

Building a Better Community

The community of Reading, Pennsylvania is in a concerning state. In 2011, *The New York Times* ranked Reading as the poorest city in the United States on the basis of having the largest percentage of its population living in poverty. The Reading School district is in a comparable condition. The school district is in “Corrective Action II” as defined by the No Child Left Behind Law, and has lately achieved mixed results in national and state standardized test scores.

Despite the city’s recent shortcomings, there is still a reason to hope. Vaughn D. Spencer, mayor of Reading, assures a promising future for his citizens: “In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity.”

The ASCE Charles Pankow Foundation Student Competition provided our design team the opportunity to shape the future of the Reading community. With an innovative, high-performance elementary school, our design team hopes to educate and inspire the next generation of Reading. The competition provided us the opportunity to capture the potential that Mayor Spencer alluded to.

It provided us the opportunity to build a better community.