

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 unsolved problems and unanswered questions in STEM fields.

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 on Imagining the Future Day (or another date prior to the end of the Festival). 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.

How much classroom experience will my STEM professional have?

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, show tools of their trade and 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, virtual meeting link/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 with your school and will not be able to visit all your classes. You may wish to organize a small virtual 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 virtually meet with them as soon as you are matched, and again in the weeks leading up to the visit. Be sure to let them know what platform and technology they will/won't have access to in your classroom (e.g., break out rooms, whiteboard, 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. Complete a visitor registration form ahead of time. Ensure they know what platform link to use if the visit is virtual.

Prepare the students.

Give your students some background on your STEM professional and their field prior to his/her visit. Using this knowledge, guide them to think up questions for the pro that the students find interesting- this is key in making sure students stay engaged throughout the visit. You and your STEM professional can even work together to give them materials to support the presentation as appropriate.

Share info about other Festival programs.

Make sure your students and their families know about other in person and virtual Festival activities – information can be found at <http://AtlantaScienceFestival.org>

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 the online survey we will email to you. **It is important to us to have an accurate count of the number of students.**

Share your experience.

On the day of, share out your experience on social media platforms. Tag the Atlanta Science Festival and Science ATL using @AtlantaScienceFestival and @ScienceATL (@Science_ATL on Instagram). After the event, send photos and videos of the event to itf@atlantasciencefestival.org.

If you have any questions, please contact itf@atlantasciencefestival.org