



SXSW EDU® Announces Finalists for its 2023 Launch and Student Startup Competitions

January 11, 2023 // Austin, Texas – With the 2023 South by Southwest EDU® Conference & Festival just a couple of months away, the company is proud to name the new class of finalists for its **Launch** and **Student Startup** competitions. Since the beginning, the spirit of entrepreneurship has been an integral part of the annual event, and the competitions have served as stepping stones for many of today’s education and youth entrepreneurs. This March, the competitions will celebrate groundbreaking work from new startups and high school students worldwide. In addition to the competition finalists, we are delighted to announce the emcees, judges, and coaches selected for this year’s Launch and Student Startup competitions.

This year’s list of finalists represents a range of ideas with the potential to usher in the next generation of innovations to move education forward. After a highly competitive application and review process, the Launch finalists selected are working on projects from advancing AI to enhancing storytelling integration and creating spaces for greater peer-to-peer learning. Core to the mission of amplifying up-and-coming innovators, the competitions will expand this year with additional opportunities for participants to gain insight and network with industry mentors and other members of the SXSW EDU community.

“With each year that we host the Launch and Student Startup competitions, we continue to be amazed by the game-changing concepts that are presented,” said Greg Rosenbaum, Senior Director of SXSW EDU. “We are proud to further grow this platform at the 2023 conference and festival in order to uplift even more creators and support them in their journey.”

Launch Competition

After more than a decade of establishing itself as a highly anticipated SXSW EDU program for early-stage startup leaders to pitch their companies, the Launch Competition experienced its largest pool of applicants yet, with applicants hailing from as far away as Sri Lanka, Finland, Japan, Australia, Brazil, and Scotland. Launch is presented by the Walton Family Foundation. This year’s finalists include:

- [EduOpenings](#) // St. Louis, Missouri
- [Kide Science](#) // Helsinki, Finland
- [Promineo Tech](#) // Peoria, Arizona
- [Robotical](#) // Edinburgh, Scotland
- [Tilli](#) // Sri Lanka
- [Koalluh](#) // Atlanta, Georgia
- [Equmenopolis, Inc.](#) // Tokyo, Japan

Leaders from the companies will share their visions with a panel of expert judges featuring **Shalinee Sharma**, CEO & co-founder of Zearn; **Frances Messano**, CEO of NewSchools Venture Fund; and **Tequilla Brownie**, CEO of TNTP; as well as special guest emcee, **Divya Gokulnath**, co-founder of BYJU'S. Plus, they will have the chance to work with coaches to prepare for the competition, including 2022 Launch winner **Catherine Eng**, co-founder and CTO of OurWorlds, Inc.; **Riyaz Gayasaddin**, vice president of program and talent at Camelback Ventures; and 2021 Launch winner **Amrutha Vasan**, COO & co-founder of Inspirit Learning, Inc.

"I look forward to elevating and celebrating innovation as a judge for the Launch Startup Competition. Fresh ideas grounded in rigorous research and teacher practice are critical to enhancing kids' learning over time," stated Zearn Shalinee Sharma, CEO & Co-Founder.

In addition to expanding the lineups, SXSW EDU will offer multiple awards to celebrate the richness of ideas. Finalists are eligible for three prizes:

Prizes:

Launch Award: This award is given to the Launch Competition's grand prize winner. The recipient of this award impressed the judges as the top startup with its overall creativity, innovation, ease of use, potential to scale, strength and unique perspective of the team, and potential to improve learning outcomes.

Impact Award: The recipient of this award has the most potential to impact student learning based on the science of learning, according to the competition judges. This startup has shown a commitment to using research-based interventions to substantially improve student learning and outcomes.

Community Choice Award: The recipient of this award has received the most votes from the audience during SXSW EDU. This startup has not only captured the attention of the diverse SXSW EDU community, which is comprised of perspectives beyond the startup industry across the education space, but also centers on equity, accessibility, and supporting historically marginalized learners.

Student Startup Competition

Another staple of the SXSW EDU lineup, the Student Startup Competition, powered by WIT - Whatever It Takes, returns to showcase high school students developing innovative tools and solutions and provide the finalists a platform to pitch their business ideas. The finalists' ideas include using speech input to support math instruction, tools to support expression in those with emotional disorders, and more. Confirmed judges include **Josh Nelson**, senior creative director at Sendoso, and **Harish Kolli**, co-founder and CEO of 2022 finalist Guardial. The live competition will be emceed by **Sarah Hernholm**, founder and president of WIT - Whatever It Takes. The 2023 student finalists are:

- [Lemonerd University](#) // Chicago, Illinois
- [WorkBee Holidays](#) // Frisco, Texas

- [Maytik](#) // McDonald, Pennsylvania
- [MatheX](#) // Windsor, California
- [iEmote](#) // San Mateo, California

“The SXSW EDU Student Startup Competition was invaluable to my progression as an entrepreneur. The mentorship leading up to the pitch and the conference itself was both eye-opening experiences. Being able to return this year as a judge is an exciting, full-circle moment,” said Harish Kolli.

To learn more about the Launch and Student Startup Competitions, go to sxswedu.com/launch and sxswedu.com/student-startup.

You won't want to miss the finalists as they go head-to-head during the live competitions, with the Launch Competition taking place on **Tuesday, March 7**, and the Student Startup Competition taking place on **Wednesday, March 8**.

Press Credentials:

To register, please go to sxswedu.com/press/accreditation.

About SXSW EDU:

The SXSWEDU® 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 reimagined paths forward. As a community of diverse people who are united around a like-minded vision for the future, SXSW EDU serves as 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 6-9, 2023.

Contact:

Liz Stein SXSW EDU Press & Publicity
press@sxswedu.com