Your child / school has been given the opportunity to participate in the International Genetically Engineered Machine ("iGEM") competition. This competition began in the summer of 2004 with 5 university teams. It has since grown to 215 teams from over 30 countries around the world participating in the 2013 season. While high school students have been part of teams in the collegiate division since about 2008, a dedicated iGEM High School ("HS") Division was started in 2010. The iGEM HS Division is designed to allow high schools the ability to participate in the competition on their schedule, while addressing the specific needs of high school student teams, which are different from collegiate teams.

The iGEM competition is the premiere competition in synthetic biology, and the High School Division of the competition allows high school students to participate in this new field of biology. Synthetic biology takes well-known engineering principles such as abstraction and standardization, and applies them to biology to make it reliable, standard, and more of an engineering discipline. Engineers learn by building -- during the competition the students will design and build a biological system using standard molecular biology techniques. Students will make use of kits containing genetic material to construct their system. They will then work to test, measure, and characterize their design. Teams then present their work and projects at the High School Jamboree in Boston, Massachusetts at the end of the season.

iGEM provides each team with a documentation website known as a wiki (similar to Wikipedia). Teams document their project throughout the competition season on the online wiki including information about the project, laboratory procedures, purpose of their biological system, and profiles on the team members. This means that the students' names and pictures can be posted on the wiki. Keep in mind that any individual will be able to view all the information on the team's wiki, although the information can only be edited by someone with an iGEM user account and permission to edit the wiki. Each student, their school and their parents should determine the extent to which a student's picture or other personally identifying information is posted on the internet.

With regard to laboratory safety, students are to be supervised by their team leader and/or laboratory department head, if applicable, while conducting laboratory experiments. The team leader and/or laboratory department head, if applicable, is responsible for teaching and ensuring safe laboratory practices.

Because of the nature of iGEM and the information that can be posted on the wiki, your permission will be required for your child / school to participate.

For more information on iGEM, please see the following resources:

www.igem.org
2014hs.igem.org

If you have any questions, please direct them to the following:

* Team Leader
* iGEM Headquarters -- hq@igem.org