

Inquiry Fair 2017 !

Over 60 students showed off their projects at the 2017 Inquiry Fair, Friday March 10th in the Piner High library. Projects ranged from exploring how microwaves work to creating the best protocol for creating geodes and crystals. Students are encouraged to use the Inquiry fair as their start to hone their research skills in preparation for our STEM certificate capstone Level 3 projects- and this year there were many projects that have this potential.

We were honored to have community evaluators interview each student group for 10 minutes as they explained their research methods and reflected on what their next steps would be. Jessica Progulske from Sonoma County of Office Education was impressed with the presentation skills of the students- stating they were able to communicate their ideas clearly, maintain eye contact and use an appropriate level of vocabulary. Michelle Mazzeo from the California International Studies Project at Sonoma State enjoyed the variety of projects that the students worked on, especially impressed with the artistic artifacts- student made videos of cell division, photographic collages that represent the variety of human race and color graphs from student surveys. Dr. Dennis Mangan, a retired NIH scientist challenged students to think critically about their process of inquiry. He acknowledged their creative approaches while providing feedback into the strengths as well as areas for improvement as a means to boost their research skills for future projects.

Teachers that participated in sending students to the fair included Mr. Mantoani, Ms. Erickson and Ms. Barcelon. Mr. Proshek took an interesting approach this year by assigning the topic of Genetics and Race to his Honors Bio students . The students were given the inquiry question, "How can we use science to make people aware of the truth about race?". The students were able to choose how they went about developing a product to answer the question. Students provided many different perspectives and showed how race is a social construct without a biological basis. They also explored how falsely using science to justify race categories has led to different racial groups living oppressed experiences. Ms. Lecus had her Health Science & Biotech 2 students research a class related topics with projects on ankle sprains, hypertension, flu shots and concussions- just to name a few.

The process of inquiry is a school wide goal and the staff has worked hard to create a rubric and make this a cross curricular experience. Nothing speaks better to this attribute than the inclusion of our Special Education students supported by Ms. Delzell. The projects that came from her class included:

- How do microwaves work
- Cause and treatments of lung cancer
- Breastfeeding vs formula for infants

However most impressive was the project from her class titled **How does Music affect the Brain, Mood and Behavior ?** by Aimie Jagggers and Sandra Torres. Aimie had the most colorful board and was eager and enthusiastic to share her results. Another project worth

mentioning was the inquiry into how different reeds affected the output of a saxophone by Jessica Alejo who delighted the judging team by actually playing her saxophone.

Students that participate will get achievement credit for 1 of the 2 required activities for their Level I STEM certificate as well as being awarded traditional ribbons based on their evaluation scores and participant ribbons such as this ! A John Jordan foundation grant was responsible for obtaining ribbons, supplies for projects and a complimentary lunch for all participants.