



CONTACT

Communications Team, GENup
EMAIL: info@generationup.net
WEB: generationup.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GENup Collective For Student Voice Kickoff Event *Press release*

6 August 2022 — On August 3rd, the GENup team proudly welcomed over 30 organizational representatives to the first official meeting of the Collective for Student Voice (CFSTV), a GENup-led coalition encompassing over 60 organizations, that is 100% student-led, student-driven, and student-focused. Attendees came from a wide variety of high-powered educational advocacy groups and stakeholders such as The Education Trust - West, Children Now, NextGen Policy, Public Advocates, California High School Democrats, California Association of School Counselors, the Campaign for College Opportunity, the Foreign Policy Youth Collective, and Schools for Climate Action.

“This collective will be a transformative effort aimed at increasing, connecting, unifying, and amplifying student voice across California and the nation, with adult allies, to create tangible change in our education systems,” says Alvin Lee, Executive Director of GENup. “Students are the future, and we are excited to lead this historic youth-driven effort.”

By partnering with youth and adult allies, the Collective’s mission is to amplify youth voices in civic dialogue and drive tangible improvements in K-12 and collegiate education. The Collective provides all of our partners with the opportunity to connect with GENup’s student member base of over 4,000 students and our extensive network of legislative and organizational contacts, and to build capacity for successful advocacy by sharing knowledge and resources across the education space. Members of CFSTV also have the opportunity to support part or all of GENup’s legislative slate, as they see fit.

“Education policy is an incredibly intersectional space,” says Saanvi Arora, GENup’s K-12 Chief Partnerships Officer. “Coalescing our shared interests is crucial when advocating for student welfare. What better way to do that than through an open and collaborative network?”

At the meeting, attendees were asked to discuss the state of our education system, based on both their lived experiences and professional insights. One important barrier to youth participation in educational advocacy, according to Ted Lempert of Children Now, is “the condescending view of students as leaders of tomorrow, rather than leaders of today.” Another is “[the lack of] investment in student organizations and groups,” says Jetaun Stevens, representing Public Advocates. “There’s no effort to educate [students] about the system and how to advocate for themselves.”

Attendees also explored strategies to promote educational equity and reform at a local, state, and national basis. “What is the educational experience of this student, within this demographic, with these resources? That’s how we approach it at NextGen,” said Samantha Seng, legislative director and policy advisor at NextGen Policy.

The Collective will continue to meet on a monthly basis, where all members will be invited to share updates on their advocacy, and promote opportunities for other organizations to engage in and support their work.

“All of the perspectives shared at the kickoff meeting have made me so incredibly excited,” says Ms. Arora, “to keep pushing for the change that our education system really needs, without leaving any voices behind.”

###