



Chicago History Fair | Chicago History Museum
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Dear Parents,

Welcome! Your child's class is participating in the Chicago Metro History Fair this year. Teachers recognize that the History Fair offers a creative, hands-on approach to developing reading, writing, and reasoning skills, and build valuable research and communications skills. It takes a lot of extra effort by teachers to incorporate History Fair into the curriculum, but they know students benefit.

For History Fair, students are asked to do research (both in and out of school) on a topic related to Chicago history they are interested in investigating, and then create a presentation based on their findings. They will need to search for primary and secondary sources, and they will give their own interpretations of the "how" and "why" change happened.

Many schools hold a History Fair where a number of projects are chosen to represent the school at the citywide competitions. The school fairs often take place during the late winter/early spring.

To help make the History Fair experience more rewarding for your child, please make sure you are aware of the rules and deadlines and work with your child on planning time for research, writing, and production.

Advice to parents

- Make sure you know all the deadlines that the teacher has set-up to keep your children on track.
- Accompany them to places to do research (some special collections will require an adult presence).
- Help them to make appointments where needed. It's good to know the topic when making the appointment.
- Watch them do the research work. Ask questions. Show them how to do something. Avoid doing FOR them -be it thinking, writing, cutting paper, or editing a video.
- Because it is a long research projects (many weeks), occasionally ask them to share what they are learning. Express enthusiasm for their newly gained knowledge and skills. They are becoming experts in their topic!

Your school will select the top projects to advance from the school fair to the regional competitions. If your child advances, the teacher will ask you to complete and sign a Student Authorization Form. At most events, students who have written a paper or produced a website are not expected to attend the event.

At these public events, trained volunteer judges evaluate each project based on its historical knowledge, analysis, presentation, and use of sources. The top-scoring projects are chosen to compete at the next level of competition. We provide a forum for interviews, but it is optional.

Advancing to High School Finals or the state contest is a great achievement. For those students who have incorporated the National History Day theme into their project, they will have the opportunity to represent their school and Illinois at the national competition in Washington, D.C., in mid-June. A special team of judges will decide which NHD-eligible projects will go to National History Day—however, only 36 projects in the entire state will be selected.

Thank you for taking an active role in your child's education. If you ever have any questions about the History Fair, we encourage you to talk to your child's teacher or contact us directly at 312-799-2153 or historyfair@chicagohistory.org.

Sincerely,

The History Fair Staff