



# BIG Idea Competition Process

## 1 - Creating Your Login & Entry Online

1. Create your business idea online by going to the website, [www.BIGideaSD.com](http://www.BIGideaSD.com)
2. Click on the 'Student Login' at the very top right to create a student login.
  - a. Each entry requires a unique email and password for login.
  - b. If students are participating as a team, only one student login is needed for the entry. Names of additional team members are added during the application process.
  - c. The primary contact person, as identified in the login and entry process, is responsible for communicating any information related to the competition with other team members.
  - d. If your school is not listed, complete the school information form when prompted. Once your school is accepted, you can continue with your profile.
  - e. All school advisors and students accounts must be created by October 24, 2024.
3. The login feature allows students to save their work and return to work until completed. Visit the 'Student Login' to sign-in.
4. After entering their profile information, students should click on the My Project tab at the top to begin their idea entry.
5. Save Draft – When working on the project, be sure to click 'Save Draft' often! Save Draft button is at the bottom of the My Project page. If you go for an extended time without entering any information, the session may time out.

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** There is NO warning before the session times out.
6. Additional members of your student team can be added in the Team Members tab by clicking on "Team Member" in the menu bar at the top right of the page. You must save a draft of your project first before adding members.
7. Students who may be sharing a computer should NOT work simultaneously on their entries. Only one student can be logged in at a time.
8. Word-limit – Each section has a word limit, and a word counter is shown at the bottom of each section on the website. The entry cannot be submitted until the text is within the allowable word limit for each section.
9. Students are STRONGLY encouraged to proofread the entry for grammar and comprehension (NOTE: The website itself will not have spell-check functionality unless your web browser has this feature installed.)
10. Students are required to provide an elevator pitch video of no more than 60 seconds.
  - a. The video must be 30 – 60 seconds in length
  - b. Must provide clear, concise description of product, the problem it solves, and the solution it will provide.

## 2- Entering a Special Category

- If your business idea fits in the Wellness, Agriculture Innovation, Hometown Business, or Makers categories please choose appropriate category from the drop down box located in the "Special Award Category" section.



- Your business concept must promote wellness, agriculture innovation, hometown business, or makers to be entered in this category according to the descriptions provided in the entry form.

### 3 - Submitting Your Entry

- Once the BIG Idea written entry is completed and Elevator Pitch video link entered, students can scroll to the bottom of the My Project page.
- Be sure to complete the Inspiration and Sources section and the plagiarism disclaimer before submitting.
- Click the Continue to Submit button to preview and print their entry and make final submission of their project. Once submitted, no changes are allowed.
- Complete BIG Idea student survey after submission.

### 4 - Final Competition

After the first round of judging is completed, the eight business idea submissions with the highest scores will advance to the final competition. Finalists will be notified by mid-November. There will be 8 finalists for both the virtual competition and the in-person competition.

- **BIG Idea Finalists** - The competition finalists will be required to make a 6-minute presentation.
  - 30 seconds – Elevator Pitch
  - Remaining 5 minutes, 30 seconds - Presentation
    - Presentation must include a visual component – PowerPoint, storyboard, handout, demonstration or other visual component of the finalist's choice
    - Computer, screen and projector will be provided (in-person finalists)
  - The judging is based on the viability of the business idea and information conveyed during the final presentation.
  - Teachers and Mentors are allowed in the room during the final presentation; other spectators are not.
  - Media may be present during presentation to capture footage.
  - Elevator pitches and presentations from previous years' finalists can be seen on the Previous Winners page at [www.BIGideaSD.com](http://www.BIGideaSD.com) or on the BIG Idea SD YouTube channel.
- **Specialty Award Winners**
  - **Wellness Category**– A \$500 cash prize and a \$500 scholarship to Northern State University will be awarded to the best business entry addressing wellness. Sponsored by Independent Health Solutions.
  - **Agriculture Innovation Category\***- A \$500 cash prize and a \$500 scholarship to Northern State University will be awarded to the best business entry addressing agriculture. Sponsored by the South Dakota Agriculture Foundation.
  - **Hometown Business Category\***- A \$500 cash prize and a \$500 scholarship to Northern State University will be awarded to the best business entry addressing hometown business. Sponsored by South Dakota Retailers Association.
  - **Makers Award Category\***- A \$500 cash prize and a \$500 scholarship to Northern State University will be awarded to the best business entry addressing manufacturing. Sponsored by Blackout Industries.
  - **\* Open to South Dakota Students only.**



## Special Category Award

Winners will be notified prior to the Final Competition and will be invited to participate in the Final Event to give an elevator pitch of their idea.

### 5 - BIG Idea Mentors (for in-person event only)

The top eight finalists will be paired with a BIG Idea Mentor before the final competition. Contact can be made before the final competition, as well as, during the morning of the final event. A variety of activities will be available for the finalists throughout the competition. Also, a luncheon and program will be held for students, mentors, teachers, judges, and community members.

### 6 - Awards Ceremony

- All schools and students who submitted entries to the BIG Idea Competition are invited to the Awards Ceremony. The Awards Ceremony is open to the public. The event will also be live-streamed through Northern State University.
- At the Ceremony, finalists and winners of specialty categories will deliver their elevator pitches.
- Following the student presentations, there will be a keynote speaker and/or a panel of business owners who will share their entrepreneurship experiences and answer questions.
- Following brief acknowledgements and school awards, the specialty category winners will be recognized & presented their awards by their sponsors (Wellness, Agriculture Innovation, Hometown Business, and Makers).
- The top three winners of each BIG Idea Competition will be announced, and awards presented.
- Pictures of all finalists will take place after the Ceremony.

The Virtual Competition will take place on **Tuesday, December 9, 2025** via Zoom. The In-Person Final Competition and Awards Ceremony will be held on **Wednesday, December 10, 2025** on the campus of Northern State University in Aberdeen. More details will be provided as available.