

Summer 2026 Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S PEN

Momentum is a remarkable thing. Once it begins to build, it creates energy, connection, and opportunity that reaches far beyond a single event or initiative. That is exactly what we are experiencing across the Southern Region of A4LE.

Our recent conference in Austin was a tremendous example of that momentum in action. The excitement leading into the conference was well founded, and the event exceeded expectations in every way. With record attendance, the Southern Region Conference has now grown into the second largest A4LE event in the United States, a milestone that reflects the passion, commitment, and engagement of our members and partners throughout the region.

What made the conference truly exceptional was not simply the numbers, but the quality of the experience. From the outstanding individual awards recognizing leadership and service, to the fantastic project awards showcasing innovation and excellence in learning environments, the conference celebrated the very best of what our profession represents.

Equally impactful was the multitude of continuing education opportunities delivered through a powerful peer-to-peer perspective. There is something uniquely valuable about professionals openly sharing lessons learned, innovative concepts, challenges, and successes with one another. Those conversations, both inside and outside the session rooms, continue to strengthen our region and elevate the work we all do on behalf of students and communities.

The Golf Tournament and Sporting Clay Tournament were also tremendous successes and provided opportunities for relationship building in an atmosphere filled with camaraderie and genuine connection. Some of the best ideas begin not in a boardroom, but somewhere between a tee box conversation and a shared laugh on the course.

One of the most memorable moments of the conference was our Gala celebration. The evening was elevated by incredible student performances featuring mariachi music and dance that brought energy, pride, and culture into the room in a truly unforgettable way. It served as a powerful reminder of why we do this work in the first place. Our efforts ultimately create opportunities and experiences for students, and seeing those talents showcased was a highlight for many in attendance.

As we continue forward, our focus now begins to turn toward the upcoming LearningSCAPES conference in Portland this November. LearningSCAPES always provides an outstanding opportunity to engage with colleagues from across the country, explore emerging trends, and continue expanding our understanding of how learning environments can evolve to meet the needs of future generations.

I look forward to what lies ahead and to continuing this journey together.



Easy Foster
President, Southern
Region

SAVE THE DATE:
A4LE Southern Region
Conference
April 19-22, 2027

Our Arkansas Chapter is
hosting next year!
Little Rock Marriott
Little Rock, AR

The call for speakers is
out now! Proposal
deadline is February 5,
2027.

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SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS TO SOUTHERN REGION CONFERENCE

Mauricio Suarez
Conroe ISD

Chris Burke
Arlington ISD

Tiffany Banks
Cypress-Fairbanks ISD

CHAIRWOMAN'S PEN

Happy Start of Summer!

I am sure everyone is busy kicking off projects, and the foundation is busy with scholarship season. We awarded three conference attendance scholarships to the wildly successful Southern Region Conference in Austin this past April. We enjoy awarding these to get new folks to attend the conference and get involved. We are looking ahead to next year's Arkansas conference and plan on awarding a much larger number to ensure great attendance and participation in our neighbor state.

Other scholarship applications to be on the lookout for:

Otto Grove College Scholarship

offers a competitive merit-based scholarship designed for students who desire financial support for their pursuit of undergraduate and post-graduate educational opportunities. The Southern Region supports membership growth in the Southern Region by providing chapter support and scholarship opportunities to support the organization's mission. Each academic year, up to four (4) student(s) will be selected as the recipients of a \$1,500 Southern Region Scholarship Award. Students will be selected from within the Southern Region (Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas), and must be pursuing degrees in architecture, education, construction or related fields. The application will be out June 5, for award in early July.

LearningsCAPES Conference Attendance

Scholarships for members interested in attending the LearningSCAPES event in the fall. This scholarship provides financial assistance for one or more individuals residing in the Southern Region states to attend the Association's Annual Conference, LearningSCAPES, November 4-7, 2026 in Seattle, WA. The maximum amount of this scholarship is \$1,200 and may be applied to registration, travel and/or hotel costs as needed.

Also, we are looking to revamp the Foundation so we can grow our ability to award these scholarships. Are you interested? Please email me at irene@in2arch.com for more information.

Have a great summer!

Irene Nigaglioni, FAIA, ALEP

Foundation Chair, A4LE Southern Region

SOUTHERN REGION 2026 CONFERENCE

As Easy noted, this year’s conference was a huge success! What he failed to mention was his own, much deserved award as 2026 Southern Region Planner of the Year. Congratulations to President Foster!



Additional congratulations go to our two Southern Region Architectural Award Winners!



Summit Award
 General Marshall
 Middle School
 Austin ISD
 Austin, TX
 LPA Design Studios



Project of Distinction
 Kingwood Middle
 School
 Humble ISD
 Kingwood, TX
 Kirksey Architecture

Find out more about membership here:



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ARKANSAS CHAPTER

The Arkansas Chapter's Back To School Tour is coming up on July 16, 2026 from 2 PM – 6PM.

This starts with a tour of the newly completed Thaden Lower School which will be opening for the 2026-27 school year. This building will house grades K-4 providing 10 classrooms and support space. All classrooms have connectivity to an exterior patio adjacent to an extensive learning playground. After completion of the Lower School tour we will walk through the campus to the Thaden School, winner of the 2022 A4LE James D MacConnell Award, one of the original buildings on campus.

The final stop will be a social happy hour at Botanical at 8th Street.

The tour is limited to 30 people so sign up soon! Registration closes July 14th or once maximum capacity is reached.

Image source: [The Thaden School Design Challenges Traditional Educational Layouts](#)



Thaden School sits on a 26-acre site in Arkansas. Here, the Home Building is seen in the rear of campus.
Photo by Tim Hursley

Check out the upcoming Central Texas events on their page at A4LE.org!

CENTRAL TEXAS CHAPTER

This active chapter has a tour soon. Their Emerging Professionals Group has a number of past events and opportunities for staying informed.



This event will be capped at 150 participants

SAVE THE DATE:

Sporting Clays
Event is set for
Thursday,
November 19,
2026.

Check their chapter
page for updates!



GULF COAST CHAPTER

The Annual AGC/A4LE Summer Forecast Report will be held on June 24 from 11AM – 2 PM at the Gerald D. Young Agriculture Sciences Center.

Lunch will be provided for attendees courtesy of Durotech, Inc.

Event will include:

- Networking
- Lunch
- Updates from AGC, A4LE & TEA
- Guest Speaker (TBD)
- Presentation on the 2026 K-12 Construction Cost Forecast



AGC
HOUSTON CHAPTER
THE CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION



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For more information on upcoming events, reach out to local chapter leadership. Information available at the [Louisiana Chapter](#) page at [A4LE.org](#)

LOUISIANA CHAPTER

This year's most recent chapter tour took place on April 27 at St. Augustine HS in New Orleans. St. Augustine High School's campus renovation advances a legacy of excellence through targeted upgrades to both the main school and the Rigaud Health & Wellness Center. This tour highlighted how focused interventions improve visibility, flexibility, and student experience across academic and wellness spaces.

Image source: [St. Augustine High School - Rigaud Athletics Center | Trapolin-Peer Architects](#)



St. Augustine High School - Rigaud Athletics Center

EDUCATION, ADAPTIVE REUSE + MODERNIZATION

Upcoming Events:

July 9 – Summer Social at Globe Life Field

July 15 – Balancing Cost and Design: Building Smarter Schools in North Texas & Cost Panel Symposium

August 25 – Emerging Professionals Annual Bowling Tournament

SAVE THE DATE
The Annual Golf Tournament is coming up on Friday, October 30, 2026.

NORTH TEXAS CHAPTER

North Texas was very excited to show off three award winners at the 2026 Regional Conference. Congratulations to our fantastic members!

Dennis Scott – 2026 Distinguished Service Award

Sean Pantin – 2026 Cornerstone Award

Rachel Harrah, ALEP – 2026 Service Citation Award

These three are pictured left to right below (along with NTX Chapter President Tania Caudill and Southern Region President Elect Beverly Fornof).



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OKLAHOMA CHAPTER

On May 20, the Oklahoma Chapter hosted our annual Spring Symposium at MetroTech’s Springlake Campus. The conference center holds special significance as the site of our chapter’s very first symposium. Since then, the facility has undergone major renovation, making it especially exciting to experience the campus in a refreshed and improved setting. Superintendent Aaron Collins gave a great talk about the facility and how the architecture supports the facility’s mission.

We were pleased to welcome several new faces to this year’s symposium, which is always a highlight. As we move into summer, we are focusing on expanding our membership while planning multiple project tours and CEU opportunities for the fall.



Upcoming Events

Available on their [Chapter page](#) and [LinkedIn Page](#)!

SOUTH TEXAS CHAPTER

Our May chapter event was an exciting and successful case study on modernizing learning spaces with flexible FFE.

Our first Emerging Professionals summer kick off as a coffee social helped many young members connect with seasoned professionals and chapter board members.

Our June event is a tour of the 70-year-old Brackenridge High School in San Antonio followed by a happy hour social.



SCHOOLS NEXT

Check out our 2026 Regional Winners!

[SchoolsNEXT Past Winners / Celebrate Your School](#)



The International
Award of Excellence
Team will present at
LearningSCAPES
later this year!

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**Save the Date – Learning Without Limits:
Alternative Environments for Tomorrow’s
Students**



Early Bird
Registration
ends **July 31,**
2026! Sign up
today!

[REGISTER](#)