

**SOCIAL STUDIES FAIR HANDBOOK  
MUSCOGEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
2017 - 2018**



## PARTICIPATION

Participation of schools in the local, county, regional, and state fairs is strongly encouraged, but not required. Schools participating in the fair should establish local guidelines within the framework of the **MCSD Social Studies Fair Handbook**. Projects submitted to the county fair and beyond should meet all requirements outlined in the handbook.

## REGULATIONS

### Local, Regional and State Fairs

1. Projects may be entered by individual students or by groups consisting of no more than **three** (3) students. The names of all students must be on the page 1 of the entry form and each student must have a separate parent-completed page 2. Group projects will be judged in their respective classes in competition with individual projects.
2. Projects are limited to a space of 30 INCHES FRONT TO BACK, 48 INCHES WIDE (when opened) AND 60 INCHES IN HEIGHT. (Additional support equipment may be placed under the table, but not in front of, or to the sides of the table; however, it may not be visible under table coverings.) Entries will be placed on display tables according to class levels and disciplines in regional and state fairs. Therefore, careful classification of the project in the appropriate discipline is critical.
3. If a project includes audio/visual media, the total listening/viewing time may not exceed 5 minutes. Students are responsible for securing the technology needed for audio or video needs.
4. At the regional and state fairs **(NOT AT DISTRICT)**, at least one student who worked on the project must be present to interpret the project. Students should be prepared to give a five-minute oral overview of the project for the judges. Students should also be prepared to answer questions posed by the judges during the project interview.
5. A research paper must accompany all projects, approximately 4-5 double-spaced, typed pages. The research paper should give the statement of the problem, methodology, research findings, and the conclusion drawn as a result of the research. The report must include bibliographic references. If direct citations are to be used in the research paper, the proper citations should be included.
6. An abstract of the project should be included on a 4"x6" card. Information on the abstract provides the project title, names of students, statement of problem, methodology, and conclusion. (See sample p. 14) This card should be placed on the table with the research paper.
7. The visual presentation shown on the Triboard must include:
  - a clear statement of the question researched
  - the methodology used for investigation
  - research findings in the form of: text, charts, graphs, maps, photos, or illustrations
  - conclusion(s) based on research.

8. The director of the district fair will instruct the judges to deduct points from projects that violate rules #2, #3, #4, and #5.
9. The projects must be strong enough to remain intact when moved. Clearly worded instructions should be placed on any project that requires special operation. Explanatory matter should be kept to a minimum, but must be provided by the exhibitor as needed.
10. The exhibitor must furnish all equipment such as extension cords, bulbs, projectors, recorders, monitors, etc. The exhibitor must also make provisions to secure such equipment to the tables.
11. **Each exhibitor is responsible for setting up the project for display and must remove the project at the required time.** Projects should be left on display until appropriate publicity photographs have been made and sufficient time has been given for additional viewing. Projects left at the district, region, and state fairs beyond removal time will be discarded.

## SOCIAL STUDIES DISCIPLINES

The following descriptions of the social studies disciplines are guidelines to help place projects in the correct categories:

**Anthropology** is the study of human beings from prehistory to contemporary societies. It includes all aspects of human development, both physical development and cultural heritage. Anthropology includes many diverse branches of the study of humanity and its social adaptations.

### Sample Research Questions

- How do religious beliefs or practices of a 19<sup>th</sup> century American society compare with today?
- How do members of Middle Eastern culture view their ancestors as compared to members of Latin American culture?
- How has the role of women in American Society changed since the 19<sup>th</sup> century?
- Did slavery end with the Civil War?

**Economics** is the study of the production and exchange of goods produced by humanity. The economist analyzes the data, issues, and public policies related to the production, distribution and consumption of scarce resources. The economist describes the economic system in an effort to explain how people satisfy their wants and needs. The economic behavior of humans is concerned with methods of doing business, producing, organizing (labor and management), financing, and regulating these activities.

### Sample Research Questions

- What are the costs and benefits of a national gun registry?
- Why are baseball stadiums often a poor investment?
- How do tariffs effect an economy?
- What might happen if the world ran out of oil?
- What might happen if there was no sales tax?

**Geography** is the study of the earth's surface, humanity's utilization of raw materials and resources, and human behavior as influenced by location and other geographic factors. Geography is the study of the relationship between the physical environment and human activities. A geographer describes the earth's surface, the changes that occur in it, the knowledge of its various parts (land, water and atmosphere), and the theories of its formation and change.

### Sample Research Questions

- Does location affect national park visitation in the United States?
- Is there a link between race and the location of fresh food choices in Muscogee County?
- Agricultural production in Japan: past and present.
- How does the geography of Columbus, Georgia affect my family and friends?

**History** encompasses all that has happened to humanity. History in a narrower sense can be limited to the history of a country (all that happened in that country), or it can be limited to a group of people, an institution, a community, etc. History is more than a systematic record of events of the past, because it usually includes analysis and explanation of these events. History is the record of changes of civilizations.

#### **Sample Research Questions**

- Why is America called 'the land of opportunity'?
- Has Puritanism influenced modern American culture?
- If you had lived in America in the 1770s, would you have been a Patriot?
- Is the American Constitution flexible enough?
- Is everyone in America equal?

**Political Science** is the study of the theory and practice of humanity in organizing and controlling the power necessary for group living. Different societies have different methods of human control. The process of government can be studied by description, through comparison and classification of political data.

#### **Sample Research Questions**

- Did the Voting Rights Act of 1965 really matter?
- How does celebrity influence national political campaigns?
- Do Americans today know their rights (the Bill of Rights)?

**Sociology/Social Psychology** is the study of humanity's social needs that necessitate cooperation within and between groups. Groups are constantly changing in nature and function because personality, attitudes, motivation, and behavior of individuals both influence and are influenced by social groups. The sociologists study the development, structure, interaction and collective behavior of organized groups of human beings.

#### **Sample Research Questions**

- What are the consequences of adoption on the adopted child?
- How does divorce impact the minds of children?
- What are the causes of increased street crimes in our society?
- How is organ transplantation viewed in urban areas as compared to rural areas and why?

## **SELECTING A TOPIC**

The most important step in preparing a research paper is choosing a good topic. Select a topic that is included within the six social studies disciplines. Use the guidelines below in choosing your topic.

**1. Avoid topics that are limited.**

Example: How many states are in the United States?

A student cannot write a report on a topic that can be explained in a few words or a sentence.

**2. Avoid topics that are too broad.**

Example: What happened during the Vietnam War?

Topics that are too big make it impossible to condense all the information to cover the topic adequately.

**3. Some topics have no available information.**

Example: Why did Henry Hudson get into trouble with the crew of his ship? We often do not know exactly why people did what they did in the past.

**4. Avoid topics that are confusing because we cannot tell what information is requested.**

Example: What do people of Italy like?

We know that the people of Italy may differ in their likes and dislikes.

**5. Avoid topics on which people throughout the world cannot agree.**

Example: What is the most powerful country in the world?

Your topic should be supported with facts. You should use these facts to form your own opinions.

Better topic: Why might Japan be considered one of the strongest economic powers in the world?

### The research paper should include:

- A brief **introduction** which will often include a review of the existing literature on the topic studied, and explain the rationale of the author's study. This is important because it demonstrates that the student is aware of what others have said about the question and how they are planning to contribute to this existing body of research in a meaningful way (that is, they're not just doing what others have already done).
- A **methodology** section, where authors describe how they gathered, analyzed, and interpreted data. This section is quite detailed, as it's important that other researchers be able to verify and/or replicate these methods. This section may be narrative, list, or time line; but it should be thorough and clear.
- A **results** section describes the outcomes of the data analysis. Charts and graphs illustrating the results are typically included.
- In the **discussion**, authors will explain their interpretation of their results and theorize on their importance to existing and future research.
- **References** are always included. These are or of the sources that the student used to conduct their research and to support their discussion.

*Please be aware, the research paper should be written by the student in their own voice/words. Occasional episodes of direct quotes/excerpts are fine to support/prove the student's conclusion; however, these should be cited. At least 80% of the paper should be in the student's own words. Plagiarized papers will disqualify the entire project.*



**Papers submitted to Muscogee County Social Studies Fair must follow this format.**

**I. Title page**

- A. Name of project (If the name of the project is not the question researched, the question researched should appear as a subtitle.)
- B. Student's name
- C. Grade
- D. Discipline
- E. School name
- F. Teacher's name

**II. Verification/Credit page**

- A. Verification is required if student did not type his or her own paper.

<p>"I verify that this paper, typed by _____, is exactly as I prepared it." Student's Signature: _____</p>
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- B. Additionally, credit should also be given to anyone who has provided assistance in the preparation of the project on the same page.

**III. Statement or Question page (purpose page)**

- A. Clearly state why the topic of research was chosen
- B. Present a question that guided research.

**IV. Methodology page**

- A. Outline the steps followed to complete the social studies project
- B. Students may choose to illustrate the process in the form of a timeline

**V. Research**

- A. Introductory paragraph
  - 1. Clearly state the general theme
  - 2. Basic ideas that will be developed
  - 3. Possibly review referenced literature
- B. Research findings
  - 1. Present information in an orderly, sequential and convincing manner
  - 2. Include adequate and properly balanced information
  - 3. Identify and cite all direct quotations/excerpts from other sources

**VI. Conclusion page**

- A. Present a summary of the arguments and/or key ideas presented in the pages and present a conclusion



## VII. Bibliography

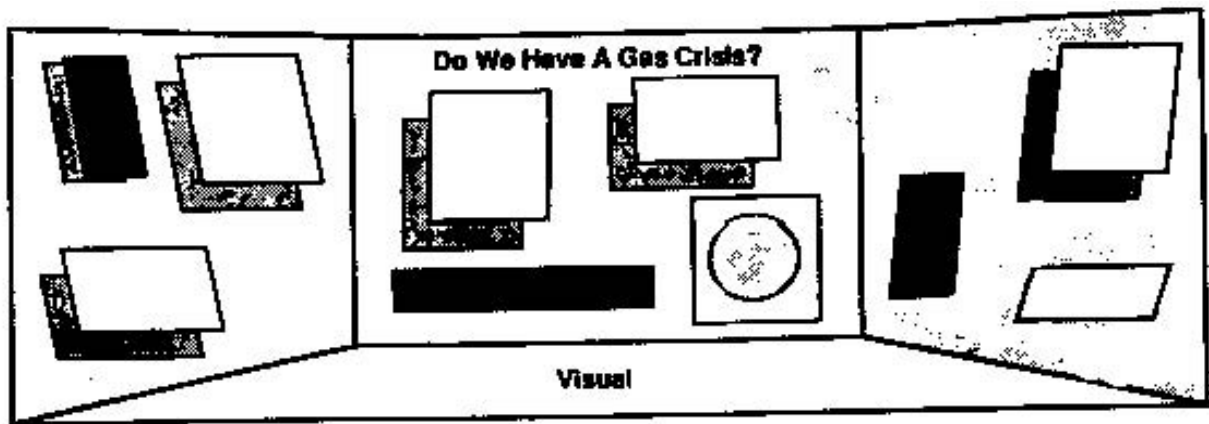
- A. The above components should be bound in some type of folder
- B. Supervising teachers should require MLA, APA, or any other traditional documentation style when listing references and giving credit within the summary paper. The supervising teacher should provide guidelines from a reliable source, and the student should use the chosen style consistently throughout the paper. Sources for manuals for these guidelines are Modern Language Association and the American Psychological Association handbooks. The following website is also useful: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

## PREPARING A TRIBOARD

1. Start gathering materials early for your Triboard. Save a copy of every correspondence concerning request for information about your topic. Have a basket, box, or drawer where you can put magazine articles, pamphlets, etc., that might be useful. Don't throw away anything until you have completed your Triboard.
2. Buy or build your display board.
3. An option is to paint the display board or cover it with fabric or paper.
4. Draw out a plan that uses the materials you have gathered and which include the required parts of a Triboard. You might try drawing several sketches or plans so you can pick the one that best suits your purpose. Keep in mind that an orderly arrangement will bring unity to your work and that a preliminary sketch will help work problems out on paper.
5. Using the preliminary sketch or plan, lay out the letters and other items you have gathered on your Triboard. Be especially careful to leave neat margins and good spacing for your lettering.

HAVE SOMEONE CHECK YOUR LETTERING FOR CORRECT SPELLING!

6. As a final step, glue down the letters and other documentation you have planned for your Triboard.



## **Elements of a Triboard**

Each Triboard must have:

- the research question
- a statement of the methodology used for researching or investigating the topic.
- visuals to illustrate the topic (pictures, charts, graphs, maps, etc).
- the conclusion to the question researched

*\* These may be taken directly from the student's research paper.*

## **Triboard Size**

The Triboard must not be larger than 48" in width and 60" in height. The depth of the project (how much it measures from front to back) should not exceed 30". That 30" includes all the tabletop space allowed for your Triboard and model if you make one.

Due to the fact that the aisles must be kept clear so that people may pass between tables of displays, having models or other materials in front of the table on the floor is highly not allowed. The regulations state that 30" is the maximum depth for each student's social studies project.

## **Display Board Material**

The Triboard should be of "sturdy" materials such as plywood, pegboard, cardboard, or other material that will stand on its own for display purposes. Project Display Board or other commercially prepared cardboard display boards are sold at office or school supply stores. Foam-board or foam-core cut with a center out, or two side cuts for standing are sold at art and office supply stores. Some art supply stores will cut the foam-core for a small cost. You may also cut it yourself by using a utility knife and a metal ruler. You must cut through only the bottom layer of the foam-core. If you cut through both the bottom and top layer, the pieces will separate. The idea is just to make the unit stand on its own.

**ALWAYS HAVE A PARENT HELP OR WATCH WHILE YOU ARE USING A UTILITY KNIFE OR OTHER SHARP OBJECT!**

### **Advantages of covering the boards:**

1. The color of the background may be part of your overall color scheme and may help reinforce your topic.
2. A covered board will not "fight" the surface of the display board itself. For example, the grain of the wood, the texture of the circles in the pegboard, or the lines in the cardboard may compete with your design for attention. The background should be a part of your design and not something that works against it.
3. A covered board helps to bring unity to your work.

### **Materials for covering the board**

1. You may decide to paint the board. That will work well, especially on plywood. Perhaps a latex paint would be easy to use. If you try to paint cardboard, make sure the paint is not too thin and watery. If it is, the cardboard may buckle.
2. Fabric makes a good covering. As long as the cloth is not exceptionally thin, it will cover the board nicely. Felt may be used. When using cloth fabric, you have the possibility of getting enough width not to have to piece the cloth. That way you don't have to deal with seams or ragged edges.
3. Paper may also be used. The bulletin board paper (sulfite paper) may be purchased at teacher supply stores. A variety of colors is usually available.

### **Project Lettering**

Lettering is very important in communicating your topic and your research. Your title should have large, bold lettering to clearly state what your project is all about.

Lettering should be consistent. In other words, keep your letters the same size in the section you are working on. Also, lettering should not be crooked if you are attempting to line your lettering up in straight lines. Uphill or downhill lettering draws the eye to it like a magnet! Take time to measure and space the letters so you will have just the right distance between letters and words. Remember not to let your letters run off the edges or off the top.

### **Lettering possibilities:**

- cut letters from felt or construction paper (either free-hand or die-cut)
- neatly drawn letters colored in with magic marker
- purchased letters such as vinyl or run-ons (sold at office supply stores and drug stores)
- stenciled letters
- computerized lettering
- punch-out letters (sold at teacher supply stores)
- lettering printed on strips of clear tape (special machine needed)

## Design Elements for Creating an Attractive Triboard

A good Triboard will be a work of art in itself. It will reflect a good composition or an orderly arrangement. The following principles of design will help to create good composition.

- *Center of interest:* Do you have something that catches the eye? A center of interest acts to draw in the viewer's attention.
- *Color Scheme:* Using a color scheme to create your Triboard will help to organize your board. The colors you choose may well reflect your topic. For example, red, white, and blue for a patriotic theme; brown and green for ecological issues; black and yellow for strong visual clarity; or shades of blue for a marine topic. *Black or white with another color always makes a strong statement.*
- *Contrast:* Is there enough of a difference between the colors you have chosen to make for easy reading? You do not want your work to fade into the background.
- *Balance:* Check to see that the overall design is carried out throughout the display board. Try to make masses or items evenly distributed so that harmony is achieved.
- *Variety:* Have you brought interest to your topic by using different graphs, charts, maps, pictures, etc.?
- *Rhythm:* An orderly progression is important to good composition. Since we read from left to right, it might be valuable to place the purpose to the left of the board and end with the conclusion on the right. Give the display board a well thought out sense of order, and it will be more easily understood and read by the viewer.
- *Unity:* This principle of design shows oneness or wholeness. Ask yourself if your Triboard works with all the parts coming together as a whole. A Triboard will achieve unity if all the parts seem necessary.

**DO NOT OVERDO YOUR PROJECT!** Your work should be clear and concise.

**KEEP YOUR PROJECT NEAT.** Terrific resources, good research, and wonderful visuals can be ruined by messy work.

## ABSTRACT

An abstract of the project should be included on a 4"x6" card. Information on the abstract provides a description of project title, statement of the problem, methodology, and conclusion. At regional and state competitions, students may give this card to the judges at the beginning of the oral interview.

## SAMPLE ABSTRACT

**Title:** Advertising and Fast Food: How Effective?

**Name(s):** John Jones and Mary Martin

**Statement of the Problem:** The purpose of this project will determine the effectiveness of fast food restaurant advertising.

**Methodology:** Surveys were administered to 138 elementary students asking them to match advertising slogans to company's names. Sales accounts were compared from five fast food restaurants for two months.

**Conclusion(s):** Findings indicated that students matched the slogans and compared sales accounts correctly. The advertisements were determined to be effective.

## USING MODELS

Models add a great deal to a social studies project. They give a three-dimensional interpretation of the topic. Examples of display items that you might include as a part of your projects are: Models, Diagrams, Murals, Historical collections, Dioramas, Recordings, Maps, Artifacts, Slides, Graphs, Films, Charts, Photographs, and PowerPoint.

### **Rules for model use**

The use of commercial models, such as model planes and ships, toy soldiers, toy furniture and dishes, and any other commercial objects, is discouraged. Students are encouraged to be creative in constructing original models.

### **Materials for models**

Modeling clay, wood, Plaster of Paris, papier-mâché, pipe cleaners, tooth picks, Popsicle sticks, Styrofoam, cardboard, paper tubes, fabric (including felt), construction paper, boxes, tissue paper, aluminum foil, and so forth may be used.

### **Collections or objects of value**

Students are encouraged to make replicas, if possible, instead of using valuable collections. For example: Make an arrowhead collection from Plaster of Paris rather than displaying the real thing. Security is always an area of concern. Therefore, students are asked to avoid displaying valuable items.

## USING AUDIO/VISUAL EQUIPMENT

A student may use audio/visual materials to coordinate with his or her topic. Video presentations, slide shows, taped interviews, etc., are examples of the types of presentations that are allowed.

\*Remember, the student will NOT be present during judging at the District Fair (only at Region and State); so the presentation must be on a continuous loop or be able to be easily managed by the judges without the student there. One consideration is to hold off on audio-visual enhancements until the next level of competitions.

\*\*Audio must not be a distraction to the judging of near-by projects.

### **Student responsibility**

If audio-visual equipment is needed for the presentation, the student must furnish that equipment. No school equipment will be loaned out to the student for such purposes. It is the student's responsibility to furnish extension cords and to see that the cords do not cause a safety problem.

### **Total audio-visual time**

The presentations cannot exceed five (5) minutes total time.

### CHECK LIST FOR A COMPLETED PROJECT

CHECKLIST ITEMS	YES	NO
1. Is my research question appropriately stated?		
2. Is my research report clear, concise, and grammatically correct?		
3. Are all my words spelled correctly?		
4. Is my research paper written in my own words/voice?		
5. Does my research paper include:		
a. Title page		
b. Verification page (Include only if someone other than you typed your paper.)		
c. Purpose page		
d. Methodology page		
e. Research		
f. Conclusion page		
g. Bibliography		
h. Credit page (Optional- this page can be used to give recognition to someone was especially helpful to you)		
6. Is my exhibit durable and easily movable?		
7. Is my exhibit appropriate for the particular discipline for which I prepared it?		
8. Does my Triboard include:		
a. A clear statement of the question researched		
b. Purpose		
c. Methodology		
d. Evidence of my research		
e. Conclusion		
9. Is my name and other required information included on both my research paper and my display?		
10. Have I practiced setting up my completed project and done a final examination of my entire display?		
11. Is my exhibit attractive and appealing?		
12. Have I secured audio/visual equipment and extension cords if needed?		
13. Have I created an Abstract Card for my project?		



*This section is pre-filled for district. 10 pts. are given by default. These must be earned at region and state*

## Social Studies Fair Score Sheet

(Judges score each section and circle details needing improvement; star \* superlative characteristics.)

*Points have been pre-filled for Oral Interview since one is not conducted at the district level.*

### I. Oral Interview (maximum 10 points)

(10) 10

- inclusion of abstract on index card with concisely-stated research question/problem, methodology, and conclusion
- knowledge of the content, discipline-specific vocabulary, and research process used in the development of the project
- confidence, poise and projection
- reflective and elaborative thinking as to how the research may be extended and refined

Section I Total 10

### II. Paper (maximum 40 points)

(may be argument or information/explanatory as defined by GADOE social studies literacy standards)

#### Statement of research question/problem (maximum 5 points)

(5) \_\_\_\_\_

- precisely stated
- original or explores new aspect of a topic; appropriate to selected discipline category
- neither too limited nor too broad
- establishes local, state, national or international significance of the topic

#### Methodology (maximum 10 points)

(10) \_\_\_\_\_

- steps in project development follow the norms/conventions of the discipline
- social studies process skills are appropriately applied
- multiple authoritative print, digital, and other primary and secondary sources representing differing points of view are explored

#### Research Findings (maximum 10 points)

(10) \_\_\_\_\_

- claims, counterclaims, reasons, evidence (argument) are logically sequenced, or information is organized to build to a unified whole (informative/explanatory)
- information included is significant, credible, and relevant to the topic
- information included is fair and thorough; there is sufficient data on which to base conclusion
- critical thinking in the interpretation, analysis, and evaluation of information/data is evident
- analysis of primary and/or secondary sources is supported by reference to data or textual evidence in the paper
- writing effectively communicates the selection, integration, and synthesis of the information
- plagiarism or overreliance on one source or type of source is avoided

#### Conclusion (maximum 10 points)

(10) \_\_\_\_\_

- answers the question/addresses the problem
- follows from and supports the argument/ information provided
- articulates implications or significance of the findings

#### Format/Conventions of language (maximum 5 points)

(5) \_\_\_\_\_

- correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling
- formal style and objective tone
- use of technology to produce and publish paper
- bibliography in standard citation format (APA, MLA, Turabian—as assigned by directing teacher)

Section II Total \_\_\_\_\_

### **III. Display (maximum 50 points)**

#### **Inclusion of Required Research Components on Display Board (maximum 35 points)**

- **Research question/problem** used in paper (maximum 5 points) (5) \_\_\_\_\_
- **Methodology** correlated with paper (maximum 10 points) (10) \_\_\_\_\_
- **Research findings** in the form of, text, charts, graphs, photographs, videos, maps, other illustrations related to research question/problem (maximum 10 points) (10) \_\_\_\_\_
- **Conclusion** correlated with paper (maximum 10 points) (10) \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Effectiveness of Display (maximum 10 points)**

(10) \_\_\_\_\_

- appropriate choice/correct use of media or format for data shown
- pleasing visual and/or auditory effect
- conscientiousness of workmanship as manifested by accuracy, neatness and craftsmanship
- creativity or originality (including the absence of commercially-prepared models) in the construction, arrangement, and presentation of the materials
- display and other media within size/time specifications (48"W X 30"D X 60" H/10 minutes)

#### **Correct Use of Conventions of Language (maximum 5 points)**

(5) \_\_\_\_\_

- grammar
- spelling
- punctuation

**Section III Total** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL POINTS (max 100)** \_\_\_\_\_

GCSS Social Studies Fair Entry Form  
Information from Parent/Guardian

This side of the form is required and must be completed in longhand and signed by a parent or legal guardian of each participant in the social studies fair. A page for each student should be attached to the entry form.

1. Parents or Guardians, please **PRINT** the student's name as you would like it spelled on a certificate:

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2. Parents or Guardians, please **CIRCLE** the accurate t-shirt size for your son or daughter; only one shirt is ordered for each participating student.

YM YL AS AM AL AXL AXXL AXXXL

3. Media Permission: The local, regional, and state social studies fairs would like permission to publish the name and photo, project title, school, directing teacher and school system of your child on our websites or in other media should he/she win top awards. The state fair will not publish anything about your son or daughter without permission.

Parent/Guardian, please **CIRCLE** your preference:

Agree to the requested media permission

Do not agree to the requested media permission

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Custodial Parent/Guardian Signature

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Date