

Healthy Environments Advance Learning NEWSLETTER



The HEAL Summit Recap

The inaugural HEAL Summit was a strong success, bringing together educators, designers, architects, and industry professionals to explore how 21st-century design can transform learning environments across Rhode Island.

Dr. Joseph da Silva, RIDE's School Building Authority Coordinator and HEAL Project Director, opened the day with reflections on the state's transformation—from a school construction moratorium to managing a \$5.2 billion investment in educational infrastructure. He highlighted key milestones, including Cranston's student-led demolition kickoff at the Apprenticeship Exploration School and the ribbon-cutting of Newport's new Rogers High School.

Keynote speaker Dr. Dieter Breithecker emphasized the neuroscience of posture and movement, advocating for dynamic spaces that enhance cognition, focus, and well-being. Courtney Sevigny, of VS America, led a session on how intentional spatial and furniture design can directly impact student engagement and learning, inviting participants to envision future-ready classroom concepts.



HEAL Summit attendees were up and moving around, actively engaged in learning. When seated, they were sitting, kneeling, or standing in flexible seating of their choice—creating an environment we envision for Rhode Island students.

The event spotlighted the work of Healthy Environments Advance Learning (HEAL), a statewide initiative led by RIDE's School Building Authority and supported by \$5 million in federal funding through the *Supporting America's School Infrastructure* grant. HEAL focuses on Rhode Island's highest-need districts, building local capacity and improving indoor environmental quality to support student-centered infrastructure.

