

# EDspaces

Designing the Future of Education

Columbus, OH | November 5-7, 2025

## What is BIFMA? Why Standards Matter for Learning Spaces

Friday, November 7, 2025  
9:00 -10:00am ET





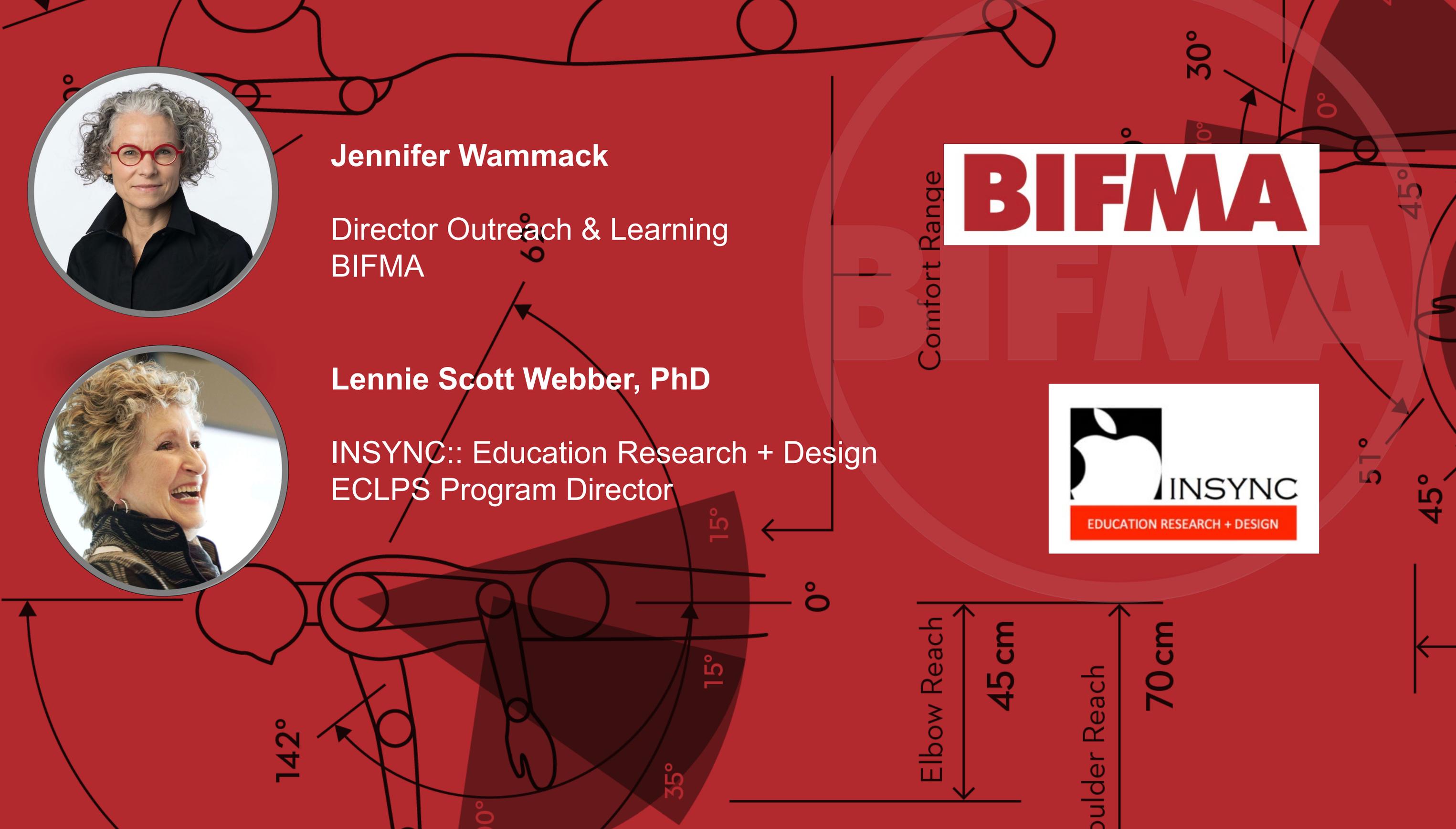
**Jennifer Wammack**

Director Outreach & Learning  
BIFMA



**Lennie Scott Webber, PhD**

INSYNC:: Education Research + Design  
ECLPS Program Director



A modern office environment with large windows and people working at desks. The scene is bright and collaborative, with several individuals engaged in work. A prominent red semi-transparent overlay is centered over the image, containing white text. The office furniture includes wooden desks and black ergonomic chairs. The overall atmosphere is professional and productive.

Why should standards be considered when selecting learning place furnishings?

# PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

This interactive presentation will help the A&D community, facility managers, building owners, education leadership, end-users, dealers, and manufacturers learn/relearn about BIFMA and its role in generating the performance standards for your learning place(s) selection. Decisions impact performance at the health, safety, well-being, universal design, and sustainability levels. We will explore how the expectation of higher product performance from industry permits higher learning outcomes. You will gain the skills to select furnishings with confidence.

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1

RECOGNIZE

2

SEE

3

ACCESS

4

REALIZE

# RECOGNIZE – THE CHALLENGE

1



**Recognize the historical changes across learning place designs, and its historical context driving the need for developing industry-wide performance standards.**

# 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY vs. 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

## Row-by-Column



Citation: Wammack, J. & Scott-Webber, L. (2025). *What is BIFMA? Why Performance Standards Matter for Learning Places*. EDspaces Conference 2025.

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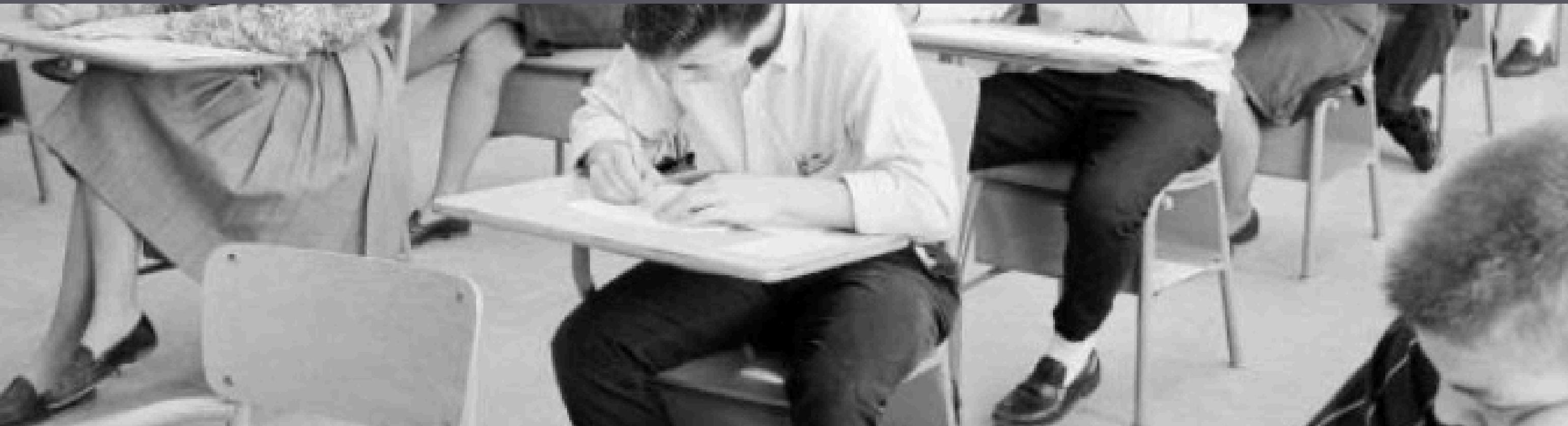


SOURCE: Scott-Webber, L. Broz, D. & Reid, D. (2024). Performance design standards: Research-Informed best practices for goal achievement. EDspaces Conference 2024.

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NEW DESIGNS / SAME SCENARIO REPEATED ACROSS TIME = BEHAVIORAL CONDITIONING



# PEDAGOGY / PASSIVE ➔ ACTIVE

## New Approaches

### Feature

Student Role

Knowledge Acquisition

Examples

Cognitive Focus

Engagement

Learning Outcomes

Teacher Role

### Passive Learning

Receiver of information

Absorbing, retaining

Lectures, reading textbooks,  
watching videos

Low-level thinking,  
memorization

Less motivation,  
lower interest

May be less effective in  
long-term retention

Information provider

### Active Learning

Active participant, engages in  
problem-solving, discussions,  
and activities

Constructing, applying, and  
reflecting

Group work, simulations,  
experiments, debates

Higher-order thinking,  
analysis, synthesis, evaluation

Increased motivation,  
higher interest

More effective in long-term  
retention and application

Facilitator, guide, coach

# MULTI-SENSORY LEARNING

Active to Agile



Image Credit: Aaron Dougherty, Multistudio

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# ACTIVE LEARNING

DoDEA 21st Century School: Building the future today

Collaborative Learning

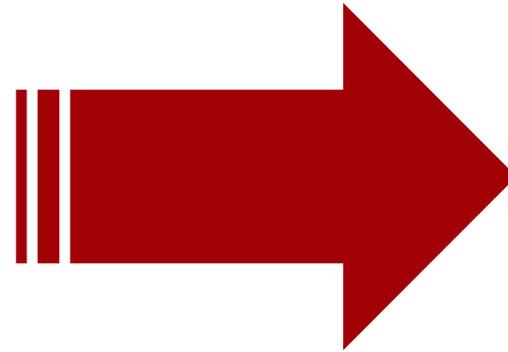


DoDEA today

Citation: Wammack, J. & Scott-Webber, L. (2025). *What is BIFMA? Why Performance Standards Matter for Learning Places*. EDspaces Conference 2025.

# MOVING FROM:

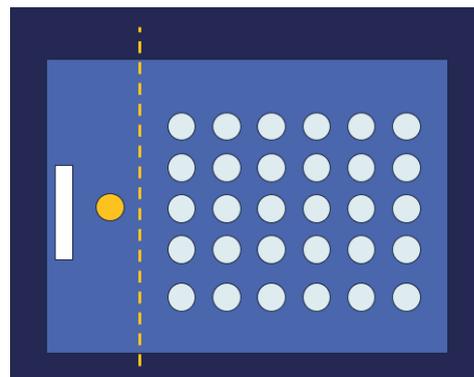
## THIS...



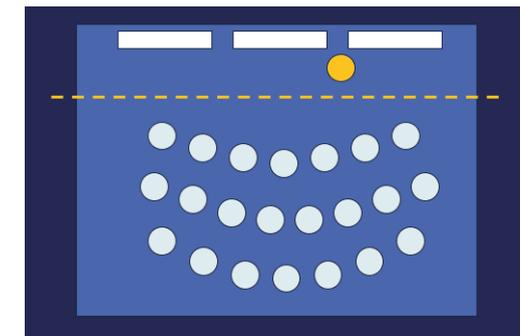
## TO THIS



Image Credit: Aaron Dougherty, Multistudio



Portrait



Landscape

# SEE – THAT STANDARDS MATTER



2

**See how testing procedures are designed to simulate use over the life of the product, and visualize how different testing procedures relate to furniture's safety and durability needed to pass BIFMA standards.**

# WHO IS BIFMA?

The voice of  
furniture for  
commercial  
applications.



- Not-for-profit founded in 1973 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- **ANSI** standards developer of **voluntary** product/industry standards that support safe, durable, healthy and sustainable environments
- Publishes key **industry statistics** for members
- **Advocates** for legislation/regulations important to the industry
- Facilitates meaningful dialog and industry education.

# BIFMA EXISTS BECAUSE STANDARDS MATTER

1973

BIFMA Founding

PRODUCT

Cost  
Function

Quality  
Design

PERFORMANCE

Business  
Profits

Environment  
Ergonomics

PEOPLE

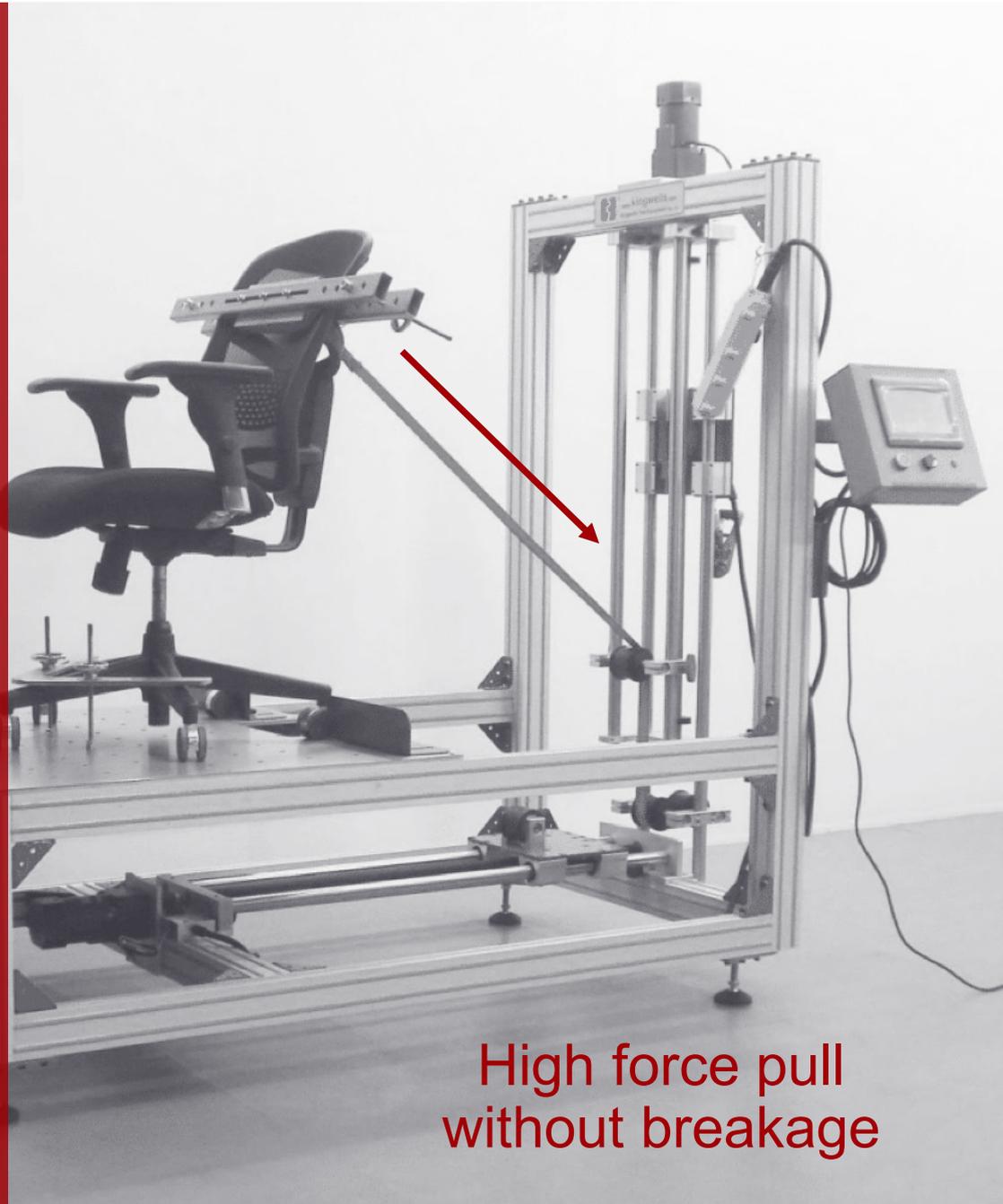
Productivity  
Leaders

Safety  
Learner's = students & educators

# STRENGTH & DURABILITY

ANSI/BIFMA X5.1 Seating  
ANSI/BIFMA X6.1 Educational Seating

Backrest  
Test



Durability  
Test -  
Cyclic

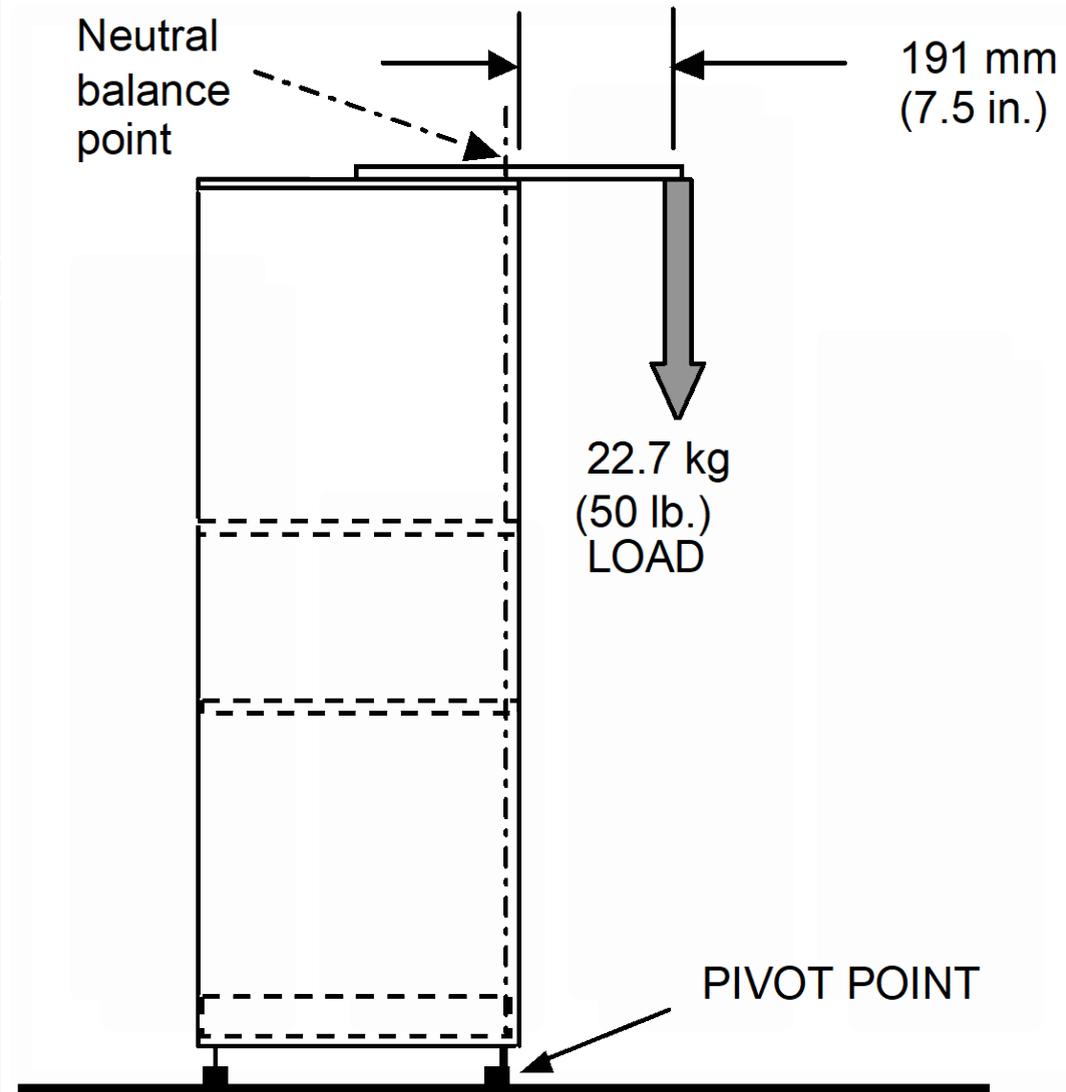
125 Pounds



# STABILITY

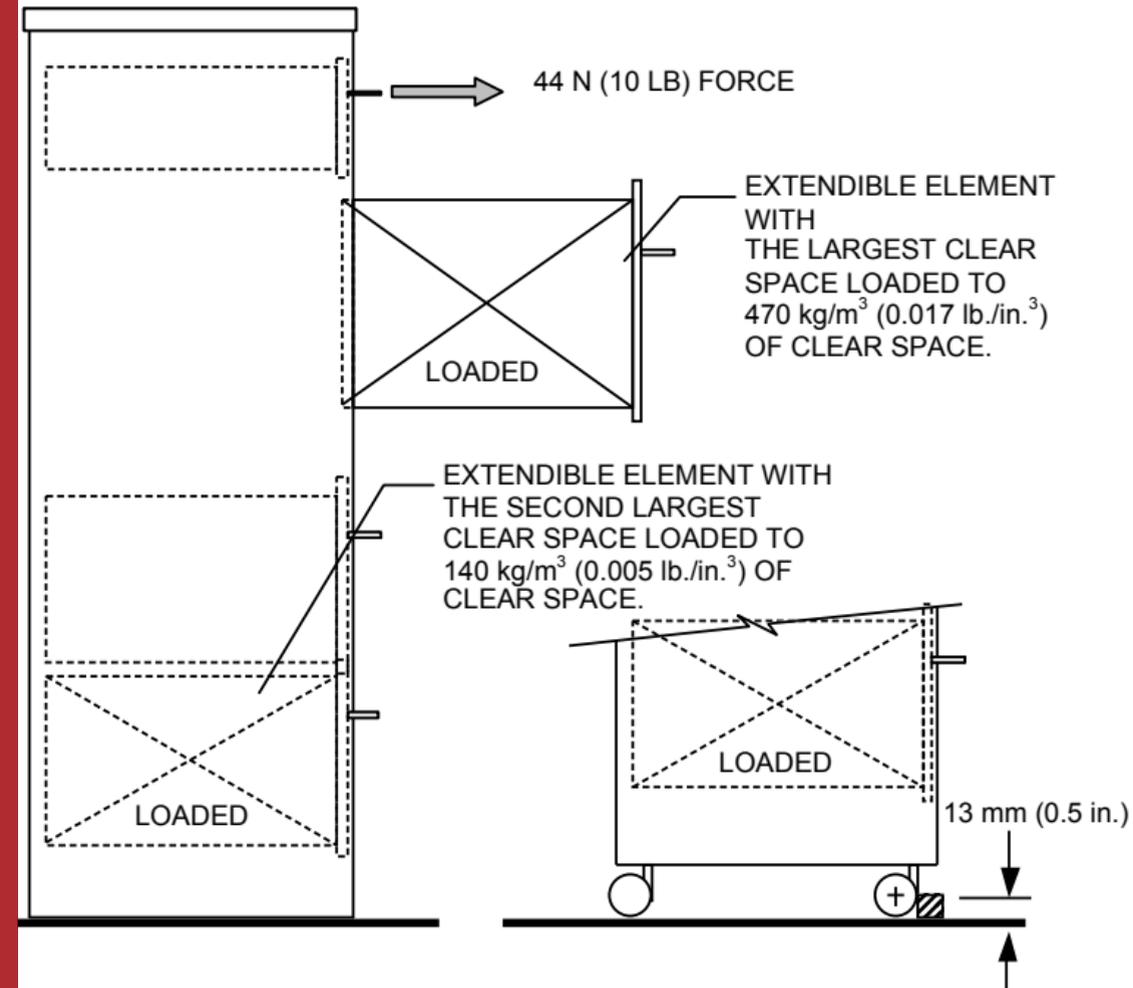
Vertical  
Force

BOOKCASE



Loaded  
Force

FILE  
CABINET



ANSI/BIFMA X5.9 Storage

# ANTHROPOMETRICS – OLD SCHOOL

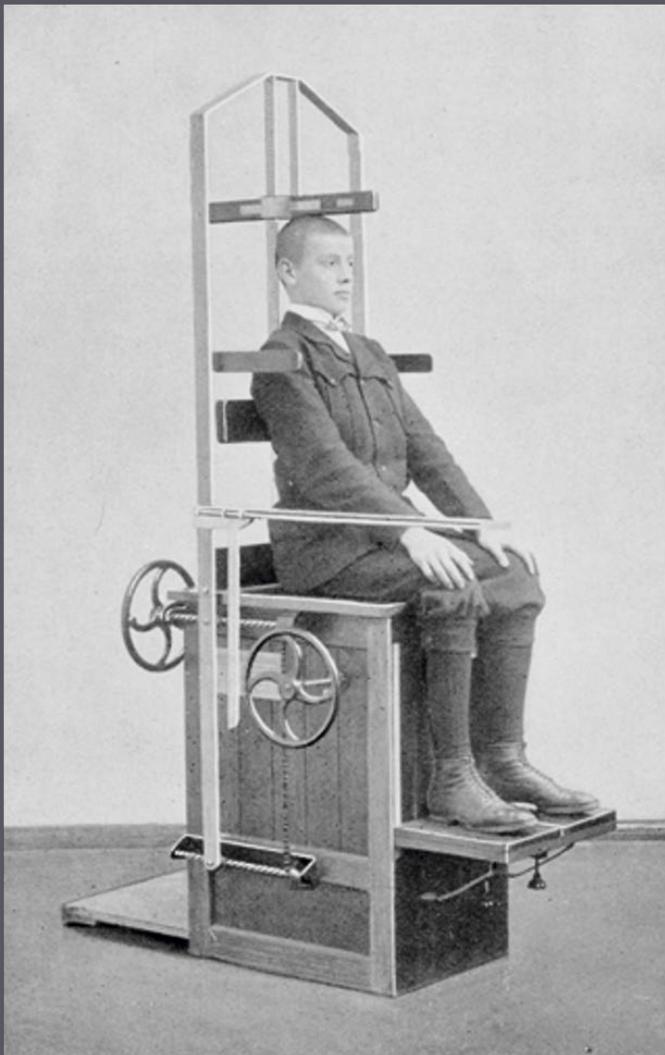
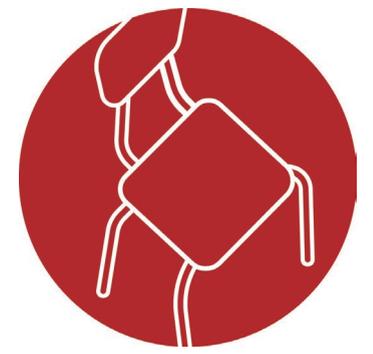
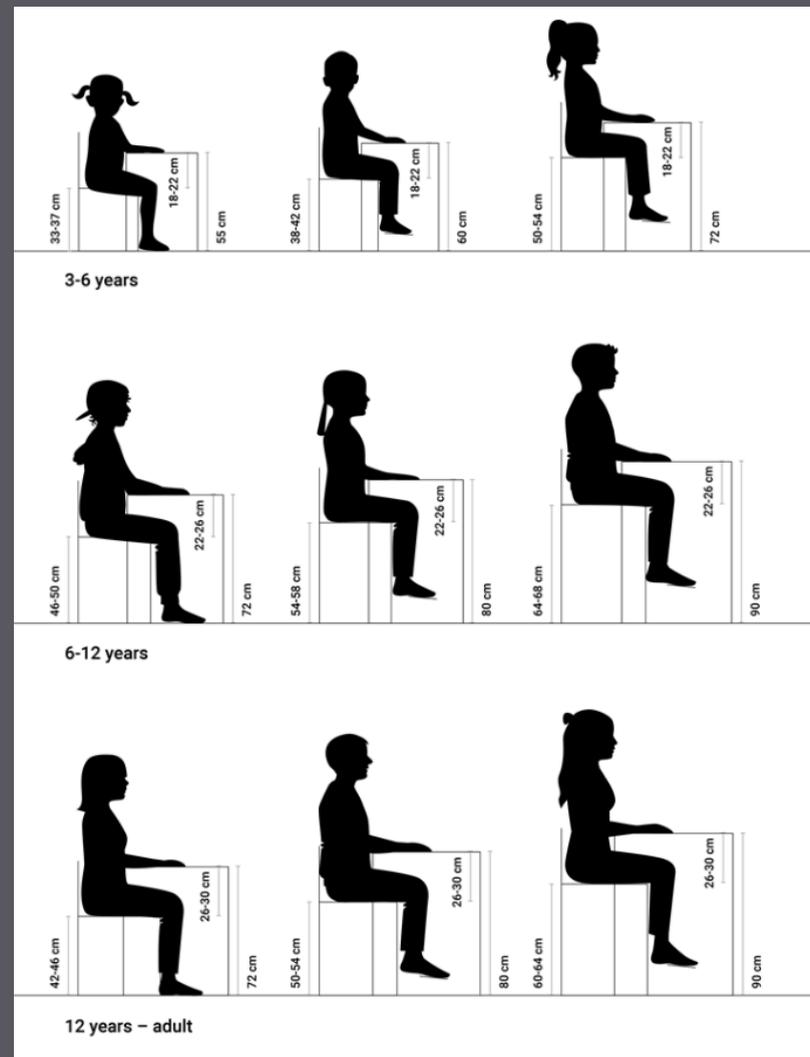


Image Courtesy of VS Germany

- **What do you think this device is?**
- Anthropometry involves collecting and analyzing human body measurements like height, weight, and limb length.
- Designers utilize this data to ensure furniture is comfortable and functional for various body types.



# ANTHROPOMETRICS – SCIENTIFIC BASIS



## ANSI/BIFMA X6.1 Educational Seating

- Three sizes: A, B, C.
- Elementary age; middle school age; high school/higher ed ages environments
- Loads adjusted accordingly
- Cycles unchanged

# ENSURING HEALTH & WELL-BEING

## IAQ- Indoor Air Quality



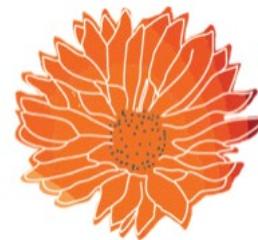
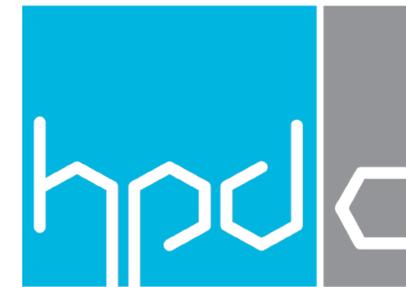
## ANSI/BIFMA X7.1 Furniture Low-emitting Furniture Standard

- Specifies acceptance levels that define low-emitting furniture
- Uses ANSI/BIFMA M7.1 Furniture Emissions Test Method



Public Services and  
Procurement Canada

Services publics et  
Approvisionnement Canada



LIVING  
BUILDING  
CHALLENGE™



LIVING  
PRODUCT  
CHALLENGE™



**BIFMA**

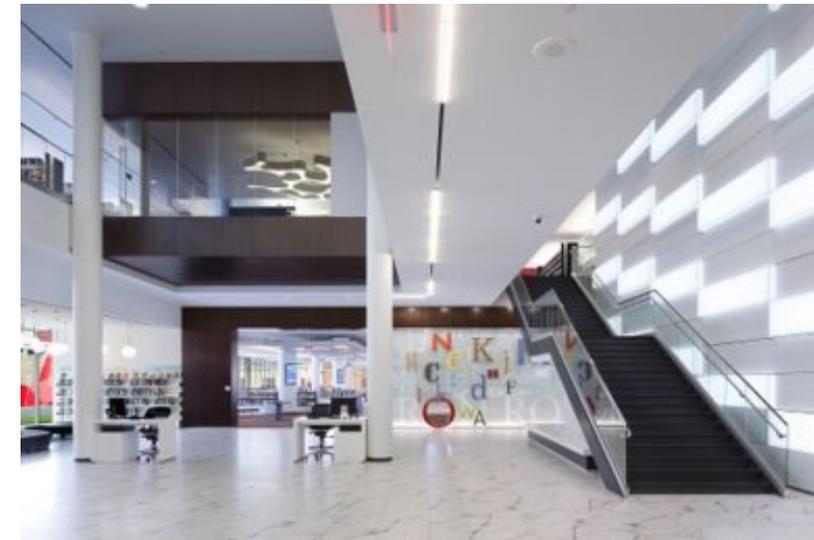
STANDARDS ARE FOUNDATIONAL

# ACCESS



3

**Access the LEVEL and BIFMA Compliant product databases and attain knowledge to evaluate your furniture selections to ensure safety for all who may use the product going forward, and to verify claims of sustainability, health, and well-being.**

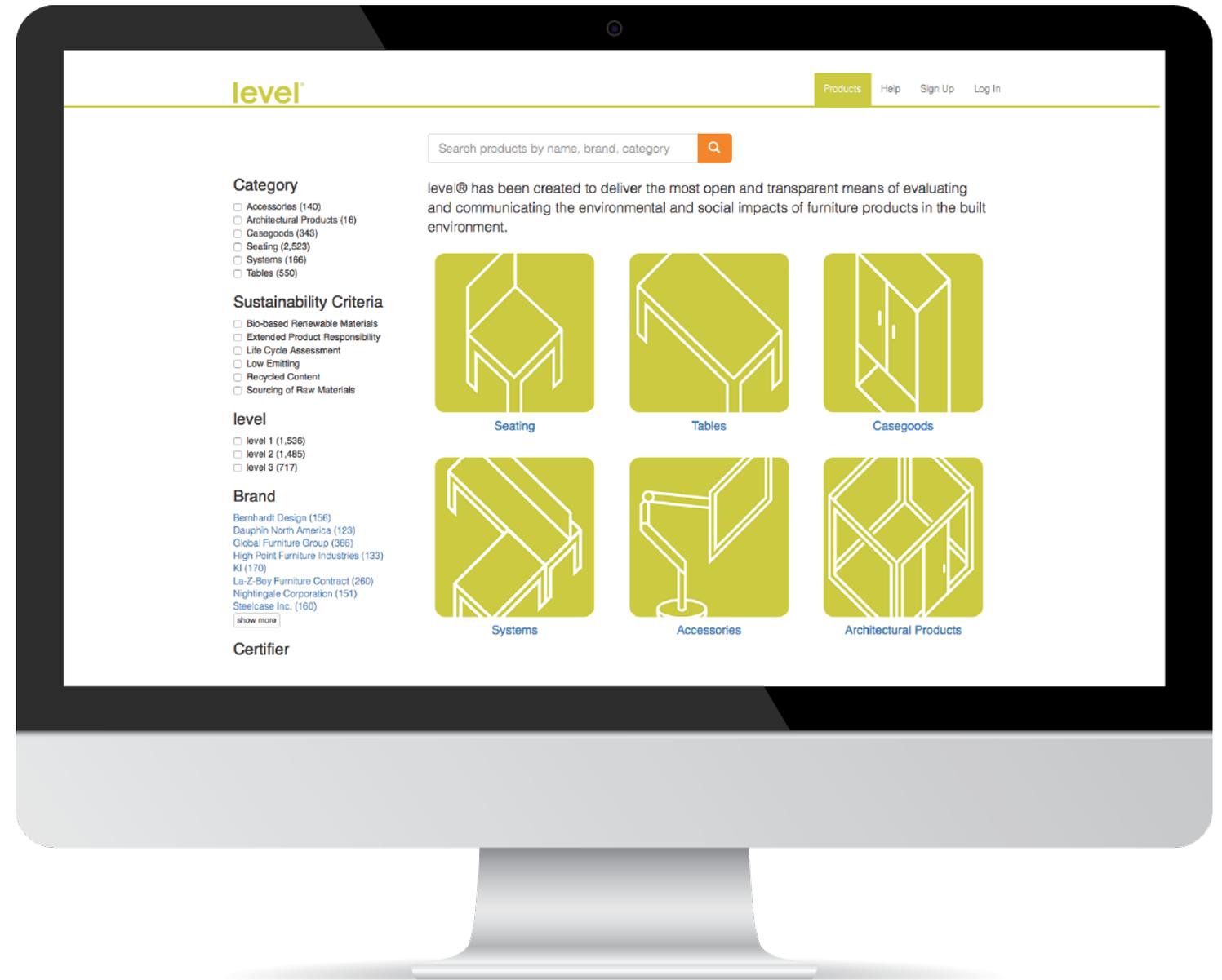


# BIFMA.ORG



<https://level.bifma.org/>

## The Benchmark for Sustainable Furniture



# BIFMA COMPLIANT REGISTRY at **BIFMA.ORG**



Conformance Program  
for Furniture Tested to  
BIFMA Standards

# BIFMA COMPLIANT at **BIFMA.ORG**

Launched MARCH 2021

Website Registry

Agreements

ISO 17025 Accredited Lab

Test Report Audits

Compliant Mark



<https://compliant.bifma.org/>

# REALIZE



4

**Realize** the impact the design of the furnishings has on learning practices, learner self-advocacy, universal design, biophilic influences and the overall impact on learning performance. Intuitively we have experienced the social, economic, and technological trends impacting learning, learning practices, and learning places – engagement and retention metrics are real. An interactive session allows for a table-top discussion of important performance ‘THiNK Abouts’.

# ACTIVITY #1

Explore to find, LEVEL Product Registry

- Groups of 6/at your table
- Find a product solution on the registry for:
  - Classroom seating for your LEED V 4.1 project
  - Includes at least one of the Sustainability Criteria
- Share your findings and process



# ACTIVITY #1 – considerations

Explore to find, LEVEL Product Registry

- How did you sort the database to refine your search?
- What type of classroom? Age of learners?
- What did you prioritize and why?
- What is your selection?

PRO TIPS:

- Discuss ideas in group to create consensus
- Designate 1-2 folks to search site to find product options
- Discuss findings within the group
- Designate someone to take notes for sharing



+ Category

- Sustainability Criteria \*

- Chemicals Assessed
- Embodied Energy Reduction
- Extended Product Responsibility
- Life Cycle Assessment
- Low Emitting
- Optimization Global Harmonization Sys Classification
- Recycled Content
- Targeted Chemical Elimination (7.4.4)

+ LEVEL

+ Brand

+ Certifier

- Rating Systems

- USGBC
- IWBI™
- ILFI™
- GBI™

Search products by name, brand



LEVEL® has been created to deliver the most open and transparent means of evaluating and communicating the environmental and social impacts of furniture products in the built environment.

\*Sustainability Criteria filters for products achieving specific credits, contact the brand for detailed credit score.

BIFMA's Website [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#)



Seating



Tables



Casegoods



Systems



Accessories



Architectural Products

Search by Certifier



# ACTIVITY #1 – recap

Explore to find, LEVEL Product Registry

- How did you sort the database to refine your search?
- What type of classroom? Age of learners?
- What did you prioritize and why?
- What is your selection?



# ACTIVITY #2

Explore to find, BIFMA Compliant Product Registry

- Groups of 6/at your table
- Find a product solution on the registry for:
  - Furnishing a teacher lounge
  - Space needs to be multi-purpose
- Share your findings and process



# ACTIVITY #2 – considerations

Explore to find, BIFMA Compliant Product Registry

- How did you sort the database to refine your search?
- What type of school is the lounge for?
- What are the multi-purpose uses for this space?
- What is/are your selection(s)?

## PRO TIPS:

- Discuss ideas in group to create consensus
- Designate 1-2 folks to search site to find product options
- Discuss findings within the group
- Designate someone to take notes for sharing





- Category
  - Accessories (159)
  - Casegoods and Storage (324)
  - Desks and Table (3)
  - Desks and Tables (724)
  - Seating (1,988)
  - Systems (76)

+ Brand

+ BIFMA Conformance

Search products by name, brand

BIFMA's Website [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#)



**ANSI/BIFMA - X5.1** General-Purpose Office Chairs



**ANSI/BIFMA - X5.11** General-Purpose Large Occupant Office Chairs



**ANSI/BIFMA - X5.4** Public & Lounge Seating



**ANSI/BIFMA - X5.41** Large Occupant Public & Lounge Seating - 400 lb user



**ANSI/BIFMA - X5.41** Large Occupant Public & Lounge Seating - 600 lb user



**ANSI/BIFMA - X5.5** Desk/Table Products



**ANSI/BIFMA - X5.6** Panel Systems



**ANSI/BIFMA - X5.9** Storage Units



**ANSI/BIFMA - X6.1** Educational Seating



**ANSI/BIFMA - X6.4** Occasional-Use Seating



**ANSI/BIFMA - X6.5** Home Office & Occasional-Use Desk, Table, Storage

# ACTIVITY #2 – recap

Explore to find, BIFMA Compliant Product Registry

- How did you sort the database to refine your search?
- What type of school is the lounge for?
- What are the multi-purpose uses for this space?
- What is/are your selection(s)?



STANDARDS MATTER FOR YOUR EDUCATIONAL  
ENTITY'S BOTTOM LINE, STUDENT LEARNER(s),  
AND EVERYONE'S COLLECTIVE WELL-BEING.

## TAKE AWAYS

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