

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Theresa G. Schaefer-Bell

tschaefer@nasboces.org

516-396-2207

Nassau BOCES and the AIA team up to bring together educators and architects for a first-ever web series about school design for the new normal

GARDEN CITY, N.Y., November 9, 2020 — Nassau BOCES recently collaborated with the American Institute of Architects (AIA), Long Island chapter, to present “School Planning and Design for Covid-19,” a forum for structural school reform. The three-part webinar series gave the educational community an opportunity to meet with design professionals to explore emerging trends in school design. Together, they explored potential short and long-term strategies to enhance school design in the era of Covid-19.

“Even before the pandemic began, school planning was at a crossroads,” said Anthony Fierro, Executive Director of the Nassau BOCES Department of Facilities Services. “In the wake of Covid-19, it’s become more important than ever for us to re-examine the physical environment that we’re providing for learning.”

According to Mr. Fierro, school renovations have been on the rise well in advance of Covid, in large part due to aging school buildings on Long Island. The goal of the series is to build safe and inspirational learning environments that promote student engagement in a place where students can thrive and grow; and establish inviting learning communities.

“We are proud to work in conjunction with Nassau BOCES in putting educators together with the most skilled architectural professionals from throughout the nation, to envision the future of education,” said Graciela Carrillo, President of the Long Island Chapter of the AIA. “In this way, we can plan for more resilient schools that can adapt to a variety of major safety issues.”

Architects and engineers met virtually with a wide cross-section of educational stakeholders including school board members, superintendents, business officials, facilities directors, teachers, parents and students. Together, they discussed the design and planning of new schools, as well as the renovation of existing school buildings, to create new student-centered models that will impact school design for future generations.

“We have an exciting opportunity here to create a new normal, and to engineer the best possible facilities given the current conditions,” stated Nassau BOCES District Superintendent Dr. Robert R. Dillon.

“What does normal look like. During the time of COVID, we need to consider continuity and capability – off site, with alternate people and resources,” said Jenine Kotob, School Safety Specialist & Architects at Hord Coplan Macht presenter of *A New Frontier for School Planning: Designing for Resiliency, Safety, & Well-being in the Wake of COVID-19*. “We

need to advocate for balance and holistic design while simultaneously emphasizing school safety. New challenges will begin to arise as we plan for new classrooms in a pandemic.”

“Design of the Learning Environment should be influenced by the needs of differing student learning styles to complement the work of students and teachers alike,” said Kevin Walsh, Accredited Learning Environment Planner with BBS Architects, during his presentation of *Next Millennium Design: Adapting to Emerging Variables*.

“Architecture is there to support the education and the school building is the most visible way we think about educating our students,” said Prakash Nair, Founding President and CEO of Education Design International and the speaker on *Transforming School Design for a Post-COVID World: Learning Spaces for Creativity and Collaboration*. “The learning community should be optimized for curriculum organized around themes, community and self-directed learning. We need to move away from the typical layout of a school that is characterized as cells and bells.”

About Nassau BOCES

A vital regional resource, Nassau BOCES offers state-of-the-art programs for learners of all ages and abilities as well as cost-effective services for school districts and municipalities. We empower students to achieve their maximum potential in alternative, artistic, outdoor, special education, virtual, and career and technical environments. We offer adult education programs that are vital to improving the Long Island regional economy. In addition, our technology services form the backbone of many school districts’ infrastructures. As the county’s educational leader in implementing the state’s reform efforts, we are helping to shape the future of education. To learn more, visit www.nassauboces.org, like us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram.

Photo #1 – Social distancing classroom image provided by Jenine Kotob, AIA, School Safety Specialist and Tracey Graham, Senior Healthcare Consultant, at Hord Coplan Macht, in Alexandria, VA.

Photo #2 – School design image provided by Kevin Walsh, Accredited Learning Environment Planner with BBS Architects, Patchogue, NY.

Photo #3 - Classroom design Image provided by Prakash Nair, Founding President and CEO and Roni Zimmer Doctori, Principal Architect & Israel Studio Head of Education Design International, Lutz, FL.