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Immediate Release

The GovLab launches national citizen engagement initiative focusing on problems in US education system

<https://youreducationyourvoice.org>

BROOKLYN, New York, Monday, March 22, 2021 – The Governance lab (The GovLab) at New York University’s Tandon School of Engineering will launch a national online citizen engagement initiative as part of [ReinventED: Your Education, Your Voice](https://youreducationyourvoice.org), a campaign to engage students, parents, caregivers and educators in identifying challenges with today’s education system. Results will be openly published and developed into recommendations targeted at policymakers and philanthropic leaders working in the education space.

Codesigned by the project’s Student Council, [20 students](#) aged 14-21 who helped to write and edit content for the engagement, the initiative will run for three weeks from March 22 through April 11. The students, who hail from 14 states, were recruited in a competitive, national selection process in December 2020. They meet every other week to help draft and refine the content and “focus group” it with their own parents to ensure that topics and language are accessible and relevant.

Among the questions that the engagement poses to students, families, caregivers and educators are:

- What are the greatest needs and opportunities at the schools in your communities
- On what subjects should schools focus
- How should schools engage with their communities
- What is the role of tests and data
- How must grading and other metrics evolve to better support students in their pursuit of success, academic or otherwise

The survey employs a free, open-source software developed at Princeton University called [All Our Ideas](#). Used in over 17,000 previous citizen engagement exercises, the software presents participants with the question and the choice between two responses (or “I can’t decide” as a third one). The

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responses are randomly selected from a list of over 80 answer choices developed by The GovLab and the Student Council. Participants can also submit their own, original responses.

Said Constance Yowell, Senior Fellow at The GovLab and former head of education for the MacArthur Foundation, “This online engagement will be a first-of-its-kind effort to hear from those participants in the education system in America about their experiences, and we hope it will pave the way for more use of technology to listen to these groups about what matters.”

Beth Simone Noveck, Director of The GovLab and a Professor at the NYU Tandon School of Engineering expects “the results of this survey to influence the way policymakers, philanthropists and community leaders direct their investments and efforts, especially in the area of improving the fairness and equity of testing and assessment.”

Victoria Alsina, Senior Fellow at The GovLab and a Professor at NYU’s Center for Urban Science and Progress reflected on the history that has led our education system to this pivotal point. “For as long as our education system has existed, people have interacted with it in a transactional way with established roles: students attend class, educators and caregivers enforce rules and lessons which they themselves learned decades earlier. Of course, there are always exceptions to the rule, but by and large education in America is not very participatory. By embedding democracy into the policymaking process, we believe that those most affected by and with the most to gain from our education system are being positioned to have their voices heard and needs reflected in future policy making.”

ReinventED: Your Education, Your Voice is a four-phase community engagement initiative supported by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The project aims to amplify the voices and views of students, caregivers and educators, especially Black, Latinx, and other non-dominant communities, who have historically been excluded from and underserved by our institutions of learning, in ways that are equitable, effective and efficient at informing policymaking.

Anyone who would like to participate is encouraged to visit <https://youreducationyourvoice.org> by April 11, 2021.

About the New York University Tandon School of Engineering

The NYU Tandon School of Engineering dates to 1854, the founding date for both the New York University School of Civil Engineering and Architecture and the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute. A January 2014 merger created a comprehensive school of education and research in engineering and applied sciences as part of a global university, with close connections to engineering programs at NYU Abu Dhabi and NYU Shanghai. NYU Tandon is rooted in a vibrant tradition of entrepreneurship, intellectual curiosity, and innovative solutions to humanity’s most pressing global challenges. Research at Tandon focuses on vital intersections between communications/IT, cybersecurity, and data science/AI/robotics systems and tools and critical areas of society that they influence, including emerging media, health, sustainability, and urban living. We believe diversity is integral to excellence, and are creating a vibrant, inclusive, and equitable environment for all of our students, faculty and staff. For more information, visit engineering.nyu.edu.

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