



SXSW EDU® Announces Finalists, Judges, and Emcees for its 2024 Launch Startup Competition and Student Impact Challenge

Representing the largest applicant pool for both competitions, this year's programs highlight cutting-edge ideas to address many facets of learning and societal issues

JANUARY 3, 2024 // Austin, Texas – South by Southwest EDU® Conference & Festival is excited to unveil the list of finalists and semifinalists for its 2024 competition programs, including the [Launch Startup Competition](#) and newly introduced [Student Impact Challenge](#). This year's selected teams feature different approaches to improving various literacies, solutions to climate change, advances in student wellbeing, and much more, and will pitch live when SXSW EDU convenes from March 4-7, 2024.

“An annual staple of SXSW EDU, the competition programs have become a go-to source for showcasing up-and-coming education innovations and changemakers hailing from locations across the United States and internationally. We are thrilled that these initiatives continue to grow and that we are seeing record numbers of submissions. That means we can raise even more awareness around the startups, projects, and solutions that will dictate the future of how we learn, teach, and exchange perspectives,” said Greg Rosenbaum, senior director of SXSW EDU.

Launch Startup Competition

The [Launch Startup Competition](#), presented by the Walton Family Foundation, has served as a key component of SXSW EDU for more than a decade. With its mission to champion early-stage education startups focused on impacting the next chapter of education, the competition provides finalists with the opportunity to pitch their startups to an arena of industry judges and a live audience. The emcees for the live competition will be **Evan Baehr**, Managing Partner at Learn Capital, and **Dr. Taniya Mishra**, Founder and CEO of SureStart. The Judging panel – including **Kristen DiCerbo**, Chief Learning Officer of Khan Academy, **Joanna Cannon**, Fellow at the Walton Family Foundation, and **Carlos Moreno**, Co-Executive Director of Big Picture Learning – will hear from the 2024 slate of finalists featuring:

- [CUENTOLOGIA](#) // Delaware
- [Culture Crate](#) // Cambridge, Massachusetts
- [Keenious](#) // Tromsø, Troms, Norway
- [Maro](#) // Bozeman, Montana
- [NaTakallam](#) // New York, New York

- [Shoelace Learning](#) // Lake Loon, Nova Scotia, Canada
- [Struggly](#) // Austin, Texas

Their innovations addressing subjects such as math learning at an early age, literacy, language learning, culturally relevant learning, mental health, academic research, and SEL will be guided by coaches and 2023 Launch Startup Competition winners **Kavindya Thennakoon**, Co-Founder and CEO at Tilli, and **Varun Gulati**, Co-Founder and CEO at Litlab.ai (formerly Koalluh). A slate of three awards will be given to the three category winners at the Launch Spotlight on Tuesday, March 5, where semifinalists will also demonstrate their startups:

- **Launch Award:** This award is given to the Launch Startup 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 composed of perspectives beyond the startup industry across the education space, but also centers on equity, accessibility, and supporting historically marginalized learners.

Student Impact Challenge

Evolved from the Student Startup Competition to focus on how students are addressing the issues that most impact them, SXSW EDU is also proud to share the lineup of finalists for its inaugural [Student Impact Challenge](#), presented by The Allstate Foundation. The Student Impact Challenge expands on the participation base to highlight a broader array of youth entrepreneurs improving facets of society through unique projects and solutions they developed that address social, economic, and environmental issues. In addition to representing a larger, more international cohort, this year’s selected projects address STEM education and robotics, wildfire prevention, financial literacy, closing the digital literacy gap, managing abnormal vision development, and reducing carbon emissions. The 2024 slate of Student Impact Challenge finalists are:

- [Clore](#) // Mountain View, California
- [Faça Parte](#) (Be A Part) // São Paulo, Brazil
- [Girley](#) // New York, New York

- [ReAlign](#) // Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
- [STEM IT](#) // Frisco, Texas
- [The GoGreen Filter](#) // Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania

The Student Impact Challenge and announcement of the Student Impact Award winner will be hosted on Wednesday, March 6 by emcee **Averie Bishop**, Miss Texas 2022, lawyer, and advocate. The live competition will be judged by **Sabari Raja**, Managing Partner at JFFVentures, **Greg Weatherford**, Program Officer, Youth Empowerment at The Allstate Foundation, **Ehsan Zaffar**, Executive Director at The Difference Engine, and **Zoë Jenkins**, Senior Advisor of the Kentucky Student Voice Team.

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 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. Join the passionate and innovative community at SXSW EDU, March 4-7, 2024.

For more information, please visit sxswedu.com.

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