

PLANNING A SCHOOL FAIR

A Guide for the School Coordinator

There are many different ways for a school to participate in the Heritage Fairs Program. Ideally, the School Fair will be a celebration of Canadian heritage that includes the entire school and acknowledges the achievements of all students. Although the Provincial Heritage Fair is only open to students in grades 5 to 9, students of all ages are encouraged to create projects and participate in your School Fair. You can plan your School Fair for any time before the end of April, but might want to consider holding it during Heritage Week in February to coordinate your efforts with other events in the community. The P.E.I. Provincial Heritage Fair is usually held in early to mid-May each year.

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 is 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 possibly parents), 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 people as possible.

STAGE ONE: PRE-PLANNING

As a School Fair Coordinator, you should:

- Make sure your school is officially registered with Provincial Heritage Fair staff, and that you have a current copy of the information manual or package for teachers. Check the webpage www.gov.pe.ca/go/heritagefair or contact heritagefair@gov.pe.ca.
- Promote the Heritage Fair to other teachers, and invite all classes to participate.
- Select a date (and alternate date in event of inclement weather) for your School Fair: check the school calendar for conflicts. Make sure you have allowed enough time to submit Provincial Heritage Fair forms.
- Recruit a committee of other staff members, and assign each person a specific job.
- Distribute information from Provincial Heritage 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.

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, possibility of inclement weather, 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 Provincial Heritage Fair.
- Plan to include every student in the school, even those not creating projects.
- Write a detailed checklist of tasks to be undertaken by each committee or individual.
- Make sure that all teachers involved are familiar with project guidelines / criteria.

STAGE THREE: COMMITTEE WORK

School Fair Coordinator

The School 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 should copy printed information for all teachers involved in the Fairs Program. This person is responsible for receiving and distributing information from Provincial Heritage 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 are not 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 School Fair and sustain their interest in history once the event is over. You should think about an official opening or closing for your School Fair, and might also want to consider educational workshops, cultural performances, and/or guest speakers.

Invitations/Dignitaries

This committee should work in cooperation 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 Provincial Heritage Fair staff to visit your School Fair. If you are having an official opening or closing, 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. The 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, retired teachers, local politicians and business members in the community.
- Send a confirmation package with basic information: 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 or meeting room for the judges.
- After your School Fair, compile the judging results and, where applicable, select which students will represent your school at the Provincial Fair.
- Prepare certificates or other awards to celebrate the achievements of all students.
- Send thank-you notes to all judges 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 information to newspapers, radio, monthly magazines, electronic bulletin boards, etc.
- When your information is published, collect press clippings. Submit a copy to Provincial Heritage Fair staff.
- Send a publicity notice home to parents with every student a week in advance of your fair.
- 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 or meeting room 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: PROVINCIAL HERITAGE FAIR SELECTION

You will be notified, usually in early February, of the number of student places available for your school at the Provincial 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 students: age/grade levels, gender, language (if applicable)
- 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 Provincial Heritage Fair participants from your school be enthusiastic, courteous, cooperative and willing to follow instructions. Please be sure that your chosen students have agreed to attend the Provincial Heritage Fair for the entirety of that event, and will follow the planned schedule of activities. Remember that the Provincial Heritage Fair staff will have deadlines for registration forms, and make sure your students submit their information in advance.

STAGE SIX: ATTENDING THE PROVINCIAL HERITAGE FAIR

School Fair Coordinators will be informed by Provincial Heritage Fair staff by mid February the number of students/projects they may send on to the Provincial Heritage Fair.

Chaperones

- It is preferable if the School Fair Coordinator is a chaperone for your school's delegates to the Provincial Fair. However, if this is not possible, the School Coordinator must ensure that information regarding the Provincial Fair (guidelines, schedule, workshops, etc.) be forwarded to all teacher or parent chaperones. Please ensure that there are sufficient numbers of chaperones to supervise your students during the Provincial Fair. Please note that Provincial Fair projects are organized and displayed by grade level, not by school. Therefore, your students may be located in various areas of the display area. Please note that students are not permitted to leave the Provincial Fair site during the event.
- Chaperones should check in at the registration desk upon arrival to receive the list of duties/responsibilities for the day's events.

Visitors

- School groups may wish to visit the Provincial Heritage Fair between 9:00 am and 12:00 noon to view the student projects. Visitors are reminded not to touch the Heritage Fair projects as some display items may be fragile. School buses should park at the Queen Street entrance.
- Parents/guardians are invited to visit the Provincial Heritage Fair during the day and/or attend the Closing Ceremonies at 3:00 pm. Please be reminded to step back from the students while judging is in progress. Only the student(s) may participate in the judging process.
- Please keep in mind that the Provincial Heritage Fair site is a building that is open to the public during Provincial Heritage Fair hours.

Set-up

- Transportation to and from the Provincial Heritage Fair is the responsibility of the parents/guardian, or school.
- Set-up time is between 8:00 am and 9:00 am. Please use Richmond Street entrance. Closing Ceremony begins at 3:00 pm and pick-up time is approximately 3:45 pm. Parents/Teachers/Students are invited to attend the Closing Ceremony.
- Each project is provided a 2' x 4' table space. No additional space is guaranteed.
- Electricity, if needed, will be provided. Any audio-visual equipment which is required for the display of projects is the responsibility of the student.
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Snacks/Lunch

- The Provincial Heritage Fair is a **peanut-free zone**.
- A snack will be distributed to students at their booth at 10:00am.
- Lunch (pizza and milk) will be distributed to students at their booths between 11:45 and 12:15.
- Students may wish to bring alternate/additional peanut-free snack or lunch items.
- Students are not permitted to leave the premises for lunch.

Judging

- Judging commences at 9:00 am until noon.
- Students will be judged at least 3 times. Parents, chaperones, teachers and other students are to step away while a student is speaking with a judge.
- Students may be judged additionally if their projects are being considered for Special (theme-related) Prizes and/or Awards.
- Some additional judging may be necessary in the afternoon.

Awards and Special Prizes

- A number of community organizations offer Special Prizes for student projects based on various themes. A list of these will be distributed to the School Fair Coordinator when prizes are confirmed.
- Special Prizes offered by community organizations will be judged separately by a representative(s) of that organization, therefore, some students may be judged several times.

Workshops

- A number of 45-minute, heritage/arts-related, student workshops will be offered during the afternoon of the Provincial Heritage Fair. A list will be distributed to School Coordinators prior to the Provincial Fair, once details are finalized.
- Students may sign up on the Provincial Fair day for one workshop. Sign-up sheets are posted in Memorial Hall. Students meet in Memorial Hall ten minutes prior to workshop time and will be accompanied to workshop site by a volunteer.
- Students should be courteous, attentive and respectful. Many of the workshop presenters are volunteers.

Closing Ceremonies

- The Closing Ceremonies will begin in Memorial Hall at 3:00pm. Parents/guardians are welcome to attend. The ceremonies should be completed by 3:45 pm.

- A number of dignitaries participate in the Closing Ceremonies and many will arrive early to view projects and speak with students. Students should remain with their project if not attending a workshop.
- Top projects in each grade level will be recognized and awards will be presented during the Closing Ceremonies.

For more information about the Heritage Fairs Program, visit www.gov.pe.ca/go/heritagefair or call Provincial Heritage Fair Coordinator, Charlotte Stewart at (902) 368-5940

Based on the document *Planning a School Fair, a guide for the School Co-ordinator* by Historica Foundation.