

Fêtes **HISTORICA** *Fairs*

PLANNING A SCHOOL FAIR *a guide for the School Co-ordinator*

There are many different ways for your school to participate in the Historica Fairs Program. Ideally, your School Fair will be a celebration that includes the entire school and acknowledges the achievements of all students. Although the National Fair is only open to students in grades 4 to 9, students of all ages are encouraged to create projects and participate in your School Fair. You can plan your Fair for any time before the end of April, but might want to consider holding it during Heritage Week in February to co-ordinate your efforts with other events in the community.

Please note: these guidelines are intended as suggestions only. 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 (fewer than one class, for example) in your school are creating 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.

STAGE ONE: PRE-PLANNING

As a School Fair Co-ordinator, you should:

- Make sure your school is officially registered with Regional Fair staff, and that you have a current copy of their information manual or package for teachers.
- Promote the Historica Fair to other teachers, and invite all classes to participate.
- Select a date (or dates) for your School Fair: check the school calendar for conflicts. Make sure you've allowed enough time to submit Regional Fair forms.
- Distribute information from Regional Fair staff to all participating teachers.
- Familiarize yourself with the guidelines and criteria for student projects.
- Encourage teachers to contact museums as a resource for student research.
- Recruit a committee of other staff members, and give each person a specific job.

STAGE TWO: SPECIFIC PLANNING

As a Committee, you should:

- Set the official date(s) and times for your School Fair, taking into account other school and district-wide 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. You might want to find out what system will be used at your Regional Fair.
- 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

School Fair Co-ordinator

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 Co-ordinator should copy printed information for all teachers involved in the Fairs Program. This person is responsible for receiving and distributing information from Regional Fair staff, and must make sure that all forms are submitted in advance of stated deadlines.

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 / Speakers

This committee should plan a program of heritage-related activities for students that will supplement the Fair and sustain their interest in history once the event is over. You should think about an official opening for your School Fair, and might also want to consider educational workshops, cultural performances, guest speakers . . .

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.

- Invite clubs and community groups (and maybe local businesses) to attend your Fair and set up displays that will educate the students about their community.
- Allow sufficient time for all classes to view the student projects: if possible, keep the Fair open one evening. In this case, send invitations home with students.
- Invite special guests like teachers in other schools, administrators, school board members, and local politicians. You should also invite Regional Fair staff to visit your School Fair. If you are having an official opening, you might want to ask some of these dignitaries to speak to the students.

Judging & 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 judging / evaluation system.

- If using judges: create a list of possible volunteers. Each judge 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 and business members in the community.
- Send a confirmation package with basic info like time, place, sample evaluation form, possible questions, etc. You might want to plan an orientation session.
- Prepare a judging package with an ID tag, a list of the projects and students, a map of project locations, evaluation forms, and comment sheets for each judge.
- Before your School Fair, set up a registration/check-in table for the judges.
- After your School Fair, compile the judging 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 judges who participated.

COMMITTEE WORK – CONTINUED

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.
- When your info is published, 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.
- Make sure that any borrowed equipment is returned promptly.
- 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 should 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

You will have been notified of the number of student places available for your school at the Regional 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

We strongly suggest that the Regional participants from your school 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 will have deadlines for registration forms, and make sure your students submit their information in advance.

Please make sure that the students you select for the Regional Fair are aware that they may be chosen to attend the National Fair in July. Clearly communicate this information to parents.

*For more information about the Historica Fairs Program,
visit www.histori.ca or call Becky Burns at 1-877-739-4056*