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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EDmarket Announces 2025 NexGen Rising Stars



Gaithersburg, MD (September 3, 2025) — The Education Market Association (EDmarket) is pleased to announce the 2025 class of NexGen Rising Stars. This award recognizes and celebrates emerging leaders in the education field. The recipients, 40 years old and younger, have been chosen for their exceptional dedication to the industry, innovative thinking, and positive impact on student achievement and success.

Join us in congratulating this year's NexGen Rising Stars whose outstanding achievements, dedication, and potential have truly set them apart.

- ★ Samantha Blum, FGM architects
- ★ Harrison Catalano, AmTab
- ★ Katie Corey, FGM Architects
- ★ Carly Coughlin, Lakeshore Learning
- ★ Michelle Dietz, Quaker Valley School District
- ★ Ashley Gould, Beaufort County School District
- ★ Emily Head, Steelcase
- ★ Abby Hoyal, Naylor Wentworth Lund Architects
- ★ Jim Kemling, Educational Environments/Frank Cooney Co
- ★ Greg Kriege, Smith System
- ★ Candice Leinneweber, MA+ Architecture
- ★ Michelle Lessman, Smith System
- ★ Nicole McGregor, Smith System
- ★ Claire McNaught, MiEN Environments
- ★ Alyssa Mix, DLR Group
- ★ Miranda Murray, Lakeshore Learning
- ★ Kathryn Roche, Schmidt Associates
- ★ Petra Sucher, The Amos Group
- ★ Hannah Tejeda, Norva Nivel
- ★ Will Thompson, Tarkett
- ★ Ann Vacek, NAC Architecture
- ★ Eric Van Dyke, Business Furniture
- ★ Carlee Wilson, Paragon Furniture
- ★ Drew Wodarski, Mien Company

NexGen Rising stars will be recognized at the EDmarket Leadership Connect Event and Plenary Session at EDspaces (November 4-7, 2025 in Columbus, Ohio), along with being featured in *Essentials* Magazine and on social media. The NexGen Rising Stars community will serve as a platform for collaboration, mentorship, and idea exchange.

"At Steelcase Learning and Smith System, we believe in empowering the next generation of thinkers, creators, and leaders. Sponsoring NexGen aligns with our mission to create innovative learning environments that enable the genius inside every student. By supporting this award, we celebrate those who are shaping the future of education and design."

— Thomas Cook, General Manager, Education at Steelcase and President, Smith System

Thank you to our distinguished panels of judges: Darlene Akers, Akers Business Solutions; Kristen Ambrose, HKS; Tammy Andreyko, Quaker Valley School District; Kaleb Davis, CEF; Jeremy Leffring, Fomcore LLC; and Mary Sauvageau, Red Thread.

To learn more about the impressive list of NexGen Rising Stars, visit:

<https://www.edmarket.org/nexgen/winners.cfm>

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