



## What is XQ: The Super School Project? How will this help children do better in school, and why?

**XQ: The Super School Project** is an open-call to America's students, teachers, administrators, civic leaders, businesses, entrepreneurs, artists and designers to meet the challenge of preparing our students for the future by dreaming, designing and creating the new American high school.

The American high school model has remained unchanged for more than 100 years. Designed for a world and an economy that look nothing like today, high school is failing to prepare our students for the jobs of the future. There is a crucial link between socio-economic mobility and education, and the extent to which we as a country are failing to prepare our students for the future limits our ability to grow as a country and as a society. Our kids need us.

We must harness the ingenuity and creativity in communities and towns across America to rethink and create a new approach to high school that gives every student the tools and opportunity to succeed. XQ will show what is possible and will help spark a movement for individuals across the country to get behind.

## Why focus on high schools?

Two hundred years ago, the founders of the American public high school had a worthy goal: To provide a free education for all, so that all Americans could find work. But, the work we were preparing for then looks nothing like the work we do now, or what we will need to do in the future. We live in a world where so much is changing, from how we communicate to how we learn. A world where information and data double at a rapid pace. Access to facts is rarely the issue. What is most valuable now is that our students learn to discern, think critically and collaborate to solve complex problems.

While the world has changed significantly, our high schools have changed very little. They simply aren't keeping up. The fact is, America is #17 in reading, #20 in science and #27 in mathematics.<sup>1</sup> With schools created for a world we no longer live in, we are not preparing students for today.

## How is this effort new and different?

Never before have students, parents, educators, innovators, community and business leaders been invited to come together in this way to not only offer a vision of how we prepare our students for an ever changing future, but also to have the opportunity to realize that vision. Nothing in our society looks the way it did 100, or even 50 or 30 years ago. The way we communicate, get around, share information and connect is different. Everything has changed in American society except how we educate our kids. XQ offers the opportunity to design a learning environment that meets the future we are headed towards, not the past we have left

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<sup>1</sup> OECD PISA, 2012. (<http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/PISA-2012-results-US.pdf>)

behind. XQ is not about the same debates and stalemates in education that have only worked to divide us.

We have pulled together the latest data, research and scientific knowledge across sectors to provide accessible information to empower individuals everywhere either to team up and apply or to build capacity for our current school environments.

### Why now?

Our high schools were made for an economy long passed. Everything has changed in American society, but our high schools are frozen in time. XQ offers the opportunity to design a learning environment that meets the future we are headed towards, not the past we have left behind. XQ seeks to move past the debates and stalemates in education that have only worked to divide us. XQ is not education reform versus unions and XQ is not about blaming politicians or teachers for the problems in education. XQ is solving for the future, capitalizing on America ingenuity, and bucking the status quo.

### Why a challenge?

America is a country that has long thrived on ingenuity to solve the challenges of our times. XQ: The Super School Project will once again tap into that innovative spirit and provide the opportunity to help spark a movement for individuals across the country to get behind. Our high schools need help, and communities have the answers. The core of XQ is a student-obsessed, design-driven method that will spark the best new thinking. Teams will compete, and the most promising ideas will be selected. Those teams will receive additional resources, access to unmatched talent and funding to realize their vision.

### Will XQ schools be public schools?

Yes. The XQ Institute believes that a quality public education is a foundational right that we as a society provide for every child. Great public schools are a critical tool in ensuring that America is prosperous, healthy and able to compete in a global economy.

### How many schools will you build?

We are committed to building anywhere from 5-10 schools. The challenge process will determine how many.

### What is the challenge process? How do I submit my idea?

The challenge opens on September 11, 2015 and closes on February 1, 2016. Interested applicants are encouraged to visit the website to learn more. Applicants will be asked to complete a three-part online application process that leads them through a robust discovery process, and lays out the concepts driving the design and implementation of their proposed schools. XQ will provide tools that help match applicants across multiple disciplines to help connect great ideas with skilled leadership, innovative thinking and knowledgeable educators. Teams will be evaluated by a panel of independent judges that have been selected by XQ. Consistent throughout the successful proposals will be the reflection of student voice and a deep understanding of what a student-driven high school could be.

### **What if I have a great idea but don't know who to partner with?**

Anyone can submit a concept paper, share thoughts on our "We Think" page, or build a team. XQ's Community Directory and other tools will help applicants match their concepts to the right individuals to create a team, and help those who want to support others' great ideas find a team to join. In addition, through the Match Making Directory, you can be introduced to other interested persons and form a team together.

### **Can anyone apply, or is this only for people working in education?**

Yes, anyone can form a team and apply. XQ: The Super School Project is an open-call to America's students, teachers, administrators, civic leaders, businesses, entrepreneurs, artists and designers to meet the challenge of preparing our students for the future by dreaming, designing and creating the next American high school. Frankly, the success of XQ hinges on bringing together all facets of American ingenuity—from the best educators who know the space to the creative minds who are solving modern problems, addressing crucial issues around rights and equity and innovating for the future.

The competition is open nationwide from September 11, 2015 until February 1, 2016. Even those who chose not to apply or join a team are invited to participate. The XQ website will feature an extraordinary wealth of information on the latest science and thinking on developing 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. In addition to these resources, the website will allow individuals to follow the challenge, learn about some of the innovative ideas being developed and be a part of a larger movement towards creating the next American high school.

### **How can I support XQ or get involved without being part of the competition?**

You can:

- Engage your school and community and encourage them to join or apply
- Visit our website and share your ideas
- Sign up to get updates and shareable content to tell your friends about XQ
- Become a surrogate

### **How can I connect with XQ?**

There are lots of ways, including:

- Visit the [XQ website](#)
- Check out our roadshow schedule
- Follow us on social media
- Become a surrogate and share updates and invite others to be a part of XQ challenge and movement

### **How do I get an XQ Super School in my community?**

Individuals can either join or create a team in their community to apply, or they can promote the challenge within their own networks to encourage a team to form and apply. Outside of the actual challenge, individuals can benefit from the deep resources offered on the website and encourage their own districts to adopt some of the suggested best practices and innovations.

### How is this funded?

The XQ Institute was incubated and is initially funded by the Emerson Collective, an organization dedicated to improving the lives of every student by bucking the status quo and charting a new path.

### Can students apply?

Yes, students 13 years and older can apply, with the consent of a legal guardian. The core of XQ is a student-obsessed, design-driven method that will spark the best new thinking. We believe student involvement is critical, whether as part of a team and/or in offering ideas through our website or via social media.