

2025 Architects & Engineers Summit: Collaboration in Action

The 2025 Architects & Engineers Summit was a day to remember, bringing together professionals, students, and industry leaders for learning, networking, and inspiration.

The event opened with a stunning performance by the *Alexander W. Dreyfoos School of the Arts String Quartet*, immediately setting a tone of creativity and collaboration. With a full house of architects, engineers, and SDPBC students, the energy in the room was palpable as attendees shared knowledge, sparked new ideas, and explored ways to build stronger partnerships.

One of the day's standout moments was a panel discussion on collaboration, sustainability, and artificial intelligence, featuring *Stephen Botek (Botek Thurlow Engineering, Inc.)*, *Lourdes Rodriguez (Rodriguez Architects, Inc.)*, *Steven Farquharson (Hammond & Associates, Inc.)*, and *Jessica Sumner-Wells (Williamson Design Associates, Inc.)*. They shared insights on how these trends are shaping the future of design. Participants then attended breakout sessions led by *Cristin Peacock (Peacock Architects)*, *Chuck Gableman (JLRD)*, *Song + Associate*, *DLR Group*, *PGAL*, *Zyscovich/Stratus*, *SGM Engineering*, and *REG Architects*, diving deeper into each topic and gaining practical strategies to help smaller firms stay competitive in today's fast-changing marketplace.

A special session, the Student Design Lab, showcased the next generation of innovators—SDPBC students who are already imagining the future of design and engineering. With guidance from *MC Harry & Associates*, *Jorge A. Gutierrez Architect*, *Carolyn Vega-Gonzalez*, *MC Engineers*, and our District architect and engineer, *Jorge Perez* and *Romulo De Carvalho Silva*, students from *Forest Hill*, *Inlet Grove*, *Lake Worth*, *Suncoast*, and *William T. Dwyer High Schools* co-designed a school space envisioned for 2040.

Attendees also gained insight into upcoming District projects, shared by *General Manager, Purchasing and District Architect, Jorge Perez*, and learned more about the *ACE Mentorship Program* from *President Brent Martin (Morganti)* and *board member Dave Dolan (SDPBC Chief of Facilities Management)*, which connects students with real-world experience and professional guidance.

The Summit perfectly reflected the spirit of the Office of Small Business Development's mission: Learn. Connect. Grow. Attendees left inspired, with new ideas, stronger professional networks, and a shared commitment to advancing excellence, inclusion, and innovation in school design.

Special thanks to all participating firms, District leaders, and District 2 School Board Member Virginia Savietto, whose support helped make this event a remarkable success. Together, we're fostering collaboration, innovation, and the next wave of talent in architecture and engineering.