GET UP AND EXPLORE SCIENCE SPECTACULAR JUDGING GUIDELINES

Introduce yourself to the student, and encourage him/her to shake your hand. Sit in a chair or kneel down to bring your eye contact to the student's level or below. Many of the students are not as tall as you and could feel intimidated by having to look up at their judges. Please try to put the students at ease – they will ultimately give a better presentation.

A good start to the interview is to ask the student to summarize the project. The student should:

- Specify the source of their ideas.
- Clarify both the question addressed and the basis for their hypothesis.
- Define the controlled and variable factors involved in their project.
- Explain procedures used to answer their questions.
- Tell how their data was collected and analyzed.
- Summarize their findings and conclusion.

Sample questions you might ask:

- What is the most important thing that you want me to know about your project?
- How did you get the idea for your project?
- What are your control factors? What are your variables?
- What skills did you have to work on, to do this project?
- What help did you have from others? (It is okay for them to have help!)
- Explain this graph (or table) to me.
- What surprised you most about your experiment?
- If you were to continue this project next year, what changes would you make?
- What application could your project have in everyday life?
- What problems did you encounter and how did you deal with them?

Judges should note the following:

- Please give everyone equal time.
- Please keep in mind that some students may be shy.
- Remember to put the students at ease in the beginning and compliment them on work done. Encourage them to expand their interests of research.
- Be careful about any out loud comments about projects, good or bad.
- Feel free to provide suggestions as to the student's work. Your input is a valuable part of their education!
- Questions should focus on the project, not on the student's home or school life.
- Don't worry if you are not an expert in the area of science or technology that the student is working with. As a scientist and a knowledgeable adult, you are providing a valuable audience. The student should be able to explain his or her project clearly to someone without specific expertise.