

Dear NIRSEF Teachers, Parents, Guardians, and Exhibitors,

Thank you for participating in the virtual NIRSEF. We look forward to seeing the results of your work on **Saturday, February 27, 2021.**

Due to the virtual nature of the event, many aspects have changed. Please review each section below:

1. Participation Waiver: All students must have a SIGNED Participation Waiver. You can download a blank form from the website and is also attached here.

The signed waiver, forms 1, 1a, 1b (along with any additional forms that may be needed for your project) can be added to the Forms area on the Exhibitor’s SEFI site under the “Forms” tab. You may also take a picture of the signed waiver form (ONLY) and send it to sciencefair@nd.edu.

1. ALL students are required to *complete* online their **Availability to Participate** and **Method of payment** as soon as possible (even if the school is paying their registration fee). The fee to participate is $15 per participant (not per project). All Payments will be handled through the website; there will be no cash or check option this year. The link for payment can be found on the website <https://sciencefair.nd.edu/>

Click on your division on the left side and there will be a tab for “Student Registration.” NOTE: Emails listed on the registration site should be a parent email or non-school email; often, school emails block messages that come from outside the school domain.

This email address will be used to communicate about virtual check-in and practice so it is important that it will be checked regularly.

1. The virtual event will be held on a platform called Gather.town. It has received rave reviews from educators who have used it as a classroom. Practice sessions will be set up with each participant before the actual fair, so all participants can see how the site works. Please note, the Gather.town system only works with a **laptop** or **desktop PC**. Phones and tablets are not supported at this time. Please make arrangements with your school and teacher to have a computer available during your assigned time.
2. Judging at the Virtual NIRSEF will take place at the following times on February 27:
	1. Elementary Division (grades 3-5): 1pm – 3pm
	2. Junior Division (grades 6-8): 9am – 12noon
	3. Senior Division (grades 9-12): 9am – 12noon (this can get extended if needed)

**Note:** During your judging time, students must stay online during the entire time of their division; as with an in-person fair, judges can virtually “walk” over and ask you questions at any point during this time frame. Just as with an in-person fair, there may be down time between judges where you can read (or other comparable activity), but you must stay logged in to gather.town and near the computer.

1. Awards: **ALL** NIRSEF participants receive either a 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or Honorable Mention ribbon within their Category taking into consideration the grade level of the exhibitor. Each project is to be judged relative to itself and the ISEF judging criteria, rather than relative to others in its Category. The Category Awards ensure that each project receives feedback and an accolade for participating but **do not influence** any potential awards including the Special Awards Teams’ selections to advance to the Hoosier Science and Engineering Fair. The award ceremony will NOT be held the day of the NIRSEF. The **awards ceremony will be held virtually on Monday, March 1, 2021 at 4:30 pm**. A link for the live presentation will be provided to all participants, families, and teachers. The ceremony will also be recorded and that link will be sent to the Fair Coordinators at each school.
2. Award Distribution: All prizes will be distributed to schools the week after NIRSEF Award Ceremony (week of March 7). All monetary awards will require a slip to be completed by the winner and returned to sciencefair@nd.edu. A check will be mailed to the winner once the completed monetary slip has been emailed back to NIRSEF.
3. Display instructions: NIRSEF will allow the same presentation that was used for your school fair to be uploaded to theCN (see separate instructions). ***If you made a tri-fold,***you should have the board with you while you are on gather.town and can use it to present to the judges*.* Please note, the judges may not be able to see it through the computer while you are presenting, which is why you will need to upload images of it on theCN. If you used a powerpoint presentation as your school fair, you can upload single slides to theCN and have them printed in front of you during the judging period. There will not be a way to show the powerpoint through gather.town.
Please contact sciencefair@nd.edu if you have questions.

**UPLOAD INSTRUCTIONS**

This year there are **THREE** websites/platforms that participants will need to be prepared for:

**1) SEFI website; 2) https//theCN.com; 3) Gather.town**

Both the SEFI website and theCN website will need to be prepared ahead of time and Gather.town will be used during the science fair. There will be a virtual “check-in” to learn Gather.town before NIRSEF.

Here’s a checklist and timeline:

* **On the SEFI website, please upload as soon as possible:**
	+ All safety forms (blank forms are found on the SEFI site)
	+ Signed Participation Waiver
* **On** [**https://theCN.com**](https://theCN.com)(see additional instructions for Log-in information and timeline)
	+ All safety forms
	+ Quad chart
	+ High Resolution Pictures of your tri-fold board or individual slides
* **Gather.town**
	+ Virtual check-in and practice to learn how the fair will work will be emailed to after your registration is complete
	+ Log-in on February 27, 2021 during your assigned judging time

The NIRSEF committee is striving to make the virtual fair as interactive and educational as an in-person fair. If you have a question that isn’t covered in this letter, email us at sciencefair@nd.edu, and we will do our best to answer your questions.

We look forward to seeing you and your projects on February 27th!