



Leadership in Education Competition

Overview

The Leadership in Education competition invites passionate and proactive FEA members to make a significant impact in their communities through exemplary leadership and dedication to enhancing education. Participants will design and lead an original service-learning project that addresses a real need, demonstrating their initiative and impact.

Each self-initiated project must meet the following criteria:

- **Benefit Individuals with Special Needs:** The project must have a positive impact on individuals with special needs, demonstrating leadership in creating inclusive educational opportunities.
- **Independent of Required Curriculum:** The participant must personally design and lead the project or a clearly identifiable new component of an existing school or community initiative. A project may complement an existing program or event, but the student's contribution must represent original leadership and work that can be clearly distinguished from the existing initiative. Projects completed solely to satisfy a classroom assignment are not eligible.
- **Minimum of 8 Hours of Work:** Planning, research, implementation, and evaluation should total at least 8 hours, beginning during the **2026-2027** academic year and concluding before the FEA Regional Conference.
- **Research Relevance and Impact Data:** The project should be supported by at least two credible sources published within the last 10 years and include measurable results, feedback, testimonials, observations, or other appropriate documentation to demonstrate its impact.
- **Be Led by One Student:** Collaboration is encouraged, but each project must be led by a single FEA member, who will be the only eligible recipient of the FEA scholarship.

Participants will share their efforts through a professional slide deck presentation accompanied by supporting project artifacts. They will present their work to a panel of judges at the FEA Regional Conference at Florida International University (FIU).

Participation Details

- This is an individual competition.
- Only one (1) entry per chapter will be accepted. Each chapter must select one student to represent it.
- A maximum of twelve (12) entries total will be accepted, on a first-come, first-served basis.



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Competition Guidelines

- A. The participant must complete an education-related service-learning project that makes a concrete and visible impact on individuals with special needs in the school or community. The participant must personally design and lead the project or a clearly identifiable new component of an existing school or community initiative. A project may complement an existing program or event, but the student's contribution must represent original leadership and work that can be clearly distinguished from the existing initiative. Projects completed solely to satisfy a classroom assignment are not eligible.
- B. A minimum of 8 hours is required. Time may include needs assessment, research, planning, communication, implementation, documentation, and evaluation. The project must begin during the 2026-2027 academic year and conclude before the FEA Regional Conference
- C. The student will create a slide-deck presentation that includes a description of the project, as well as 3-5 supporting artifacts.

SILIDE DECK GUIDELINES

- D. The slide deck (PowerPoint, Google Slides, or similar) will serve as the participant's storytelling tool and must include the following clearly labeled sections:

1. Title Slide

The participant's name, the sponsoring teacher's name, the school's name and address, and the title of the project.

2. Executive Summary (1-2 Slides)

The participant will provide an overview of the project's goals, actions taken, and major outcomes.

3. Background (1-2 slides)

The participant will explain why they chose this project, its significance, the community need it addressed, and their intended outcomes.

4. Project description (3-4 slides)

The participant will describe their process, including planning, strategy, resources, time management, adjustments made, and how they evaluated project completion and effectiveness.

5. Reflection (2-3 slides)

The participant will share what they learned about themselves, their leadership growth, community impact, and what they would do differently in the future.

6. References (1-2 slides)

The participant will reference at least two credible sources supporting the project's design and include measurable data, feedback, testimonials, observations, or other appropriate documentation that demonstrates the project's impact. Use APA, MLA, or Chicago citation style. All research cited must be within the last 10 years.

ARTIFACT GUIDELINES

An artifact is anything that demonstrates or exemplifies the work that the participant put into the service project. A collection of 3-5 supporting artifacts must be included in the presentation. Below is a list of sample artifacts that might be included:

- Photographs



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- Newspaper articles, blogs, or other media coverage of the project
- Project timeline
- Log of how time was spent
- Written testimonials from beneficiaries of your project (especially students and parents)
- Letters of commendation

PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

- F. Participants will deliver a slide deck presentation of no shorter than five minutes and no longer than seven minutes, describing their experience and insights gained through the project. They should bring their presentations on a USB drive.
- G. Competitors will respond to judges' follow-up questions. The entire presentation and question session will last no more than 10 minutes in total.

Judging and Scoring

- A. Competitors must be present at the scheduled time; otherwise, they will be disqualified.
- B. The judges' decision is final.
- C. Competitors agree to be bound by the FEA General Competition Rules.
- D. The entry will be scored using the Leadership in Education Competition rubric.

How to Enter

- A. This is an individual competition. Only one (1) entry per chapter will be accepted.
- B. All entries for individual and/or chapter competitions must be submitted by the chapter's sponsoring teacher via the Online Competition Entry Form **by 5:00 pm on Friday, October 30, 2026.**
- C. Entries submitted by email will not be accepted.

The guidelines for the FIU Leadership in Education Competition are adapted from the national Educators Rising competition guidelines and are used for educational purposes. All credit for the original competition structure, objectives, and evaluation criteria goes to Educators Rising. FIU's adaptations are intended to align with our institutional context and support student success within our programs.

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Points Available	Accomplished 16 – 13	Commendable 12 – 9	Developing 8 – 5	Needs Improvement 4 – 1
Content of Slide Deck	The slide deck thoroughly addresses all required sections (title, executive summary, background, project description, reflection, research, and impact data) with clarity and depth. The content clearly demonstrates the project's purpose, process, impact, and the student's leadership growth. Research is well-integrated and appropriately cited.	The slide deck includes most required sections and presents a clear, logical overview of the project. The content shows a solid understanding of the project's purpose and outcomes, with some integration of research and reflection.	The slide deck addresses some of the required sections but lacks detail or depth. The content provides a general overview of the project, but may miss key elements such as impact data or personal reflection.	The slide deck includes a few required sections and provides a limited or unclear explanation of the project. There is little evidence of impact, research, or reflection, and key components are missing or underdeveloped.
Special Needs Focus	The presentation clearly and compellingly demonstrates the project's well-executed focus on individuals with special needs.	The presentation demonstrates the project's focus on individuals with special needs.	The presentation inconsistently or superficially focuses on individuals with special needs.	The presentation offers a limited, non-existent, or non-credible focus on individuals with special needs.
Depth of Research	Supported by at least two credible, recent sources, the participant demonstrates a strong understanding of effective strategies for supporting individuals with special needs.	Drawing on at least two credible sources and experience, the participant demonstrates the project's strategy for supporting individuals with special needs.	Based on limited research, the participant presents a partially supported project strategy for individuals with special needs.	Lacking sufficient credible research and experience, the participant employs a limited, nonexistent, or non-credible strategy for supporting individuals with special needs.
Artifacts	The 3-5 artifacts collectively tell a compelling and comprehensive story of the project's outstanding focus and powerful impact.	The 3-5 artifacts provide helpful information about the project. More or deeper information, or more variety, would have taken the artifacts' impact from good to great.	The 3-5 artifacts show some information about the project but may be confusing or lacking essential aspects.	The 3-5 artifacts do not convey a story of the project's focus and impact, or fewer than 3 artifacts were submitted.



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Presentation

Points Available	Accomplished 16 – 13	Commendable 12 – 9	Developing 8 – 5	Needs Improvement 4 – 1
Content	The participant demonstrates an impressive, professional-level depth of knowledge and understanding of the project's outstanding focus and powerful impact, based on their experience and research.	The participant displays knowledge and understanding of the selected project's focus and impact, based on his/her experience and research.	The participant displays an inconsistent or incomplete understanding of the project's focus or impact. Aspects of the project may not be satisfactorily addressed.	The participant displays a limited understanding of the project's focus or impact. Significant aspects of the project are not satisfactorily addressed.
Q&A	The participant's responses in the Q&A session demonstrate consistent thoughtfulness and professional-caliber insight, rooted in a deep understanding of the project and its impact.	The participant's responses in the Q&A session demonstrated thoughtfulness and reflected successful attempts to address most of the material posed to him/her.	The participant's responses in the Q&A session reflect inconsistent thoroughness and clarity from one answer to the next.	The participant's responses in the Q&A session may offer limited depth, accuracy, understanding, or insight into the project and its impact.
Overall Impact	The participant delivered a professional-caliber and highly compelling presentation of the project's outstanding focus and powerful impact.	The participant delivered a good and mostly engaging presentation of the project's focus and impact.	The participant made a decent effort, but the presentation was inconsistent or unclear at times. Stronger clarity on the project's focus and impact would have strengthened the presentation.	The participant delivered a presentation that was unclear, distracting, or incomplete, lacking clarity.

Points Available	5	0
Length	The initial presentation (before Q&A) is between five and seven minutes.	The initial presentation (before Q&A) is shorter than five minutes or longer than seven minutes.