



WE ARE MANY UNITED

January 2026

Student Leadership, Belonging, and the Youth Unity Summit

Listening Is Leadership: Elevating Student Voice in the New Year

One of the most powerful ways to foster belonging is by listening to students, truly listening. Student voice is often talked about, but too frequently limited to surveys, student councils, or formal leadership roles. Authentic student voice, however, is much broader and more impactful.

Listening is leadership. When students are invited into meaningful conversations about their experiences, schools gain insight that no data point alone can provide. Students know what helps them feel safe, what makes learning harder, and where systems unintentionally exclude. **When adults listen with curiosity, trust grows.**

January is an ideal time to intentionally elevate student voice. New semesters offer a natural pause to ask questions:

- What helps you feel like you belong here?
- What gets in the way of learning or connection?
- What do you wish adults understood about your experience?

Across our communities, we see the impact of student-led discussions, peer mentoring, listening sessions, and classroom conversations that center student perspectives. These moments do more than gather information; they empower students to advocate for themselves and for one another. When students feel heard, they are more likely to engage, take risks, and step into leadership. Listening does not mean giving up control; it means building trust and shared responsibility.

We invite you to learn more about elevating student voice at the upcoming Youth Unity Summit breakout sessions, where multiple schools will share their own stories of student voice and belonging!

A New Semester:

A Renewed Commitment to Belonging

January marks more than the start of a new calendar year; it signals a return. Students come back to our schools carrying a wide range of emotions and experiences from winter break. Some return rested and energized. Others return anxious, grieving, disconnected, or unsure of what this new semester will hold. For many students, January is not a “reset,” but a re-entry. Because of this, belonging does not automatically pick up where it left off in December. **It must be intentionally rebuilt.** The first weeks of a new semester are powerful. They shape how students see themselves, their relationships, and their place within the school community. The way adults greet students, re-establish routines, check in emotionally, and set expectations communicates a clear message: You matter here. ***We believe belonging is not a single program or statement; it is a daily practice.*** As we begin this new semester, we recommit to creating schools where every student feels seen, supported, and safe to show up as their full selves. January is an opportunity to pause, reflect, and intentionally re-anchor our work around dignity, care, and connection. Please reach out if you would like help in doing this work! We would love to provide resources and encouragement!

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND: THE 4TH ANNUAL WE ARE MANY UNITED – YOUTH UNITY SUMMIT!

JOIN US FOR THE 4TH ANNUAL YOUTH UNITY SUMMIT



SCAN ME

Registration Details:

Scan the QR Code to secure your spot or
[CLICK HERE to register!](#)

For questions, contact us at
info@united-against-hate.org



CALLING ALL STUDENT LEADERS, SCHOOL ADVISERS, AND SRO PERSONNEL!

What's in store:

- **Dynamic Keynote Speaker:** Kick off the day with an energizing keynote that will spark ideas and inspire meaningful conversations.
- **Breakout Sessions:** Join smaller groups to explore important topics, learn new strategies, and hear different perspectives from students across districts.
- **Small Group Reflection & Action Planning:** Wrap up the day by creating a plan you can bring back to your school to help strengthen belonging in your community.

SMALL SCHOOL SUMMIT

DODGEVILLE

912 W CHAPEL ST
DODGEVILLE, WI 53533

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 25TH

9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

LARGE SCHOOL SUMMIT

MCFARLAND

5103 FARWELL ST.
MCFARLAND, WI 53558

THURSDAY, FEB. 26TH

9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Ready to connect with other student leaders and help build a stronger sense of belonging at your school? The Youth Unity Summit is a chance to share ideas, learn from each other, and take small steps that make a big difference. We'd love to have you join us and feel free to invite a friend! *We'd also especially like to welcome SRO officers and school administrators.* You'll have your own breakout session to talk about the unique ways you can support student belonging!

From Voice to Action: Why Youth Leadership Matters

Students today are navigating complex social, cultural, and identity-based realities. In many cases, they are already leading in quiet and powerful ways, often without formal support or recognition. The Youth Unity Summit is designed to provide students with the skills and confidence to turn their voices into action. Youth leadership is not about having all the answers; it is about learning how to ask thoughtful questions, listen across differences, and stand up for belonging.

The Youth Unity Summit is open to students who already see themselves as leaders and to those who are still discovering their voice.

To learn more about the event, please see the attached handout and register using the link or QR code provided. The event is free, and you are always welcome to reach out with any questions.

Scan the QR code in the infographic to register individually or as a group.

Attending the Wisconsin State Education Convention in Milwaukee this month? We'd love for you to join us to hear Platteville's story of belonging during their breakout session on Friday, January 23, at 9:15 a.m. You can also stop by and connect with us at the School Fair in the exhibit hall on Wednesday or Thursday.



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