2026 Youth Advocacy Summit



On Tuesday, October 27, 2026, the League of Education Voters Foundation (LEV), in partnership with the Association of Washington Student Leaders (AWSL), hosted the 4th annual Youth Advocacy Summit. This year the Summit took place at the Pacific Science Center in Seattle and saw over 230 students and educators attend to learn how to be better advocates and engage in direct civic engagement training.



The 2026 Youth Advocacy Summit: *Student Voice Taking Flight* was led by our passionate student co-design team who came from communities up and down the I-5 corridor from Vancouver to Sammamish. This year's co-design team was focused on ensuring students left the event knowing that their voices are powerful, that they have community, and have tools to make positive change in their communities and schools.

The theme this year for our Youth Advocacy Summit was "**Student Voice Taking Flight**," speaking to the need for our communities to hear students as true experts in the student experience. The day opened with a welcome from Washington State Representative Osman Salahuddin (D-48), who spoke about the importance of having youth voice in our civic process.



Following Rep. Salahuddin, the morning was broken into two different breakout sessions. The first session featured breakouts on "Know Your Rights" for student advocates and immigrants, understanding issues that will be impacting youth in the 2027 Washington State Legislative Session, and one focused on "Fixing the Broken Marketplace," a study by HarrisX and the Schultz Family Foundation on how to navigate the disconnect between Washington state's education system and the workforce.



The second breakout session featured workshops focused on bill writing, the importance of voting and civic engagement led by the Office of the Washington Secretary of State, building an Advocacy Toolkit, and preserving cultural identity through youth advocacy.

During lunch, Washington State Representative My-Linh Thai (D-41) joined us and shared her path to becoming a state representative. Rep. Thai spoke about her deep desire to have more students engaged in the civic process, and students asked thoughtful questions. Rep. Thai ended her talk by offering to partner with students in co-authoring legislation.





The afternoon focused on having courageous conversations with the students attending the Summit. Our own student co-design team member Nathan Hamm, a senior at Camas High School in the Camas School District, facilitated a panel made up of LEV CEO Arik Korman, AWSL Executive Director James Layman, Schultz Family Foundation Program Officer Kris Goddard, and student co-design team member Swarisha Korukonda, a junior at International School in the Bellevue School District. The panel focused on student advocacy and engagement in the civic process, mental health, AI and cell phones in schools, and the power of student voice. However, it quickly turned into a full group discussion with audience members engaging deeply in the questions being asked and posing many of their own.

The Youth Advocacy Summit is only possible because of the dedication and commitment of our co-design team. Thank you, Smira, Swarisha, Avani, Yarily, Nate, Jesadia, and Sheena for your role in developing, curating, and leading this event.





We also want to extend a special thank you to all the sponsors who ensured that the co-design team could create the Summit they wanted. Huge appreciation to the **Schultz Family Foundation**, **College Spark**, **foundry10**, **Microsoft**, and **True Blue Strategies** for understanding the need for an event like this in Washington state and for supporting education advocacy and the critical importance of youth voice.

We would like to extend extra appreciation to the Schultz Family Foundation for creating this video recap of the 2026 Youth Advocacy Summit.



