

## The 2021 SARSEF Science and Engineering Fair in March will be Virtual



Volunteer judges conduct virtual interviews at the 2020 SARSEF Science and Engineering Fair  
(Photo Credit: Michele McClellan)

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(Tucson, AZ) Every Spring, Southern Arizona celebrates young scientists in grades pre-kindergarten through high school through a week-long science and engineering fair that fills the main hall of the Tucson Convention Center. This school year, SARSEF will keep the tradition alive through a virtual event, ensuring that all communities can participate in science and engineering educational opportunities safely.

This past school year, the SARSEF Fair showcased the work of over 7,000 students. The likelihood of holding an event that large by March 2021 is murky, but by making the call to go virtual now, SARSEF is ensuring that they have time to generate the plan and resources needed to offer an engaging science fair experience in new and exciting ways.

"SARSEF continues to lead by implementing its own principles of innovation and critical thinking," said Wendy Erica Werden, Manager of Community Investment at Tucson Electric Power. "They were one of the first large community events to transition to a successful virtual format at the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, and now they're strategically planning ahead to keep the wellness of the public, students, teachers, judges, and staff at the forefront for 2021. It's one of the reasons TEP continues to support SARSEF year after year – they keep the amazement and curiosity of science, math, and engineering alive."

While the details of the SARSEF Science and Engineering Fair are evolving, several key decisions have already been made.

- The virtual fair will take place between March 1st-6th, 2021.
- Volunteers and judges will still be needed to make the event a success.
- There will be a virtual project floor for the public to explore and enjoy with opportunities to ask questions and interact with students.
- SARSEF will release resources and suggestions throughout the fall for school and district fairs considering virtual submissions and projects.
- Interviews at the high school level will occur virtually.
- Project Judging will occur using the same SARSEF Fair criteria. Grand Awards and Sponsored Awards will be given as usual.
- Finalists will compete for over \$100,000 of cash and prizes, including scholarships and trips.

Beyond the fair, SARSEF is providing free virtual opportunities for students, teachers and parents to explore science and engineering throughout the coming school year.

"We are beyond impressed with the work that teachers and parents are doing to make learning possible this school year," Brooke Meyer, Director of Education and Innovation at SARSEF shared. "We're here to provide free support at all levels as they navigate how to make science and engineering education engaging in virtual environments."

Want to learn more? PreK through 8<sup>th</sup>-grade inquiries can be sent to [brooke@sarsef.org](mailto:brooke@sarsef.org) and high school inquiries can be sent to [margaret@sarsef.org](mailto:margaret@sarsef.org).

**About SARSEF:**

<http://sarsef.org>

*SARSEF was formed in 1955 in an effort to increase student interest in the field of science. The mission of SARSEF is to teach Arizona's Pre-K-12 grade students critical thinking and problem-solving skills as they participate in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) through inquiry-based learning and research.*

*SARSEF accomplishes this mission through a variety of programming including SARSEF Research Fair Week, educational outreach programs with an emphasis on underrepresented populations in the sciences, teacher professional development, ACES Camp for Middle School girls, Racing the Sun, and Arizona STEM Adventure.*

*Over 795 professionals in the community volunteer for SARSEF each year, and 145 organizations support its programs financially.*

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