2026 COMPETITION FREQUENTLY-ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Note: This document is subject to change. Last updated: November 8, 2026.

Please send all questions to Harrison Bench at hbench@s4ca.org.

What is the Long Island BESS Bowl?

The Long Island BESS Bowl is a case competition for high schoolers organized by Students for Climate Action (S4CA) with support from the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). **Teams of 3-5 high school students** will compete to solve real-world problems in battery storage and renewable energy development – by researching, strategizing, and presenting their innovative solutions to a panel of expert judges.

When and where is the 2026 competition?

The 2026 Long Island BESS Bowl will be held on **Thursday, December 10**. Competition rounds will take place between **9:00 AM** and **2:00 PM**. When teams register, they will be asked to rank their top three 30-minute time slots within this window. Official time slots will be shared on **Monday, November 23**. The closing ceremony will take place from **2:00 PM** to **3:00 PM**, and all teams are expected to attend. The 2026 competition will be held virtually over **Zoom**.

There will be an optional (but strongly recommended) orientation and Q&A session on **Thursday, December 3** at **2:00 PM** over **Zoom** for registered teams. This session will be recorded for teams who are unable to attend.

The full 2026 Competition Schedule can be found at www.s4ca.org/bess-bowl.

How can teams register?

Teams of 3-5 students at high schools in Nassau and Suffolk Counties are eligible for the Long Island BESS Bowl. Teacher advisors can register their teams by completing the form found at www.s4ca.org/bess-bowl or https://forms.gle/Cjq3bVLJ3tHoQh9V8. Registration opens on **Monday, November 9** and closes on **Friday, November 20**. There is no cost to register or participate!

What happens after registering?

All registered teams will be sent introductory materials on climate change, renewable energy, battery storage, and development on Long Island. Team members will also be sent a media release form that must be completed by a parent or legal guardian by **Monday, November 30**. The Long Island BESS Bowl will be recorded by S4CA for judging, promotion, and evaluation. Photos may be shared on our webpage, social media, with the press, or local officials.

When will the challenge be released?
The 2026 challenge will be sent to teams on **Monday, November 30** (ten days before the competition). Questions about the challenge can be emailed to Harrison Bench at hbench@s4ca.org or raised at the optional orientation on Thursday, December 3. Answers will be shared with all teams.

What is the time commitment?
S4CA anticipates that each team will spend **approximately 15-20 hours per team, total** to review the challenge, perform background research, and develop presentation slides and speaking points. On the day of the competition, teams will participate in **30-minute competition rounds** and the **1-hour closing ceremony.**

When are presentation slides due?
Presentation slides are due via email to Harrison Bench (hbench@s4ca.org) by **5:00 PM** on **Tuesday, December 8**. If teams encounter technology (Zoom) issues on the day of the competition, S4CA will share presentation slides with judges while teams participate by phone.

How does judging and scoring work?
Each team will present to **three expert judges** from environmental organizations, community groups, government agencies, and/or energy companies. Presentations are limited to **15 minutes**, which will be followed by a **5-minute Q&A session**. Judges will be announced on **Monday, November 30**.

Teams will be scored across **four categories** (Evidence & Understanding; Community Engagement; Practicality, Safety & Tradeoffs; Presentation & Teamwork) for a **total of 20 points**. There are additionally **4 bonus points** available. A tentative rubric can be found at www.s4ca.org/bess-bowl.

1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winning teams will be announced at the closing ceremony at **2:00 PM** on **Thursday, December 10**. After the competition has concluded, S4CA will mail a prize check to each winning team's school or advisor (**$1000** for 1st; **$500** for 2nd; **$250** for 3rd).

Where can I find the competition rules?
The 2026 Long Island BESS Bowl Competition Rules can be found at www.s4ca.org/bess-bowl.

What is BESS?
Battery energy storage systems (BESS) are utility-scale facilities that store excess electricity and then discharge that energy to the grid when demand rises. As more solar and wind projects

are developed, and as electricity demand rises, BESS are a critical component of New York's energy future. The Long Island BESS Bowl will make this complex topic more accessible, understandable, and exciting for the next generation of climate and energy leaders.

Why does it matter?

- New York State has ambitious BESS goals and Long Island communities are at the center of siting debates, meaning local youth voices are especially important.
- The Long Island BESS Bowl bridges the gap between technology, policy, law, community engagement, and youth empowerment in one integrated challenge.

What do students gain?

- Students will gain a substantive understanding of climate and energy topics, in accordance with new New York State learning standards.
- High school participants will develop strong research, presentation, and public speaking skills while addressing interdisciplinary and complex challenges.
- By meeting a variety of stakeholders, students will grow their professional networks and be exposed to careers in the growing clean energy industry.
- Teams will have the opportunity to refine their civic engagement and advocacy skills – sharing their presentations and findings with local decision-makers.

What is Students for Climate Action?

S4CA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that connects youth with elected officials to advocate for common sense climate and energy solutions at all levels of government.

To learn more about S4CA, please visit: www.s4ca.org/.

What is the New York League of Conservation Voters?

NYLCV is a nonpartisan 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization dedicated to fighting climate change, conserving land and water, and protecting public health across New York State.

To learn more about NYLCV, please visit: https://www.nylcv.org/.

For more information about the Long Island BESS Bowl, please visit www.s4ca.org/bess-bowl or email Deputy Executive Director Harrison Bench at hbench@s4ca.org.