



## **SXSW EDU® Announces Finalists for its 2022 Launch and Student Startup Competitions**

**January 12, 2022, Austin, TEXAS** – In anticipation of the South by Southwest EDU® Conference & Festival, the company revealed today the finalists for its [Launch and Student Startup competitions](#). Competitions are pillars of the event's celebration of entrepreneurship in the education space; both programs highlight the work of trailblazers developing products and services for the present and future of learning. This year's finalists, selected through a rigorous review process, represent a wide variety of innovations ranging from game-changing tech, to those that improve learning outcomes, and products that support overall wellness. Finalists will have the opportunity to present their businesses to a panel of judges and coaches chosen for their impact and expertise in the field, as well as special guest emcees.

For over a decade, SXSW EDU's **Launch** competition has been a premier arena for early-stage startup leaders to pitch their companies. With feedback from industry experts, early adopters, investors, and educators, these organizations gain the insight and tools that help take their missions to the next level. The six finalists chosen for this year's competition, presented by the Walton Family Foundation, cover a breadth of pressing topics and persistent challenges emphasized by lingering effects of the pandemic such as enhancing literacy, progressing equity and inclusion, and addressing social emotional learning. This year also saw an elevation in applicants seeking to create tech that augments the learning process. Finalists include:

- [Affectifi Inc.](#) // Brooklyn, NY
- [Epixego](#) // Berkeley, CA
- [IEP & Me](#) // San Francisco, CA
- [Our Worlds, Inc.](#) // Pala Indian Reservation, CA
- [Readlee](#) // Worcester, MA
- [Schoolytics](#) // Washington, DC

Initially announced judges for Launch 2022 are **Heejae Lim** and **Liz Dozier**. Lim is the founder and CEO of TalkingPoints, an edtech nonprofit unlocking the potential of families to drive student learning in under-resourced communities, and is a former education consultant at McKinsey & Company, Aspire Schools, and for the U.K. Secretary of Education. **Liz Dozier** is the founder and CEO of Chicago Beyond, an impact investor working to ensure all young people have the opportunity to live a free and full life. Joining as coaches for the competition are **Amrutha Vasan**, co-founder and COO of Inspirit and 2021 Launch winner, and **Aly Murray**, founder & executive director of UPchieve. The competition will be emceed by **Dan Carroll**, middle school science teacher turned CPO and co-founder of Clever and **Craig Narveson**, general manager and director of partnerships at Kahoot!. In 2013, Clever was the winner of the Launch competition and Kahoot! was a finalist.

“Now in its eleventh year, the Launch competition never ceases to amaze and inspire us with the sheer creativity and passion of the entrepreneurs that apply. The cohort of finalists selected this year demonstrate the many paths for learning that have yet to be fully explored and the innovation arising from the pandemic,” said **Greg Rosenbaum**, Head of SXSW EDU. “The same rings true for the Student Startup competition. What makes education so fascinating is that the roles are never concrete. These students show us that they are just as much the teachers as anyone else, equipping us with the concepts that will lead our education community forward.”

Ringin in its sixth year, the **Student Startup competition**, powered by WIT - Whatever It Takes and supported by the Do-Or-Dier Foundation and the Diamond Challenge, brings together high school students looking to take their own business ideas to fruition. This year’s list of finalists was narrowed down to five youth-led companies largely concerned with developing products that further our approach to wellness. They include:

- [Accordia Power, LLC](#) // Cedar Park, TX
- [AUesome](#) // Sunnyvale, CA
- [CorteX Wellness](#) // Dubai, UAE
- [Fia Technologies, Inc.](#) // Indianapolis, IN
- [Guardial](#) // Austin, TX

During the 2022 SXSW EDU Conference & Festival, they will have the chance to showcase their ideas and receive guidance from competition judge **Charles Choice**, the senior program officer for the Do-Or-Dier Foundation, and coaches **Kimberly Small**, executive director of Network For Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) West, **Kathy Osborne**, founder of Kamel PR, **Loren Feldman**, founder and editor in chief of 21 Hats Media, **Don Buckley**, a design thinker, innovator, and educator, and **Alina Morse**, CEO and founder of ZolliCandy. The event will be emceed by **Sarah Hernholm**, the founder and president of WIT - Whatever It Takes, host of the DO WIT podcast and three-time TED speaker, and **Kylie Thorp**, a teen entrepreneur and founder of Free Roaming Jewelry.

SXSW EDU will take place March 7-10, 2022. For more information on the competitions featured during the conference and festival, visit [sxswedu.com/competitions](https://sxswedu.com/competitions).

#### **Press Credentials:**

To register, please go to [sxswedu.com/press](https://sxswedu.com/press).

#### **About SXSW EDU:**

The SXSW EDU® Conference & Festival is a reflection of the world’s most critical social issues as seen through the lens of education. This year’s event will bring together the learner, the practitioner, the entrepreneur, and the visionary to share their groundbreaking stories, tackle complex issues, and build reimaged paths forward. As a community of diverse people who are united around a like minded vision for the future, SXSW EDU serves a place for attendees to renew their purpose in practice from both a personal and professional perspective. It is a place

to reinforce the core principles of teaching and learning as well as an opportunity to express your creativity and passion for education. SXSW EDU is a component of the South by Southwest® family of conferences and festivals that has grown from 800 to over 8,000 registrants in the last decade. Join the passionate and innovative community at SXSW EDU, March 7-10, 2022.

**Contact:**

Liz Stein

SXSW EDU Press & Publicity

[press@sxswedu.com](mailto:press@sxswedu.com)

240-461-3053