

# delve

SEPT 2022 V30

CREATING A  
WINNING eSPORTS  
PROGRAM WITH  
MIEN  
COMPANY

Cover Photo:  
eSports environment by  
Mien Company



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**COVER STORY:** Creating a Winning eSports Environment with MiEN Company



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## editor's note

Dear Reader,

Education Design holds a special place in our industry. It's where the best and brightest come together to innovate and inspire the learning environments that help shape tomorrow's leaders.

In this issue we have highlighted stories that dive deep into the philosophy of Education Design, as well as showcase many of the new and exciting product trends.

We invite you to dive in, and reach out to those whose stories inspire you!

Enjoy!

*Do you have an idea for an article in Delve? We want to hear from you! Send us an email at:*

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**THE  
MY RESOURCE LIBRARY  
FAMILY**



I am not an interior designer specializing in traditional K-12 or collegiate interiors. In the 23 years of having my practice, I have never designed a school or a classroom. But if you asked me if I can design interiors for people who want to teach or learn, the answer is yes.

There are many types of students. Age or ability does not define a student; instead, it is anyone who wants to learn. The thirst for knowledge is not limited to anyone's physical or mental capacities. Educators have long known that the environment of interior spaces where learning takes place is essential. The space needs to help facilitate the learning process by designing with the student in mind; it will become as much of a learning tool as a book or computer.

One of my favorite projects I am currently working on involves repurposing an existing office space into a learning center for mentally and physically challenged young adults. These students are between the ages of 16-27. Many of them have a variety of neurodiversity disorders in the context of the autistic spectrum. Some have Down Syndrome, and others have mental and physical disorders requiring them to be monitored 24 hours a day with constant support. These students don't just have learning disabilities; they lack the basic skills needed to function independently. Educators like my client believe these students can learn life skills to achieve a certain level of independence.

She describes her students as either capable and able, and not so capable and able. The students she views as capable are those who can hold a regular job, even if that job is nothing more than sweeping floors. Because that job means they can now be more independent from their immediate caregivers. Those who are not so capable require a safe place to interact with each other



**By Susan Mulholland**

*Susan Mulholland studied interior design at Northern Arizona University and is an NCIDQ certificate holder. She has 30 years of interior design experience in commercial design. Her experience in the industry covers a large variety of projects that focus on workplace, healthcare, and hospitality. Her design studio Mulholland Art & Design Commercial Interiors is in Tucson, Arizona, where she has been helping clients for the past 20 years. [Connect with Susan Mulholland on her website.](#)*



and staff and participate in arts and crafts or other activities that allow them to be achievers within their abilities while learning new ones.

Self-esteem, independence, dignity, and freedom from restrictions are things every human on this planet wants. The prospect of a learning environment encompassing all of these things in one location was the driving force for this project.

Educators who work with these students need a space to help them teach effectively. The students need an environment that doesn't cause them harm or distract them from learning.

Dementia and Alzheimer's are like other neurodiverse disorders; they are associated with older people. My experience designing environments for seniors, especially those with dementia and Alzheimer's, was a great help to me when I started this project. The key to note here when designing for anyone with challenges is accessibility. Is the environment you are creating going to be accessible to someone who may have a cognitive or physical disability to navigate or interact with others within the same interior space?

The elements of design, such as natural and artificial light, color, and texture in the space, need to be treated as triggers for behavior; whether that behavior is favorable or not, these elements, along with sound, become essential in selecting materials for finishes and furnishings. Without going into too much research, seniors with dementia and young people with autism or other neuro-spectrum conditions react to color, light, sound, and texture similarly. This is the challenge that designers need to address. How do we create an interior environment that helps those thrive with a quality of life that we all value? We do this by looking at what the principles of universal design represent. We engage our clients, caregivers, educators, and researchers in what types of materials or other environmental influences directly affect the individual using this space. Learning outcomes are directly related to how we envision this environment.

When I started this project, I looked at the space there. The flooring, the existing paint color, the millwork, and even the window coverings. I immediately saw that the current finishes would be prohibitive to an accessible learning environment. The existing layout also needed to be changed to meet the needs of both the caregivers and students. I based the new design on the programs the teachers wanted to create to engage their students, based on their attention span and ability. These programs or lessons were as simple as tying their shoes to making a peanut butter sandwich by themselves.

Design flexibility was vital - easy to care for finishes and materials that did not easily damage with vigorous use or cleaning; acoustic design that allowed for sound to be limited or enhanced; artificial lighting and natural light that could be controlled safely. With these primary concerns in mind, the aesthetics also needed to match the feeling my client wanted to convey to her staff and caregivers, which was that this is not a daycare. It's a school.

The interior space can change, without worrying about the overall color concept, because the neutral color palette on the walls and floors anchors the other design elements in the area. So, we created a concept design with light neutrals and contrasted it with bright colors throughout the space. The palette's bright color accents in each area come from the furniture instead of the paint on the walls. This approach allows for more flexibility and adaptability for the school moving forward.

We will be adapting other locations in the school much the same way moving forward. But for now, this first project is a work in progress. We are adapting small changes in the overall design as the students and teachers use it. With each new addition or change, we keep the same theme-accessible design that says this is a safe place to learn, have fun, and engage with others regardless of your mental or physical abilities. Everyone who comes here knows they will be able to learn and grow confidently to become their best selves.







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# 6 OF MRL'S FAVORITE PRODUCTS FROM ACROSS THE LIBRARY

The following products represent 6 of our favorite products currently on My Resource Library. The products are listed in no particular order. Can you guess the theme?

## **RICOCHEST STOOL**

KI 4-EDUCATION  
& HEALTHCARE FURNITURE

Students are naturally wiggly. Their young bodies crave movement. From standing and sitting to jumping and running, students are constantly repositioning and exerting active energy. And that's a good thing. Studies have shown that physical activity improves cognitive development.



## **STRIVE TASK CHAIR**

KI 4-EDUCATION  
& HEALTHCARE FURNITURE

Innovative ChangeUp tablet arms provide an accessible worksurface for Doni and Strive 4-leg, 4-leg with casters, sled base and task chairs. This large flip/fold tablet pivots 45 degrees for ease of ingress and egress in a compact footprint.



## **BUILD MAKERSPACE TABLE**

HON EDUCATION

Inspiring the next generation takes a higher degree of mobility and hands-on learning. The Build series, an educational product collection of tables, student desks, and seating, is lightweight, durable, reconfigurable, and customizable. Build encourages creativity and adaptability so students can support collaboration and social interaction or create personal space for focused study time.



## **JUMBO LARGE HOPSCOTCH EDUCATIONAL RUG**

CHILDREN'S FACTORY

Printed, cut pile, educational rugs are made from 100% polyamide. Treated to be stain, water and fade resistant, these rugs are able to withstand rugged wear and tear. The sturdy 3-ply felt backing increases sound and thermal insulation while preventing wrinkling and creasing. Double serged edges ensure the rugs won't fray.

## **SURGE DESK**

ACADEMIA FURNITURE

State-of-the-art adaptability maximizes attentiveness by letting students sit or stand with the same desk! Safety lever gives wide range of sitting and standing options. Larger desktop suits teacher, too. Use with any chair. Wide choice of finishes and colors. Choose glides or casters. Fully welded steel frame is strong, yet sleek. Angled to insure absolute stability at all heights.



## **VIRCO FLOOR ROCKER**

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Depending on the task, sitting low to the ground may just be what's needed to create a comfortable and effective learning environment. We've taken this idea and rocked it with a compelling and versatile complement to the classroom that meets kids on their level.



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Get real support from our human helpdesk for content and tech issues so you can move past roadblocks quickly.





**By Michelle Warren**

*Michelle Warren is President of Catalyst Consulting Group, a firm specializing in providing strategic solutions to the commercial furniture industry to enhance their sales, positioning, and distribution.*

*With 25 years of industry experience on the dealer and manufacturer side of the industry, Michelle has been recognized as an innovator in selling to the Federal Government, State/ Local Government, Higher Education and Cooperative Purchasing. Her expertise includes: sales strategies, strategic planning, 3-5 year road mapping, targeted marketing plans, distribution development, hiring reps, and training for reps and/or dealers.*

*Michelle is known as a “serial networker” in the furniture industry and enjoys meeting people and making connections happen. If you’re interested in connecting - reach out at: [Michelle@strategic-catalyst.com](mailto:Michelle@strategic-catalyst.com), connect on LinkedIn or visit [www.strategic-catalyst.com](http://www.strategic-catalyst.com) to learn more about her work.*



**Mythbusting in the Public Sector**

As we continue busting through some of the many myths surrounding selling to the Public Sector, especially the Federal Government, in this edition, we will tackle four pricing myths. The rules around pricing are probably one of the most misunderstood aspects of selling to the Federal Government. When selling commercially or to the Government, pricing can be the costliest to a contract holder if you do not understand your contract terms.

**Myth #1:** The Government always has to have the lowest price.

**Myth #2:** GSA always has to receive the deepest discount a company has to get a Contract.

**Myth #3:** Companies can never extend a deeper discount to a commercial or Government Client if they have a GSA Contract

Myths 1, 2, and 3 are very similar, so we should address them together. There is so much in these three myths that I will address a couple of different aspects around them. They are all false statements, but they have some compliance understanding required to navigate them as a contract holder securely.

To help carve away at these myths, we need to understand a few simple basics.

**Basis of Award:**

As a GSA contract holder, the Government should be your best customer, and the contract you negotiated is based on this premise. However, you also negotiated your contract based on the award. Your basis of award is who your best customer, also known as Most Favored Customer (MFC), was before GSA and is what your negotiations are based on. Therefore, within your negotiated tiers and

the Maximum Order Limit (MOL), you should not give anyone within your basis of award category better discounting than your negotiated GSA allowance of discount. Outside of your basis of award, you can provide better discounting as needed to win the award on a project-by-project basis. But to be safe, document the commercial project-specific items such as who you were competing against, the quantity, the product being customized, who will make the purchase and issue the PO, etc. Additionally, this only applies to products on your GSA contract, so any products not on your contract are not limited by your GSA contract.

**MOL:**

I mentioned this above, so I want to clarify. The MOL is negotiated as part of your GSA contract. Once you surpass that threshold above your negotiated MOL, there are no limits to how you can price your products to any commercial customer.

**Competitive Landscape:**

GSA understands the nature of competition. If you are in a competitive situation or project situation, they allow you to provide commercial pricing deeper than GSA. I would recommend you work with your contract administrator and, in some cases, your Contracting Officer (CO) to ensure you are documenting this correctly to comply with your contract.

That covers the commercial side of the pricing myths, but what about selling to Government end users? GSA has no problem at all with you offering additional discounting/pricing to government agencies. If you need to discount beyond your standard GSA contract to win a BPA, IDIQ, or project with a Federal end user/agency, you are free to do so. I would caution that this could trigger a GSA request for similar pricing in the future.

**Myth #4:**

I can't run an end-of-the-buying season promotional pricing to the Government

You are closing in on year-end and looking for a way to get some sales, but you don't think you can adjust your GSA discount? You are wrong. You most definitely can run an end of the buying season- or even beginning or middle- promotions. To do this, you would determine which products you would like to offer this promotion on. If the products are on GSA advantage, you will need to run the promo on there, and it is as simple as putting in a sale or temporary pricing in the SIP file. For products not on GSA Advantage, you will want to provide the product list along with the specifics of the promotion to your CO. They will approve, and then you are free to market this promo to your GSA end users, prospects, dealers, etc.

Thanks to everyone who sent in these pricing myths to be discussed. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to understand your contract, the basis of award, and your compliance terms in regard to your contract to ensure you are making the best decisions for your company when it comes to pricing. There have been some hefty fines to furniture manufacturers who did not understand or perhaps did understand but thought they could get away with something. **You do not want your company to be the next headline!**







# Creative Solutions In Acoustic Lighting WITH UNIKA VAEV

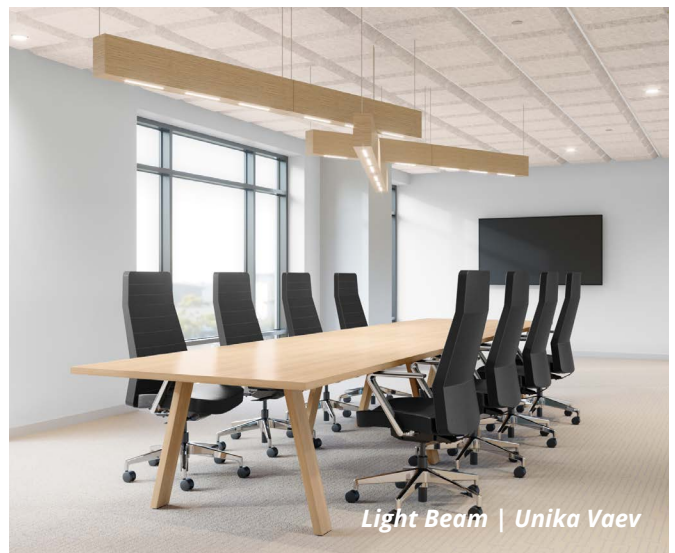
Since the introduction of our decorative acoustic product collection over a decade ago, Unika Vaev has established itself as a leader in this product category. At the same time, Unika Vaev's Design Studio has offered custom capabilities and developed designs and applications that create real 'value added' acoustic and decorative solutions.

The introduction of our Beam and Light Beam products reflects the focus of Unika Vaev's continued growth into the Acoustic Lighting segment. There are plenty of box baffles and even lighted baffles on the market – but there are no others like Beam and Light Beam. This latest introduction highlights the beautiful and timeless foundation of the architectural process. **Beam** and **Light Beam** can be mounted with a variety of hardware, resulting in a direct mount or standoff installation. Available as a digitally printed wood grain or in a wide range of solid colors, Unika Vaev has achieved a cost effective 'Post and Beam' look. Due to its unique end to end connection and the structural integrity, the modular 48" sections of Beam work at most any length.

Scott Goodwin, Creative Director of the Studio stated, "many of the products we have introduced are the genesis for what are now mainstay across the industry." He continues, "in the case of box baffles, we took our time to develop more than just another baffle. We really love the PET material and the wide range of ways it can be used, so we decided to look at the baffle, with the options of being used more architecturally and with enough structural and dimensional integrity to do more than just hang.

Beam and Light Beam have gone through a more extensive development than just fashion and styling." Our belief that the timeless saying "Form Follows Function" is underscored with the introduction of this product.

Beam and Light Beam can work together, or separately to create and define space, only limited by the designer's imagination! Create dimensional features combined with color, light and shadow play from small to larger scaled spaces.



Light Beam | Unika Vaev

## UNIKA VAEV

The two profiles of wide (48" x 5.5" x 6.5") and narrow (48" x 4" x 7.5"), in both lighted and non-lighted versions, allow the lighting and the acoustic design to work together with the same visual aesthetic. The very ridged structure and several attachment options provides the installation to be planned and assembled on the ground and then connected, by hanging or furring, to the ceiling and even walls. No assembly is required because Beam and Light Beam are shipped fully assembled.

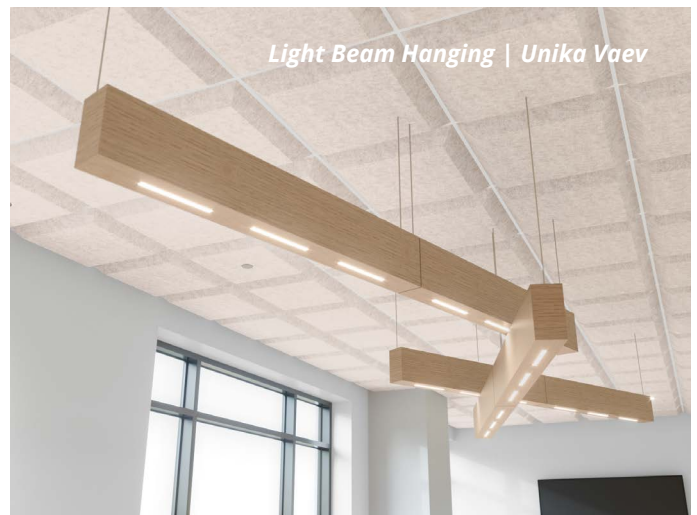
Each LED lighted section is self-contained, adding to the versatility of the lighting design and integration into the acoustic plan.

Beam and Light Beam are based on a very pleasing scale of rectilinear box baffles. The down-light version accentuates the rectilinear box design with inset lineal LED lighting. The up-light version offers a full-length LED and the up + downlight version is a combination of the two.

This sound-absorbing box baffle is constructed with recyclable 12mm PET Solid Core, available in 11 colorways of Solid Core, and 8 wood grain print finishes. Besides the NRC (0.85) value of the material, the design utilizes open and void space to maximize the acoustic value. Beam and Light Beam meet a wide range of sustainability standards.

### Environmental:

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# unika vaev





*Arc Mods® by Academia Furniture Industries*

## **SELECTING YOUR TEAM PLAYERS** FROM VISIONING TO INSTALLATION

*By MISTY MCFADDEN, ACADEMIA FURNITURE  
INDUSTRIES, LEARNING ENVIRONMENT COORDINATOR, ALEP*

Selecting a design team is a crucial step in the process of building or planning a remodel of a school. Designing a school is not something to go blindly into without a seriously well laid plan. Design is a creative process, however, having a team work together with a common goal and plan, can not only bring even more creative ideas to the table, but it can also keep from derailing the entire process with a checks and balances system. There must be a team of individuals who really understand the purpose and have the passion and belief that educational design is different from “prison design” little boxes inside big boxes. A school doesn’t have to be glamorous or opulent, but it should be functional, educational, and given tremendous consideration to the end user, the child, and the educator.

Hiring an educational planner is probably the best answer to ensuring that the vision and values start and continue throughout the design process. If that is not an option, plan on interviewing several architecture firms and hiring them with an open-selection process, one that has educational design experience, using a standardized interviewing process. If the firm chosen has no educational design background, they must be willing to visit schools like the one you are planning to design and bring them through a screening committee to evaluate their competence in their past projects and go through the facilities design process required for schools. When selecting the design team, you must be willing to dig deep into the potential candidates to make sure they are the right fit, have the right understanding of

## ACADEMIA FURNITURE INDUSTRIES

the vision and philosophy of the school. A team of professionals involved in the design of a school will range from architects, engineers, facilities directors, interior designers, furniture specialists and consultants these professionals will need to work symbiotically to stay focused in on the bigger picture. This is not always an easy task.

Every team player will have a specific role to participate in dependent on the scope of the project. The individuals who have the community respect, influence and experience should be the leaders and the liaisons. There should be a main point of contact within each professional industry and these roles need to be organized and thought out in the beginning. This will keep the communication channel clear and hopefully devoid of miscommunication, contradictions, and conflicts. Aside from the professional individuals, authentic community engagement makes for a better school design. Diversity matters, so who is at the table for your design committee matters a great deal. Design must include many voices including students and teachers who will inhabit the space. There should be a bridge from the design professionals to the community so that the design process is understood. Big ideas can come in the smallest of voices!

There is a piece of this design planning puzzle that tends to get left out and in some cases the piece that gets gobbled up by other resources and that is furniture. Furniture should not be an afterthought or cut out of the budget. Furniture should be just as important as the structure, the lighting, and the flooring. Part of the design team should include an educational furniture expert as mentioned. At Academia Furniture Industries we have a brilliant online tool that a designer can utilize right at their fingertips. We call this tool The Designer Portal. The designer will have access to all the products, be able to create a project board for the

school, this will allow them to add the furniture and create tear sheets to share with their clients. This will include the budgetary pricing quote and estimated install costs. They can choose the color pallet, upload their fabric & laminate finishes, and create a PDF that is automatically e-mailed to them when they are finished. The designer can create as many projects as they'd like within the designer portal. This tool is available to all designers. Another service we offer at Academia is the expert advice of our on staff Learning Environment Coordinator (Accredited Learning Environment Planner) She can assist in floor plan layouts, specific ideas for alternative classroom designs, and coordinating the color schemes to fit the vision. Please visit our website [academiafurniture.com](https://academiafurniture.com) to sign up for our online design tool or contact our learning environment coordinator for your next school design project, we would love to be on your team of experts.

When creating your design team many players have specific roles and responsibilities, they have areas of expertise and experience that is necessary for a well thought out plan. During each phase of the design process and throughout the building phases committee meetings should be held with the entire team. Inevitably, there are always changes and challenges though out the process but having an invested team of individuals from the community and professional guides will ensure that all facets of the process, from the vision planning to the furniture installation will have a beautiful educational space for the entire community for years to come.







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# Research Shows Furniture Design Can Improve Student Engagement



Open the streaming service of your choice, click on any high school rom-com, and you're likely to find a scene where a teacher must rouse a sleeping or daydreaming student. That Hollywood cliché is grounded in reality: Put high school students in traditional classroom furniture, and they begin to slouch, lose focus and maybe even doze off.

However, we've learned through our observational research that changes in the classroom furnishings and design can have a significant impact on student engagement.

There are many reasons why students at any grade level might be disengaged, and some have nothing to do with school. If a child stays up until 4 am shooting aliens in a video game, their engagement the next morning is likely to be less than ideal! The same is true if that student is worried about family issues or suffering from poor health.

Within the school environment itself, we see three primary components to engagement:

- **Cognitive** – how is the mind engaged in what's happening in the classroom? Does the student understand the content?
- **Emotional** – does the student feel a sense of belonging? Does he or she like the teacher and the other students?
- **Behavioral** – is the student attentive, focused and participating – or tuned out?

Roberta Lenger Kang of Columbia University [sees similar components](#) and writes, "Whether we've recognized it or not, in-person learning is dominated by compliance-oriented structures which often mimic the behaviors of engagement. We structure how students enter, exit, and move throughout the building, we structure where they sit, how they sit, when they can go to the bathroom or eat food."

Kang acknowledges that educators need to structure many elements of student interaction to create a safe and



## FLEETWOOD

productive learning environment, but “we often confuse the results of compliance with engagement.”

This became more obvious during the pandemic, when students were freed from the requirements of the structured classroom environment. Engagement levels dropped when learning was online, while those students who did engage were able to make their own decisions about furniture, posture and movement.

### Elevate, circulate, rotate...and wiggle!

It's our belief that educators are best suited to address the cognitive and emotional components of engagement. The behavioral component is the easiest to see and measure – and it's where designers and furniture companies can have the greatest impact.

With the help of researchers from Hope College and Grand Valley State University, Fleetwood set out to test the hypothesis that students learn better when ergonomics, content delivery and the classroom environment come together to help, rather than hinder, performance.

Here's one way to think about our findings. (We encourage you to read more about our methodology and results in this [white paper](#).) If classroom design addresses these four elements, engagement is likely to improve.

**ELEVATE.** Higher tables, with backless stools, help students focus and avoid slouching. Student-teacher interactions are more frequent and more effective when everyone is at the same height. (And teachers don't have to lean over so far to assist younger students.)

**CIRCULATE:** Those interactions can only happen when teachers aren't trapped in the corner by room design, technology or those ever-expanding backpacks in the aisles. Space must be designed to allow for better circulation – including the use of backless stools that have a smaller footprint and can slide under tables when not in use.

**ROTATE:** As teaching methods and technology evolve, students' focal point isn't always at the front of the room. Non-handed seating allows students to easily shift focus to different points in the room.

**WIGGLE:** Younger students have trouble sitting still? Let's embrace the fidget. Furniture with flexible seat pans can support shifting postures and movement that isn't distracting to others.

Student chairs have come with solid backs since the days of the one-room schoolhouse, so there can be some reluctance to alternative seating options or new classroom layouts.

“If you're taking the SAT and sitting in the same spot for hours, you might need more back support.” says Shaunna Kelder, DROT, OTRL, Associate Professor at Grand Valley State University. “But if you're moving to a new room every 50 minutes, or you're an elementary student moving about the classroom in the course of the day, a backless stool may be perfectly fine.”

Research by Kelder and others heavily influenced the design of Fleetwood's Rock Stool, says VP of Design Alan Rheault. “We designed the stool to allow for movement, but not too much movement. A stool like this, paired with a taller worksurface, raises the student's eyeline, so there's better eye contact with the teacher. The ergonomics are better for everyone.”

Additional research shows that improvements in student engagement may also contribute to increased teacher engagement. Students aren't the only ones dealing with factors inside and outside the classroom that interfere with engagement. Surveys show that more than half of all teachers are disengaged. Good design won't totally solve that problem – any more than it can remove all the barriers to student engagement – but it can have an impact. When students are more ready to learn, teachers are more inspired to teach.





# How to Set Up a Winning eSports Program at Your School

By Dr. Christina Counts

As more K-12 schools have put computers in their classrooms, competitive online video gaming or “esports” has been growing in popularity. These games aren’t just used to teach STEM topics like coding or computer science; they’re also effective for subjects like social studies, history and English (among others). Gaming also helps bridge the gap between traditional subjects and social emotional learning (SEL) by encouraging teamwork, leadership and a sense of belonging.

The esports fever is catching on. Projected to surpass \$1.8 billion in revenues this year, the related ecosystem hosted nearly 27 million viewers in 2021, an increase of more than 11% over the prior year. The North America Scholastic Esports Federation (NASEF) provides opportunities for students to use esports to develop STEM- and STEAM-based skills and produces a free state-approved curriculum that can be used during the day or after school.

## 5 Steps to Success

Schools that want to make the best learn-play connections should start with the environment where the gaming will take place. Where a traditional classroom setup may still be the best choice for many subjects, esports requires a more comfortable, collaborative space where kids can really get into what they’re doing.

Here are five strategies that all schools can use to develop a winning esports program:

**1) Know your audience.** Students that gravitate toward esports may be less apt to join a sports team or an after-school club. Roughly 80% of esports teams comprise students who have never participated in extracurricular activities before. This creates an inclusive environment for a broader range of students and teaches them how



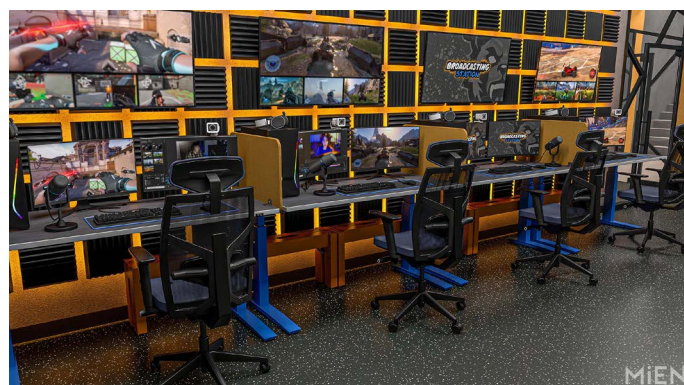
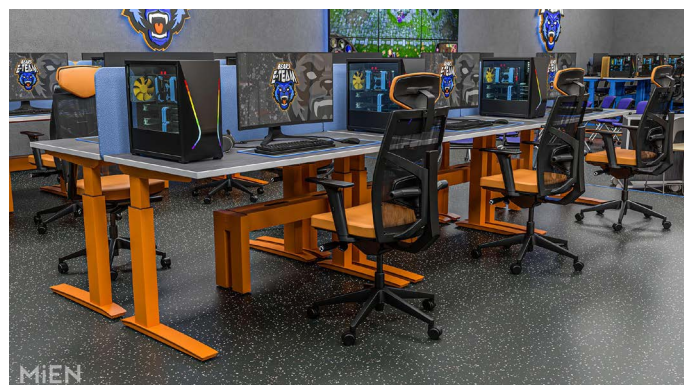
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to work together by communicating and collaborating with each other. Esports players also spend time analyzing plays, game statistics, and strategic planning—all skills that directly correlate to college and career success.

**2) Secure the funding.** Once you've developed the framework for your esports program, you can do some fundraising to buy computers, consoles, furniture, décor, table, chairs and other items to outfit the space with. Talk to school leadership to figure out if there are any local school grants/funds to support the esports program; activate your existing network of stakeholders and community partners; and get institutional advancement (and similar offices) involved from the beginning. Talk to your local and state governments, which might offer grants for extracurricular activities and or specific gaming activities.

**3) Create the right environment.** You may want to build out a multipurpose makerspace that can also be transformed into a gaming room or a space for CTE programs. Existing computer and science labs are another good option because they already have an effective gaming room layout and ergonomic seating for players. It's important to note that esports players will probably spend hours engaging in play, so comfortable chairs and proper posture are critical. Ergonomic seating, height-adjustable chairs with armrests, adjustable cushions, and back support are ideal for esports applications.

**4) Make space for shoutcasting.** The running commentary of esports matches, shoutcasing entertains and educates the viewer and is a crucial part of what makes esports so engaging. Shoutcasters provide play-by-play commentary and/or an analytical view either from behind a desk or by hosting it from stage at the venue. For best results, incorporate multiple power outlets for mixers, keyboards, stream decks, and other tech devices that help capture game plays and make esports competitions more engaging.



**5) Give them a break.** Esports is a sedentary extracurricular activity, so it's important to consider the health implications of sitting for hours on end at a computer screen. Students need space where they can stand up, move around, and stretch between games, as well as a lounging spot where they can give their eyes a break from screens after an intense match.



**COVER STORY:  
MIEN COMPANY**



**Blend Collaboration, Learning and Fun**

Comfortable seating combined with mobile whiteboards or whiteboard tables encourages a collaborative approach to esports planning and debriefing sessions. Large video monitors can be used for analyzing replays and brainstorming new strategies. These meeting areas can be outfitted with soft seating for when players collaborate and talk to their peers, sponsors and/or coaches.

Whatever your school's budget, you can put together an engaging space to host esports clubs and competitions. With the right design partner, your school can create a program that supports actual gaming, tournaments, collaborative planning sessions, and players and fans in a very engaging and inviting space.



**Dr. Christina Counts is the Vice President of Education at MiEN Company.**

*Dr. Christina Counts, VP of Education for MiEN Environments, is a proven leader with a successful background in transforming learning spaces to modern engaging learning environments. Dr. Counts has worked in education for over 17 years with experience as a classroom teacher, district instructional leader, school administrator, and digital and innovative learning designer. In her most recent position, Christina leads a team of professionals that support schools making the transition to a flexible, collaborative, & student-centered learning space. She holds a doctorate in K-12 Educational Leadership, National Board certified, and an Accredited Learning Environment Planner (ALEP).*



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10  
20  
■ ON 10

DRINKSEEWIN



October 20



4 pm - 7 pm



THE MART - 10th Floor



## Furniture Brands Align for Premiere 10th Floor Event at theMart

*Top Brands Organizing to Host Off-Season Programming for  
Chicago Design Community*

Once each year, the design community descends on Chicago for NeoCon. But for the other 362 days per year, one of the largest buildings in America sees a fraction of the traffic. Local representation works to leverage theMart and 100+ showrooms for dealers, designers, and decision makers in what is known as “the off-season” for THE MART. But in general, companies that invest significant amounts of their

marketing budget have been searching for ways to create value in their showrooms for the rest of the year. In recent years, brands with permanent showrooms in the historic building have been organizing to host a series of off-season events to drive traffic, awareness, and to gather the design community.

## INDUSTRY EVENTS



The latest of such events is being coined as “10/20 on 10,” a collection of brands that reside on the 10th floor. Brands including [AIS](#), [Groupe Lacasse](#), [Via Seating](#), [Source International](#), [Clarus](#), [Loftwall](#), [Workrite](#), [My Resource Library](#), [Howe](#), [Krug](#), [Global](#), [Kettal](#), [Turf](#) and more are joining together to host an evening for the Chicago design community.

“As we got to know our neighbors on the 10th floor during NeoCon, we realized we have a key thing in common,” said Andrew Holmes, Director of Marketing at Loftwall. “We spend countless hours and dollars to make our showrooms shine for three days every year. But the history of this building and the strength of the design community should be celebrated beyond NeoCon. The more we connected with brands on the 10th floor, the more logical hosting an event like this became.”

While many manufacturers build towards NeoCon as a critical launch date in their product development cycles, an event like 10/20 on 10 affords an opportunity for real-time feedback on the latest products. With an event like this, seeing the best THE MART has to offer without dealing with 30,000 people vying for the same elevator has more than a little appeal.

Some products to keep an eye out for at 10/20 on 10 this October:

### From Loftwall

Tempo is a HiP Award winning acoustic baffle system like you’ve never seen. Designed to be the most dealer-friendly baffle system on the market, Tempo has been turning heads and winning awards in the first 12 months since its introduction. Fortune 500 brands, universities, and even retail customers have been flocking to a new way to turn down the volume with style in their spaces. **Tempo can be seen in a stunning installation in Loftwall’s new showroom, #10-162.**

### From Source International

Nordic lounge is a modular design by the Norwegian designers Berg & Hindenes. The rounded, soft appearance of the upholstered seat combined with the sleek lines of the back and profile makes Nordic inviting and modern. The choice of armless or with arms, combined with 16 standard base finish options, creates a high level of design flexibility.

With its solid ash frame and modern minimal form, Smirk lounge is a perfect compliment to the modular Nordic lounge. Smirk is ideal with a sofa, or around a coffee table for casual meetings, or alone for independent work.

**See Nordic lounge and Smirk lounge at Source #10-147**



## INDUSTRY EVENTS



### From Via Seating

Via Seating's proprietary, Patented, Copper Infused Mesh will be on full display on Best of NeoCon's ONDA Chair, the new 'Sit to Stand' RISE chair (with telescoping gas lift) and on the incredibly comfortable RESET nesting chair. Via's Best of NeoCon for Sustainability with the JETE chair will also be on full display. **Come see, come sit - Sitting is Believing! 10-148.**

### From Clarus

Clarus is breaking the barrier between glassboards and technology with their all-new, cutting-edge product, mobVIEW™-allowing for collaboration in a whole new way. Utilizing camera technology from Logitech® at the top of the device, mobVIEW™ captures only the content that's being written or posted on the glassboard. It can then stream that content to devices. Additionally, this product is compatible with many major teleconference software such as Microsoft Teams® Rooms, Zoom Rooms™, and other leading video conferencing services. mobVIEW's™ flexibility is an ideal fit for multiple workspaces such as offices, schools, government enterprises and more. Wherever your team sits around the globe, collaborate in a way you never thought possible. **See Clarus in space #10-102!**

### From Workrite

The Workrite Sentinel Series features modern industrial design with patented profile and glide technology, industry first brushless motors, and bright polished aluminum feet. Sentinel offers a full family suite of products in many shapes and sizes giving designers and specifiers the tools to design entire offices with multiple applications. In addition we offer multiple control options including the Sentinel Smart App Bluetooth Switch giving users the ability to operate their table using their smart device. **See it for yourself at space #10-152.**

### From Takeform

Takeform designed its showroom to elevate your expectations for experiential graphics – no matter your style. The entry façade and bar deliver pure graphic enthusiasm featuring Takeform's edgy urban style. As a visual counterbalance, the four project vignettes are studies in black and white sophis-

tication featuring integrations of the brand's award-winning signage and graphics lines. Oomph, their latest line, shows its unique ability to deliver both acoustic performance AND custom visuals throughout the showroom. **Experience it all for yourself at #10-166.**

### From Global

A true FOCUS on furniture solutions can be found throughout the 14,000 sf Global Furniture Group showroom on the 10th floor of theMart. Whether the client's environment is geared towards the workplace, education or healthcare, the very latest product solutions are presented in the newest and most inspiring textiles and finishes.

### From Groupe Lacasse

*Joie de Vivre* is defined as the *enjoyment of life*. In the ever-evolving workspace, delivering curated experiences for the workers is *de rigueur*! Groupe Lacasse can help businesses welcome back their employees and achieve their own *Joie de Vivre* by creating imaginative and functional spaces for teams to enjoyably interact and collaborate. Whether for commercial, educational or healthcare market segments, visit the beautiful Groupe Lacasse showroom and witness for yourself our exciting furniture collections. See our Best of NeoCon award winning, **QUORUM MULTICONFERENCE**, with its complete conference and meeting furniture solutions, with all the latest technologies. Check out our **NEX COLLECTION**, the high-design industry benchmark in laminate casegoods. And while there, check out **PARADIGM PANEL SYSTEM**, a well-thought-out panel system that's both functional and conducive to collaboration. **Let's have our own Joie de Vivre in space #10-00.**

The event will be open to the public from **4pm until 7pm on Thursday, October 20th**. The evening will feature entertainment, catering, craft cocktails, and opportunities for attendees to win thousands of dollars in prizes.

For those interested in attending, event organizers are accepting registrations at [www.1020on10.com](http://www.1020on10.com).

# DRINK SEE WIN

# 10 20

ON 10

A Chicago night you won't want to miss!  
Join us on the 10th floor of THE MART on October 20th  
for free drinks, expensive giveaways and contract furniture!  
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 October 20  4 pm - 7 pm  THE MART - 10th Floor

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1035

**takeform**

10-166

**LOFTWALL**

10-142

**MRL**  
MY RESOURCE  
LIBRARY

10-164

**GRUPE**  
**LACKSE**

1000

**HOWE**

10-110

**via**  
SEATING

10-148

**SOURCE**

10-147

**Workrite**  
ergonomics<sup>™</sup>

10-152

**clarus<sup>™</sup>**

10-102

Head to [www.1020on10.com](http://www.1020on10.com) to RSVP!





# CHANGING SPACES, CHANGING AESTHETICS



*Two identical classrooms of the same size are treated differently for different purpose and aesthetics: soft greys and wood finishes lend warmth to the flexible team-project space. Standing height tables with integrated technology, along with collapsible tables are accompanied by wood Parfait II stools and wood stacking chairs with casters. The second more traditional instructor-led layout employs the same collapsible Fast tables with polypropylene Slam chairs on casters, that also can be stacked.*

While every school today is addressing the need to adapt classroom space and furniture based on new teaching methods, the role of aesthetics has been given far less attention. It's mostly the private schools that have been the earliest adopters of a more considered approach to materials and colors. Their need to attract students relies much more on competing for the parents' attention with regard to the educational institution's brand and the physical environment that is being offered.

As well-designed as many school buildings are today, they become a cacophony of both actual clutter and the visual clutter of the bright colors and typical mix of unrelated pieces of furniture.

At Leland our goal with school furniture is to promote consistent design values throughout the entire educational facility. It has been shown that the aesthetic properties of classroom spaces carry the subliminal power to elicit feelings of safety, comfort, and a sense of belonging, potentially impacting learning as teachers notice increased engagement when students feel good, happy, relaxed and safe.

Additionally, the stress of more than two years of disrupted teaching during the pandemic has exacerbated the stresses of schooling for many children. It is even more important now for the school environment to be one that is calm, as well as a safe and secure space. Social-Emotional-Learning (SEL) environments decrease anxiety and help to develop the life-long coping skills of self-awareness, resiliency and self-care. With a younger student body, hormonal changes and other factors can increase aggression, while these social-emotional skills are still developing. This has been observed to affect higher-order thinking, like problem solving and self-control.

Many studies report on the benefits of certain colors and materials on our well-being, with the recognition that colors and materials found in nature have very positive impacts. Biophilia has become a crucial part of interior design.

In a 2004 publication about aesthetics and education, S.K. Chung's exploration of Zen presents the idea that aesthetic experiences possessing the characteristics of simplicity, naturalness, and tranquility can be critical agents that enable

students to be calm, perceive, and illuminate their minds. The results of his study suggest that the impact on learning can be negative when students feel anxious, excluded, or overwhelmed.

[Chung, S. K. (2004). Zen (Ch'an) and aesthetic education. In *Teaching for Aesthetic Experience: The Art of Learning* (pp. 33-47). P. Lang.]

Many decades ago the Montessori schools promoted soft lighting similar to home environments, and simpler furniture than that found in traditional classrooms. This was an early expression of an SEL space recognizing that aesthetics impact physical space and have the power to affect emotions, mood and behavior.

More recent research has determined that learning is an 'embodied experience', meaning that something occurs when there are salient elements contributing to the memorability of the experience. At Leland we believe that intentional classroom design and the utilization of aesthetics can improve student enjoyment levels and increase overall engagement.

## **New Spaces and Dual Purposes**

A STEM classroom needs to accommodate science, technology, engineering, and math projects in addition to other subjects. Not only must a space be flexible enough to cover so many topics, a room may need to be used in different ways at different times, or in different ways at the same time.

The furniture should also allow the classroom to have a different layout each day. The goal is for students to make the space their own and have the ability to move the furniture in creative ways. STEM Classrooms are considered flipped classrooms, where the students learn through hands-on activities and working in teams. One moment the classroom will be set up for a formal presentation or lecture and the next it might need to accommodate hands-on group projects. Students' involvement in the process of creating their environment empowers them by developing community and increasing motivation.



## LELAND



*Roll-up doors allow increased utilization of adjacent spaces: the corridor beyond has powered benches and white boards so that study groups can overflow and gather for break-out discussion sessions and work. Leland's Quarry Mobile tablet-stand and technology in the Ebb benches enables devices to be used anywhere. Inside the main space the high Fixed tables have Corian tops and the Amadeus seating is polypropylene – both materials lending themselves to maker-space and lab-type activities.*

In a successful STEM layout students will begin viewing each other as resources and tools for enhancing their learning experience: the arrangement of space impacts the energy in the room. With the energy gathered in the center of the classroom there is a high degree of collective encouragement and more active discussion.

### Recommendations for selecting furniture for your STEM classroom:

- **Work Surface - Material:** Tables should be offered in seated as well as counter and standing heights. Surface material options should offer more durable surfaces like Corian or special laminates as well as just wood, if there is to be maker-space activities. Leland's Fixed tables come in three standard heights, with top options that include Forbo Furniture laminate and Corian Terrazzo, as well as the more common surface options.
- **Work Surface - Size and Shape:** Because so much of STEM education revolves around project-based learning, usually done in groups, the size and shape of the work surfaces has a big impact. Tables as large as 120" x 42" are offered in Leland's Fixed Table collection.
- **Seating Material:** When it comes to materials for STEM rooms, durable, flexible polypropylene (poly) is a good choice as it is low-maintenance and easy to clean. Leland offers the Slam and Amadeus seating collections, along

with the cost-effective hi-density stack Mass seating – all of which pass a five-hundred pound test for the greatest durability and longevity.

- **Seating Height:** Seating in STEM rooms needs to be of varying heights so students can choose. Leland offers standard-height seating and both counter-height and bar-height stools.
- **Technology:** Students will definitely use a variety of mobile devices in a STEM classroom, so surfaces must come with the option of built-in power outlets and USB ports. Extension cords and power strips can be dangerous. Cabling within the table should be easy and intuitive – the Fixed Table does not require any tools or the removal of covers to insert cables and wires, and all table-legs can receive cabling, not just one leg per table.

STEM classes reveal the truth that while individuals have good ideas, teams can have even greater ones. Dividing into teams often requires breakout areas where teams can collaborate separately from others. Most classrooms aren't large enough for this, but with movable walls, the appropriate furniture and tools, many underutilized common areas, such as corridors and even adjacent cafeteria spaces, can achieve a higher rate of utilization if designed to support these breakout sessions.

### Multi-purposing food-service spaces:

The café is often the most underutilized space in a school. Used for perhaps less than two hours in any day, simple alternative furniture choices can raise that level of use quite substantially. The same space can be used for team meetings, small group sessions, and even for parent events if the furniture is an upgrade from the typical tables-with-attached benches type of furniture. With the addition of technology these spaces can be purposed as another auditorium or presentation space.

Aside from using a food-service area for some class exercises, specifying something other than just benches attached to picnic-style tables allows for even higher utilization. Here the collapsible Fast Table with folding legs can receive different shapes and sizes of tops enabling both a forward-facing training layout or a more elegant round dining layout for evening and parent events. Just one set of table-bases are needed: it is only the optional round or square tops that need to be switched out for a completely different purpose and aesthetic. Marquette chairs in a semi-transparent stain have custom logos on the seat-backs.

While a private school's brand is much more than a logo and a mascot - it's a message to parents and students about what a school is all about - Leland's furniture offers a way to display a logo that reinforces and shares the sense of 'place' and branding for a school. All of Leland's wood chairs can have custom artwork or logos as either a cut-out or an engraving on the backs of the chairs.



### CONCLUSION:

All too often school furniture is purchased as an afterthought, too often also seen as low status, with the consequence that the intended benefits of a new school are diminished by inappropriate furniture. Poorly-designed unattractive furniture results in students feeling a lack of ownership over the furniture, encouraging vandalism and graffiti, and shortening its life span. At Leland we believe that a school's physical environment affects morale and student learning, and that the environment should match your objectives, both in terms of human interaction and your instructional approach. Today's children are part of a design-conscious society and this awareness extends to the furniture they use. Good furniture indicates that the purchaser respects the children - in return they are more likely to adopt a more positive attitude which is more conducive to learning.







# Growing Minds Benefit from Dynamic Movement.

When it comes to the classroom, it's important to consider ergonomic furniture that's designed to flex and move with ease to help students find the position and space where they work best.

We intuitively know that moderate movement can improve focus and concentration. Sometimes the simplest thing can help, like standing up or bracing your legs on a footrest. As a result, we all naturally engage in dynamic sitting, which involves moving our arms and legs or adjusting our position for comfort in order to stay alert and engaged.

This type of movement is beneficial for students in classroom settings too. As children's brains develop, sensory systems that respond to movement help cultivate the fine motor skills that are at the foundation of learning. These sensory systems help coordinate the eyes, hands and bod-

ies of children as they move and grow. Healthy movement facilitates such growth, while helping children feel active and alert – even while seated.

## Healthy Movement FAQ's

### What is "Healthy" Movement?

Humans are programmed to move. A young developing brain requires various types of motion to develop important foundational skills for learning. The sensory systems that respond to movement help to coordinate the eyes, hands and body for everyday fine motor and gross motor activities.

"Healthy" movement refers to safe and accessible opportunities for motion that help everyone feel organized, alert, fit and ready to learn.

**What is the role of "Healthy" Movement in the classroom?** Parents and adults tend to want children to "sit still." The reality is no one sits without moving for very long, because if we keep our bodies completely inactive, we tend to fall asleep or zone out. Dynamic sitting involves making adjustments to our position for comfort and moving our arms, legs and body while we are sitting, in order to keep ourselves alert and engaged. Children who have access to healthy movement in the classroom are more likely to stay engaged and to have better attention and behavior.

**If children have chairs that move at school, won't they be disruptive?**

Children are already moving in their chairs because they need movement to stay alert. In stable or static chairs many children will tend to tilt backwards, lean forward, swing their legs and sit on the edge of their chairs or on their knees. Studies have shown that after about a 2 week "settling in" period, children with access to chairs that provide healthy movement only move as needed to stay comfortable and to attend to the lessons throughout the day. In fact, several studies suggest that children show better ability to stay seated, with less disruptive movements, when they have access to chairs that offer healthy movement.

**Is healthy movement the same as ergonomics?**

The term "ergonomics" usually is used in reference to the proper fit of furniture for the human body and the way it moves. Dynamic furniture plays a role in good ergonomics, because chairs that swivel and adjust are better suited to helping a child sit at the optimal height and to be able to turn to face the teacher or other forms of instruction at various placements in a classroom. Foot and arm rests, the ability to stretch (such as at standing tables or in pushing back against an adjustable-seat back) and adjustable-height levers all assist in ensuring good ergonomics for the various sizes of children in a classroom: even for the same child who is growing from the beginning to end of a school year.





**Healthy Movement Furniture for Today's Classrooms**

Virco offers products that support healthy movement in the classroom with a line-up of seating that lets students move in their seats without leaving their seats. Our Room to Move® collection includes ergonomic seating that flexes and rocks, chairs that roll and swivel and tables and desks that adjust from sitting to stand-up height and can work alone or nest together – all designed to move with ease and help students find the position and space where they work best.

**Learn more about the benefits of Healthy Movement.**





# Rethinking Early Childhood & Elementary Classroom Learning Environments

Flexibility: The New Movement in Classroom Design

Reminiscing about the first days of kindergarten or elementary brings that familiar song back, the one that includes the line, "...we're all in our places with bright shining faces." What a difference a few decades have made.

As classroom teachers and instructional leaders are returning for another school year, new priorities are front and center. Among them, and often at top of the list, is figuring out how to create a flexible classroom without disrupting classroom culture and community. Creating an environment that supports a variety of learning methods while instilling a sense of belonging and excitement for little ones is a challenge. In addition, creating this space with the ability to be rearranged in a snap of the fingers is becoming more and more important for educators.

## Flexibility in Classroom Furniture and Design

For many early learning environments and elementary classrooms, open plans have already replaced the desks in rows. Classrooms have become hives for learning. And now they're spaces that need to support quiet, independent reading, group projects, 1:1 time with teachers, technology access, whole class learning, and areas for collaboration, dramatic play, art, and even physical activities.

All together, traditional classrooms have a growing number of constantly evolving needs to accommodate. As educators and administrators look for answers, these six tips can serve as inspiration for redesigning, rearranging, and reprovisioning learning spaces to meet learning, safety, and budgetary needs.



### **Tip #1: Mobile Furniture for Optimum Flexibility**

Classrooms, particularly those in older facilities, are often small. And even in settings where classrooms offer ample space, furniture with wheels and locking casters can make it easier and faster to rearrange to accommodate teaching and learning, as students' and curriculum needs evolve. From creating ad hoc centers for small group and individual student activities, to making "circle time" for the whole class easy to manage, mobile furnishings can help teachers streamline classroom setup and management.

Another consideration? Mobile furniture can help maintain optimum distance between students, throughout the school day and that supports critical health and safety protocols.

### **Tip #2: Modular Furniture Adds New Options for Room Configuration**

Modular furniture like KYDZ Suite® from Jonti-Craft® can give educators even more choices for configuring classrooms, daycares, preschools, libraries, learning labs, and other environments. Matt Hinkle, Jonti-Craft's National Sales Manager noted, "Our Mobile Collaborative Tables can easily switch from individual desks to grouped tables to make it possible to adapt the space to the instructional need or activity at hand. It's a great way to encourage collaboration yet provide individual space for specific tasks and projects when needed."

With added pieces, like modular storage units, makerspace centers, and special-purpose pieces like sensory tables, easels, or dramatic play units, modular furniture and accessories make it possible to keep classrooms organized and provide the right environment for learning across the curriculum.



### **Tip #3: Multipurpose Furniture Saves Time, Money, and Space**

Shelving that holds books, supplies, or bins. Storage units that have magnetic backs for additional work surfaces. Makerspace centers that include desk and writing areas for students. Activity tables that work for hands-on crafts and building projects and convert to writing areas with dry erase surfaces. These are just some of the options that are now available in classroom furniture. They're a great way to add functionality to corners or other classroom areas, that may be underutilized. When educators are looking for ways to support multiple activities and interactions among teachers and students, multi-purpose furniture can answer these needs affordably.

### **Tip #4: Creative Storage Solutions Make a Big Impact**

Classrooms are busy places, with all kinds of activities happening simultaneously. And each curriculum area typically requires its own sets of materials, equipment, and resources. Creative storage solutions can make a difference. From mobile storage carts like the Jonti-Craft STEM Carts and shelving designed to hold a mix of bins, trays, papers, and folders—to compact lockers and mobile coat storage like the Jonti-Craft Mobile Backpack Cart—new storage options continue to make organization, access to materials, and classroom management easier for both teachers and students alike.

### **Tip #5: Yes, Furniture and Accessories Matter for Health and Safety**

Health and safety have always been top priorities for schools and early childhood centers and now, those concerns have grown even more critical. From basics like rounded corners, and hinges such as Jonti-Craft KYDZHinges® that protect tiny fingers all the way to providing surfaces that can be cleaned and sanitized multiple times a day, classroom furniture plays a key role in keeping classrooms clean, safe, and healthy. New innovations, like Jonti-Craft's Clean Hands Helper portable sinks that don't require plumbing hookups, are answering the need for hygiene in the classroom and other early learning spaces. And as health requirements evolve and social distancing needs change, furniture, storage, and seating that can be reconfigured quickly will contribute to keeping classrooms open, accessible, and productive.

### **Tip #6: Rethinking Classroom Configurations and Design Is More Important than Ever**

The days of students sitting in neat rows are rapidly fading. Circular configurations, special functional areas, team or group pods, and more are effective ways to plan classroom spaces. Nick Schwarz, Chief Operating Officer at Jonti-Craft, a Wabasso, MN-based educational furniture manufacturer, noted, "Classroom design services and expertise have never been more important than now. Not only does this caliber of professional service help schools and educational organizations optimize their learning spaces, but professional space planners and architects are instrumental in adding the critical elements of health and safety into room design. And that's essential in keeping school operating successfully for students, families, staff, and their communities."



### **Where to Start...**

As educators in all types of learning areas continue to adjust, update, or expand their facilities, it's always a smart strategy to consult with specialists in classroom design and furnishings. Then, educators can compare plans and options, costs, and other safety and health considerations to arrive at the optimum approach to classroom designing and outfitting their spaces. Looking at other schools' solutions, talking to colleagues, and gathering input from staff, students, and families can impact your design decisions as well.

So yes, as the 2021-22 school year continues, all signs point to a great year of bright shining faces...all in their places—at school— while learning and thriving.







# Getting to Know CR Associates

*CR Associates are representatives of contract furniture and residential furnishings covering Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Alaska regions. Their goal is to provide the best support possible to the architectural and design community. We represent manufacturers that offer a comprehensive and diverse collection of products. Our exceptional service has allowed us to successfully support architects, designers and furniture dealers for over twenty years. Experience in the marketplace has earned us valuable relationships with key resellers and end users. They offer sales, service and more!*

**REP FEATURE:  
CR ASSOCIATES**

**Q: Tell us a little bit about how your rep group got started?**

**A:** My mom started CR Associates in 1992. We still have 2 of her original lines Allermuir and Cumberland. She encouraged me to take over one day and after working with her for 3 years I eventually took over about 7 years ago. I then brought on 3 more lines and made it more my own.

**Q: What do you think is the secret to your rep groups longevity and success?**

**A:** Our groups secret to longevity and success is our clients! We love working with all the amazing designers and dealers in our area. The relationships we have mean so much to us. It also helps that we represent amazing brands that bring out outstanding products.

**Q: What makes you most excited about working in the contract and hospitality industry?**

**A:** What gets me excited is seeing trends, new product introductions and I absolutely love seeing a project from start to finish (which sometime can take many years!)

**Q: How has the company changed over the years? How hasn't it?**

**A:** The company has changed with our times, the business is always evolving. The line package is now a very comprehensive and complete group that can hit every angle from healthcare to corporate to hospitality.

**Q: How do you think your group will evolve over the next 5-10 years?**

**A:** Over the next 5-10 years we will be here to support our clients in all the ways we do today, but I would imagine, even better. Who knows what is going to happen in a year, let alone 5-10!

**Q: If you could use just one word to describe your rep group, what would it be?**

**A:** One word to describe CR Associates is innovative.





# KEEPING CONNECTED

With the challenges that 2020 and 2021 brought, it is more important than ever to "Keep Connected" to our clients, friends and colleagues. We have been simply inspired by all of the innovative ways our Rep Group friends have found to do just that! The pandemic hasn't slowed them down one bit, and relationships are still at the center of their strategy.

In the "Keeping Connected" section of Delve Magazine, we will highlight inspirational snapshots of what our Rep Group partners are up to, and how they are finding innovative ways to stay connected to their clients.

We hope you enjoy this new feature, and are inspired as much as we are!



## Stemle Associates

Stemle & Associates, Inc. is a regional multi-line manufacture representative organization. We specialize and focus on three areas of the contract furniture market, Healthcare, Educational, and Commercial. We represent manufacturers who build excellent products that fit into each and everyone of these unique market segments.

## Stemle Associates (Cont...)

Stemle Associates had a blast at a regional trade show in Cleveland. The show is called NeOHcon. 70 vendors. 250 attendees. They showed the following manufacturers: Frovi, OFGO, LZB Knu, Versteel, Via Seating. The show is organized yearly by our local IIDA chapter.

[stemle.com](http://stemle.com)



**Stemle Associates**

## Dan Binford Associates

Dan Binford & Associates has been representing quality furnishings in Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia for over 30 years. They offer solutions in Corporate, Hospitality, Healthcare, and Educational furniture from our vast selection of lines.

Dan Binford Associates attended an IIDA event in Cleveland the first week of September.

[www.danbinford.com](http://www.danbinford.com)



**Dan Binford Associates**



**Dan Binford Associates**



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