COQUITLAM PUBLIC LIBRARY

Science Expo 2026

Celebrate knowledge and discovery with us at the **Coquitlam Public Library Science Expo (CPLSE)** for elementary, middle and high school students. The free competition is **open to kids and teens throughout the Tri-Cities, including Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Anmore and Belcarra.**

Scheduled for **Saturday, May 9, 2026,** the Expo invites science-loving students to exhibit their amazing experiments and innovations for parents, judges and members of the public. For the second year in a row, we are holding the event **at the Coquitlam Campus of Douglas College, 1250 Pinetree Way.**

At the end of the Expo, judges will select prize winners in three grade categories: Middle, Junior and Senior. Judges will provide feedback to Elementary participants about their projects but will not rank or compare them. However, organizers will distribute gift cards to participants in all categories, including Elementary. That means everyone will leave the event with a prize to take home!

This document includes rules, a schedule for the **Coquitlam Public Library Science Expo (CPLSE)**, and tips about preparing your experiment or innovation.

Join us to share your scientific knowledge and to inspire others!

Eligibility:

1. **Students who live and/or go to school in the Tri-Cities are eligible to participate.**
2. Students must be in gr. 4-12.
3. Projects may be worked on by one or two students, known as exhibitors.
4. An exhibitor may be involved with one project only.
5. Exhibitors must follow the rules and **CPLSE Regulations on pages 3 and 4**.

Grade categories:

Each project will be assigned a category based on the grade level of its student exhibitor(s):

Elementary: 4-5	Junior: 9-10
Middle: 6-8	Senior: 11-12

We will include as many project proposals as possible. However, we must place limits based both on the space available inside the venue, and the amount of time needed for

judging each category. Because of these limits, we may be forced to say “no” to some registrants.

If necessary, we may contact the teachers acting as liaisons so we can make informed choices about which projects to admit, and which to reject.

Types of Project:

All projects will fall under one of two categories:

> **Experiment:** Involves testing a hypothesis under controlled conditions, displaying the results in an informative manner and explaining their relevancy.
>
> **Innovation:** Involves creating new knowledge, solutions, ideas or technologies, and sharing information about their value.

We are unable to accept any ***studies,*** which are another type of science project. The **CPLSE** will include **experiments** and **innovations** only.

Registration

To participate in the **CPLSE**, exhibitors must follow the steps described below.

- Wait for the registration period to begin. **Registration officially starts at 9 am on Tuesday, Jan. 13.**
    a. At that time, the online Registration form will go live.
- Complete the online Registration form, which we will place on the Science Expo home page: https://coqlibrary.ca/science-expo/
    a. Submissions deadline: Monday, March 16, 2026
- Wait for a response from Science Expo organizers
    a. It will come between Monday, March 16 and Monday, March 30.
    b. If your project is approved, we will tell you, and provide a link to **the consent form,** which a parent / guardian must complete.
    c. If your project is rejected, we will tell you. Please do not take it personally! It is a sign that we have received more submissions than we can manage.

Please note:

- The CPLSE will include as many exhibits as it can. Due to space limitations and a desire to keep the event a manageable length, the CPLSE may not be able to include everyone who registers.
- Decisions to include or exclude exhibits will be made by Coquitlam Public Library and Douglas College staff.
- All decisions made by staff are final.

- Anyone whose exhibit is not accepted will be notified by e-mail or phone no later than Monday, March 30.
- On the day of the Expo, award recipients will be chosen by a panel of judges, including some from the science faculty at Douglas College. The judges' decisions are final.
- Winning exhibitors will receive medals or trophies that will be distributed by CPLSE partners on the day of the event. Most will receive prizes during the awards announcements. A description of prizes is on pages 5-6.

CPLSE Regulations: Your Experiment or Innovation …

- **Must feature a folded, three-part backboard** explaining your project
  - This is the classic "tri-fold board"
- Must conform to the CPLSE's **ethics standards** (see below) and **safety regulations**
- May not include flames, poisonous substances, or anything that goes boom!
  - During experimentation, the use of any chemicals or acids must be approved by the teacher and the experiment must be completed under adult supervision
- May not include experimentation or data drawn from human subjects or other vertebrates
  - Anyone wanting to do work with cell tissues must get pre-approval by contacting Chris Miller at 604-554-7339, or cmiller@coqlibrary.ca
    - If approved, cell tissue work must be completed under the supervision of a teacher/mentor
- May include the use of plants
- Experimentation with fungi, bacteria, protozoa, insects, or invertebrates is permissible if approved by a teacher
- Remember, **no studies** are allowed!
- If you have questions about any of the exclusions, please contact:
  - Chris at cmiller@coqlibrary.ca or 604-554-7339

Ethics Standards

- Your project must be original – you must have conducted the research that you present in your exhibit
- All students who worked on the project, and any teachers who helped develop it, must be acknowledged
- Any ideas borrowed from other sources must be acknowledged

- You must be honest about your results, even if they are different from what you expected

Safety Regulations for May 9 Display

Structural and Mechanical Safety

- Make sure that your backboard or display is stable
- Do not leave sharp edges of objects exposed
- Do not leave machines with moving parts exposed
- Do not use any pressurized vessels or gas-filled cylinders

Chemical Safety

- Do not use flammable, toxic or dangerous chemicals
- If your experiment uses chemicals that could be dangerous, please use innocuous substitutes such as water and salt instead – tag the substances to show what they represent

On the Day of the CPLSE …

On Saturday, May 9, please take your project to:

Douglas College

Coquitlam Campus
1250 Pinetree Way
Coquitlam, BC V3B 7X3

Set-up will be in the main building (known as Building A/B). Participants should arrive between 9:30 and 10:15 am. After entering Building A/B, they should proceed to our check-in desk. Volunteers will be stationed by entrances to point participants in the right direction. Check-in will take less than a minute. After a volunteer walks you to your table, you can begin unpacking and setting up your project. We are hoping all exhibitors will have their projects ready for judging by 10:30.

The hour after that – from 10:30 to 11:30 am – will be a designated judging period. The public will not be allowed inside to view the projects until 11:30. At that point, we will welcome the general public into the building.

We will share information about parking with parents and participants in advance.

Judging Criteria

Judges will visit your table during the Expo to evaluate your work. When you meet a judge, you will spend 3 to 6 minutes describing your project to him or her, depending on its complexity. If you are working with another student, try to divide the time as evenly

as possible between you and your partner, so that each of you can describe a different aspect of your experiment or exhibit. After you finish, the judge may have questions for one or both of you.

The judges will evaluate your project based on the following areas:

Scientific Thought (50%): Is every aspect of your exhibit grounded in science? Did you come up with scientific solutions to the problems you faced?

Creativity (33%): How much thought and originality went into your exhibit? Did you use a canned science fair activity, tweak an idea that you read about, or come up with the entire experiment or innovation on your own?

Communication (17%): How well do you describe what you have done, and why it is important? This area will evaluate written and illustrated materials (such as your backboard), as well as your ability to talk and answer questions about your exhibit.

Speaking with Judges

When a judge visits your table, be prepared to discuss why you chose your project and what you hoped to discover or achieve with it. Explain your hypothesis, and what you thought would happen when you tested it. If your exhibit builds on research conducted by others, please describe the earlier research, and say why you felt inspired to carry it forward.

After that, discuss the nature of your experiment – what you actually did to test your hypothesis – and the results you gathered, which may or may not have been close to what you expected. Place these results in context by providing a conclusion. What did you learn?

Follow with analysis including possible sources of error, things that future research could test, and how your test results could make a difference in the world. Why was your experiment important, in other words?

End with an acknowledgment of the sources you used for research, and the people who helped you, including fellow students, family members and teachers.

Please note: If you are working with a partner, both of you should discuss the project with judges when they visit your table.

AWARDS & PRIZES

All exhibitors who do not win 1st, 2nd or 3rd place in a category will receive a gift card for participating.

Winners of 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in the Middle, Junior and Senior categories will receive small trophies or medals in addition to prizes. The prize list includes tickets to science venues, higher-valued gift cards and scholarships.

<u>Note:</u> in cases where two partners win a prize, we will split the amount evenly, with each student getting a half share.

The list of prizes is as follows:

Senior category (gr. 11 and 12):

- 1st place: $2000 in scholarship money
- 2nd place: $1500 in scholarship money
- 3rd place: $1000 in scholarship money

Junior category (gr. 9 and 10):

- 1st place: $200 in gift cards
- 2nd place: $150 in gift cards
- 3rd place: $100 in gift cards

Middle category (gr. 6, 7 and 8):

- 1st place: Two Canon IVY portable printers with paper, approximate value $240
- 2nd place: Four tickets to Telus World of Science, approximate value $130
- 3rd place: Four tickets to H.R. MacMillan Space Centre, approximate value $100

Elementary category (gr. 4 and 5):

- Only the gift card for participation

Senior category scholarships will be administered by the Coquitlam Foundation. Junior category gift cards are for Coquitlam Centre Mall.

Thanks for your interest in the event, and good luck! We look forward to celebrating science with you on May 9, 2026.