Research and best practice reveal, when physical and educational design are aligned, space can serve as an essential tool in creating a successful learning environment. Furthermore, creating the optimum fit between the educational delivery method — the pedagogical approach — and space better leverages the bond dollars allocated for both new school buildings and redesign of existing spaces.

This link between educational approach and space becomes even more critical as education organizations look to fundamentally change the learning and teaching activities within the classroom to address 21st century learning outcomes. The process of educational space design offers a unique opportunity to support this shift from traditional to deeper learning strategies.

The Learning Space Design Project at the University of San Diego’s Institute for Entrepreneurship in Education (IEE) works with school districts, schools, program managers, and education design architects to develop intentionally designed physical spaces that structurally support these new kinds of personalized and technology-rich blended learning environments.

Through research and evidence-based practice, the Learning Space Design Project brings the needed resources to engage a new conversation about facilities design that is driven by the organization’s own core education principles and guided by its approach to the delivery of learning and teaching. Drawing on the expertise of researchers from the IEE Center for Education Policy and Law and professional learning specialists from the IEE Mobile Technology Learning Center, the Project offers five core areas of service:

- Working with central office leaders, strategic guidance aligns 21st century educational principles with facilities design;
- Alongside program management and education design firms hired for specific facility initiatives, consultation is provided to create pedagogy-driven, student-centered, teacher-supportive, community-connected, and sustainable learning spaces;
- During the programmatic design phase, professional learning specialists partner in the process to build the capacity of instructional and teacher leaders to implement the shift towards deeper learning strategies and use of space;
- During occupancy, customized professional learning programs deliver instruction to teachers to engage physical spaces as a tool to support 21st century teaching and learning; and,
- In partnership with school site stakeholders, participatory research is conducted both to understand the impact of the designed space and desired student outcomes and to promote the effective use of the space.

For more information: www.sandiego.edu/iee