



Dear 6th Grade Parents,

It is an annual tradition that 6th graders in IUSD complete a Science Fair project as a culminating event in their upper grade Science Lab experience.

This year, given the extraordinary circumstances in which we find ourselves, the project will be **optional**. Students may complete **individual or group projects**. Groups can have **2-3 students** and require that each student in the group be responsible for significant contributions to the project. Students should practice safe social distancing when collaborating and, like professional scientists, consider collaborating virtually.

Assuming that the 21-22 school year allows us to return to normalcy, we will revert to prior year rules. To minimize confusion, we are describing this year as a Science Showcase.

This year, given the extraordinary circumstances, and unlike the past few years, students will complete their project entirely at home. IUSD Science Team Members are available to address student questions and to guide students through a revised 6th grade Science Showcase project.

- 1) Students will choose either an **inquiry** or **engineering** project. For the inquiry project, students will collect data in order to answer a scientific question. For the engineering project, students will propose solutions in order to solve a problem and make improvements upon original designs. These projects more align to the actual work in which scientists and engineers engage.
- 2) While students who choose an engineering project may spend some time up-front conducting online research to aid in the design process, in general, most students will spend less time up-front digitally researching topics.
- 3) Students will have access to online resources to support them in completing a project.
- 4) *After* data collection, students will conduct digital research to seek evidence that will connect big science ideas and principles to explain their data.
- 5) The project guidelines for the Science Showcase project are aligned with the Orange County Science & Engineering Fair guidelines, found [here](#).
- 6) The project's emphasis on *process* and *Next Generation Science Standards Science & Engineering Practices* will produce projects worthy of entering the IUSD Science Showcase.
- 7) This year, projects will not be graded nor will they be factored into the science grade

If you have any questions about this year's 6th Grade Science Showcase Project, please reach out to Chris Weber or Meg Vanek with further questions.

Sincerely,

Director of STEM
Irvine Unified School District

Coordinator of Elementary Science
Irvine Unified School District