



Design Competition Guidelines



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SCHOOLSNEXT

Celebrating our schools and reinforcing the connection between school facilities and student learning, SchoolsNEXT is an annual program supported by the Association for Learning Environments (A4LE) in collaboration with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, American Institute of Architects, American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association, Tarkett, Shaw Contract Group and over 20 other organizations.

Our children spend the majority of their waking hours in a school. SchoolsNEXT provides an opportunity to draw national attention to the importance of well planned, healthy, high performance, safe and sustainable schools that enhance student achievement and community vitality. As the building blocks of communities throughout the world and the keystone of our future, schools should be sustainable spaces for lifelong learning.

SchoolsNEXT is a time when schools and school districts may engage in activities and celebrations that channel students, parents, policymakers, legislators and other affected constituencies to consider the role the school building plays in the educational process and in the current and future vitality of their communities. Each community values its schools in a manner unique to its local educational needs and curriculum focus. Today we have an opportunity to create effective learning environments that reflect the community's unique assets as well as its needs; serve as a resource of education, health and human services to students and neighborhood members alike; and strengthen community life.

SCHOOLSNEXT DESIGN COMPETITION

A4LE's SchoolsNEXT Design Competition offers an opportunity to illustrate the kind of creativity that students bring to the planning and design process. The competition highlights the importance of well-planned, high performance, healthy, safe and resilient learning environments that foster student achievement and enhance community vitality. The annual competition challenges student teams to design a learning facility or space to enhance learning, conserve resources, be environmentally responsive and engage the surrounding community. The multi-disciplinary solution encourages students to follow a planning process from the concept phase to completion of the project, with thorough documentation. The students will present their project to a jury for review.

Submittal requirements: Each team is required to submit a 3 to 5-minute video, recorded presentation and an 850-word narrative description documenting the planning process and rationale, optional is a project model. Supporting materials, such as plans, elevations, perspective drawings, Google Sketchup or other CAD drawings, etc. may be submitted for view on line.

Mentors: Dedicated architecture students, architects, engineers, construction managers, facility planners, manufacturers and suppliers contribute their time in mentoring middle school students through the competition, so that learning about facility planning, design and the built environment can take place.

Teachers: Teachers are may use the award-winning SchoolsNEXT Design Competition curriculum resource and outlined lesson plans, www.a4le.org/SchoolsNEXT as a starting point for the creative ideas of the participants of the student design competition and to develop skills in math, language arts, communication, leadership, science technology, architecture and facility planning.

Registration forms, criteria, instructions, resources and other materials are available online at www.A4LE.org.

School district, chapter, state juries and regional juries will be held in February-April. A4LE regions must complete regional jury selection and announce a winner in accordance with the international timeline. The first-place winning team will receive travel and accommodations to be featured at the A4LE LearningSCAPES Conference.

DESIGN COMPETITION RULES

1. Each class must form a student planning team and develop and implement a planning process, which involves student role-playing, representative of the entire community, if these learning spaces are truly to be centers of community.
2. The student planning team may include an entire class or a selected group of students.
3. If more than one school class participates, it may be necessary to have a school competition and jury to declare the school winner.
4. Four (4) students will represent their team at the jury presentations, along with a teacher.
5. Teachers and students may utilize the award-winning SchoolsNEXT curriculum resource, www.A4LE.org and outlined lesson plans to develop skills in math, language arts, communication, leadership, science technology, architecture and facility planning.
6. Supporting materials, such as plans, elevations, perspective drawings, Google Sketchup or other CAD drawings, etc. may be submitted as well as an optional physical project model via electronic submission.
7. The 850-word narrative description documenting the planning process and rationale must be written by the students.
8. Copy of narrative must be sent for juror review prior to actual jury date.
9. Students will create a 3 to 5-minute video and a recorded presentation.
10. The following items must be sent in advance to the chapter, state, regional and national jury competitions:
 - Copy of narrative
 - Video and recorded presentation
 - Supporting materials, boards, etc.
 - Signed student release form
11. Students must submit media release/parental consent forms signed by parents or guardians.
12. Direct questions to either the A4LE staff or regional volunteer coordinator.
13. Deadlines are final, so adhere strictly to the published timelines.

DESIGN COMPETITION GUIDELINES

When working with students to participate in this competition, teachers and volunteer mentors should consider the following issues in helping the students to develop their design projects.

- Students will work in groups to design the projects, following a planning process.
- Students will adopt roles representing all the key players on a planning team – architect, landscape architect, facility planner, engineer, owner, school district representative, interior designer, community member, business representative, elected official, etc.
- Teachers may utilize the award-winning SchoolsNEXT Design Competition Curriculum resource, www.a4le.org, as a starting point to develop skills in math, language arts, communication skills, leadership skills, science, architecture and facility planning.
- Students will demonstrate their awareness of sustainable building including environmental and “green” building issues.
- Teachers will work closely with mentors and regional coordinators to develop their design competition projects.

The design focus can be on a single classroom, studio, laboratory or the entire school and can be new construction or a renovation project. The SchoolsNEXT Jury will consider the following requirements and criteria in selecting the SchoolsNEXT Design Competition award winners.

Getting Started: As you work with the students, it may be helpful to discuss the following topics and questions:

Develop and implement a planning process:

Who would be helpful to talk to as you create your ideal space or school? Why would that person or those people help your solution to be better?

Community environment:

How does your proposed learning environment connect learning to the community?
What is special and unique about your community and how is that celebrated in the environment you’ve created?

Are there any partnerships between your learning environment and the community?
How does the community benefit, and how do you?
How will this place help students tie learning to real life and make it more meaningful?

Learning environment:

Why is learning better in the environment you’re creating?
What will the learner be able to do that he or she can’t do now?
What would a typical day in your learning environment be like? Help to build stronger relationships between students, between students and teachers, and between the school and the community? Does the learning environment respond to all learning styles?

Physical environment:

Have you created a healthy and comfortable learning environment?

How will this place make it easier for students to learn?

How do people get here – are there buses or cars?

What are the materials, colors, and textures?

How does your design preserve the environment?

Given that **Learning happens best when...**

...all of your senses are engaged. Not just hearing and sight, but smell, touch and taste;

...your technology is integrated. It should not be an end in itself, but a tool, which enhances your learning experience;

...your learning environment is healthy and comfortable. Good indoor environmental quality, temperature, furnishings, acoustics all improve performance;

...you feel safe and secure. Learning is about risk taking. A sense of safety and security encourages you to stretch outside of yourself to achieve your best;

... you actively participate, you are actively engaged in making your own learning happen;

...you're connected to the world. There are levels of connections that you make with other learners, with teachers or "guides," with the school as a whole and with your community;

...you feel a sense of pride about your school and your community.

And acknowledging that **all of us can learn, anytime, anywhere, but that all of us learn differently**, so that we need to provide a **variety of learning spaces** to engage all learners. ***Most importantly, encourage your students to be as creative as possible and have fun!***

Submittal Information

- Regional and final juries require electronic presentations of the project model.
- Supporting materials, such as plans, elevations, perspective drawings, Google Sketchup or other CAD drawings, etc., may be submitted on foam boards and/or tri-fold boards that can be displayed on an easel.
- 3 to 5-minute video and a recorded presentation.
- 850-word narrative description of the proposed project to help the jurors fully understand the students' ideas and planning process.
- Presentation to live jury documenting rationale, planning process and unique design features.

Submittal Criteria

- Demonstrate community involvement in the planning of the school.
- Create a high-performance learning environment
 - o Healthy
 - o Energy efficient
 - o Sustainable
 - o Safe and secure
 - o Comfortable
- Incorporate sustainable features such as solar panels, green roofs, natural lighting, energy efficient lighting, and recycled materials.
- Develop a learning environment that
 - o Supports all the different learning styles and methods for delivering instruction.
 - o Supports hands-on, active, project-based learning.
 - o Fosters connections and collaboration: student-to-student, student-to-teacher, small-medium-large groups, school-to-community.
- Incorporate technology that supports a "learning anytime-anywhere" philosophy.
- Illustrate awareness of smart growth and school siting issues, i.e. orientation, resources, land fill use, terrain, wind, water.
- Demonstrate community use of the school.
- Show how the community is integrated into the learning process.
- Design the project to celebrate unique community attributes and create a sense of pride (heritage, character, geography, history).
- Provide easy accessibility for the physically challenged, handicapped and elderly.

- Utilize US DOE Energy Smart Schools tools and resources to reduce energy usage and create healthy, high performance buildings <http://www.eere.energy.gov/education/>
- Employ US EPA ENERGY STAR tools and resources to reduce energy usage, operating costs and environmental impact – projects must be designed to earn the ENERGY STAR. <http://www.energystar.gov/>
- Utilize US EPA Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools or Design Tools for Schools programs to assess, resolve and prevent indoor air quality problems. <http://www.epa.gov/iaq;> www.epa.gov/children
- Additional information on A4LE website under “Health Schools”

CRITICAL DATES

April 1st	SchoolsNEXT team and mentor registration open
September – December	Student design competition begins
February - March	School/District jury/competition convene
February - March	Student design competition projects, narratives, videos, PowerPoints completed for submittal
March	Electronic submissions due to regional coordinator (based on regional conference dates)
March	Chapter and Region juries convene (based on regional conference dates)
April 30th	Regional winner announced to International
May 3rd	Electronic submissions due to international Program Director
May (TBD)	International Jury (electronic)
October/November	International Winning Team attend LearningSCAPES Conference

Please see timeline on www.a4le.org for specific dates.

MENTOR PROGRAM

Mentorship refers to a personal and developmental relationship between a student and a professional adult, which serves to further the student's career skills and knowledge. It is a liaison that will help students to grow. Mentorship extends learning beyond the curriculum, develops self-esteem with career-related responsibility, opens access to community role models and demonstrates that career development is continuous. Mentorship challenges and enhances students' strengths talents and interests, thereby providing critical connections between education and careers.

Students gain access to highly skilled and motivated leaders, who are remarkably resourceful and demonstrate what will be expected of them, as they become contributing adult members of society. The mentors work in the various fields of knowledge that contribute to creating outstanding learning environments and healthy, vital communities: university students and professors, facility planners, architects, engineers, economic developers, city planners, green building advocates, construction managers, federal agency representatives.

The mentor's job is to promote and facilitate intentional learning by acting as a technical advisor. They can share their "how to do it so it turns out right" stories, as well as "here's how I fixed what went wrong." Successful mentoring means sharing responsibility for learning. The student's imaginations can run wild, so it is the job of the mentor to keep their plans based somewhat on reality. Most importantly, the successful mentor will encourage the students to have fun with their project.

Best of all, mentoring can be one of the most satisfying and rewarding experiences you will ever have. Volunteering as a mentor requires a significant commitment of your time and energy, but it is a fun and enjoyable experience. To create and facilitate the structures and opportunities for those kinds of powerful connections is a significant part of working thoughtfully with educational and social systems in which students are genuinely affirmed and encouraged to build self-confidence.

Flexibility is a key component for success. Fun is the glue that holds it all together.

MENTOR & TEACHER CHECKLIST

Plan...be familiar with the criteria, curriculum and deadlines for the program. Encourage creativity! Be a great coach! Have fun! Refer to the timeline at www.a4le.org for specific dates.

April - November

- Register online as a mentor
- Contact Regional Coordinators or A4LE if you cannot find a school in your area
- Contact your school to be assigned to a teacher or A4LE to be assigned to a team
- Complete any required security procedures – this may take time!
- Meet your team of students to schedule your visits
- Download Google Sketchup

August - December

- Assemble planning team and clarify roles – have students volunteer to work on different aspects of the project
- Assist students in assigning activities within the team
- Begin regularly scheduled team meetings
- Coordinate curriculum/classroom activities with teacher
- Explain competition rules and what is involved
- Brainstorm project and begin research
- Identify major tasks
- Document, document, document all activities
- Set mutual goals
- Introduce students to Google Sketchup
- Conduct surveys of school staff and students, community, local businesses
- Begin narrative, which must be written collaboratively by students
- Have students document their work as they proceed for the narrative
- Take photos and begin videotaping, photographing each step of the process
- Begin plans for building the project
- Follow schedules and be aware of deadlines

September - January

- Invite guest speakers to further students' knowledge base and introduce them to various careers
- Continue working on project, narrative, video/Power Point
- Begin work on oral presentation, explaining and documenting the planning process and rationale for the project
- Determine method to select four (4) students who will represent entire team and give oral presentation to local, regional and national juries
- Document, document, document all activities

MENTOR & TEACHER CHECKLIST

January - February

- Complete all projects, narratives, videos/PowerPoints for submission to local and regional juries
- Finalize and rehearse oral presentation
- Have a team appreciation party – celebrate!

February - March

- School district juries convene

March - April

- Chapter and Regional juries convene

May

- National Jury

October/November

- A4LE Learning SCAPES Conference

REGIONAL CHAIR DUTIES

SchoolsNEXT offers an excellent opportunity to illustrate the kind of creativity that students bring to the design process and also gives students, teachers and mentors a unique opportunity to work together as a planning team and have a lot of fun. The regional and chapter coordinators are key to the success of the program, as they will provide the infrastructure for their area competitions.

1. SchoolsNEXT Chair ensure that all teams with in the region are signed up online to participate in the competition.
2. SchoolsNEXT Chairs serve on region board, coordinate with HQ, chapters and all regional members to ensure that schools have assigned mentors and program is running successfully.
3. The regional Chair will be responsible for all SchoolsNEXT regional activities and direct all regional committees, i.e. school contact, mentors, juries, awards programs, media.
4. The regional Chair will assist in organizing initial chapter and local meetings to present overview of SchoolsNEXT Design Competition and distribute Guidelines.
5. The regional Chair will communicate directly with chapter and state coordinators to ensure all programs are running well and in a timely manner.
6. Regional Chair will appoint state and regional jury chairs.
7. Regional Chair will assist in organizing visit to state capitols to showcase competition finalists and their projects. This also provides an opportunity for A4LE members to advocate local legislative issues.
8. Regional Chair will assist in obtaining student media release/parental consent forms to A4LE.
9. Regional juries will select a first-place winner. The first place winning regional teams may participate in a final international competition to select the top team who will travel to the A4LE LearningSCAPES Conference.
10. Regional Chair and committee will plan local awards ceremony for the regional finalists, following the regional jury.
11. Regional Chair will arrange recognition and/or tribute for regional final team at the regional conference.
12. A4LE will provide detailed information on the national finals to each regional coordinator.

CHAPTER CHAIR DUTIES

1. Chapter Chair ensure that all teams with in their chapters are signed up online to participate in the competition.
2. Chapter Chair will establish committees for school contact, mentor contact, juries, award ceremonies and media coverage.
3. Chapter Chair and committee members will solicit and facilitate school registrations and assist schools in finding mentors.
4. Chapter Chairs will communicate with committee members responsible for teachers/mentors on a regular basis to ensure program is running well and in a timely manner.
5. Chapter Chair will appoint school district and chapter jury chairs.
6. Chapter Chairs will ensure that all student participants have media release/parental consent forms signed by parents and/or guardians.
7. Chapter Chairs will forward consent forms to regional coordinator or directly to international.
8. School district juries shall determine one winner.
9. Chapter juries shall determine one winner.
10. Chapter Chair and committee members will be responsible for contacting local media and issuing local news releases, with the assistance of A4LE. A4LE will issue all general news releases.
11. Chapter Chair and committees will plan local award ceremonies following school district jury and chapter jury procedures, preferably at the winning school(s). Community recognition is crucial to the success and growth of the program.

REGIONAL & CHAPTER CHAIR JOINT DUTIES

1. Regional and chapter Chairs will organize the chapter and regional duties.
2. Regional and chapter Chairs will host meetings to inform schools of the value of the competition – project-based learning; curriculum emphasizing the national mathematics standards for middle school students as well as communication skills, language arts, social studies, health and other sciences; introduction to careers; teamwork.
3. Online registration for both schools and mentors is available on the A4LE web site at www.A4LE.org.
4. Curriculum is available online as well as all the rules and regulations for the competition.
5. Regional and chapter Chairs will determine deadlines for each phase of the competition in accordance with international timeline/deadlines.

REGIONAL & CHAPTER CHAIR JOINT DUTIES

6. Regional Chair, chapter Chair and committee members will be responsible for contacting local media and issuing local news releases, with the assistance of A4LE. A4LE will issue all general news releases.
7. Regional Chair and chapter Chairs are responsible for awards ceremonies, which should be held following each of the jury procedures, preferably at the winning school(s). Community recognition is crucial to the success and growth of the program.
8. Regional Chair, chapter Chair and committee members will assist in plans for awards ceremonies and media events.
9. Regional Chair, chapter Chair and committee members will secure proclamations for SchoolsNEXT from school superintendents, mayors and governors.

**JURY PROCEDURE
CHECKLIST**

The jury procedure checklist applies to all juries from local school level to the national jury. Please refer to the timeline at www.a4le.org/schoolsnext for specific jury dates. There are a minimum number of jurors for each round of competition.

SCHOOL DISTRICT JURIES (for schools with more than one entry)	Minimum 2 jurors
CHAPTER AND LOCAL JURIES	Minimum 5 jurors
STATE JURIES	Minimum 5 jurors
REGIONAL JURIES	Min. 8-10 jurors

TASK

Preparation:

Assemble a jury that includes representatives from the key planning team groups, i.e. architects and/or engineers, contractors, school district administrators, facility planners, community members, business leaders, and media representatives. Ideally, these would include some of the same people that were consulted during the planning process.

1. Identify a Jury Chair
2. Distribute the Competition Guidelines and the Evaluation Matrixes for the juror’s review.
3. Set a date for design competition narrative submittal for juror review.
4. Set a date and time for the jury deliberation. Juries must be set up allowing one hour per team, including set-up and takedown between groups for in person jury process. Following presentations, allow one hour for final evaluation of the submittals and selection of a winner.

Jury Day:

5. Assemble jury members one-half hour prior to team arrival.
6. Review the Competition Guidelines and the Evaluation Matrixes.
7. Presentations
 - Team set-up – 10 minutes
 - Presentation – 15-20 minutes
 - Questions & answers – 5 minutes
 - Pack-up & next group begin set-up – 10 minutes

JURY PROCEDURE
CHECKLIST

8. Discussions
 - Ask each juror to rank their top three choices and discuss their reasons.
 - Utilize a process that allows jurors to reach consensus.
 - Identify one winner from each school who will move on to the chapter competition.

TASK

9. Score and retain narratives, video, PowerPoints and submit to the chapter coordinator and/or chapter jury chair.
10. Summarize juror comments and scoring process and submit to the chapter coordinator and/or chapter jury chair.
11. Notify and thank winning school teams, as well as other participants, by the following day so they can prepare for the next level of competition.
12. Inform first place winners of location, date, time and contact for chapter jury.
13. Recognize the winning teams. Plan a local/school district awards ceremony in conjunction with the chapter coordinator and committee.

JURY MATERIALS

Please have the following available:

- PowerPoint project, monitor, screen
- List of schools/contact info
- Submittal criteria
- Evaluation forms – narrative
- Evaluation forms – video and recorded presentation
- Virtual platform (if not in person)
- Refreshments for participants and jurors

Jury makeup suggestions:

- Architect and/or engineer
- School district representative
- Contractor or program management firm
- Community member
- Business leader
- Media representative

Participating School:

Project Type: Single classroom, studio, laboratory, or entire school.

Please rate each project according to how well they responded to the questions within the following four categories:

- **Planning Process:**

Who would be helpful to talk to as you create your ideal space or school?

Why would that person or those people help your solution to be better?

- **Community Environment:**

How does your proposed learning environment connect learning to the community?

What is special and unique about your community and how is that celebrated in the environment you've created?

Are there any partnerships between your learning environment and the community?

How does the community benefit, and how do you?

How will this place help students tie learning to real life and make it more meaningful?

- **Learning Environment:**

Why is learning better in the environment you're creating?

What will the learner be able to do that he or she can't do now?

What would a typical day in your learning environment be like?

How does your environment help to make stronger relationships between students, and between students and the teachers, and between the school and community?

- **Physical Environment:**

How will this place make it easier for students to learn?

How do people get here – are there buses or cars?

What are the materials, colors, and textures?

How does your design preserve the environment i.e. incorporate Energy Star, good indoor air quality?

EVALUATION FORM

Instructions: Each of the criteria should be evaluated as a whole and is worth up to five points. More specifically, each of the criteria should receive between one and five points, with five being the highest. Please add comments about the presentation to assist in the jury process.



SchoolsNEXT Scoring Matrix

Directions:
(The highest scores indicate the projects with the greatest combination of criteria)
 Provide a score between **1 to 5** for each category for each project. A score of "5" indicates the project satisfies the highest level of the category while a score of "1" indicates the project did not meet the criteria.

Score 5 (highest) to 1 (lowest) for each category as described below

SCHOOL NAME					
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Planning Process The project provided the opportunity for end user and community participation in the process	0	0	0	0	0
Community Environment The project connects the facility to the community in multiple ways	0	0	0	0	0
Learning Environment The facility design enhances the relationship between learners and instructors and learners and learners	0	0	0	0	0
Physical Environment The project developed a site and facility design that is respectful of the environment and supports the learning process	0	0	0	0	0
Presentation The presentation satisfied the submittal criteria and demonstrated strong presentation skills	0	0	0	0	0
Other Outstanding Features Provide a score from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) for projects exhibiting other unique features	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL SCORE	0	0	0	0	0

School Name

Comments

SUBMITTAL CHECKLIST

- Project narrative
- Video and/or PowerPoint
- Supporting materials, boards
- Media Release forms
- Student and teacher contact information
 - School address and phone
 - Home address
 - Home phone
 - Date of birth
 - Emergency contact information: Parents, Cell phone
- Nearest airport
- Preferred rooming list – each team will be assigned three rooms

MEDIA RELEASE FORM

I authorize the Association for Learning Environments (A4LE), and those acting within its authority, to, at no charge:

- Permit release of my name and photograph to the media for events related to the A4LE SchoolsNEXT Competition.
- Permit posting of my photographs on the A4LE Web site and collaborating partner Web sites.
- Videotape my presentation or parts of it for educational or promotional purposes.
- I understand that I will not receive any compensation for the promotional use of my name and photograph with regard to SchoolsNEXT Competition activities.
- A4LE encourages the participation of children in conferences, programs, and events. Their perspective of what makes an ideal learning environment provides great value and encouragement to A4LE members.

In order to protect any child who attends an A4LE event, A4LE requires the practice of following guidelines as minimum standards:

- No person under the age of 18 may attend a A4LE event without the accompaniment of an adult sponsor/chaperone that has been approved by the child’s parent, legal guardian, or a government accredited school [herein referred to as “responsible party”].
- No photos may be made of any person under the age of 18 without written consent from the responsible party.
- No person under the legal age of consumption may be present when alcohol is served in an open environment (i.e. a hospitality room with a non-hosted bar).
- Responsible parties are required to accompany children under the age of 18 to all meetings, events, and other functions that are in conjunction with the A4LE event.

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone No.: _____

Signature of Parent: _____

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the Association for Learning Environments (A4LE) has long been engaged in the vital work of improving the places where children learn, and

WHEREAS, the Association for Learning Environments is the primary advocate and resource for planning and designing healthy, high performance, safe and sustainable educational facilities that enhance student performance and community vitality

WHEREAS, the quality of our schools has a direct bearing on the viability and livability of our communities; and

WHEREAS, the Association for Learning Environments functions as the convening organization to share knowledge, experiences and best practices of planning, designing, building, renovating and maintaining learning environments that center a community and improve student success; and

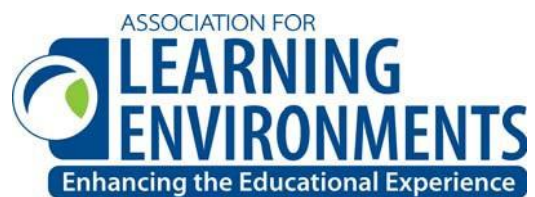
WHEREAS, the Association for Learning Environments believes that all students, teachers and staff deserve healthy, safe and effective learning environments; and

WHEREAS, as the building blocks of communities and the keystone of our future, schools should be sustainable spaces for lifelong learning; and

WHEREAS, the Association for Learning Environments has designated a week to raise community awareness of school building conditions and the need to improve them

NOW, THEREFORE, I, _____, do hereby proclaim

SchoolsNEXT Week



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www.A4LE.org