ATLANTA SCIENCE FESTIVAL

IMAGINING THE FUTURE

Program Expectations: Educators

Program Objectives

Imagining the Future seeks to increase students':

a) knowledge of the unique science and technology coming out of local universities and businesses,
b) interest in STEM careers, and
c) understanding of the unsolved problems and unanswered questions facing STEM industries.

What to Expect

Atlanta Science Festival staff will match you with a STEM professional, with whom you will make arrangements for a visit to your classroom. Most STEM professionals will have prepared an approximately 30-minute presentation about their career, the questions/problems they are addressing in their work and the challenges facing the future of their field, leaving time for Q&A and other interactions. Some will also have a demo or hands-on activity prepared. Please understand that STEM professionals have varying degrees of experience as educators. They are coming to your classroom not to teach specific content standards, but rather to share their experiences in the STEM workforce and to show how students' STEM learning in class could be applied in the real world. Our STEM professionals are encouraged to be interactive, bring tools of their trade, show pictures of their workplace, share their career journey, ask questions and allow for student discussion, work with you to better understand students' prior knowledge and grade-appropriate learning outcomes, do a brief demo of a scientific concept that relates to their job or industry, or to engage the class in an inquiry-based activity where possible. However, not every presentation will include all these elements. You may wish to examine the Speaker Guide provided by ASF (contains tips and sample lesson outline) to better understand what the Festival intends for STEM professionals to do. With your help and communication prior to the visit, STEM professionals can meet your expectations to the best of their abilities. It is vital that you contact the STEM professional ahead of time to discuss these issues, as well as the logistics of time/date/building entry/etc.

I teach multiple classes, can I have the speaker come to every class?

These accommodations can be made, but at the discretion of the speaker. Most STEM professionals are unable to spend the entire day at your school and will not be able to visit all your classes. You may wish to organize a small assembly or combination of classes, if such arrangements are possible. We understand the challenges of pulling students out of other classes. ASF will try to match STEM professionals willing to give more than one talk with schools making this request. However, with a limited supply of STEM professionals, we prefer to offer this program to more schools rather than to all students at fewer schools. Ultimately, it is up to you and the STEM professional to work out the details of the visit.

Before the visit

Work with your STEM professional to plan the visit. Call, e-mail, or meet with them ASAP and again in the weeks leading up to their visit. Be sure to let them know what technology they will/won't have access to in your classroom (e.g., projector, etc.). Help them determine the feasibility of the presentation/activity they plan to deliver. Explain your students' prior knowledge and current interests. Discuss any safety issues relative to their planned activities or materials. Let them know what the visitor protocol is at your school. Where to park? Will they have to come through a particular entrance? Sign in at the main office? Complete a visitor registration form ahead of time?

Prepare the students. Give your students some background on your STEM professional prior to his/her visit. Have them think up questions for him/her, and even give them materials to support the presentation as appropriate.

Advertise other Atlanta Science Festival programs. Make sure your students and their families know about the Festival, including our fantastic and free Exploration Expo at Centennial Olympic Park on March 26, 2016! A printable classroom flyer and relevant information are available at http://atlantasciencefestival.com/educator-toolkit.

During the visit

Make the STEM professional comfortable. Some of them haven't been in a classroom in many years! Welcome them and orient them to your classroom before the students arrive, if possible.

Maintain a presence. Our STEM professionals have varying degrees of experience with public speaking, especially for student audiences. Stay in the classroom for the duration of the visit. Expect to help the STEM professional maintain control of the classroom and connect with students' prior knowledge. Help "translate" if they're speaking outside the students' level of understanding, and if the conversation lags, jump in to keep it going.

Participate. Take part in any activities the speaker conducts, and help draw the students in if necessary. Your participation will model intellectual curiosity and encourage students to get involved.

After the visit

Keep in touch. Consider asking the STEM professional if s/he would take questions from students after the visit. Filter the students' questions and e-mail them to the professional yourself.

Complete evaluations. Feedback from you and your students will help us to develop a more effective program in the future. Please help us by completing and returning the evaluations we provide to you and your students. Additional details will be provided at a later date.