

WESO Wizards

Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad

May 14, 2016, at Pioneer High School
For students in Gr. 2-5

The 2016 Emerson Science Olympiad Team will be forming after the break. Please read the questions/answers below for more information.

What is Science Olympiad? Science Olympiad is a national program in which students learn science through active, hands-on participation, with an emphasis on problem-solving and team-building skills. Students from participating schools compete in events designed to be fun, exciting, and challenging. Some events require knowledge of science facts and concepts, while others rely on scientific processes, skills, or applications. Students with varying interests, abilities, and skills can all participate. The team spirit and good sportsmanship that students develop will be beneficial throughout their lives.

How is the team selected? Each school is allowed to fill this year's events with students in grades 2-5 (around 30+ students per grade). The Emerson team will be made of many small groups, organized by grade level and/or event. Students express their level of interest or willingness to participate in several of the events available for their grade. A huge attempt will be made to place them in one of their top picks. Students may compete in more than one event if space (and coaching) is available. Having a parent willing to coach an event, level of student interest in the event, willingness of a parent to volunteer on May 14th, and the schedule of WESO events on May 14th will all be factors in determining which event(s) each student will compete in. **Your flexibility is much appreciated as placing students is a complicated process!**

How do students sign up? Read over the list of events and their descriptions for your grade level on the attachment or the WESO website. Fill out the

online Google Form by **December 21st**. Students registering after that date will be able to join the team only if there are open events.

Does it cost anything to participate? The Emerson science budget covers the WESO registration fee and the cost of any materials coaches need to purchase. Students do purchase a team t-shirt (approximately \$6.00) that must be worn at the Olympiad (last year's shirt will work as long as it fits!).

Can students be in the same event as last year? It is possible to be in the same event two years in row; however, I would encourage students to be open to participating in many different events. **Some events are very popular, and I would like to give a variety of students the opportunity to try them.**

Who are the Event Coaches? Coaches are parents or other adults who volunteer to hold practices to teach students the rules and scientific concepts for their respective events (along with problem-solving and team-building skills). Coaches will hold 1-4 practices a month (depending on the event) from mid-February until mid-May. Coaches do not need to be scientists for most events; it is a great way for parents to spend time with their own child while fostering enjoyment of science and social interactions among their peers. Depending on the preference and availability of the coach and students, teams may meet during lunch, after school, in the evening, or on weekends. Some teams practice at Emerson while others meet at a coach's home. Information and experiences from last year's coaches will be helpful to us this year.

What do all parents/guardians need to do? Science Olympiad is made possible through the volunteer efforts of parents and community members. **A parent (or other designated adult) of each student on the team needs to volunteer in some capacity either prior to or on the day of the competition.** Volunteer opportunities include supervising an event, coaching an event, and/or covering a volunteer shift on May 13th or 14th. Parents/guardians also need to make sure students attend practices and exhibit good sportsmanship and teamwork at all practices and at the competition.

What is the day of the event like? On May 14th, Emerson's team (along with teams from approximately **thirty-seven** other elementary schools) will gather at Pioneer High School. **Each grade will have its own competition**

time frame and its own awards ceremony during a 3-4 hour span on Saturday. Last year the awards ceremonies were as follows: Grade 2 at 11:00am; Grade 3 at 2:00pm; Grade 4 at 5:00pm; and Grade 5 at 8:00pm. Certain events (Water Rockets and On Target) are open to viewing, but most take place in classrooms with no spectators (or coaches) allowed. There are open events (hands-on activities open to all kids attending WESO) and food sales throughout the entire day. Last year the top-eight teams for each event were recognized at the awards ceremony.

How do I get more information? Contact Emerson head coach Kelly Vohland via e-mail kvohland@emerson-school.org or phone (734) 665-5662 ext. 539. You should also visit the official WESO website at the following address: <https://sites.google.com/a/aaps.k12.mi.us/weso-wizards/>

