



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SXSW EDU® 2019 ANNOUNCES FINALISTS AND JUDGES FOR THE LAUNCH AND LEARN BY DESIGN COMPETITIONS, AND A ROBUST LINEUP OF FILMS AND PERFORMANCES

Jan. 9, 2019, AUSTIN, Texas – SXSW EDU announced finalists and judges for the Launch startup competition and Learn by Design, plus powerful films, and captivating performances for the Conference & Festival taking place March 4-7, 2019. The festival program complements the conference through experiential and creative components for attendees to learn and grow.

LAUNCH:

Now in its eighth year, [Launch](#) is a competition for early-stage startups to pitch to leaders across the business, investment, and learning sectors, and gain knowledge about how to take their company to the next stage of growth. Since the Launch competition's inception, many of the startups have gone on to receive millions of dollars in funding and greatly impact learning across the country, including: Clever, The Whether, by Better Weekdays, BloomBoard, Elsa, and last year's winner Quottly.

This year's finalists showcase projects that teach students how to master mental math calculations, a new app that marries facetime with story time, and robust research that supports the high school to college transition and pathways towards career readiness. This year's top 8 finalists are: • [Amira Learning](#) // Las Vegas, NV • [Caribu](#) // Miami, FL • [Edmit](#) // Boston, MA • [Giide](#) // Boulder, CO • [Pie for Providers](#) // Chicago, IL • [ROYBI](#) // San Jose, CA • [SoroTouch](#) // Tokyo, Japan • [Upkey](#) // Chicago, IL.

Judges for this year's competition include:

- Jonathan Rochelle (JR), Director of Product Management at Google for Education and best known as the creator of Google Docs, Drive, Sheets, Slides, Forms, and more.
- Tony Wan, Managing Editor of EdSurge, who oversees the outlet's news coverage of people, ideas, and technologies that shape the future of learning.
- Vince Chan, Co-Founder and General Partner at Creta Ventures, where she spearheads investment in learning innovations in China and abroad.
- Bridget Burns, Executive Director of University Innovation Alliance, the ground-breaking national consortium of public research universities working together to test and scale innovations that close achievement gaps and improve outcomes for all students.

The Launch competition is presented by the Walton Family Foundation. The winner of the competition will be announced at the Competition Awards Party on Tuesday, March 5.

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"SXSW EDU's Launch competition was an outstanding experience for Quottly," said Alicia Policinski, Co-Founder and CEO, Quottly. "Through the competition we were introduced to many impressive Ed Tech entrepreneurs and key Ed Tech investors. In addition, we were able to take advantage of the pitch preparation and the feedback session with edtech investors, which really helped us hone our investment pitch and presentation skills. We highly recommend participating!"

"Festival programming represents the broad spectrum of experiential and hands-on learning that plays a vital role in education today," said Greg Rosenbaum, General Manager, SXSW EDU. "This part of SXSW EDU has grown exponentially alongside the conference just as entrepreneurship, design-thinking, arts education, and experiential learning have grown inside and outside the classroom. The Festival supports the latest creative thinking in how best to support teaching and learning throughout the entire learning cycle."

LEARN BY DESIGN COMPETITION:

The third annual [Learn by Design](#) competition celebrates the collaboration between designers and educators in reimagining physical space and how it can improve learning outcomes. This year's finalists support neurodiversity, adventure education, future education spaces, transdisciplinary learning, and entrepreneurial education that span the entire learning cycle. The top 7 finalists are: DLR Group's [Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium Robert B. Daugherty Education Center](#) • University of Kansas's Project Lemonaid • Kurani's [Code Next Lab](#) • HDR Architecture's [Spero Academy](#) • Ennead Architects' [Seoul Foreign School, New High School](#) • Cannon Design's [Waukee Innovation & Learning Center \(WILC\)](#) • Gulf of Maine Research Institute's [LabVenture](#).

Judges for this year's competition include:

- Jim Determan, Principal at Craig Gauden Davis, is a published architectural researcher and is currently teamed with educators at Morgan State University, neuroscientists at The Salk Institute and biophilic consultants at Terrapin Bright Green, to reveal the impact of biophilic design on student success.
- Jane Werner, Executive Director of the Children's Museum Pittsburgh, where she leads all aspects of the Museum's mission and vision, exhibits, public programming, funding and operations.
- Roosevelt Weeks, Library Director of Austin Public Library, who is passionate about improving technology, literacy and education, both inside and outside of the library.
- Stephanie Santoso, Director of Maker Initiatives at Citizen Schools, works with the organization's US2020 City Network of 22 communities to expand and deepen opportunities for maker-centered learning and STEM mentorship.

The Learn by Design Competition is presented by VS America. The winner of the competition will be announced at the Competition Awards Party on Tuesday, March 5.

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FILMS:

An attendee favorite is the [SXSW EDU Film](#) program which tackles important issues facing today's students and young adults through powerful and poignant visual storytelling. Many screenings feature a Q&A with the filmmakers, providing attendees an opportunity to connect on a personal level.

From accessibility and inclusion to equity, student agency, and higher education, our 2019 film program highlights the powerful movement to heal and mobilize following the Marjory Stoneman Douglas shooting, discussions and action around sexual boundaries and #metoo, individuals fostering inclusive environments, and those creating innovative solutions to combat America's staggering college dropout crisis. Presented by the Special Olympics, the film lineup includes:

- [*#MSDStrong Documentary*](#) – Created by the students of WMSD-TV at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, with help from students and alumni across the country, this collaborative documentary covers the days after the incident as the school began the rebuilding, and healing, process.
- [*Eighth Grade*](#) – Thirteen-year-old Kayla, portrayed by Golden Globe nominated actress Elsie Fisher, endures the tidal wave of contemporary suburban adolescence as she makes her way through the last week of middle school—the end of her thus far disastrous eighth grade year—before she begins high school.
- [*Intelligent Lives*](#) – From award-winning filmmaker Dan Habib comes *Intelligent Lives*, a catalyst to transform the label of intellectual disability from a life sentence of isolation into a life of possibility for the most systematically segregated people in America.
- [*Life, Animated*](#) – *Life, Animated* is the inspirational story of Owen Suskind, a young man who was unable to speak as a child until he and his family discovered a unique way to communicate by immersing themselves in the world of classic Disney animated films.
- [*Moving Stories*](#) – Six diverse dancers from an acclaimed New York dance company travel the world to work with at-risk youth, teaching them the tools of choreography so that they can tell their stories through dance.
- [*Personal Statement*](#) – Three seniors at Brooklyn high schools are determined to get their entire classes to college, even though they aren't even sure they are going to make it there themselves.
- [*Roll Red Roll*](#) – *Roll Red Roll* is a true-crime thriller that goes behind the headlines to uncover the deep-seated and social media-fueled “boys will be boys” culture at the root of high school sexual assault in America.
- [*School in the Cloud*](#) – The film follows Indian professor Sugata Mitra, who sets up an unmanned internet kiosk in a remote Bengali village to pioneer the *School in the Cloud* and the children as they encounter the internet for the first time.

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- [Seats at the Table](#) – *Seats at the Table* is a feature documentary film which depicts a unique college class that brings together university students with residents of a maximum-security juvenile correctional center through the study of classic works of Russian literature.
- [The R-Word](#) – *The R-Word* is a feature-length documentary film about the word ‘retarded.’ This film confronts how, when, and why the r-word became so present in our culture, illustrates who this word impacts, and, ultimately, makes the case for why the conversation surrounding people with intellectual and developmental disabilities needs to change.
- [Unlikely](#) – Set in the cities of Akron, Atlanta, Boston and Los Angeles, five individuals failed by America’s higher education system fight for a second chance at opportunity.

PERFORMANCES:

Bringing arts to life, the performance series offers SXSW EDU attendees a unique entertaining and educational experience. Following each act, the performers and their associated organizations lead the audience through a workshop, offering insight to the concepts that fueled the performance and, in many cases, activities that can be adopted for the classroom. Highlights of this year’s performance schedule include The Kennedy Center’s “Staged Reading: The Kennedy Center’s Long Way Down,” The Paramount Story Wranglers’ “From Page to Stage: Bringing Students’ Stories to Life,” and The University of Texas at Austin and Make Your Move’s “Make a Move: Bodies Creating Change”. For more information please visit [Performances](#).

EXPO

Rounding out the festival is the [Expo](#), the central hub for innovations in learning at SXSW EDU. The dynamic space features a discovery-based learning playground, curated programming, and networking opportunities, alongside interactive exhibits showcasing what’s new in education. The Expo, which is presented by AT&T and Chevron, will run from Monday, March 4 through Wednesday, March 6.

ABOUT SXSW EDU

The SXSW EDU® Conference & Festival cultivates and empowers a community of engaged stakeholders to advance teaching and learning. The annual four-day event affords registrants open access to engaging sessions, immersive workshops, interactive learning experiences, film screenings, early-stage startups, business opportunities and networking. SXSW EDU is a component of the South by Southwest® family of conferences and festivals. Join the passionate and innovative community at SXSW EDU, March 4-7, 2019 in Austin, Texas. For more information, please visit <http://www.sxswedu.com>.

Press Credentials: Press accreditation for SXSW EDU 2019 is available at <http://www.sxswedu.com/press>. The deadline for press accreditation is February 6, 2019.

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