



Students design bright idea for schools

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The ACE Mentor Program of Central Iowa competition team included, from left, Brant Bristow, Stacie Ellickson-Hastie, David Unick, Eric Cole, Katie Smithart, Joey Bahnsen, Sirina Reed, Ross Nickey, Jordan Hutton, Nicole Bramow, Josh Ridgely and Mike Dean. Not pictured: Saketh Undurty and Jonathan Vaage. / SUBMITTED PHOTO

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Eight Des Moines-area high school students from the ACE Mentor Program of Central Iowa claimed the top prize of \$5,000 in a national design competition.

The student group traveled to Washington, D.C., where Joey Bahnsen of East High School presented its mock design for a modular education addition to a panel of judges that included CEOs from top national design and construction firms.

The students were given three potential project options to pursue. Based on their own experiences with portable classrooms, the students felt that this problem was the most important to address and had the greatest potential for innovative design and

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construction.

From September to March the students met once a week to discuss ideas, propose solutions and create an award-winning project that addressed design at multiple scales.

They utilized factory-built modules that can be quickly fabricated and shipped to sites throughout the nation. They realized that their education module had added benefits including creating better learning environments for low-income school districts and even providing temporary structures to aid disaster relief efforts.

The teams were judged on their ability to make a clear, comprehensive, coherent and cogent presentation on the design/construction approaches while being fully responsive to the competition package elements in the challenge.

The central Iowa ACE team members are Nicole Bramow and Sirina Reed from Ankeny High School; Bahnsen from East; Ross Nickey from Lincoln; Eric Cole and Katie Smithart from Southeast Polk; and Jordan Hutton and Saketh Undurty from Valley.

Professionals from local businesses contributed more than 250 hours of volunteer time to help guide the competition team through the design process and several sponsors helped pay for the trip for the delegation of 12 students, mentors and chaperones.

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