

# 2026 Colorado Science and Engineering Fair

## Grand Awards Press Release

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### Junior Division Best of CSEF Project

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#### First Place

Anirudh Rao 8th grade  
*Mirai - A Sustainable Alternative to Electrochemical Batteries Using Treated Nanomaterials and Water*  
 STEM School Highlands Ranch

#### Second Place

Anmoldeep Gill 8th grade  
*Effects of Probiotics on Pathogenic Adhesion*  
 Lamar Middle School Lamar

#### Third Place

Hannah Deering 8th grade  
*Year Two: The Effect of Leg Length on Canine Speed Across Multiple Breeds*  
 Yuma Middle School Yuma

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### Senior Division Best of CSEF Project

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#### First Place

Julia Gao 11th grade  
*Year Two: Toward Expansion of the Standard Model with Multi-Hadron Final States and Muon Neutrino Reconstruction*  
 Fairview High School Boulder

#### Second Place

Aayush Paliwal 9th grade  
*Digital Defense: Using Molecular Docking to Combat the Mountain Pine Beetle Epidemic in North American Forests*  
 Pine Creek High School Colorado Springs

#### Third Place

Hayden Drullinger 12th grade  
*No Flow, No Grow*  
 Liberty School Joes

#### Fourth Place

Natalie Muro 12th grade  
*A Novel Field-Based Approach to Reducing Harmful Algal Blooms in Freshwater Ecosystems*  
 Palmer High School Colorado Springs

#### Fifth Place

Priya Mayjoy 10th grade  
*Monitoring Apis Mellifera Linneaus for winter survival (Year 3)*  
 Lamar High School Lamar

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### Junior Division Animal Sciences

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#### First Place

Hannah Deering 8th grade  
*Year Two: The Effect of Leg Length on Canine Speed Across Multiple Breeds*  
 Yuma Middle School Yuma

#### Second Place

Kendyl Osborn 8th grade  
*Bumble Bees Please*  
 La Junta Jr/Sr High School La Junta

#### Third Place

Elena Amador 8th grade  
*How Do Different Active Ingredients in Injected Pesticides Affect the Life Span of Superworms in Modeled Bark Beetle Galleries?*  
 Challenge School Aurora

#### Honorable Mention

Khaleesi Reynolds 7th grade  
*Can't Resist This*  
 Sargent Middle School Monte Vista

#### Honorable Mention

Eleanor Smith & Rylee White 7th grade  
*Brain Lateralizatin in Goats*  
 Connect Charter School Pueblo

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### Senior Division Animal Sciences

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#### First Place

Priya Mayjoy 10th grade  
*Monitoring Apis Mellifera Linneaus for winter survival (Year 3)*  
 Lamar High School Lamar

#### Second Place

Paisley Wiersma 9th grade  
*The Cattle Calmer: The Effect of MBAS on Weaning Cattle*  
 Genoa-Hugo School Hugo

#### Third Place

Pranav Erukulapati 10th grade  
*Intraspecific Variation in Postcranial Skeletal Pneumaticity: Insights from the Turkey (Meleagris gallopavo)*  
 Fairview High School Boulder

#### Honorable Mention

Max Hermele 10th grade  
*Evolution of Gene Regulation in Association with Scale Loss and Replacement in Catfishes*  
 Fairview High School Boulder

#### Honorable Mention

Jaelie Jaminet 9th grade  
*Observing pH Levels in Mares to Predict Parturition*  
 Sanford Jr/Sr High School Blanca

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### Junior Division Behavioral & Social Sciences

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#### First Place

Nadiya Abarca-Reynoso 8th grade  
*How Does Time Affect Witness Reliability After an Incident Has Occurred?*  
 Skinner Middle School Denver

#### Second Place

Dhriti Mehta 7th grade  
*Effects of Notetaking on Memory Retention*  
 Flagstaff Academy Longmont

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### Third Place

Ava McFarland 8th grade  
*AI's Effect on a Person's Originality*  
 Challenge School Aurora

### Honorable Mention

Bhavish Matli 6th grade  
*Risky Business: Developmental Peaks in Dopamine-Linked Eye-Blink Rates*  
 Home School Parker

### Honorable Mention

Ali Mooney 6th grade  
*Visual or Auditory*  
 Alta Vista Charter School Lamar

### Senior Division Behavioral & Social Sciences

#### First Place

Natalie Cappelletti 12th grade  
*Mitigating and Miscommunicating: Analyzing and Visualizing Discourse Markers from Bilingual Children Across the United States*  
 Fairview High School Boulder

#### Second Place

Anthony Zarlengo 12th grade  
*RamJam: Digital Student Connectivity*  
 Green Mountain High School Lakewood

#### Third Place

Natalia Woolcock 11th grade  
*Carbon Conscious: Measuring How Health and Carbon Footprint Data Labels Influence Real Consumer Behavior*  
 The Academy of Charter Schools Westminster

#### Honorable Mention

Amika Begin 11th grade  
*Assessing the Impacts of Social Media-Driven NIL Endorsements on College Sports Sponsorship*  
 Nederland Middle/High School Nederland

#### Honorable Mention

Edna Abel & Genesis archila-Ochoa 11th grade  
*Neighborhood Food Quality Disparities Revealed Through DNA Degradation Analysis*  
 Green Valley Ranch High School Denver

### Junior Division Biomedical & Health Sciences

#### First Place

Kynzleigh Hanel 7th grade  
*Barnyard Bacteria*  
 Sargent Middle School Monte Vista

#### Second Place

Mabel Grimsley 7th grade  
*Elite Essential Oils*  
 Vail Mountain School Vail

### Third Place

Daxon Peddy 8th grade  
*From Grain To Glucose: Fresh vs. Store Bought Flour and Its Affect on Blood Sugar*  
 Home School Creede

### Honorable Mention

Ainsley Salaz 8th grade  
*The Effect of Age on Orthostatic Heart Rate Response and Heart Rate Recovery*  
 Skinner Middle School Denver

### Honorable Mention

Davis Wischer 7th grade  
*Minty Fresh - or Plaque Mess?*  
 St. Mary's Catholic School Greeley

### Senior Division Biomedical & Health Sciences

#### First Place

Aariv Arora 9th grade  
*Computational Screening of FDA-Approved Cancer Drugs for Targeting Altered Proteins in Cholangiocarcinoma*  
 Stargate Charter School Thornton

#### Second Place

Zoe Wang 11th grade  
*Restoring Klebsiella pneumoniae Susceptibility to Tobramycin via Antibiotic Adjuvants*  
 Fairview High School Boulder

#### Third Place

Advait Jadhav 9th grade  
*Methyl-Predict: Using DNA Methylation to Predict Immune System Disease Risk*  
 Pine Creek High School Colorado Springs

#### Honorable Mention

Joshua Wells 11th grade  
 Keian Keating 9th grade  
*"A Cardiovascular Pharmacology Investigation using Daphnia Magna": Comparing the Effects of Energy Drinks and Heart Rate: Are you one of the 22 Million?*  
 Weldon Valley School Weldona

#### Honorable Mention

Samantha Simmons 9th grade  
*Case of Claws*  
 West Grand High School Kremmling

### Junior Division Chemistry

#### First Place

Kenley Mitchell 8th grade  
*Small Plastics, Big Problems!*  
 Sargent Middle School Monte Vista

#### Second Place

Sydney Montague 6th grade  
*Medicine War*  
 Centauri Middle School La Jara

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### Third Place

Connor Stone 8th grade  
*Science of the Sip: Coffee Grinder Brand, Ground Uniformity and Its Affect on Taste Profile*  
 Brush Middle School Brush

### Honorable Mention

Humza Memon 8th grade  
*Effect of Osmotic Stress on the Microbial Activity: Modeling Biogas Inhibition through Idli Batter Fermentation*  
 Crescent View Academy Aurora

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### Senior Division Chemistry

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#### First Place

Abhijay Kodadala 11th grade  
*Renaturing Proteins with Organic Materials*  
 Grandview High School Aurora

#### Second Place

Ria Rajasekharan 11th grade  
*Laser Induced Graphene Electrodes for Capillary Microfluidic Electroanalysis*  
 Fossil Ridge High School Fort Collins

#### Third Place

Sophia Zhang 12th grade  
 Carolyn Long 9th grade  
*Water-Soluble Eutectogel Adhesives for Sustainable Packaging*  
 Fairview High School Boulder

#### Honorable Mention

Abdullahi Adan 12th grade  
 Kamal Khalif 11th grade  
 Ebenezer Yimam 11th grade  
*ZnO Nanoparticles for Simultaneous UV Disinfection + Filtration*  
 Lotus School For Excellence Aurora

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### Junior Division Earth & Environmental Sciences

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#### First Place

Sienna Harden 8th grade  
*Save the Cows, Save the Soil, Save the World! The impact of grazing in Northern Colorado on soil fertility, soil function, and soil structure*  
 St. Joseph's Catholic School Fort Collins

#### Second Place

Ashlyn Kozura 8th grade  
*Forecasting the Flash: What Makes Lightning Choose You*  
 Summit Middle Charter School Boulder

#### Third Place

Mikaela Ludden 8th grade  
 Charlotte Hoffman 7th grade  
*The Effects of Climate Change on African Whites' Tree Frogs*  
 Challenge School Aurora

### Honorable Mention

Nela Kereshi 7th grade  
*The Effects of Water Temperature on Phytoplankton Population*  
 Ridgway Secondary School Ridgway

### Honorable Mention

Ava Boblitt 7th grade  
*Invisible Threat: The Impact of Microplastics on Macroinvertebrates*  
 Bayfield Middle School Bayfield

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### Senior Division Earth & Environmental Sciences

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#### First Place

Cameron Kempisty 9th grade  
*Sequestering PFAS from Biosolids: A Natural Solution Using Biochar*  
 Air Academy High School Colorado Springs

#### Second Place

Lola Sondrol 9th grade  
*Sustainable Cleanup: Mycoremediation as a Green Alternative for Heavy Metal Removal*  
 Monte Vista High School Monte Vista

#### Third Place

Ayush Vispute 11th grade  
*Complete in Csilico Discovery and Validation of New High Performing Carbon Capturing Organisms*  
 Rampart High School Colorado Springs

#### Honorable Mention

Isaac Stong 11th grade  
*How Much More Impacted by Microplastics Are Urban Lakes and Reservoirs Than Rural Lakes and Reservoirs*  
 Green Mountain High School Lakewood

#### Honorable Mention

Caroline Prieto Layna Snyder 10th grade  
*Increasing Microplastic Removal Efficiency with Ferrofluids*  
 Brush High School Brush

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### Junior Division Energy

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#### First Place

Anirudh Rao 8th grade  
*Mirai - A Sustainable Alternative to Electrochemical Batteries Using Treated Nanomaterials and Water*  
 STEM School Highlands Ranch

#### Second Place

Nimisha Upadhyay 8th grade  
 Azaria Saiz 8th grade  
*Power From Footsteps: How Piezoelectric Tiles Generate Electricity*  
 Challenge School Aurora

#### Third Place

Jayden Zhang, Caleb Henrichsen, James Weirauch 8th grade  
*Veggie Voltage: A study on the power of fruits!*  
 Frontier Academy Greeley

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### Honorable Mention

Cy Poss 7th grade  
*Distance by Mousetrap Power*  
 Genoa-Hugo School Hugo

### Senior Division Energy

#### First Place

Om Vegesna 11th grade  
*New Materials for the Green Synthesis of Energy Intermediates from Waste via Selective Hydrogenation and In-Silico Screening*  
 Fairview High School Boulder

#### Second Place

Ethan Bonnell 12th grade  
*SunSpot: A Solar-Powered Public Charging Station for the Future*  
 Centaurus High School Lafayette

#### Third Place

Shreyas Gadepalli 10th grade  
*Hydrogen Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles: Enhancing Platinum Nanoparticle Stability in PEM Fuel Cells*  
 Cherry Creek High School Greenwood Village

### Junior Division Engineering

#### First Place

Payal Gopinath & Evan Gopinath 8th grade  
*An Objective Measurement of Physical Properties and Environmental Impact of Climbing Chalk*  
 Nevin Platt Middle School Boulder

#### Second Place

Shaurya Sisodia 8th grade  
*The Effects of Soil Liquefaction on The Structural Stability of Buildings*  
 Liberty Middle School Aurora

#### Third Place

James Muro 6th grade  
*A Redesigned Shade Structure for NFL Sidelines to Enhance Performance*  
 North Middle School Colorado Springs

#### Honorable Mention

Callie Griffin 7th grade  
*Feel the Game: Basketball for the Blind*  
 Sargent Middle School Monte Vista

#### Honorable Mention

Siena Halterman 7th grade  
*En Pointe. On Point.*  
 Sacred Heart of Jesus School Boulder

### Senior Division Engineering

#### First Place

Hayden Drullinger 12th grade  
*No Flow, No Grow*  
 Liberty School Joes

### Second Place

Jessie Yan 10th grade  
*Effect of Foot Materials on Hexapod Robot Performance*  
 Fairview High School Boulder

### Third Place

Kowshik Shanmugamani & Aryaveer Sheoran 11th grade  
*Analyzing the Effectiveness of Blown Wing Application in Fighter Jet Movement Dynamics*  
 Cherry Creek High School Greenwood Village

### Honorable Mention

Surie Jia 11th grade  
*Engineering a Smart Wearable Sleep Sensor Using Shape-Memory Polymer Networks*  
 Fairview High School Boulder

### Honorable Mention

Havoc Martinez & Nikolas Martinez 12th grade  
*WET Technology - Magnetic Outlet Adapter*  
 Central High School Pueblo

### Junior Division Environmental Engineering

#### First Place

Joel Wilson 8th grade  
*Hydrogen . . . A Green Gas of the Future?*  
 Home School Colorado Springs

#### Second Place

Hagen Short 8th grade  
*Rural De-Icer*  
 Dove Creek Middle School Dove Creek

#### Third Place

Clay Grossman 8th grade  
*Trust the Trees: How Mangroves Impact Costal Flooding*  
 Summit Middle Charter School Boulder

#### Honorable Mention

Ingram Olson 7th grade  
*Mycoremediation Exploration: Can Adding Materials or Plants Help Fungi Remediate Pollution in the Soil?*  
 Telluride Middle School Telluride

### Senior Division Environmental Engineering

#### First Place

Natalie Muro 12th grade  
*A Novel Field-Based Approach to Reducing Harmful Algal Blooms in Freshwater Ecosystems*  
 Palmer High School Colorado Springs

#### Second Place

Cami Wolkow 12th grade  
*Fungi: The Future Solution to Building Materials*  
 Palmer High School Colorado Springs

#### Third Place

Sierra Winslow 9th grade  
*Engineering Calm Zones for Coastal Biodiversity*  
 Air Academy High School Colorado Springs

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## Grand Awards Press Release

### Honorable Mention

Brynn Hamm 11th grade  
*Plastic Decomposition Using Blue Oyster Mushrooms*  
 Silverton Public High School Silverton

### Honorable Mention

Leo Stasevich 10th grade  
*Analyzing Water Filter Efficiency*  
 Compass Community Collaborative School Fort Collins

### Junior Division

#### Mathematics & Computer Sciences

#### First Place

Laurel Kent 8th grade  
*SnackSnap: Developing a Mobile-Based Diagnostic Tool to Identify Hyper-Palatable Foods*  
 Eagleview Middle School Colorado Springs

#### Second Place

John Dicker 8th grade  
*Reducing Human Pesticide Exposure Through Technology*  
 Monte Vista Middle School Monte Vista

#### Third Place

Emmett Wiedenheft 8th grade  
*Can AI Learn to Game: A Project on How AI Learns*  
 Southern Hills Middle School Boulder

### Honorable Mention

Anand Zolboo 8th grade  
*VisuAI Deception*  
 Challenge School Aurora

### Honorable Mention

Sovereign Sybrant 6th grade  
*SmashDude Fitness*  
 Wray Middle School Wray

### Senior Division

#### Mathematics & Computer Sciences

#### First Place

Dev Patel 11th grade  
*Physics-Based Simulation and Machine Learning for Optimal Two-Layer Thermal Protection System Design*  
 Centaurus High School Lafayette

#### Second Place

Amy Zhang 11th grade  
*Just Look, Don't Type: Enabling Intent-Level Communication through Gaze Grounding and Disambiguation*  
 Lakewood High School Lakewood

#### Third Place

Bode Monahan 9th grade  
*Entropy Engine: Utilizing Non-Deterministic Electron Cascade Dynamics for Cryptographically Secure Password Generation*  
 Liberty School Joes

### Honorable Mention

Hayden Street & Adhrit Sundaresan 11th grade  
*Engineering Thermostable PETase for Optimized Plastic Recycling*  
 Fairview High School Boulder

### Honorable Mention

Eshaan Yendamuri 11th grade  
*Confidence-Driven Dynamic Model Ensembles for Robust Detection of AI-Generated Images*  
 Rock Canyon High School Littleton

### Junior Division

#### Micro & Molecular Biology

#### First Place

Anmoldeep Gill 8th grade  
*Effects of Probiotics on Pathogenic Adhesion*  
 Lamar Middle School Lamar

#### Second Place

Marat Gilfanov & Takahiro Stewart 8th grade  
*The Solution to Pollution*  
 Southern Hills Middle School Boulder

#### Third Place

Madison Glenn 7th grade  
*Clean Fight Testing Soaps Against Acne Bacterias*  
 Lone Star School Otis

### Honorable Mention

Kayla Melby 7th grade  
*Not So Sweet: The Impact of Artificial Sweeteners on E. coli and Antibiotics*  
 Yuma Middle School Yuma

### Honorable Mention

Emerald Ballard 8th grade  
*Tongue Twister: A Bacterial Comparison*  
 West Grand Middle School Kremmling

### Senior Division

#### Micro & Molecular Biology

#### First Place

Aayush Paliwal 9th grade  
*Digital Defense: Using Molecular Docking to Combat the Mountain Pine Beetle Epidemic in North American Forests*  
 Pine Creek High School Colorado Springs

#### Second Place

Ella Wilson & Hailey Znamenacek 12th grade  
*Heat-sensitive Protist Presence in the Microbiome of Pocillopora damicornis Correlated with Thermal Stress Response of Coral*  
 Steamboat Springs High School Steamboat Springs

#### Third Place

Aislynn Boese 9th grade  
*The Effectiveness of Disinfectants Against S. epidermidis and E. aerogenes*  
 Yuma High School Yuma

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## Grand Awards Press Release

### Honorable Mention

Grace Xue 11th grade  
*Analysis of the Interaction between the Bacterium Nissle 1917 and L-Dopa to Improve Treatment of Parkinson's Disease*  
 Fairview High School Boulder

### Honorable Mention

Yuna Lee 10th grade  
 Sieun Jang 11th grade  
*Visualization of Beta-Amyloid Aggregation Using Split-GFP in Caenorhabditis elegans for Screening Small Molecules to Mitigate Protein Aggregation in Alzheimer's Disease*  
 Fairview High School Boulder

### Junior Division Physics & Astronomy

#### First Place

Calvin Yang-Jacobs 8th grade  
*Testing the Lift of Airfoils with a Wind Tunnel*  
 Southern Hills Middle School Boulder

#### Second Place

Alexander Snow 8th grade  
*The Effect of Surface Dimples on Aerodynamics*  
 Compass Community Collaborative School Fort Collins

#### Third Place

Tucker Moore 7th grade  
*Roll Goal*  
 Vail Mountain School Vail

### Honorable Mention

Cason Mattive 7th grade  
*Power of the Prop: How propeller shape impacts drone flight.*  
 Sargent Middle School Monte Vista

### Senior Division Physics & Astronomy

#### First Place

Julia Gao 11th grade  
*Year Two: Toward Expansion of the Standard Model with Multi-Hadron Final States and Muon Neutrino Reconstruction*  
 Fairview High School Boulder

#### Second Place

Danica Christensen 10th grade  
*Fractal Form and Function in the Brain: The Interdimensional Physics Underlying Cognition and Consciousness*  
 Fairview High School Boulder

#### Third Place

Tanner Houser 12th grade  
*Demonstrating a Potential Method for Black Hole Information Recovery via Simulated Hawking Radiation*  
 Sargent High School Monte Vista

### Junior Division Plant Sciences

#### First Place

Yasaswini Vinjamuri 8th grade  
*Air-Purifying Geniuses*  
 Heritage Heights Academy Centennial

#### Second Place

Laurynn Vetter 7th grade  
 Bristol Cook 7th grade  
*Shape-Shifting Gel: Helping Plants Thrive Through Drought*  
 Lone Star School Otis

#### Third Place

Lynnin Alba 6th grade  
*The Frequency Factor*  
 Alta Vista Charter School Lamar

### Honorable Mention

Ashton Power 8th grade  
*Dye or Die: The Effect of Various Saline Solutions on White Flowers*  
 Heritage Heights Academy Centennial

### Honorable Mention

Caprise Priestley 7th grade  
*The Influence of Applied Frequencies on Plant Growth*  
 Mancos Middle School Mancos

### Senior Division Plant Sciences

#### First Place

Emilio Ortiz 12th grade  
*Roots to Resilience: Testing the Effects of Arbuscular Mycorrhizal Fungi (AMF) on Different Potato Cultivars Under Simulated Drought Conditions*  
 Monte Vista High School Monte Vista

#### Second Place

Niels Novotny 10th grade  
*NDVI Analysis of DWC, Drip Through, and Potted Plants*  
 Cherry Creek High School Greenwood Village

#### Third Place

Madison Gunnels 10th grade  
 Chase Pollart 11th grade  
*The Effects of Northeast Colorado Irrigation Water Sources on Alfalfa Seed Germination*  
 Brush High School Brush

### Honorable Mention

Allyson Solze 9th grade  
*Microbes Matter*  
 Genoa-Hugo School Hugo