

What Students are Saying...



Alexander Spencer

Wayzata Senior High School, 11th grade

An Exploration of Magnetism in Thin Film Strained LaCoO₃

The MN State Science & Engineering Fair, from the regional level through international, is the greatest "pipeline" to pursue an interest in Science, technology, engineering, and math. There is nothing a student can do that will explore these areas more than actually going out and doing research, and not just reading about it. The Science Fair competition drives students to delve into science at a depth beyond anything in school, and presents a challenge that is both interesting and fun.

Working in materials science, it was great to talk to all the judges who, unlike the regional fair, actually knew what my project was about. While perovskites are a fairly new, obscure area of materials science, I was able to talk to a half dozen judges from Seagate who work closely in them as a career! I was able to receive feedback and recommendations on things to look into in my research from judges who worked in my subject area. Given that my subject area is largely unheard of, this was a great opportunity!

Everything about the State level is amazing. I honestly can't describe the experience of those short, sweet couple of days. The State science fair is truly necessary as a step to the international level. Looking at the large difference in competitiveness between the international and regional level, I think it is fair to say that were there no state level, competitors advancing from regionals directly to ISEF would be in shock and unprepared. The feedback received from judges at the state level is extremely useful as they are better matched to your subject area than at the regional level. Without feedback from the judges at state, judges at ISEF would overwhelm the finalists with questions of a difficulty they are unaccustomed to.

I am considering publishing my work, but to do so is of a level that is far beyond high school competitions. JSHS and ISEF-affiliated competitions are at an attainable level for high school students, and there is no better avenue for nurturing a passion for science".

