Elevating Youth Voice to Impact Systems Change

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Evolution of Youth Executive Board (YEB)

- Founded in 2007
- Co-created by Heidi Fransen and 5 youth
- 40-45 youth from participating districts
Core Values of YEB

Student Engagement & Achievement

Identity Development
- Cultural & Racial Understanding
- Educational Equity

Self-Efficacy
- Leadership Development
- Civic Engagement
Youth Vision, Youth Voice in Action

- **Author & Illustrator of Children’s Books**
  - Taste of Heritage
  - The Sparrow’s Message
  - The Journey of Paw Htoo
  - Aponine the Colorless Butterfly
  - Saub Nag (pronounced Shoua Nah)
  - Where I Grow Up

- **Untold Stories From The Secret War & Civil Rights Movement**
  - Social studies curriculum written in alignment with state standards
  - Performing arts DVD accompaniment

- **Truth Telling at Professional Learning Spaces**
  - See details on next slide

- **McGraw-Hill Publishing Partnership**
  - Providing expertise and consulting on curriculum, training & vision

- **Transformative Power of Truth Telling**
  - Multi-media anthology (grant from MN Humanities Center)
Transformative Power of Truth Telling

Ongoing Partnerships:
- McGraw-Hill Education
  ○ Equity Roundtable
  ○ Minnesota Association of Administrators of State & Federal Education Programs (MAASFEP) Conference Workshop
    ■ *I Matter: Equity for ALL in Minnesota*; Crowne Plaza West, Plymouth, MN
- MN Humanities Center
  ○ Increase Engagement Through Absent Narratives: *Community Solutions Panelists* (occurs quarterly)
  ○ *Beyond Food--Making Connections and Leaving Mentally & Physically Full*
  ○ *Food Roots--Connecting Our Stories & Impact of Colonization*

Conference & Workshop Presentations
- Overcoming Racism, FREC (Facilitating Racial Equity Collaborative)
  ○ *The Transformative Power of Becoming Woke Through the Voices of Youth*
  ○ *The Inspiring Hope & Transformative Power of Youth*
- National Youth Leadership Conference
  ○ *The Transformative Power of Becoming Woke Through the Voices of Youth*
- SEED (Seeking Educational Equity & Diversity)
- Twin Cities Social Justice Education Conference
  ○ *Absent Narratives of The Secret War*
- Higher Education Consortium of Urban Education (HECUA)
YEB & Reimagine Minnesota: Common Goals, Shared Values

See All - Serve All - Support All

- Address & eliminate the micro-aggressions: biases, stereotypes & prejudices
- Know the history that brought us to where we are today
- Speak up - “What you permit, you promote”
- Be able to speak about race, racism, privilege and oppression
**ROGER HART’S LADDER OF PARTICIPATION**

**RUNG 8** - Youth initiated shared decisions with adults: Youth-led activities, in which decision making is shared between youth and adults working as equal partners.

**RUNG 7** - Youth initiated and directed: Youth-led activities with little input from adults.

**RUNG 6** - Adult initiated shared decisions with youth: Adult-led activities, in which decision making is shared with youth.

**RUNG 5** - Consulted and informed: Adult-led activities, in which youth are consulted and informed about how their input will be used and the outcomes of adult decisions.

**RUNG 4** - Assigned, but informed: Adult-led activities, in which youth understand purpose, decision-making process, and have a role.

**RUNG 3** - Tokenism: Adult-led activities, in which youth may be consulted with minimal opportunities for feedback.

**RUNG 2** - Decoration: Adult-led activities, in which youth understand purpose, but have no input in how they are planned.

**RUNG 1** - Manipulation: Adult-led activities, in which youth do as directed without understanding of the purpose for the activities.

Recommendations for Authentic and Sustained Youth Empowerment

• “Nothing about us without us” - prioritizing the voices of those directly impacted is critical to strong identity development

• Acknowledge the power differential and be honest, thoughtful and strategic in creating shared meaning around common values

• Grow and develop your own cultural and racial understanding; understand own biases and privilege particularly those that are in alignment with dominant culture
Thank You

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