

FOR EDUCATORS

An idea starts with something you notice.

Help students turn a community problem into a 1–2 minute video for the North Carolina Idea Challenge.

Who:	NC students in grades 5–12
What:	An individual idea to help their community
Deadline:	October 4, 2026
Prize:	Winning ideas receive \$1,000. A finished project is not required.

Choose the format that fits

- **Recommended: two 30-minute sessions.** Notice, brainstorm and outline first. Record and submit in a second session, with space for students to take turns.
- **One prepared 45-minute period.** Use only when devices, parent email details and several recording spaces are ready. Otherwise, finish recording outside class.
- **A 20-minute launch.** Show an example, complete the worksheet and invite students to record at home or during a library/club recording hour.

Your job

Ask questions, make the opportunity feel possible and help students finish. Students supply the ideas and their own words. They do not need a slideshow, a business plan or professional video equipment.

Important: For students under 18, submission is followed by a parent or guardian permission email. Help families complete that step so the entry can be reviewed.

Official details and entry: ideachallengenc.org | Help: hello@ideachallengenc.org

Convened by **Exponential Scholars** · exponentialscholars.org

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Two short sessions. One real entry.

Before students arrive

Open the entry flow on a school device. Check Wi-Fi, microphone, recording/upload access and school rules. Plan several quiet recording spots or stagger turns. Make sure students can obtain the parent/guardian email needed by the form. Never put personal contact information in the video.

Session 1: notice, choose, outline — 30 minutes

0–5 minutes

Open the prompt. Read: “What is one thing you wish worked better in your school, neighborhood or town? Who does it affect? What could make it better?” Give students quiet thinking time.

5–10

Make it feel possible. Choose one middle-school or high-school example from page 4. Ask what the student noticed. Explain that a useful idea can be small.

10–20

Find an idea. Students list three things they notice, choose one and talk it through with a partner. Ask: “Who would this help?” and “What is one small first step?”

20–30

Draft in bullets. Use page 3. Keep the student's own words. Have partners say back the idea they heard; clarify anything confusing.

Session 2: record, submit, follow through — 30 minutes

0–5

Rehearse once. Aim for 1–2 minutes. Students can speak naturally from notes. No special production is needed.

5–23

Record in turns. Use the recording spaces while others rehearse or finish their notes. Check sound. A drawing with narration can help students who do not want to appear on camera, consistent with the entry instructions.

23–30

Submit and check next steps. Follow the official form. Students should look for confirmation. For minors, explain the parent permission email and send the page 5 note home.

If time runs out: set an exact recording time or place to finish. A submitted video and a consent-confirmed entry are different milestones. Follow up privately on what is still needed.

STUDENT WORKSHEET — PRINT ONE PER STUDENT

What would you make better?

First name or classroom identifier: _____ Date: _____

1. What do you notice? List a few things that could work better at school, in your neighborhood or in your town. Choose one.

2. Who does this affect? What makes it difficult for them?

3. What is your idea? Explain what would change and how it could help.

4. What is one small first step? Who or what might you need?

5. Why does this matter to you? You can explain your interest without sharing anything private.

Your video can follow this order:

"I noticed ..." → "This affects ..." → "My idea is ..." → "A first step could be ..."

Use your own words. Aim for 1–2 minutes. It is okay to use notes.

REAL WINNING IDEAS

Students like yours have ideas worth sharing.

Use these public winner summaries to show the range of possibilities. They are examples, not ideas to copy. Choose the age group that fits your students.

Middle school

Burke County | A reminder that changes a habit

Water-saving signs encourage people to use less water.

Ask: What everyday habit could a simple reminder improve?

McDowell County | A more connected community

Activities and small gifts for nursing-home residents.

Ask: Who nearby might appreciate connection or support?

High school

Greene County | A place to make things together

A student craft club creates a shared activity.

Ask: What interest could bring people together at your school?

Guilford County | Fixing something people overlook

A system helps keep school water-fountain filters maintained.

Ask: What needs regular attention but is easy to miss?

Say this: “Your idea does not have to look like any of these. Start with something you notice and people you want to help.”

Examples paraphrased from public student winner summaries. Read more at ideachallengenc.org/winners.

COPY AND SEND TO FAMILIES

Help your student finish their entry.

Before the session

- Our class/group is exploring ideas for the North Carolina Idea Challenge, a statewide opportunity for students in grades 5–12.
- Students can enter a 1–2 minute video about an idea to help their community. Winning ideas receive \$1,000; students do not need a finished project. The deadline is October 4, 2026.
- If your student chooses to enter and is under 18, the Challenge will email a parent or guardian to confirm permission after submission. Please help your student use the correct email address and watch for that message.
- Learn more: <https://ideachallengenc.org/>

After a student submits

- Your student has submitted an idea to the NC Idea Challenge. If they are under 18, please look for the Challenge's parent/guardian permission email and complete that step so the entry can be reviewed.
- Check spam or promotions if you do not see it. If the email is missing or an address needs correction, contact hello@ideachallengenc.org.
- Thank you for helping your student follow through on an idea they care about.

Teacher / host completion check

Privately note whether each participating student has drafted, recorded and submitted, and whether the guardian step is still outstanding. Set a follow-up date. Do not publish individual student completion status or ask students to share personal family information with the group.

The Challenge accepts videos in other languages with the English translation described in its FAQ. Point families to the official instructions when planning language or accessibility support.