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**SXSW EDU ANNOUNCES EXPO, PLAYGROUND, AND STARTUP VILLAGE  
PROGRAMMING THAT SUPPORTS INNOVATION, EXPLORATION,  
AND HANDS-ON LEARNING**

*Aldrin Family Foundation Hosts Former NASA Astronauts, Dr. Bonnie Dunbar, Kathryn “Kay” Hire, and Dr. Nancy Currie-Gregg in Discussion of Education’s Role in Deep Space Exploration*

**December 4, 2019, Austin, Texas** — The SXSW EDU® Conference & Festival announced today its broad range of Expo, Playground, and Startup Village offerings that complement SXSW EDU’s conference and festival elements. The Expo, a central hub for innovations and learning at the Conference & Festival, is a dynamic space that features a discovery-based learning Playground, curated programming, and networking, alongside interactive exhibits showcasing what’s next and new in education.

The Expo, presented by AT&T and Epic Games, which houses the Playground and Startup Village is more robust than ever before. It features a number of areas and events designed to support interaction and learning within the exhibition. This year, there are more than 100 participants spanning diverse sectors including technology, publishing, universities, agencies, nonprofits, and advocacy groups. As in past years, Wednesday, March 11 marks SXSW EDU’s Community Day which is free and open to the public and will host thousands of Central Texas students, families, and educators. The Next Stage showcases student programming driven by student voice including activism, entrepreneurship, and student-led learning.

“We are thrilled that for our 10th year, the Expo is supercharged with more exhibitors, a larger Playground stage, a student day, and more participants in the Startup Village,” said Greg Rosenbaum, Head of SXSW EDU. “It has always been our vision that the Expo will challenge and inspire learning and be a place where pedagogy and programming come to life. Given the evolution of how teachers teach and how students learn, we are very proud of the diversity of exhibitors and organizations who are part of the Expo and the experience our attendees will have this March.”

# SXSW EDU

One compelling element in the Expo is the [Playground](#), which is an interactive space that showcases new strategies to activate students' learning and features a collaborative stage with Hands On and Talk programming. Some of the organization highlights from around the world include [Tomato Art School](#) from Shanghai that will have an interactive art installation designed by children, and interactive experimental art activities; [Upper Ninety](#) from Austin, Texas that brings soccer, SEL, and mindfulness into non-traditional learning spaces; Tanzania-based [Ubongo International](#), Africa's leading edutainment company, creates fun, localized, and multi-platform educational media; and [CodeScty](#), Cambridge, Massachusetts based company that uses original hip hop music, videos, and engaging activities to teach computer science that is culturally relevant to diverse audiences. Learn more about other organizations in the Playground [here](#).

Another important component is the [Startup Village](#), which is produced in partnership with Amazon Web Services (AWS) & AT&T to support early stage innovators in edtech. This intersection between innovation, entrepreneurship, and investment is core to the SXSW roots. This year's Startup Village proves to be one of the largest events to date with 50 early-stage startups from around the world participating. Attendees will have the opportunity to demo and learn about the latest thinking in the learning landscape.

An exciting addition to our conference programming is our Featured session with three former NASA astronauts, Dr. Bonnie Dunbar, Kathryn "Kay" Hire, and Dr. Nancy Currie-Gregg in conversation with President of the Aldrin Family Foundation, Andrew Aldrin. With NASA's initiative to send humans to Mars in the 2030s, the future astronauts and the team that will support them are currently in grade school. These accomplished former astronauts will discuss how to prepare future generations to continue deep space explorations and why we must inspire students. The discussion will also include how education played a role in Dunbar, Hire, and Currie-Gregg applying to the NASA Astronaut Corps as well as who inspired them.

For more information on these speakers and others included in SXSW EDU 2020, please visit the [SXSW EDU website](#) and for the full list of announced programming please visit the [2020 schedule](#).

## **About SXSW EDU**

Now in its 10th year, the SXSW EDU® Conference & Festival cultivates and empowers a community of engaged stakeholders to advance teaching and learning. The annual four-day event affords registrants open access to engaging sessions, immersive workshops, interactive learning experiences, film screenings, early-stage startups, business opportunities, and networking. SXSW EDU is a component of the South by Southwest® family of conferences and festivals that has grown from 800 to over 8,000 registrants in the last decade. Join the passionate and innovative community at SXSW EDU, March 9-12, 2020 in Austin, Texas. For more information, please visit [sxswedu.com](#).



**Press Credentials**

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