

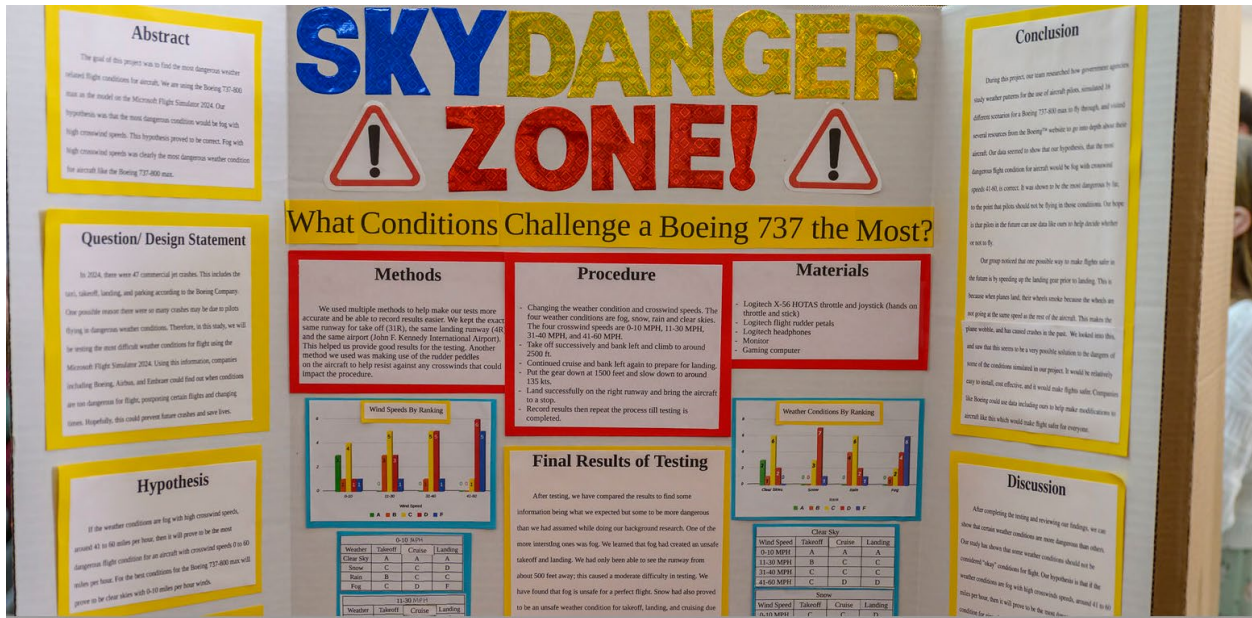
2026 Ohio University Regional Science Days



March 21, 2026 Ohio University Regional Science Day at Heritage Hall, Ohio University Athens Campus
Photo credit: Ohio University

Regional Science Day at Ohio University was led by the Voinovich School's Dr. Natalie Kruse Daniels, professor, and Director of the Environmental Studies Program. Regional Science Day at Ohio University serves students in District 12 with support from the PORTSfuture Program provided for schools in Ross and Jackson counties. Pike and Scioto counties belong to a different region served by the University of Rio Grande. Students in grades 5–12 can compete by presenting their original projects following either the standard scientific method or engineering design principles. Through inquiry-based project learning, students gain skills in posing a research question, creating a hypothesis, method development, data collection, data analysis, and written and oral communication. The Ohio Academy of Sciences has developed standards for science fairs across grades 5–12. Students earning a superior at their school fair qualify to compete at their Regional Fairs, and those earning superiors at Regional Fairs qualify to compete at State Science Day held in Columbus, Ohio, each May. High school students in both districts have the additional opportunity to qualify for the Buckeye Science and Engineering Fair, which allows them to compete for a spot at the International Science and Engineering Fair. High school students in the region can compete for a spot at the International Fair straight from their district. The potential for learning, exposure to a community of engaged young scientists, and competition for scholarships and awards for students from southern Ohio is unparalleled.

During BP4, Science Fair was held on March 21, 2026 and Ohio University hosted 14 schools from six (6) regional counties including Jackson, Ross, and Athens, Hocking, Perry, and with 123 students from grades 5 through 12 in attendance and 100 student projects represented.



Student project board at Ohio University Regional Science Day
Photo credit: Ohio University



Ohio University judges review student projects
Photo credit: Ohio University

PORTSfuture funding has increased participation from students and schools in Ross and Jackson counties in previous years. This year, PORTSfuture helped six teachers mentor hundreds of students, supported regional fair operations, cataloged student abstracts, assigned award eligibility for judging based on age and other categories and connected students from District 12 with Ohio University resources.

Teachers in Ross and Jackson County who participated this past academic year received a \$500 stipend from the PORTSfuture Program. During BP4, PORTSfuture supported six schools in Ross County including Jackson Middle, Chillicothe Middle, Chillicothe Intermediate, Unioto Elementary School, Zane

Trace Middle, Zane Trace High with 55 students participating from those schools. Schools participating from other counties were supported by other Ohio University resources.



Community volunteer judges review student projects
Photo credit: Ohio University

Overall, Science Fair funders provided over 104 awards, which included certificates, cash prizes, and scholarships, and 56 student projects advanced to the State Science Fair. Chillicothe Intermediate Middle School and Solid Ground School tied for the Elementary School Division School Award, Zane Trace Middle School earned the Middle School Division School Award, and Zane Trace High School and Athens High School tied for the high school division school award. Southeast Ohio's 2026 International Science and Engineering Fair Finalist was Prem Koshal, Grade 12, from Athens High School in Athens County, for his project "Computational Inhibition of Lachrymatory Factor Synthase Utilizing Molecular Docking Simulations." Funders for the Regional Science Day at Ohio University included OU Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service, PORTSfuture Program, OU College of Arts and Sciences, OU Russ College of Engineering and Technology, OU College of Health Sciences and Professions, OU Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine, Ohio Research Division, Crane Hollow Nature Preserve and Brennen's Coffee Café. The Voinovich School provided \$2,310 of Ohio University funding to 77 students from Scioto, Ross, and Jackson counties to cover their \$30 Science Fair registration fees.