

Before we begin



- Please mute your microphone to reduce background noise.
- We will leave time for Q & A. Please submit your questions via this google doc (link will be shared in the chat)
- This meeting will be recorded for anyone who is unable to attend tonight.

WESO 2026

General Coaching

Meeting



Topics

General
information about
WESO and the
tournament

Logistics

General coaching
advice



Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad “WESO”



The mission of WESO is to enhance the quality of science education, increase student interest, and recognize outstanding achievement in STEM activities.



Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad: An Introduction

Tournament

One day event open to all public, private, and charter schools in Washtenaw County

Award Ceremony

Medals awarded to the top performing teams during 4 grade-level ceremonies



Events

Offering a variety of STEM based events for students in grades 2 thru 5

Open Events

Hands-on activities for all attendees



2026 Event Slate

Events	Grades 2 & 3	Grades 4 & 5	# of participants/team
Aerodynamics	✓	✓	1-2
Feathered Friends	✓	✓	1-2
Circuit Wizardry		✓	1-3
Code Busters		✓	1-2
Geology Rocks!		✓	1-2
iCompute		✓	1-2
iRobot	✓		1-2
Mystery Architecture	✓	✓	1-2
On Target	✓	✓	1-3
Pasta Bridges	✓		1-2
Pentathlon	✓	✓	5
Photon Phun		✓	2-3
Potions		✓	1-2
Read It/Build It	✓		1-2
The Human Machine	✓	✓	1-2
What Went By	✓		1-2
Zip-It	✓	✓	1-3



Types of WESO Events

Academic Events

- Circuit Wizardry
- Codebusters
- Feathered Friends
- Geology Rocks!
- iCompute
- iRobot
- Pentathlon
- Photon Phun
- Potions
- The Human Machine
- What Went By

Building Events

- Aerodynamics
- Mystery Architecture
- On Target
- Pasta Bridges
- Read It/Build It
- Zip It!

When will my team compete on that day?

Grade Level	Competitive Events*	Award Ceremony**
2	8:00 am - 11:00 am	11:30 am
3	11:00 am - 2:00 pm	2:30 pm
4	2:00 pm - 5:00 pm	5:30 pm
5	5:00 pm - 8:00 pm	8:30 pm

* Some events are scheduled to start outside of these time frames.

** Approximate start times for the Award Ceremonies.

Each school's Head Coach will schedule their teams specific event time. Please contact them for that information.

Can we be in the competition room?

NO

For the safety of our participants, integrity of the events, and in order to remain on schedule, we do not allow parents or team coaches to enter competition areas.

Can a student participate in an event outside their grade level?

Depends - A student may participate in an event **ONE grade level HIGHER**, but may **NOT** participate in an event at a *LOWER* grade level.

- No first graders are allowed to participate
- Students can not do the same event in multiple grades

What if I am coaching more students than the event team size?

Each school is only allowed to send one team per grade per event. If you are coaching more than the number allowed, you need to work with your head coach to determine your school's policy for team selection.

Schools use a variety of methods for team selections such as:

- Practice attendance record
- Strength in that event
- Random drawing

Will WESO provide old tests or pictures of builds from previous years?

We do not make old test public nor do we provide pictures of winning builds. Many supervisors provide sample questions in the detailed event description or the event study guide (if there is one).

WESO does not return tests.

How often should we have practices?

- This is up to you and your head coach
- General recommendation - 1 hr, once a week
- Building events will require less, academic events may require more

What if I have a team member who needs special accommodation at the tournament?

- Identify needs early and speak to your school's Head Coach
- The Head Coach must communicate the needs to WESO at least one month before the tournament
- Not all accommodation requests can be accommodated particularly in a situation where there is an additional teammate that does not need support
- WESO requests IEPs to be reviewed

WESO Coaching



Where do I begin?



Logistics

Go to the website to download and review the Detailed Event Description for your event.

Click on the events page



Make a Donation [Home](#) [Events](#) [Calendar](#) [Head Coach Info](#) [About WESO](#) ▾ [Contact Us](#)



2026 WESO Events:

Detailed Event Descriptions and supporting documents will be updated throughout the month of January.

- [Aerodynamics](#) – All grades; 1-2 participants each grade
- [Circuit Wizardry](#) – Grades 4-5; 1-3 participants each grade
- [Codebusters](#) – Grades 4-5; 1-2 participants each grade
- [Feathered Friends](#) – All grades; 1-2 participants each grade
- [Geology Rocks](#) – Grades 4-5; 1-2 participants each grade
- [iCompute](#) – Grades 4-5; 1-2 participants each grade
- [iRobot](#) – Grades 2-3; 1-2 participants each grade
- [Mystery Architecture](#) – All grades; 1-2 participants each grade
- [On Target](#) – All grades; 1-3 participants each grade
- [Pasta Bridges](#) – Grades 2-3; 1-2 participants each grade
- [Pentathlon](#) – All grades; 5 participants each grade
- [Photon Phun](#) – Grades 4-5; 2-3 participants each grade
- [Potions](#) – Grades 4-5; 1-2 participants each grade
- [Read It; Build It](#) – Grades 2-3; 1-2 participants each grade
- [The Human Machine](#) – All grades; 1-2 participants each grade
- [Zip-It](#) – All grades; 1-3 participants each grade
- [What Went By](#) – Grades 2-3; 1-2 participants each grade

Logistics

Each event has a page with all the event support document.

Aerodynamics

All Grades

1-2 participants each grade

Participants will build and fly paper airplanes for distance, time and accuracy. Teams will design, construct, and fly at least two paper airplanes. Two initial flights will be measured for distance. Two final flights will be measured for flight time.

[Detailed Event Description Final Version](#) (Added 01/07/2026)

Event Coach Meeting Presentation Slides (Coming Soon)

Event Coach Meeting Q & A (Coming Soon)

Link to Event Coach Meeting Recording (Coming Soon)

WESO 2026

[Detailed Event Description](#)

Aerodynamics

Grades: Grades 2, 3, 4, 5

Teams: 1-2 participants per team

Duration: 30 minutes

Supervisor: Shan Cook, Mo Abouelnaga, Erin Rohde

Summary Description

Teams will design, construct, and fly at least two paper airplanes. Two initial flights will be measured for distance. Two final flights will be measured for flight time.

Concepts Covered

- The four forces at work to make an airplane fly: weight, lift, thrust, and drag.
- Paper airplane design features that lead to the farthest distance flight.
- Paper airplane design features that lead to the longest flight time.
- Manufacturing techniques that lead consistently to a balanced paper airplane.

[Rules/Competition Format](#)

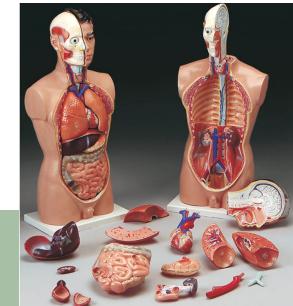
Attend the Event Coach Meeting for your event

Date	Time	Event
1/15/26	7:00 PM	General Coaching
1/20/26	7:00 PM	Geology Rocks!
	8:00 PM	On Target
1/21/26	7:00 PM	Codebusters
	8:00 PM	The Human Machine
1/22/26	7:00 PM	iRobot
1/26/26	7:00 PM	Read It/Build It
	8:00 PM	Potions
	8:00 PM	Aerodynamics
1/27/26	7:00 PM	Zip It
	7:00 PM	Circuit Wizardry
	8:00 PM	Pentatlon
1/28/26	7:00 PM	What Went By
1/29/26	7:00 PM	Pasta Bridges
	8:00 PM	Photon Phun

- Feathered Friends has not been scheduled yet
- Mystery Architecture and iCompute will not have meetings
- Do not log in early
- Review the Detailed Event Description prior to the meeting

Where do I get the supplies and equipment for my event?

- Head Coaches will be picking up the 2026 supplies on Saturday 1/31
- Not all events receive supplies from WESO (check the detailed event description)
- Ask your Head Coach for equipment that has been provided to your school in the past (Ozobot, Torso Model, On Target Launcher, etc.)



How to I ask questions about the event after the Event Coach Meeting?

Most answers can be found in the detailed event description.

Join the WESO Discord Server to send a question to the event supervisors and to chat about your event with other event coaches.

Event Q&A – How to join the WESO Discord Server

New for 2025! We will be using the WESO Discord server to facilitate individual event Q&A. Please click [here](#) to learn how to join the server and the guidelines for its use.

On the Events Page



Events

Members

Server Boosts



event-committee

weso-boardmembers

2026-head-coach-chat

general-information



2026 WESO Events



aerodynamics

circuit-wizardry

codebusters

feathered-friends

geology-rocks

icompute

irobot

mystery-architecture

on-target

pasta-bridges

pentathlon

photon-pun

potions

read-it-build-it

human-machine

what-went-by

zip-it



Welcome to #general-information!

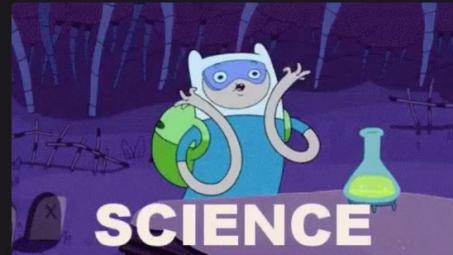
This is the start of the #general-information channel.

Edit Channel

September 29, 2025



WESO 9/29/25, 7:06 PM



6



WESO 2026 will be held on Saturday, May 9th at Pioneer High School. We are busy planning and school registration will open in November. We are looking forward to another great year!

October 11, 2025

WESO 10/11/25, 10:00 AM



Using the Events Channels on the WESO Server

- Please review the guidelines for use on the WESO website
- Event channels will open the day after each event's Event Coach Meeting and close one week before the tournament
- The Event Supervisor and/or a WESO Board member will be monitoring each event channel
- Official responses will come from the Event Supervisor (name in **green**) or a WESO Board Member (name in **gold**)
- Turn off notifications for all other events
- Please be patient - responses can take several days
- Engage with other coaches
- Be respectful - This is not a place to air your grievances!

WESO Event Workshops/Practices

- Saturday April 11th - Sign up will be shared a month before
- **Zip It**
 - Practice using the Zip frame they will use at the tournament
- **Photon Phun**
 - Practice Reflection Relay room
- **Geology Rocks!**
 - Workshop run by the EMU Geology Club
- **Feathered Friends**
 - Bird walk run by the Washtenaw Bird and Nature Alliance

General Practice Tips



“Every child starts out as a natural-born scientist”

- Carl Sagan



A Good WESO Coach.....

- Is positive and gives positive feedback
- Listens as much as they speak
- Let's the students ask questions
- Keeps it fun!



Coaching Tips

- Recognize a limited attention span
- Let them burn off some energy before and during practice
- “Chunk” information
- Use “hands-on” learning
- Do not overcoach - focus on the basics

What about disruptive behaviors?

Possible Solutions

- Assign each a task
- Provide a snack/water break
- Additional parent volunteers
- Breathing exercises
- Have a behavior plan in place - talk to the Head Coach and School Administrator



Building Events

- Use the Scientific Method
 - Help them develop good questions
 - Identify variables
 - Only change one variable at a time
 - Try multiple attempts to see how reproducible the results are
- Have them use a notebook to keep track of what they change and their results



Building Events

- There are no bad results!
 - All information is useful information
 - Allow them some time to just try things out. Try to identify something in what the student is doing that is a learning opportunity.
- Teamwork is important!
- The best approach is one that is repeatable



Academic Events

- Make up a lesson plan to spread out the topics
- Try to incorporate real life examples
- Try a variety of learning methods
 - Games
 - Flashcards
 - Puzzles
 - Have the kids make up questions and test each other
- Teamwork is important because they can only give one answer at the tournament



Internet Pitfalls

- At the Elementary School level there is no national standard for events.
- We have events that have the same, or similar names, as many middle and high school events.
 - In some cases our events are run differently
- Be careful if you are pulling resources from other sources for event specific strategies.

Final Practice

- Make sure you review the detailed event description again. This is how the competition will be conducted.
- Make sure they understand the rules and what to expect
 - Also prepare them to be flexible in case something is a different at the tournament
- Have them do a practice test or build
- Make sure they know their roles and can work as a team.
- Have them practice working **quietly** with each other
- Make sure they know it is OK to ask questions of the supervisors/volunteers.

The WESO is a community event. We depend on 100s of volunteers at every level to make this happen!





Questions?

Please submit your questions now using the Google form that is being shared with you in the chat.

We will answer live and post all questions and written answers to the website following the meeting.

Questions are always welcome at weso@wesoscience.org or on the Discord chat.

