



2026 DeKalb Elementary Science Olympiad (DESO 2026)



DeKalb County School District



Key Dates for DESO 2026

Join Us!

- Grades 3 - 5
- Free for DCSD!
- Varsity & JV
- 27 Events Offered
- Do them all or do a few
- Parade and Fun!
- SCIENCE & SKILLS!

Tentative

Event Date:

**Saturday
March 28
2026**

DeKalb



**Elementary Science
Olympiad**

Registration Deadline:

FRIDAY

December 5th



What is DESO?

A Video Introduction

<https://youtu.be/IP5vJ9NB15g>



Video link

<https://youtu.be/IP5vJ9NB15g>



Olympiad Fun



- All students take part in our ***Opening Parade!***
- Schools have hang-out areas in the ***Cafeteria.***
- Kids let off steam before the ***Awards Ceremony.***

Olympiad Location for 2026



Ronald McNair Middle School

2190 Wallingford Dr, Decatur, GA 30032

Olympiad Location for 2026



DeKalb County's newest middle school facility . . .



Event Information

Event Categories,
Descriptions, and
Manuals / Packets



Event Categories

We offer **27 events** this year in three categories. Most events last about 45 minutes at the Olympiad, although “Bring It” events can be shorter.

BRING or MAKE IT

Students follow design guidelines to make something in advance . . .

. . . OR build a structure at the Tournament.

PENCIL & PAPER

Students take a quiz about the event subject.

They usually work with a partner VERY quietly.

There is a single score.

CHALLENGE

Students complete a task based on skills they have previously practiced.

The Tournament event will feature items that are **not** announced in advance.

BRING or MAKE IT

Barge Building

Bridge Building
(with Popsicle Sticks)

Chopper Challenge

Egg Drop
(with Packing Peanuts)

Gummy Bear Launch

Paddle Boats

Paper Rockets

Pastamobile

Straw Tower

Water Rockets

2026 Events

No Changes
from 2025

PENCIL & PAPER

Backyard Biologist

Deep Blue Sea

Disease Detectives

Don't Bug Me

No Bones About It

Rock Hound

Simple Machines

Starry, Starry Night

Weather or Not

CHALLENGE

Cool It

Crime Busters

Data Crunchers

Grab a Gram

Mystery Architecture

Picture This

The 24 Game

Which Way's North

Elementary Science Olympiad



Competitive Tournament RULES MANUAL



Division A
GRADES K-6

6th Edition
SCIENCE OLYMPIAD, INC. © 2016

OFFICIAL MANUAL

Supplied to NEW
DESO schools
by
Fernbank Science
Center



Exploring the World of Science

**DeKalb Elementary Science Olympiad
2026 Event Packet**



**DESO
EVENT PACKET**

PDF Version emailed
in late November.

Physical Copy sent
by DCSD courier (or
delivered) in early
December

DeKalb Special Events are NOT in the Manual

EGG DROP with PACKING PEANUTS

DeKalb County
Modified Event

2026 Olympiad

Description: This event tests students' ability to build a protective device using packing peanuts and paper that will prevent a raw egg from breaking when dropped.

Number of Participants: 2

Approximate Time: 45 minutes

The Competition:

1. Each pair of students will receive:

- 20 biodegradable packing peanuts
- 2 pieces of 8-1/2" x 11" printer paper
- 30 cm (approximately 12 inches) of standard masking tape
- 1 pair of scissors
- 1 egg in a sealed baggie and cup (provided upon request at any time after building begins)

2. Students will have 20 minutes to build a device to cushion the egg and prevent it from cracking or breaking when it is dropped.

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Practice and Preparation

IS there any
HELP?

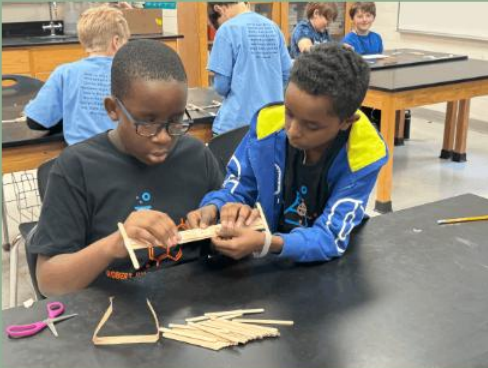
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Fernbank's DESO website



DeKalb Elementary Science Olympiad (DESO)

Join us for DESO 2026



<http://fsc.fernbank.edu/scienceolympiad.html>

Helping Students Prepare

- Every *student* and *parent* should have a *photocopy of the Event Description* from the Event Packet for assigned events.
- In most cases, the Description explains science content students should study and practice.
- Some events are harder, and additional help is really useful. Fernbank offers *Practice Tip Sheets* and *Instruction Videos* for these!

Tip Sheets!

Videos!

Tip Sheets and Videos

http://www.fernbank.edu/PDF/ScienceOlympiad/so_practice.pdf

2025 DeKalb Elementary Science Olympiad Event Clarifications

Issue Date: 11-22-2024 ORIGINAL

For each event, use only the photocopied Event Descriptions you received from your Head Coach.

Event Name	DeKalb Rules Clarification	Practice Resource from Fernbank Science Center
1. Backyard Biologist (DeKalb Modified Event)	Use only the DeKalb Modified rules provided to your Head Coach. Tie Breaker: Pre-selected questions.	TIP SHEET
2. Barge Building	Teams receive a single 15 cm square sheet of standard aluminum foil. Teams that damage or tear their 1 st sheet may request a 2 nd , but they will be ranked below teams using only a single sheet. Students may bring and use their own scissors and ruler; we do not provide these for this event. Students must calculate their estimate for predicted weight by hand (no calculator) and receive a score for this portion of the event. We provide students with the mass of each piece. Students should practice converting their predicted mass into the corresponding number of pieces . Time permitting, students may load their barge for testing.	VIDEO on YouTube

Example Tip Sheet

Practice Tips: Crime Busters



PAPER CHROMATOGRAPHY: Practice with your teacher or at home with a parent.

Chromatography is a way to separate materials from a mixture. The ink in a black pen is a good example of a mixture that can be separated this way. Although they look black to our eyes, most black inks are comprised of pigments of many different colors, such as purple and blue! By making a chromatogram, you can see the differences between different brands of black ink pens by separating their various pigments.

The Crime Busters event includes paper chromatography as one part of the competition. This is a useful part to practice in advance!

Materials: Your team will receive the following at our DeKalb Olympiad:

- 1 piece of filter paper (already cut into a rectangular shape)
- 1 set of pens (same color, different brands)
- 1 plastic beaker
- 1 pencil or Popsicle stick
- 1 small plastic cup



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Competition Categories

Varsity and JV details

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Varsity

VARSITY Competition Category:

- DSCD schools may bring either **one** or **two** separate teams.
- Each team may contain up to **20** students in grades **3–5**.
No more than 9 or 10 5th graders, please. STATE imposes a more significant limitation: a **maximum of 8** in grades 5-6 combined for a team of **20**.
- Non DCSD schools are **not eligible** for this category.
- Only VARSITY teams will be eligible for GA ESO slots. By default, we award state slots to **schools** and you may pick and choose members from either team. At your request, we can score and rank your teams **separately**.

Junior Varsity (JV)

JUNIOR VARSITY Competition Category:

- DCSD schools may bring either **one** or **two** teams.
- Each team may contain up to **15** students in grades **3–5**.
- Non-DCSD schools may participate in this category for a \$30 fee on a space-available basis.
- JV has separate awards from Varsity but will **not** be eligible to advance to the GA ESO.

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Scheduling

Team Groups,
Event Sets, and
Student Assignments

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Team Groups

Each team is assigned to a group. Groups do events in a fixed sequence.

Some schools bring 2 teams; they may be in different groups.

	Group A	Group B	Group C
9 AM	Event Set 1	Event Set 2	Event Set 3
10 AM	Event Set 2	Event Set 3	Event Set 1
11 AM	Event Set 3	Event Set 1	Event Set 2

Event Sets for 2026

Event Set 1

No Changes
from 2025

1	Backyard Biologist	GA ESO	Pencil & Paper
2	Barge Building	GA ESO	Bring It or Make It
3	Bridge Building with Popsicle Sticks	GA ESO	Bring It or Make It
5	Chopper Challenge	GA ESO	Bring It or Make It
4	Cool It		Challenge
6	Crime Busters	GA ESO	Challenge
18	Pastamobile		Bring It or Make It
20	Rock Hound	GA ESO	Pencil & Paper
27	Which Way's North?	GA ESO	Challenge

Assign each student (or pair) to only ***one event*** in this Event Set.

Event Sets for 2026

Event Set 2

No Changes
from 2025

7	Data Crunchers	GA ESO	Challenge
8	Deep Blue Sea	GA ESO	Pencil & Paper
9	Disease Detectives	GA ESO	Pencil & Paper
11	Egg Drop with Packing Peanuts	GA ESO	Bring It or Make It
19	Picture This		Challenge
21	Simple Machines		Pencil & Paper
24	The 24 Game		Challenge
25	Water Rockets	GA ESO	Bring It or Make It
26	Weather or Not	GA ESO	Pencil & Paper

Assign each student (or pair) to only ***one event*** in this Event Set.

Event Sets for 2026

Event Set 3

No Changes
from 2025

10	Don't Bug Me		Pencil & Paper
12	Grab a Gram	GA ESO	Challenge
13	Gummy Bear Launch	GA ESO	Bring It or Make It
14	Mystery Architecture	GA ESO	Challenge
15	No Bones About It	GA ESO	Pencil & Paper
16	Paddle Boats		Bring It or Make It
17	Paper Rockets	GA ESO	Bring It or Make It
22	Starry, Starry Night	GA ESO	Pencil & Paper
23	Straw Tower		Bring It or Make It

Assign each student (or pair) to only ***one event*** in this Event Set.

Scheduling Details and Flexibility

- Typically, each student participates in **3** events, usually with a partner, but they can do fewer.
- Teams do ***not*** need to participate in every event. You will tell us you choose to do in January.
- We ***allow substitutions!*** If someone discovers a soccer conflict on tournament morning, the coach may make a substitution that day.
- Our goal is to make this competition work for you and offer a fun, fair learning opportunity.

Suggestions for Assigning Students to Events

Assigning Events (1)

Simplest approach:

- Assign “event buddies” (Most events allow 1 or 2, although *Picture This* requires 2.)
- Allow buddy pairs to select one event from Event Set 1, then do Set 2, etc.
- Encourage / require buddy pairs to pick one event from each category:

CHALLENGE

PAPER & PENCIL

BRING or MAKE IT

Assigning Events (2)

Strategy and Considerations:

- Do you want to have *alternates* for practice?
- Are you trying to emphasize *STEM* or *hands-on* skills or techniques?
- Does it make your life easier to have more students practicing *fewer* events? (2 teams!)
- Do you really want to make it to state? (Focus on GA ESO events!)

Assigning Events (3)

- Each **team** gets to do each event **once**. (Schools with 2 teams may do each event **twice**.)
- You do **NOT** need to compete in every event. You may have **two small teams** so you can **focus on fewer events** to practice.
- You may **substitute** at any time within a team. Please do not worry about absent students on the day of the Olympiad.

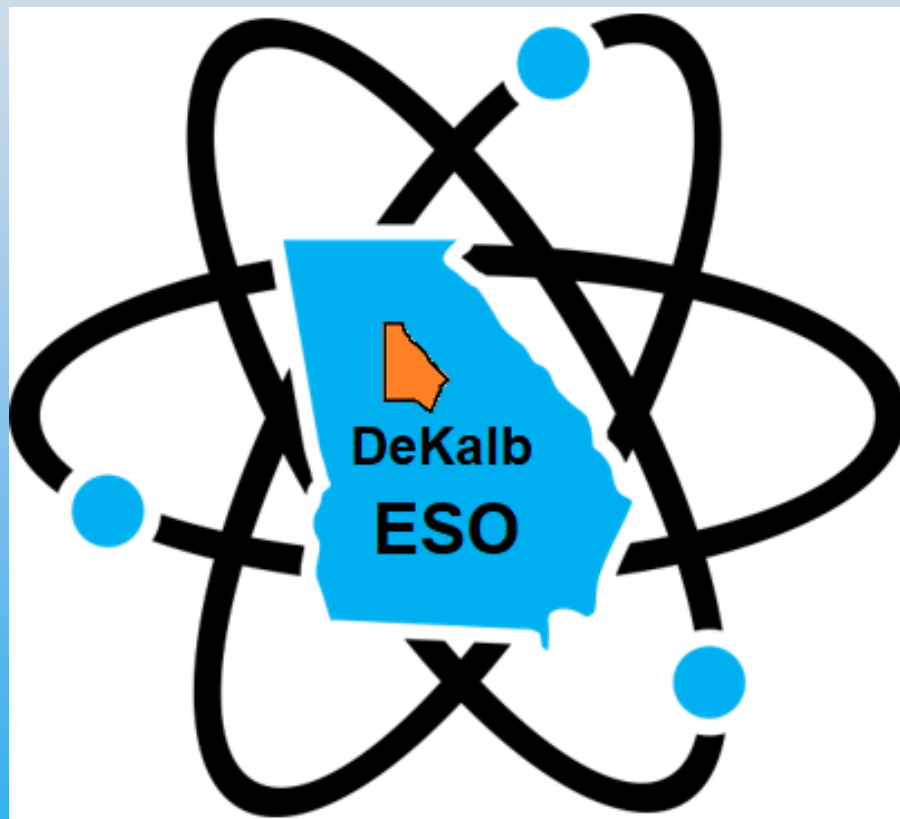


Fernbank **Science Center**

Where Science Becomes an Adventure



See you in March!



State Level Competition

Georgia ESO

- DeKalb will likely get 4 entries to the GA ESO this year.
- Only Varsity teams are eligible to move on to State. Schools in the JV or New & Small competition categories are not eligible to earn state spots.
- GA ESO allows only **one** team from a school.
- By default, we **combine** your team scores and use the higher place to rank your school. Head Coaches may request to have their teams ranked separately.
- Rankings for GA ESO are based only on events offered at **State**.

Important Notes:

- We suggest no more than 9 or 10 5th graders per team; GA ESO restricts you to 8 students in 5th grade or up to 6 in 6th grade students, with no more than 8 total in 5th and 6th grade combined.
- Head Coaches take care of all details for the State Olympiad: registration, fee payments, event assignments, etc.
- Head Coaches may assign students to **any event** in the GA ESO, even if students did not compete in that event at DeKalb's Regional event.
- Schools do NOT need to attend the State Olympiad. If you earn a spot but cannot attend, we will designate an alternate.



Georgia ESO website



The image shows a screenshot of the Georgia Science Teachers Association website. At the top left is the logo for the Georgia Science Teachers Association, which includes the text "Georgia Science Teachers Association" and a graphic of the state of Georgia with a science atom and laboratory glassware inside. To the right of the logo is the tagline "Supporting Excellent Science Teaching for Georgia". Below this is a dark blue navigation bar with the following menu items: "Home", "Conference", "GSE Phenomena", "eObservations", and a hamburger menu icon. The main content area features a collage of four photographs: a science fair on a lawn, a group of students in purple and green shirts celebrating with a trophy, a large audience in a lecture hall, and a wide shot of a large indoor arena filled with people. A white banner with the text "GA Elementary Science Olympiad" is overlaid across the center of the collage.

Georgia Science Teachers Association

Supporting Excellent Science Teaching for Georgia

Home Conference GSE Phenomena eObservations

GA Elementary Science Olympiad

<https://www.georgiascienceteacher.org/GAESO/>

DESO vs GA ESO


Alignment of Event Sets

This table is only needed by Varsity teams that earn a spot at State.

The GA ESO has four sessions, whereas we can only offer three. Consequently, we must reassign the events in GA ESO Set 4.

You may assign students to GA ESO events in any way you see fit. You are not required to have the same participants.

The GA ESO organizers will provide your team's sequence of event sets.

		GA ESO 2025	DeKalb County School District
		At the State Olympiad, events are grouped in 4 sets. All events in a set take place concurrently for your team.	DESO 2026
Backyard Biologist	GA ESO Set 1		DESO Event Set 1
Barge Building			
Bridge Building with Popsicle Sticks			
Chopper Challenge			
Crime Busters			
Rock Hound	GA ESO Set 4		DESO Event Set 2
Data Crunchers	GA ESO Set 2		
Deep Blue Sea			
Disease Detectives			
Egg Drop with Packing Peanuts			
Water Rockets	GA ESO Set 4		DESO Event Set 3
Weather or Not			
Grab a Gram	GA ESO Set 3		
Gummy Bear Launch			
Mystery Architecture			
No Bones About It	GA ESO Set 4		
Paper Rockets			
Starry, Starry Night			