

# GCSS Social Studies Fair Administration

## Local Fairs

The preliminary competition is the school system local fair. The local curriculum director and school representatives should set a date that does not conflict with other community activities and allows time for parents and the public to view the projects. It is recommended that **system fairs be completed by December 31** in order to be ready for regional fairs in February and early March. This will afford each teacher sufficient time to plan projects with students.

The local fair coordinator should work with school level coordinators to set up the protocol for entering students in the system fair or, if there is no system fair, determining how regional fair entries from the system will be selected. (See the scheme below to determine how many project entries may be submitted to the regional fair from your system.)

A committee should be organized to handle the fair and each member given a specific task such as the following:

- Providing space and facilities for the exhibits
- Securing judges
- Registering the exhibits
- Securing and awarding prizes
- Clean-up activities

It is recommended that students be used as assistants in all activities pertaining to the fair except judging.

Teachers and students are encouraged to start work on proposed projects as early in the school year as possible. Projects should relate to a subject being studied and assist the student and the class in learning more about the subject. Teachers should urge students to undertake individual projects rather than group projects. However, group projects are eligible provided no more than three students cooperate on the project.

Only first prize winners in the local fair (projects with scores of 90 and above) will be eligible for entry in the regional fair. The number of projects that may be submitted to the regional fair from a local fair is based on the student population of the local school system, using the following scheme:

1 - 4,999 students	4 projects
5,000 - 9,999 students	8 projects
10,000 - 20,000 students	16 projects
Over 20,000 students	32 projects

The local fair coordinator should review the entry forms of projects selected to go to the regional fair for completeness, accuracy, and signature of the custodial parent/legal guardian for each student working on the project. These entry forms should be typed and sent immediately to the regional director(s), in order that appropriate arrangements can be made for display space and judges for the regional fair.

No project will be accepted for regional competition without an official and current entry form having been completed and mailed to the regional director(s). Parents or legal guardians must sign the form, indicating permission or denial of permission to publicize the student names and awards received by the project at all levels.

All information and signatures requested are used at the state level; missing and incorrect information may lead to inaccurate classification and labeling of awards at levels beyond the local school, as well as an inadequate number of awards. **Complete the official entry accurately and fully to avoid the deduction of 2 additional points from the overall project score at the state level.** The local fair director(s) should ensure that the projects are placed in the proper class and discipline for regional competition.

## Regional Fairs

It is the responsibility of the regional fair director to give directions and information to local fair officials. Curriculum directors or other appropriate persons should be consulted in setting a date for the regional fair.

The best projects among the four classes at local fairs are eligible for entry in the regional fair (Class I – Grades 5-6, Class II – Grades 7-8, Class III – Grades 9-10, Class IV – Grades 11-12). The judges at the regional fairs will select the sixteen best projects to advance to the state fair. Projects sent to the state fair must be first-place winners (score of 90 or above) at the regional fair.

All projects must be classified at the time of entry according to the disciplines of social studies. Teachers should be sure that their students' projects are put in the correct class and appropriate discipline.

Other duties of the regional fair director (s) include the following:

- Providing space and facilities for the exhibits;
- Securing judges;
- Registering the exhibits;
- Clean-up activities;
- Distributing information about the state fair to regional winners; and
- Sending entry forms for the 16 best first place projects to the state director.

## The State Fair

The state fair consists of the display and review of the best sixteen projects from each of the six regional fairs. All projects that do not adhere to the stated size requirements will be penalized. Points will be deducted from the project's total score.

Information as to the date and location of the state fair will be posted in another document at [www.gcss.net](http://www.gcss.net).

For guidelines concerning judges,  
please see the next two pages.

## Guidelines for Selecting and Preparing Judges

Selecting and preparing judges are critical factors to the success of the local, regional, and state fairs. Judges should be chosen for their ability to empathize with students as well as for their knowledge of content. Judges should be given the criteria in advance. In addition, an orientation session should be held prior to the judging. At this session, the importance of helping students relax and feel good about participating in the fair should be stressed.

It is recommended that the judges be persons experienced in social studies. Local college teachers, social studies coordinators, school administrators, publisher representatives, individuals whose work in social studies-related fields, and teachers may serve as judges.

Note: Teachers from schools submitting projects should not be used as judges in the Classes (I, II, III, IV) corresponding to the entries from their schools.

### Local Fairs

The local fair chairperson is responsible for selecting the judges and establishing the criteria. It is recommended that the official judge's scoring sheet be used at all levels of competition to provide consistency. All projects should be judged by class and by discipline. The sponsoring teacher should ensure that a student's project is clearly labeled.

### Regional and State Fairs

The regional directors are responsible for providing qualified persons for judging at the regional fair. The state fair coordinator will obtain judges for the state fair. The following suggestions are offered:

1. Judges should be cautioned to use common sense rules of judging criteria as presented on the official judges' scoring sheet.
2. Local, Regional, and State directors/coordinators will provide judges with the list of requirements/regulations for projects.
3. At least **two** judges should judge each project.
4. Judges should be careful to give comparable time to each student and each project and progress through the assigned projects in the order in which they are numbered.
5. It is required that students (at least one student for a group project) be present for interviews at the regional and state fairs.
6. Each project should be assigned a score based on what is present in the paper and display and available from student interviews. A judging team will compare projects across disciplines and classes, using scores as guidelines, when determining class and fair awards and in making decisions as to which projects will progress to higher level competition.
7. No visitors (including parents and teachers) should be allowed in the exhibition hall during judging. The judges should not discuss a project with anyone other than his/her judging partner or with a student before the winners are announced.
8. The decision of the judges will be final

## Guidelines for Judges

1. Many students are terrified by the interview with the judges. Try to put the student at ease initially by asking friendly, non-threatening questions.
  2. Once you have established some rapport with the student, the interview should be used to determine just how much the student really knows about the project and how much outside help the student received. If you are suspicious that a project appears too professionally designed and constructed, a few carefully worded questions should reveal just how much help the student received.
  3. All questions you ask the student should be directly related to the project under consideration.
  4. Projects may be entered by individuals or by groups of two or three. Individual and group projects compete against each other in the same category.
  5. Judges should be very careful about what they say to each other when students are present. Casual comments overheard by the students can frequently lead to misunderstandings.
  6. Try to spend equal time with each project. Do not slight an obviously inferior project and do not show undue enthusiasm for an obviously superior project. It is suggested that you devote approximately five minutes to the interview.
  7. In order to establish some uniformity in assigning numerical scores, use 85 as the score for an average project, high 80s or low 90s for an above-average project, and mid to high 90s for prize-winning projects. The score of 100 should be reserved for a superlative project, one that could not be improved in any way. At the other end of the scale, there should not be any projects at the state level of competition that score less than 70. In summary, almost all scores should range between 70 and 99, with 85 as the average. You may wish to look over several projects in each category before beginning to assign scores.
  8. In your written comments, try to make at least two observations. The first should be something favorable or complimentary; for example, "good craftsmanship," "excellent choice of subject," "shows much hard work." Any unfavorable comments should be phrased in constructive terms; that is, suggest how the project could be improved rather than just describe what is wrong with it. For example, "The project could have been improved by placing results in a graph."
- Copies of the score sheets from the state fair will be mailed to the students upon request. If the score needs revision, please ask the director for extra copies. Please be sure all comments are appropriate and legible. Students and teachers should be able to use the feedback to produce better projects in the future.
9. Once you have finished your interview, you should tell the students that they are free to leave the exhibit room. Announcement of winners will be made at the awards ceremony.
  10. Judges should recuse themselves from any deliberation that involves their own children or students from their respective schools or systems (in the case of social studies coordinators) and remove themselves from the area in which the projects are being discussed.

*Adapted from original by  
David Laushey, Ph.D.*

# Awards

## Local Fairs

Appropriate ribbons and certificates should be given at the local level.

## Regional Fairs

Regional fairs will grant ribbons and award certificates in each of the following classifications: Class I, Class II, Class III, and Class IV. Ribbons will be given on the basis of points scored in each discipline.

<b>Purple ribbon</b> .....	Regional fair winners selected for state fair participation
<b>Blue ribbon</b> .....	First prize - 90 to 100 points
<b>Red ribbon</b> .....	Second prize – 80 to 89 points
<b>White ribbon</b> .....	Third prize - 70 to 79 points
<b>Certificate</b> .....	All participants will receive certificates.

Additional awards may be solicited by the regional chairperson. Publishers, equipment dealers, film producers, insurance companies, civic organizations, and local businesses may be asked to provide awards appropriate to their business.

## State Fair

At the state fair awards ceremony, the following recognitions will be made.

**A certificate, T-shirt, and ribbon** will be given to all students to acknowledge participation as a state finalist (T-shirt availability subject to budget constraints).

**A rosette** will be awarded to the best project in each discipline in each class. "Best in Discipline" - 24 awards

**A glass plaque and a \$50 cash award** will be awarded to the best overall project in each class. "Best in Class" - 4 awards

**A glass plaque and a \$100 cash award** will be awarded to the best overall project. "Best in Fair" - 1 award

**A glass plaque and a \$100 cash award** will be awarded to the supervising teacher of the student(s) winning "Best in Fair". - 1 award

All awards will be based on the criteria given on the official judge's scoring sheet. Judging team leaders will represent judges from Classes I, II, III, and IV in the determination of overall winners.

