



March 1, 2026

Dear 2026 CSEF Grand Award Judge,

Thank you so much for volunteering your valuable time to judge at the 71st Annual Colorado Science & Engineering Fair (CSEF). Without your generous donation of time and effort, CSEF would not be such a success!

Judging for the CSEF will be on **Thursday, April 9th**, at Colorado State University in Fort Collins in the Lory Student Center (LSC). **Judges are required to check-in from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in the LSC Theater.** If you are a Category Team Captain or Assistant Captain, you are required to check-in before 9:30 a.m. **ALL** judges need to be checked in by 11:00 a.m. and expect to be at the CSEF until 5:00 p.m.

The **Category Team Captains/Assistant Captains' Briefing** will be held at 9:45 a.m. on the east side (left) of the LSC Theater main floor and the **All Grand Award Judges' Briefing** will be held in the LSC Theater at 11:00 a.m. **All Grand Award Judges are required** to attend this meeting. Lunch will follow the briefing, which will give your team time to plan a judging strategy. You will automatically be registered for the complimentary Judges' Luncheon.

Your attendance, whether as a Captain, Assistant Captain or Judge is critical to the success of the CSEF. Please do **everything** possible to attend the fair as your team members and the students are counting on you. However, if for any reason you are unable to attend or not able to fulfill the duties of Judge and/or Team Captain or Assistant Captain, **please notify me immediately.**

When you registered, you were asked if you wanted to be included in the **carpool** list. The carpool list will **not** be posted on the web site because of the personal information required for the list, but I will include the list in the email I send to you.

The following 2026 documents are available for viewing or may be downloaded from the Grand Awards Judging Information page under the "GAJ Essential Documents" tab at <https://csef.natsci.colostate.edu/grand-award-judges/>:

- Grand Awards Judges' Welcome Letter;
- Grand Awards Judging Schedule;
- 2026 CSEF 3-Day Schedule;
- Preliminary Junior/Senior Division Category Judging Team Assignments (Final Team Assignments will be at the Judges' Check-In);
- Grand Awards Judging Guide;
- Grand Awards Judging Policy;
- Finalist Abstract Review Instructions;
- Access to Finalists' Abstracts (online only);
- Regeneron ISEF/CSEF Forms Explanations;
- Category Descriptions;
- Grand Awards Guidelines/Criteria;
- 2026 Parking Instructions & Maps;

Parking at CSU

We have arranged for a free shuttle service from the off-campus Timberline Church parking lot to the CSU Main Campus (drop-off will be on Meridian Avenue - a short walk to the LSC). Shuttle service will be operating from 7:00 a.m. through 6:00 p.m. **Parking Instructions and Maps will be emailed to you, so check your email or go to the Grand Awards Judge Information page at <https://csef.natsci.colostate.edu/grand-award-judges/> and download the information. Please note that if you are using the shuttle bus, you will be dropped off on Meridian Avenue and need to walk to the Lory Student Center.** Please allow 40+ minutes from the time you park in the shuttle lot to when you arrive at the LSC. For all judges, please plan on arriving at the shuttle lot no later than 9:15 a.m. Shuttles will be leaving approximately every 30 minutes from Timberline Church. **ALLOW FOR EXTRA TIME!**

Category Team Captains' and Assistant Captains' - **DO NOT use the shuttle service** - Campus parking permits will be offered to non-CSU faculty, staff or students serving as a Grand Award Judging Team Captains and Assistant Captains. We will email you a link where you can input your own parking information to the system that will be a one-time campus parking permit since Captains will need to stay until 8:00 p.m. We suggest you use the Library and Theater Parking lot, as you will be arriving earlier than everyone else. Parking and Transportation Services have a very useful parking map at <https://map.concept3d.com/>.

Judging Team Assignments

Please refer to the "Preliminary Category Judging Team Assignments" for your judging assignment. Some of you will find that I have assigned you to your 2nd or 3rd category choice, and different division preference. The team lists are *preliminary*, because I may be rearranging people on the teams to accommodate a better judge:student ratio, to assure adequate expertise on a particular team, and to accommodate judge cancellations.

Pre-CSEF Project Abstract & Digital Project Review

The students' project abstracts are available online at the CSEF [MySciFair website](#) on the above mentioned "Grand Awards Judge Information" page for review by all judges prior to the CSEF. Under "Grand Awards Judges - Essential Documents" you will find a link to the Project Abstracts. **NOTE:** The category filter has a list that includes other fair's categories, so you will need to make sure you choose the correct CSEF category that you were assigned to.

Also, students will submit a digital power point of their project materials into MySciFair where you can preview more about their project than is available in their abstract. You will NOT Have any scheduled time on the day of CSEF to view their physical project boards without them present, so it is important that you preview these materials prior to April 9th. The link to the MySciFair site is:

<https://myscifair.com/fair?f=CSEF&y=2026>

VERY IMPORTANT: Judges' Checklist for CSEF, Thursday, April 9th

- **Download** the Judging Guide and Parking Instructions and Maps;
- **Bring a clipboard to hold your judging score sheets (we have a limited number of clipboards); This is the one item that I constantly get asked for and do not have, so I highly suggest you bring one if you use clipboards.**
- **Bring** pens/pencils (we will have a CSEF pen in your packet);
- **All Grand Award Judges must plan on being at the CSEF until at least 5:00 p.m., unless you are a Captain. Best-of-CSEF judging will not be completed until at least 8:00 p.m. It is critical that ALL judges are available for judging and team meetings for the whole day in order to make the category award selection as fair as possible for the students. Also, bringing children to the Grand Award Judging is not an option, as we do not have child care available and it is not an appropriate environment for children;**
- Judging Rating Cards are provided by CSEF at Judges' Check-In;
- Pre-printed labels with the student's name, project number and title will be provided by me at the Captains' Briefing for all judging teams to affix to the rating forms; and
- Suggested attire for CSEF is business casual and comfortable shoes

Best-of-CSEF Project Judging

The Best-of-CSEF Judging Team consisting of the Category Team Captains from each division and category will be looking only at the 1st place projects from each of the categories to choose 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in the Junior Division and an additional 4th and 5th place in the Senior Division. As in the past, Best-of-CSEF judging starts at 5:30 p.m. and will not be completed until at least 8:00 p.m. Pizza and salad will be provided for Best-of-CSEF Judges.

Again, thank you so much for volunteering and I look forward to seeing everyone and supporting all the Finalists on their journey to creating a better future for themselves and for us! If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me by email or phone.

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