Thank you so much for volunteering to be an event leader for the Iowa Science Olympiad. This letter will help you construct an event that will be in accordance with the event rules and provide a challenging and fun event for the students. If you have any questions regarding your particular event, please don’t hesitate to contact me. All judges are to register in room 327 in Peterson Hall about a half-hour before the event. You will receive a badge and an event roster during check-in.

As an event leader, you are a vital part of the competition. You provide fair, inquiry-based challenges in which the students participate. Every event awards first through third place medals for the students. Also, each event counts equally in the overall score for the school’s team. The first place winner will advance to the National Tournament held in May in Augusta, Georgia.

The first thing you need is a copy of the current rules and regulations for your event. I’ve included that document in this mailing. It is very important that all students adhere to the rules and regulations of the event. You do not have to cover every topic or concept in the rules. However, please avoid including concepts which are not specifically covered in the rules. Students have not prepared for topics not presented in the rules and will be disappointed if they are in the competition. I’ve also included tests from previous competitions which you may use as a guideline in constructing your exam.

You will be running the same event for Division B (Middle School) and Division C (High School). Usually the rules for both divisions are very similar, but you should double-check to make sure this is accurate. I would suggest using the same event for both, but making slight adjustments so the event is appropriate for each level. This will allow for easier preparation and grading.

There are two possible formats you may use to design your event:

- Method One- Rotational Format
  This method is much easier in some ways since the teams involved rotate through the event answering 1-4 questions per station. This works really well because all that needs to be graded is one answer sheet per team.
You will need to make sure that each station requires the same amount of time. There are usually 14-16 stations with 2-3 minutes at each station. If one team finishes their station early, simply have that team wait until another station is free. It is wise to number the stations so that the students know if they have completed each station. It is advisable to tape the question sheets at each station. Teams must be warned that anyone tampering with the materials in an effort to confuse or delay other teams will be disqualified from the event.

- Method Two- Stationary Format
  This method is very similar to the more typical test that students are accustomed to, but it should include hands-on participation as much as possible. This event should include graphs, diagrams to interpret, observations to make or questions about a specific demonstration for the entire group. This format is usually slower to grade, as the answers are usually longer than fill-in-the blank type questions.
  Student teams sit in one location at this type of event. All of the materials they need are at their specific location, as well as an answer sheet. For a 50 minute testing period, you should design enough questions so that the test is completed in 40 minutes. This allows enough time for introductions, instructions, etc. If you have designed an answer key, you may enlist the aid of your assistant to help you in grading the exam.

Each school will have a team of two students, unless otherwise specified in the rules, participating in the event. Some schools, however, may decide to not participate in a particular competition if a student is ill, etc. It is important, however, to make sure that all of the students are official members of a Science Olympiad team. The students have been issued wristbands denoting that they are members of a particular Science Olympiad team. These wristbands must be checked at the start of the event. Those students who do not have a wristband will not be allowed to compete.
The rules of each event should be reviewed with the students at the start of the competition. Students should be warned that the use of cell phones during the event is strictly prohibited. Cell phones must also be turned off during the competition. Students not adhering to this rule will be disqualified.

You will need to score the competition as quickly as possible. You will bring the tests, or data used in scoring, and your event roster to the judging room in Peterson Hall room 327. The awards ceremony will start at 4:30pm, so it is imperative that the later events be scored in a timely fashion. Keep in mind that it’s ok to finish the event before the allotted time period- this is better than running over. When scoring the teams, you must be able to rank the teams with one being the top grade. The team with the lowest score at the end of the day proceeds to the National Tournament. It is very important that there are no ties in any event. The best way to break a tie is to select parts of your event or certain questions to use to break a tie. Score all parts of the event and then if a tie exists, use the team’s score on the part of the event you have selected. The time it takes to complete an exam should not be used to break a tie.

Please do not discuss the performance or the expected placing of any team or student at any time. Students will receive feedback at the end of the day when they receive their exams. It is a good idea to submit an answer key with each test.

The following teams will be competing in Science Olympiad:

High School-
Ames, Marshalltown, Gilbert, Cedar Rapids Washington, Burlington, Durant Community High School.

Middle School-
Ames, West Marshall, Cedar Rapids Franklin, Cedar Rapids McKinley, Cedar Rapids Roosevelt, Mt. Vernon, Gilbert Team A, Gilbert Team B, Ogden Team A, Ogden Team B, Clear Creek Amana, Cedar Falls Holmes M.S., Marshalltown Miller M.S., Durant Community M.S.
Again, thank you so much for volunteering. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time if you have questions about the competition.

Sincerely,

Susan Noreuil

State Director, Iowa Science Olympiad

319-399-8524 (Coe College) or 319-431-2526 (cell)