

Science and Technology Expo

*John F. Kennedy School
Windsor, Connecticut*

For many science teachers across America, getting students to memorize periodic tables and the different kinds of igneous rocks can be a hard sell. But after last year's Science and Technology Expo, students at John F. Kennedy School are eager to dig in. Since the Expo, they've come to a much stronger understanding of how science connects to their everyday lives.

Kennedy's Action Team for Partnership (ATP) developed the event to support the school's science goal on its action plan. For the first time in recent years, the 2007-08 state achievement test asked students questions about science. Teachers at John F. Kennedy wanted to make sure their students were prepared. They decided to bolster the science curriculum at the school with activities that helped students understand material that could appear on the test. The Science and Technology Expo was the largest event associated with that goal.

Members of the ATP started planning early. They contacted as many parents and local businesses as they could think of that might be willing to donate some science-related services to the Expo. In early September, ATP members sent home a "save the date" note, letting parents know about the January Expo. Over the next few months, a few reminders went home with students along with ideas and notes about science activities that parents and students could do together at home. Ten days before the Expo, school staff had students make morning announcements about the event over the loudspeaker system.

On the evening of January 25th, 125 students and 75 parents came to the school cafeteria to witness the culmination of the ATP's planning and preparation. Fifteen exhibitors manned booths around the room that showcased a wide variety of science professions and industries. The school nurse, a parent who had a local chiropractor business, and a dentist

ran a booth about health science professions. The PTO's table explained the scientific process and the benefits of recycling. The high school robotics team brought their prized robots to the event. Kids and Critters, an animal lovers group associated with the high school, ran a small petting zoo where students were allowed to touch and hold various snakes. There were also representatives from the Vintage Radio and Communications Museum of Connecticut and from Dinosaur State Park, a landmark area where visitors can hike around fossilized remains of ancient creatures.

The event cost \$125 to produce and promote, from the promotional posters to refreshments served at the Expo. A family resource center associated with the school provided the funding.

Administrators from the district were so impressed by the Expo that they are considering holding a larger version of the event next year and include all four Windsor elementary schools.

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