

PLANNING A SCHOOL FAIR

A Guide for the School Coordinator 2016/2017

The Heritage Fairs program is a bilingual educational initiative that encourages students to explore an aspect of a student's heritage, provincial, national or international in a dynamic and captivating learning environment. Students use the media of their choice to share their learning about heroes and legends, milestones and achievements - and then proudly present the results of their research at a public exhibition. Volunteer committees involving educators, heritage groups, and community association's work together to organize this important youth development opportunity.

The Heritage Fairs give students a voice to tell their own stories in their own ways. Their enthusiasm, creativity, and passion make the Fairs a highlight of the school year!

Ideally, your School Fair will be a celebration that includes the entire school and acknowledges the achievements of students presenting a Heritage Fair Project. You can plan your Fair anytime up to two weeks prior to the Regional Fair in your area, but might want to consider holding it during Heritage Week in February to coordinate your efforts with other events in the community.

In some cases, a Heritage Fair is a means for teachers to achieve outcomes in a specific subject area or across the curriculum as the teacher chooses. The Fairs link to Social Studies, but they can be used by teachers in subjects as diverse as art, language arts, mathematics, theatre arts, music, physical education, science, and technology. The program is bilingual. French First Language students and students who are in French Immersion are encouraged to participate in French.

Provincial Web Site: <http://www.historicsites.ca/>

This site has information regarding provincial contacts, regional fair contacts, guidelines for participation in a school fair. There are some excellent links to resources on this site for original research. Students are encouraged to do more than google their topic and can find valuable information by contacting one of these organizations. Information and submission forms are also provided for the Design and Story contest. There are many wonderful awards provided to students who reach the Regional Fair. Visit the website for information about the Young Citizens Program, Regional Awards and the Ambassador Program.

If this is your first School Fair, you will almost definitely want to start with a less elaborate plan and work up to the type of Fair described below. If only a small number of students (less than one class) in your school are creating Heritage Fair projects, you are encouraged to revise this plan to fit your circumstances. You may want to consider displaying the projects in a classroom or multipurpose room for tours by other students and staff, and you should think about having your students visit other classes to do short oral presentations on their topics. Remember that the goal is to share information and to create a celebration by including as many students as possible.

The School's Heritage Fair Coordinator is the person at the centre of it all, who will work with all teachers and committees. He/She should know exactly what is happening and be able to answer questions from the school administration, other staff, and parents.

The School Fair Coordinator will ensure that all Fairs information is communicated efficiently and effectively to teachers involved in the Fairs Program, particularly the Design and Stories Contest and provincial and national Heritage Fair opportunities that begin at the school level. This person is the point of contact for Regional Fair Coordinators and must register with the Regional Coordinator early to receive valuable information about the Fairs for their students.

***Please note: these guidelines are intended as suggestions only.**

There are five suggested stages for planning a school fair.

STAGE ONE: PRE-PLANNING

As a School Fair Co-coordinator, you could:

- Promote the Design and Stories Contest as warm-up to the Heritage Fairs (deadline February 1st)
- Promote the Heritage Fair to other teachers at your school, and invite all classes to participate.
- Recruit a committee of staff members, and invite each person to take on a task of their choosing.
- Select a date (or dates) for your School Fair: check the school calendar for conflicts and the Regional Fair date to ensure adequate time to submit Regional Fair forms.
- Make sure your school is officially registered with Regional Fair Coordinator, and that you have a current copy of their information manual or package for teachers.
- Distribute information from the Regional Fair Coordinator to all participating teachers.
- Familiarize yourself with the guidelines and criteria for student projects (see appendix A)
- Provide teachers with a letter to send home to parents explaining School Fair and the Regional Fair participation details (see Appendix B).
- Encourage teachers to provide contacts for museums, historical societies, libraries and other resources for student research.
- Find out about the special awards that are being offered at the Regional Fairs, and ensure the students are aware of any contest both provincial and national and provide them with links to contest details (see Contests and Awards page).

STAGE TWO: SPECIFIC PLANNING

As a Committee, you could:

- Set the official date(s) and times for your School Fair, taking into account other school activities like field trips, after school sports, etc.
- Book the area(s) of the school you will be using (gym, library, front foyer, etc).
- Remember to plan time in your schedule for set-up and take-down of projects.
- Decide on a system of judging or evaluation of the student work for your Fair. (adjudication information is available on the website or through your Regional Heritage Fair Coordinator)
- Plan to include every student in the school, even those not creating projects.
- Write a detailed checklist of tasks to be done by each committee or individual.
- Make sure that all teachers involved are familiar with project guidelines / criteria.

STAGE THREE: COMMITTEE WORK

**The following committees are suggestions only: feel free to separate, combine and modify these duties to best fit the needs of your School Fair. If there aren't enough teachers and volunteers involved to establish any committees, assign the positions individually.*

Student Activities / Workshops

- Plan a program of heritage-related activities for students to supplement the Fair and keep the students occupied while adjudication is going on. Consider educational workshops, cultural performances, guest speakers, etc.
- There is often an official opening for School Fairs.

Invitations/Dignitaries

This committee should work in co-operation with the Publicity committee to make sure that the School Fair is a celebration that involves the entire community.

- Allow sufficient time for all classes to view the student projects and if possible, keep the Fair open one evening.
- Invite parents, local businesses, clubs and community groups to attend your Fair
- Invite special guests like teachers in other schools, administrators, school board members, and local politicians. You should also invite Regional Fair Coordinator and committee members to visit your School Fair. If you are having an official opening, you might want to ask some of these dignitaries to speak.

Adjudication & Awards

This committee will supervise the evaluation of projects and the recognition of student achievement. Its first task should be to decide on a type of adjudication / evaluation system.

- If using adjudicators: create a list of possible volunteers. Each adjudicator may look at 4-6 projects, so determine how many people you will need. (Invite more than you need!)
- Send an invitation letter and reply form to: teachers in other schools, administrators, school board members, politicians, business members in the community, and heritage groups. Follow up with phone calls.
- Send a confirmation package to those who accept, with basic info like time, place, sample evaluation form, possible questions, etc. You might want to plan an orientation session.
- Prepare an adjudication package with an ID tag, a list of the projects and students, a map of project locations, evaluation forms, and comment sheets for each adjudicator.
- Before your School Fair, set up a registration/check-in table for the adjudicators.
- After your School Fair, compile the adjudicator's results and (where applicable) select which students will represent your school at the Regional/Provincial Fair.
- Prepare certificates or other awards to celebrate the achievements of all students.
- Send thank-you notes to all adjudicators who participated.
-

Publicity & Sponsorship

This committee is responsible for sending information about your School Fair to local media outlets in advance of and after the event. (Don't forget your own school newsletter and website!)

- Send info to newspapers, radio, monthly magazines, electronic bulletin boards, etc.
- Collect press clippings. Submit to Regional Fair staff.
- Send a publicity notice home to parents with every student a week in advance.
- Arrange to have photographs taken of the students, projects, and activities at your Fair.
- Create a display in a public area of the school.
- After your event, send another press release to follow up. Write about the student activities, guest speakers, stories shared, and the most creative projects.
- You will likely need at least a small budget for your Fair: if funds are not available from the school itself, a place to look for sponsorship is your parent advisory group.
- Remember that donations can be cash and in-kind: solicit contributions, especially of refreshments and supplies, from local businesses.

Facilities & Refreshments

- This committee is responsible for the physical details of the Fair.
- Make sure that student needs for tables, chairs and special equipment are met.
- Create a plan for set-up well in advance: work with the judging committee to decide where projects will be placed. Make this map available to everyone involved.
- Where applicable, make table numbers and project markers for easy identification.
- If necessary, plan a space for a judges' lounge where they can complete their forms.
- Decide what refreshments will be available: where, when, and to whom.
- Recruit older students to prepare, serve and clean up food / set up tables etc.

STAGE FOUR: THE SCHOOL FAIR

If you are well-prepared, your School Fair will be an enjoyable experience. There may be small problems during the event, but remain flexible and have fun!

- Remember to celebrate the achievements of every student who prepared a project, for example by printing certificates or awarding participant ribbons.

STAGE FIVE: REGIONAL FAIR SELECTION

Your Regional Coordinator will let you know the number of student places available for your school at the Regional Heritage Fair. Whatever judging or evaluation system you have used, you will need to select students to represent your school. These guidelines may help your selection:

- choose a variety of project categories
- choose a variety of student ages and sexes
- choose projects that are innovative and creative
- choose projects that are visually stimulating and attractive
- choose projects that demonstrate the excellence of your school

Regional participants from your school should be enthusiastic, courteous, co-operative and willing to follow instructions. Please be sure that your chosen students have agreed to attend the Regional Fair for the entirety of that event, and will follow the planned schedule of activities. Remember that the Regional Fair staff has deadlines for registration forms, so make sure your students submit their information in order to be adjudicated.

Appedix A: Project Guidelines

HERITAGE FAIR PROJECT GUIDELINES **The Provincial Theme for 2017 is "Keeping our Stories Alive: Celebrating 20 Years of Heritage Fairs in NL"**

- Projects do not have to interpret the theme, but must have a history, geography, or heritage theme.
- Research resources must be acknowledged in the project presentation.
- Projects may take different forms: 3-dimensional models, displays, audio-visual presentation, creative writing, performance, or a combination of these.
- Projects must not be larger than 80cm deep x 150cm wide x 100cm high table display
- Projects may be prepared by individual students, by small groups of students, or may be a class project (if more than one student has completed the project this may make the project ineligible for some awards).
- Several school projects will be selected for presentation at the closest Regional Fair. To be considered for the Regional Fair, students **must** accompany their projects and be present at their display for an interview during the Regional Heritage Fair adjudication process. Students must provide their own electronic equipment, if needed, to display their work. Electrical outlets will be provided as requested on the student registration form.

SOME SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR DIFFERENT PROJECT FORMATS

Short Stories and Diaries

- Length 2-11 pages
- Legibility, style and grammar will be considered

Poetry

- Minimum length 14 lines
- Legibility, style and grammar will be considered

Scripts

- 2-6 pages for Grades 4-7
- 5-10 pages for Grades 8-9

Original Artwork

- Must depict the chosen theme
- Must not be traced or copied from another's work
- Can be in any medium (watercolour, acrylic, collage, printmaking, sculpture)
- Projects must not be larger than 80cm deep x 150cm wide x 100cm high table display

Cartoons or Graphic Storytelling

- Cartoon must measure 8.5 x 11 inches
- All works must be signed and dated and must be original work

Video

- All submissions must not exceed 15 minutes in length.
- A script must be written and directed by students with a minimum of technical help from teachers or advisers.
- Submissions must include a title and credits.

Performance

- Must be based on an original script
- No longer than 5 minutes
- Any props must fit the space restrictions above
- Performance must take place within to the students assigned Heritage Fair space
- No more than 3 students in the performance

Audio

- All submissions must not exceed 5 minutes duration.
- Submissions must include a title and credits.

DISPLAY

For students who choose a table top display project you might consider the following:

- Using a backboard to display some of your material (a cardboard tri-fold backboard will fit the table and is quite portable)
- Putting a title on your project
- Including your name(s), school, grade, teacher contact
- Presenting any research in an attractive manner with the credit for your information included
- Including such things as artifacts, photos, illustrations and newspaper/magazine clippings

NOTE: We do not recommend the use of items that are irreplaceable or of family value or dangerous artifacts.

Suggestions:

- Print or write legibly or type your material using a large font
- Do not overcrowd your display
- Balance your display with photos/illustrations and text
- Choose artifacts for your table that people can pick up and examine
- If your project is a performance, consider providing your audience with some printed background information and credits for those who helped you
- Make sure your project is easily transportable
- Take a photograph of you and your project

ADJUDICATION

While each region will develop its own specific adjudication process and guidelines, any adjudication will involve the following:

1. Historical Research
2. Product (student display, presentation)
3. Written Summary
4. Interview

**If you require further information about the adjudication process, please contact the regional coordinator for your area. (See Contacts)*

Appendix B: Sample letter for parents

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Our school is participating in the 2016/2017 Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage Fairs Program. Students are encouraged to produce a project related to some aspect of history. This can be a project related to their family history, to their community, to Newfoundland and Labrador, or to some other area of interest to them. Our School Fair will take place on _____ . Student projects are to be completed by _____. After adjudication, several projects will be selected to represent our school at the Regional Fair to be held at (insert place and date _____). At the Regional Heritage Fair students will be adjudicated and some will receive awards. Information about awards can be found at <http://www.historicsites.ca/contests-awards/>

Students may prepare a project that stands on a table, with a backboard, model and artifacts, write an essay or poem, make an audio-visual piece, or perform. All projects must reference the research sources in a bibliography.

Adjudication at the Heritage Fairs is designed to give students an opportunity to practice their presentation skills, and to provide feedback on their projects. Students may prepare a project individually, or in groups of two or more. **Please note however, that at the regional level some sponsors have only provided one award for a project in a certain category. Should your child decide to do a project with one or more of his/her friends or classmates, they may not be eligible for some prizes.** The selection of projects for various awards is the responsibility of the Regional Heritage Fair organizers.

Please advise me of any concerns or questions you may have. You may also visit the Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage Fairs Web Site for specific information regarding the Fairs and projects. The address is www.historicsites.ca

Yours truly,

Andrea MacDonald