



TIP SHEET FOR PARENTS/TEACHERS/COACHES

IMPORTANT DATES:

Qualifying Round Begins:	November 17, 2023
Deadline for Teachers to Request Assistance:	February 16, 2024
Qualifying Round Ends:	March 1, 2024 (11:59 PM EST)
Finalist Notification by Email:	March 4, 2024
Deadline to RSVP for Finals:	March 11, 2024
Finals:	April 5-7, 2024 (subject to change)

TIPS:

- Students can register and start submitting bridge designs NOW! The deadline to submit a bridge design is **March 1, 2024**. Approximately the top 25 teams on the [leaderboard](#) will be invited to participate in the Finals that will take place in April. For a full explanation of who will be invited to the Finals, please read the **QUALIFYING ROUND** section of the [Contest Rules](#).
- There is a [Bridge Designer Software Video Tutorial](#) by West Virginia Department of Transportation – Division of Highways Secretary / Commissioner, Jimmy Wriston, P.E. on the website. If your student(s) watches the tutorial (with you) and takes notes, they will be ahead of most. Although the video series is available to all students, most do not watch it – but most of the students who make it to the final competition do!
- The website has a free download of the software under the [Software](#) tab. You/your student are welcome to download the software and share it with friends who may want to participate. If someone is not a middle school or high school student but wishes to design a bridge and see how it compares, it will show up on the leaderboard as Open Competition (not eligible to advance to the Finals). If you have any questions or problems in helping your student with the contest, you can submit them directly on the webpage or e-mail dotwvbdb@wv.gov. We encourage you to ask lots of questions!
- The goal of the Qualifying Round is to design the lowest cost bridge that will carry the truck across the river. There are choices of different kinds of steel, different sizes, and different types of bridges. Students are encouraged to experiment and try lots of different designs. Students can help other students and it is natural for students from the same school to begin to have similar looking bridges. We understand, and don't consider that "cheating."

- Students can submit as many bridge designs as they want. Their lowest cost bridge will be used for the purpose of deciding their rank on the leaderboard. If they submit a bridge and get the cost down five minutes later, they can re-submit. There is no limit to the number of designs they can submit.
- This year, every WV student who registers for the contest and submits a bridge design will receive a free BridgeWalk tour for their family (tours are typically \$75 per person!). The tour can be scheduled at the family’s convenience directly with BridgeWalk. While only middle school and high school students are eligible to advance to the Finals, the tour is open to all K-12 students (grade school students are welcome to join in the fun and “get their feet wet” with the contest). ***The tour is compliments of Benjy Simpson at BridgeWalk, and students should mention him when calling to schedule their tour.***
- Students who make it to the Finals will compete in a software design and a balsa bridge building competition. Details on prizes and awards can be found in the rules or on the contest website! Additional awards for families, teachers, volunteers, and Finalists are awarded at the discretion of the advisory committee. We keep those interesting and do different things each year but, in general, good sportsmanship and participating in the extra activities are good things to keep in mind.

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