

**DESIGN
IGNITES
CHANGE**

school: BY DESIGN

Student Guide

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THE DESIGNERS ACCORD

Think About It

What don't you like about your school?

- » *the building is ugly*
- » *the furniture is uncomfortable*
- » *there is nowhere to hang up my coat in Spanish class*
- » *I get tormented because I am gay*
- » *there are no decent benches to sit on outside*
- » *guys get more breaks than girls*
- » *the food sucks*
- » *kids in my school are racist*
- » *the walkways flood when it rains*

What would make your school a better place?

What is this?

The problems outlined on the previous page can often be solved by design, or by using “design thinking” – the combination of unleashed creativity and executable actions. *School: by Design* is a *Design Ignites Change* and Designers Accord youth mentoring initiative that asks high school students, in collaboration with a design mentor, to **“redesign your school.”**

For this initiative, mentoring teams **composed of you and a design mentor** will examine your school’s whole “ecosystem” – how all the people, places, programs, and things in your school interact – from your vantage point to re-imagine a more sustainable school, one that will improve now and continue to grow and thrive in the future. The project will connect you to a subject that you know well, and one that **you undoubtably will have a strong opinion about.**

The goal of the initiative is to engage you in thinking about the **pressing problems in your school** in a mindful and creative way, to come up with solutions that account for a diversity of ideas, perspectives and approaches to learning. Teams will be encouraged to create integrated solutions that consider the student in the classroom, the classroom in the school and the school in the community.

The topic is quite broad: teams can consider larger issues like the overall design of a building, while also attending to small-scale projects that you can implement yourself using a modest budget. And some of your ideas will be **eligible to apply for a financial award** so that you can actually implement the project in your school.

What to Expect

Here's what you can expect from this program.

BEFORE YOUR FIRST MEETING

You will need to **talk to your mentor** about where and when you plan to meet. Your teacher or a project coordinator will help you arrange this.

Before your first meeting, make a list of all of the problems in your school that need fixing. Brainstorm and write down everything you can think of. Bringing this list your first meeting with your mentor will get your project off to a great start.

SESSION 1

You and your mentor will get to know each other. **Bring your portfolio** or any examples of your creative work – photos, cartoons, paintings, videos, etc. Share your list of problems – or issues – that you have with your school. Also, during this session, create a complete schedule of meeting times.

SESSION 2

Talk seriously about the topics you are considering. Your mentor may ask you to do some more research or sketching outside of the session.

SESSION 3

You and your mentor will **develop a few concepts** for your project. You might bring along more research: fine art, images or music about the subject. Bring anything that inspires you and that would be interesting to talk about. At this point you will write a Creative Brief and create an outline of how you want to finish the project in the remaining time that you have.

SESSION 4

This session is for **finalizing your concept**. You may explore a number of options for executing your idea; will it be a drawing or photograph, will you build a model? At the end of this session you will have a good idea of what you plan to do.

SESSION 5

You will **develop your concept** and figure out any technical issues that you face. Your mentor will help you in the areas that are unfamiliar to you.

SESSION 6

This is when you **wrap up the project**. You and your mentor may decide to add a few more sessions to refine the work. You may be asked to fill out a short questionnaire to tell us about your experience. Your feedback will improve the project for future executions of the program.

A Few Things to Keep in Mind

Take this seriously, **have fun and don't stress.**

You must **attend all scheduled meetings** with your mentor. During your first meeting, you will create a schedule of when you will meet.

Since your mentor has limited availability, you must **arrive on time.** If your plans change contact your mentor immediately. Respect their time and they in turn, will respect yours.

Be sure to **communicate your interests** to your mentor. If you like to take photographs, paint, draw comics or write, let your mentor know. He or she is going to help you realize your ideas using the tools you have.

It's not like homework. You may be required to work on this project outside your scheduled meeting times. But don't worry, it will be fun!

You must **come to each meeting prepared.** Keep track of deadlines! At the end of each session, you will discuss with your mentor what you need to do to prepare for the next meeting.

Always be honest! In order for this to be a rewarding and fun experience, you need to let your mentor, teacher or project coordinator know how things are going.