49+1 BETTISWORTH NORTH

NEXTNORTH

Bettisworth North

Next North Design Challenge Guidebook

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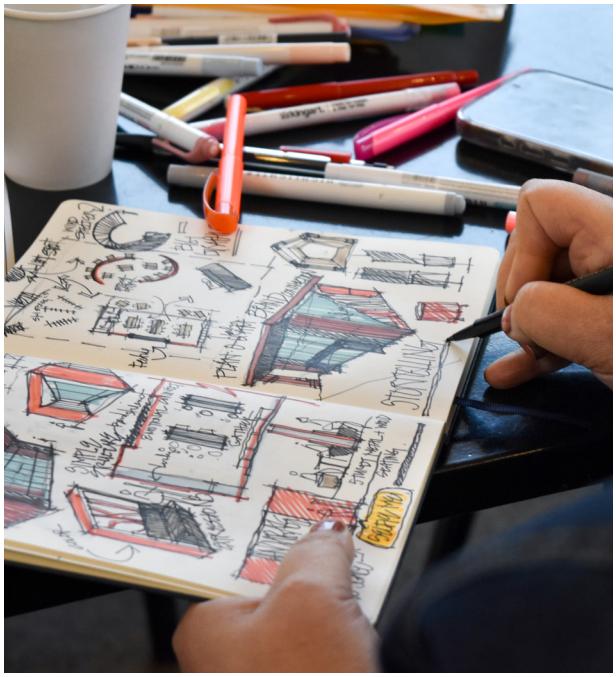
SECTION 1

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

The Next North Design Challenge (the "Competition") is a project-based design competition for Alaska high school students, intended to introduce students to careers in architecture. The competition invites students to design a building or public space that addresses an identified need in Alaska's built environment.

This year marks Bettisworth North's 50th anniversary. As part of our 49+1 campaign, looking back on 50 years in the 49th state, our +1 looks ahead to what is next. The Next North Design Challenge is part of our +1: a way to give back to the communities we have designed in by opening the door to students who might not otherwise get a firsthand look at a career in design.



OCTOBER	**Contest Launch** Registration opens 10/12/2026 at www.bettisworthnorth.com/next-north-design-challenge/
OCTOBER *(WEEKS 1-3)*	**Understand the Community and the Site** Students research their community needs, select a site, and project type ***Milestone 1 due: Community need outlined and project type selection***
NOVEMBER *(WEEKS 4-7)*	**Develop Your Concept** Students produce rough sketches and drawings of project ***Milestone 2 due: Concept summary of design direction and drawings***
DECEMBER-JANUARY *(WEEKS 8–16)*	**Develop Your Design** Students create floor plans, organized site plans, and detailed drawings ***Milestone 3 due: Draft visual presentation***
FEBRUARY *(WEEKS 17-20)*	**Finalize Your Submission** Revisions and refinements to drawings. Final presentation and written project description finalized ***Milestone 4 due: Final submission ready for teacher sign-off***
MARCH	Project submitted to Bettisworth North 03/05/2027 Winning projects announced 04/2027

SECTION 2

CONTEST STRUCTURE AND RULES

Key things to know before submitting:

- The Competition is open to Alaska high school students (grades 9-12), working individually or in teams
- All work must be an original idea

By submitting an entry, the student gives Bettisworth North permission to share work publicly if selected.

Eligibility

The Next North Design Challenge is open to any current high school student (grades 9-12), including home schooled students who have completed coursework through grade 8 and are working toward a high school degree. At the time of entry, participants must reside in the state of Alaska. Students are not required to pursue a career in design to participate.

Participants may enter individually or as part of a team. Each student or team may submit one entry. Team submissions must designate one primary contact.

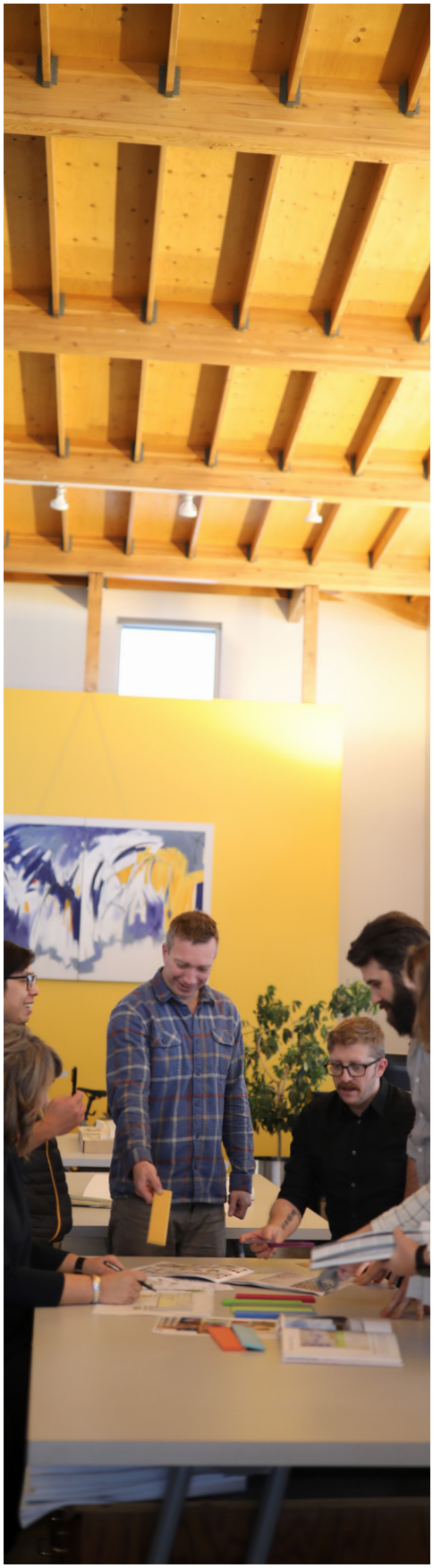
Submission Requirements

All entries must be submitted through the official Competition submission form by the stated deadline 03/05/2027.

Each submission must include:

- Visual presentation
  - A slideshow in either Google Slides or PowerPoint, containing all deliverables for the design
- Narrative (300–750 words)
  - A written description of the project that defines the community need identified and explains how the design responds to it

Entries must be complete at the time of submission. Late, incomplete, or improperly formatted submissions may be disqualified at the sole discretion of Bettisworth North.



Original Work

Participants represent and warrant that all submitted work is original and created by the participant(s). Submissions must not:

- Contain copied or plagiarized material
- Infringe on the intellectual property or rights of any third party
- Include information within the presentation that could compromise the integrity of the judging process

Bettisworth North reserves the right to disqualify any submission that violates these requirements.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

If AI is used, participants must disclose how the tools were used and how the tools contributed to the submission. Failure to disclose AI usage, or providing inaccurate information, may result in disqualification. All submissions must reflect the participant's original ideas.

Individual vs. Team Entries

Both individual and team entries are welcome. Team entries:

- All team members must be listed at time of submission
- One team member serves as the primary contact
- Prizes and awards are given per team, not per individual

Selection & Judging

Entries will be reviewed by a panel of professionals selected by Bettisworth North. Submissions will be evaluated based on Community Need and Research, Design Response, Creativity, and Presentation.

Ownership & Permissions

By entering the Competition, participants must sign a media release and grant Bettisworth North license to:

- Display and share submitted work
- Use submissions for educational, promotional, and exhibition purposes
- Publish work across digital and print platforms

Code of Conduct

Submissions must be appropriate for a general audience and must not include:

- Offensive, harmful, or inappropriate content
- Content that violates any applicable laws or regulations

Disqualification

Bettisworth North reserves the right to disqualify any participant or submission that:

- Violates these Terms and Conditions
- Provides false or misleading information
- Attempts to interfere with the Competition process

Limitation of Liability

Bettisworth North is not responsible for:

- Technical issues, including submission errors or system failures
- Lost, late, or misdirected entries
- Circumstances beyond reasonable control

In the event of technical issues or circumstances preventing submission, participants may contact Adeline Berry at aberry@bettisworthnorth.com.

We Want to Hear from You

If there are questions at any point during the design process, whether about the site, the rubric, or anything else, please reach out. Questions are welcome and encouraged; we would rather help you understand the Competition than have you guess. Contact Adeline Berry at aberry@bettisworthnorth.com, or ask your teacher to reach out on your behalf.

SECTION 3

DESIGN PROMPT

Choose an Alaska community, either your own or another, and identify a real need within it. Then design a building or public space that responds directly to that need.

Your design should be rooted in the community you choose. Design every element, from the site to the layout to the materials, around the people who will use it and what they need.

Design Type Examples

Students may choose from the list below, or design their own structure based on their research:

- Community center, park, youth center
- Performance center, concert venue, cultural or heritage center
- Emergency shelter, health clinic, childcare center

Regardless of which design type is chosen, the design must:

- Serve a real, identified community need
- Be feasible and could realistically exist in Alaska. For example, an outdoor waterpark may not be realistic for Alaska's weather
- Be accessible and usable by people of all abilities

What You Are Not Required to Do

This is a design competition, not an engineering exam. You are not expected to produce:

- Structural calculations or engineering drawings
- Cost estimates or construction budgets
- Mechanical, electrical, or plumbing system designs
- Permit applications or code compliance documentation

Focus on the big idea behind your project, how it responds to your site, community, and how clearly you communicate it to someone seeing it for the first time.

This section walks through the design process from start to finish. It is written for students working through the Competition, and teachers looking to integrate it in their classroom.

SECTION 4

DESIGN PROCESS

Phase 1: Understand the Community and the Site

Suggested timing: October, weeks 1–3

Before you design anything, you need to understand where you are and who you are designing for. Start with the community. Look at it on a map. Read local news. Look at population data. Talk to people who know the area. Ask yourself:

- Who lives here?
- What do people need that they do not currently have?
- What problems could a building or public space help solve?
- Who would use what you design?

Then look at the site. Ask yourself:

- What is around it? Homes, roads, other buildings?
- What does the neighborhood feel like?
- What does the weather do here? Wind, snow, sun angles.
- Is there anything about this place that makes it special or challenging?

By the end of this phase, you should be able to answer: what does this community need and what can I design to address it?

Milestone 1: Tell your teacher your chosen project type and what needs your community has.

Phase 2: Develop Your Concept

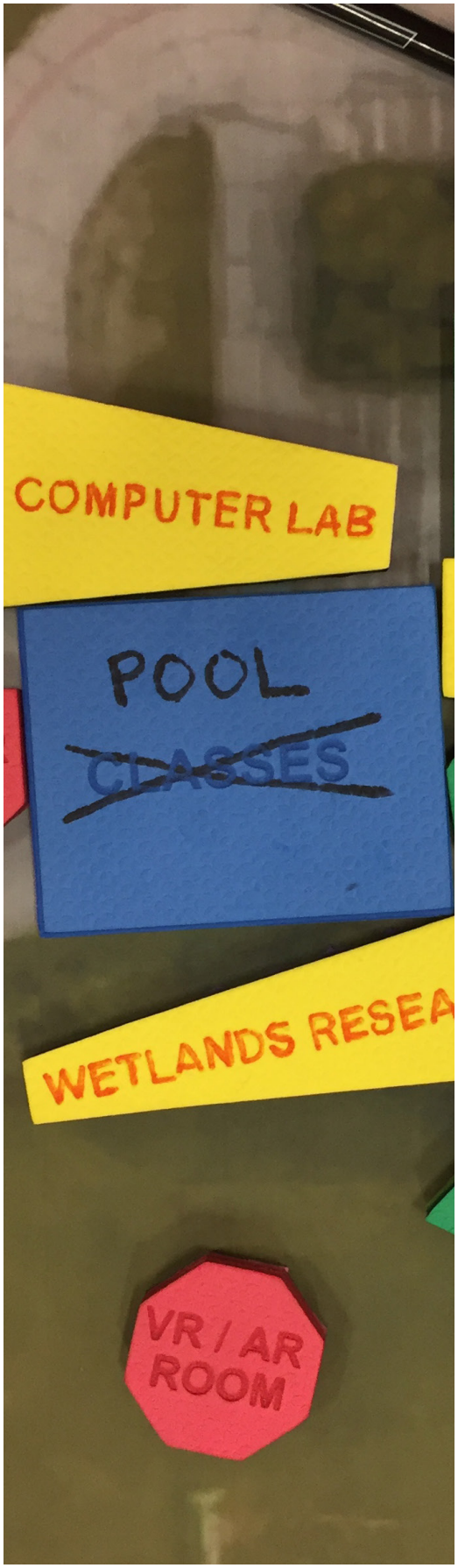
Suggested timing: November, weeks 4–7

Now that you understand the site and the need, start developing your design idea. A concept is not a finished design; it is the core idea that drives every decision you make. Ask yourself:

- What will my project give this community that it needs?
- How does my project respond to the site?
- Who enters? Where do they go? How do they feel?
- What makes my design specific to this place and this community?

This is also where you start thinking about the Alaska climate. How does your building manage snow, cold, wind, and the dramatic shift between summer and winter light?

Milestone 2: Submit a short concept summary to your teacher describing your design direction and why you chose it, plus your rough sketches or diagrams.



Phase 3: Develop Your Design

Suggested timing: December-January, weeks 8–16

Now your concept becomes a real design. You're moving from ideas to drawings. Work on:

- A site plan showing where your project sits on the site
- Floor plans showing how the space is organized
- A drawing showing what your project looks like from the outside
- Any diagrams that help explain your design, like how light enters, how people move through the space, or how it responds to the site

You don't need professional-level drawings. What matters is that your drawings clearly show your design.

Milestone 3: Submit a draft project submission for your teacher to review.

Phase 4: Finalize Your Submission

Suggested timing: February-March, weeks 17–21

Take the feedback from your teacher and refine your design. Then put together your full submission. It includes two things:

- Visual presentation
- Narrative (300–750 words) that covers:
  - What needs your design serves
  - Your core idea behind your design
  - The site and context of your design
  - The key important parts of your design

Before you submit, read back through the rubric. Ask yourself: does my submission answer all the categories?

Milestone 4: Get teacher sign-off on your final submission before uploading.

A Note on Tools and Software

There is no required software for the Competition. Use the tools you have access to and know how to use. Hand drawings are welcome. What matters is that your design is clearly communicated, not which program you used to produce it.

SECTION 5

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Every entry, individual or team, must include one visual presentation, one narrative of 300-750 words, and one signed media release.

Slide Presentation Specifications

- Format: Slideshow in Google Slides or PowerPoint
- File name format: LastName_FirstName_SchoolName

What to include in your slideshow:

- Orient the reviewer to where your project is located
- Describe the problem you identified in your community
- Describe how your design solves it
- Use your drawings to show how the project addresses the needs you identified

To help explain how your design works, consider the following questions:

- How people move through the space
- Which areas are open to everyone versus more private
- How natural or artificial light reaches the space
- How the project handles energy, like heating or natural light for warmth
- How the project handles seasonal changes

Written Project Description

- Length: 300–750 words
- Must cover all four of the following:
  - What needs your design serves
  - Your core idea behind your design
  - The site and context of your design
  - The most important parts of your design

Submissions may be edited and resubmitted up to the deadline. Once the deadline passes no changes or additions will be accepted.

SECTION 6
RUBRIC

Entries are scored on a 100-point scale across four categories:

- Community Need and Research: 30 points
- Design Response: 30 points
- Creativity: 25 points
- Presentation: 15 points

Each category is scored on a five-level scale:

- Exemplary
- Proficient
- Developing
- Beginning
- N/A

CATEGORY	POINTS	EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	DEVELOPING	BEGINNING	N/A
Community Need and Research	30	30 Specific, well-researched need. Clear who's affected, why, and how it connects to the building type	26 Real need identified and explained. Research could be more specific	20 Need feels general or assumed, not researched	13 Little to no research shown. Building type feels disconnected from need	0 No evidence of research
Design Response	30	30 Design clearly solves the need. Logically organized, responds to site and climate, feasible to build	26 Design responds to need and site, though not always in depth. Plausibly feasible	20 Connected to the need in a general way. Site/climate acknowledged but not integrated	13 Design doesn't respond to need, site, or climate. Feels generic	0 No evidence of design thought
Creativity	25	25 Clear, original concept driving every decision	22 Genuine creative thinking in at least one meaningful way	16 Functional but expected. Concept present but not clear	10 Generic. No clear concept behind decisions	0 No evidence of ideas or creativity
Presentation	15	15 Complete, clear, organized. Written description covers all four topics	13 Complete and understandable. Some elements could be clearer	9 Partially complete or unclear in places	6 Significantly incomplete or unclear	0 No submission