

To: Seventh/Eighth Grade Parents and Students  
From: Helene Debelak, Lorraine Tzeng  
Date: August 31, 2011  
Re: Future Problem Solving Program

We welcome everyone! Just as everyone is acclimating to the school routine, we would like to add more to the mix. We are pleased to be able to continue to offer you the opportunity to participate in the Future Problem Solving Program (FPS). Students who choose to participate in this competition will meet every Wednesday as part of the Thinking Skills class. For students who had a taste of this in the past, we challenge you to hone your critical thinking skills even as we delve into different futuristic issues.

In addition to learning the six-step problem solving process, students research, learn to work in a team, and cultivate an interest in global issues which will directly affect them in their lifetime. Students learn to think analytically, write clearly, and communicate effectively.

This is an international competition where registered students work in teams of four to “solve” (on paper) a futuristic scenario. After we learn the process and research the designated topic, students will complete a booklet which will then be sent to the state office for evaluation. The first two booklets, although scored and evaluated, will be for training purposes only. The state qualifier will be problem three where a percentage of Ohio teams will be invited to compete in the State Bowl. Topics and rough approximates of packet deadlines are the following:

- Problem 1 All in a Day’s Work (November 5)
- Problem 2 Coral Reefs (December 20)
- Problem 3 Human Rights (March 4)
- State Bowl Trade Barriers (April 8 & 9)

Students who register for the program will be assigned extra homework. Generally it should be thirty minutes over a one-week period. No after school sessions are scheduled at this time, but it may be necessary later for state and (cross your fingers) international qualifiers. We also reserve the right to dismiss a student who does not keep up with the weekly assignments.

Although the benefits of FPS are numerous, it is an academic competition that requires time and commitment beyond the already rigorous Birchwood curriculum. It is best to consider your child’s motivation, desire, and ability to cope with a “full plate.” Students who opt out will have a study hall. Please discuss this together with your child and do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions. You could learn more about the program by checking these websites: [ohiofps.org](http://ohiofps.org), [fjsp.org](http://fjsp.org)

Please return the form below by September 7, Wednesday. A \$40 fee per family is required when you register. Thank you. (Write checks out to Birchwood School.)

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My child, \_\_\_\_\_, and I understand the time and homework requirement for participating in FPS. Enclosed is the \$40 registration

My child \_\_\_\_\_ will not participate in FPS at this time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature, Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature, Date