



Thank you for this opportunity to highlight the 32nd Annual Hillsborough Regional Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Fair, the single largest academic competition in our district, where students representing all grade levels K-12 will share their research from a variety of fields to their peers and professionals.

Completing a STEM Fair project is a culmination of all we hope to teach students in our schools. It requires reading, writing and mathematical skill, creativity, problem solving through logical and critical thought, and consideration of socially important scientific issues. We encourage parents to take an active role in their child's education, and the STEM Fair provides families the opportunity to share ideas and work together to build students' esteem and reinforce positive attitudes toward science, technology, engineering and mathematics—and may one day be the spark that ignites a passion in the next doctor, scientist, mathematician or engineer, all of which our country needs more of...I think you would agree.

The first thing you may notice about this year's fair is that we have expanded the name to include "Technology & Mathematics" alongside of the traditional title "Science & Engineering".

The reason for the change is quite simple—we would like students, parents, educators, as well business and community partners, to recognize both the breadth and interrelatedness of the disciplines showcased at our event. As with all large Fairs in the state, a significant portion of our STEM Fair budget is provided through generous donations from private and public sources. In addition to financial contributions, it should also be noted that over 250 professionals in the Tampa Bay Area volunteer their time to serve as judges. We would like to expand that number to 400 to accommodate our growth. We hope the inclusion of "STEM" in our official title we may attract more community and industry support for our students, and I personally invite all of you to serve in this capacity.

The structure of the competition will not change—the 13 categories of competition will again be:

Astronomy	Computer Science	Medicine & Health
Behavioral & Social Sciences	Earth & Planetary Science	Microbiology
Biochemistry	Environmental Science	Physics & Engineering
Botany	Mathematics	Zoology
Chemistry		

We anticipate that over 1500 students projects will be proudly displayed at the Tampa Convention Center February 7th & 8th, culminating with two ceremonies on Wednesday evening. Over \$10,000 in cash and prizes will be awarded locally to the best individual and team projects.

Our Regional STEM Fair is affiliated with both the Florida State Science & Engineering Fair and the International Science & Engineering Fair. Undoubtedly both events will eventually change their names in the future to follow Hillsborough's lead.

The top 26 middle and senior projects will go on to compete at the State Science and Engineering Fair in Lakeland in April. In addition, two senior division students will compete at the International Science and Engineering Fair in Pittsburgh in May to compete against 1,500 students representing all 50 states and over 50 countries from around the world.