any project which meets topic category, grade and other project criteria set by the sponsor, if any.

When will the District Science Day take place? Registration will begin on February 15 with a deadline of March 1. The results should be available by April 19.

When will State Science Day take place? The registration opens on April 20 and closes on April 27. This will provide students with 8 days and the opportunity to utilize judges' comments and feedback to make any necessary changes to the milestone answers, video, or pictures. State Science Day results will not be available until June 18.

How will students register for the Virtually Judged Buckeye Science & Engineering Fair?

BSEF Registration will be open to all projects, grades 9-12. Registration will be on STEM Wizard, but separate from the District Science Day Registration site, so required information and documents will need to be entered on both sites. BSEF registration fee will be \$25 per student. It is highly recommended that teachers review projects of those students considering the BSEF and explain to them the increased rigor of the BSEF judging process. BSEF judging will take place concurrently with the District Science Day judging. Projects will not be selected as a result of District Science Day as in the past. The selected Finalists will be eligible to compete at the International Science & Engineering Fair in May 2021.