



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SXSW EDU® 2020 ANNOUNCES AN INCREDIBLE LINEUP OF CAPTIVATING AND POWERFUL FILMS

NBC News Chief Education Correspondent Rehema Ellis and NCAA Champion Coach Valorie Kondos Field Added to Keynote and Featured Program Respectively

Policy Forum Sessions Announced

****Deadline to Apply for Press Credentials Closes Friday, February 7, 2020****

February 6, 2020, AUSTIN, Texas — SXSW EDU announced a bold lineup of films that reflect some of the most important issues confronting educators and students today as part of the 2020 SXSW EDU event. In addition, new voices join the Keynote and Featured program and a rich selection of new sessions within the Policy Forum. These films and new speakers will be showcased at SXSW EDU Conference & Festival taking place in Austin, Texas March 9-12, 2020.

Now in its eighth year, the SXSW EDU Film program brings together a diverse offering of poignant stories that tackle difficult topics. Visual storytelling enables filmmakers to address issues that are sometimes hard for students and young adults to talk about today. These universal issues can be political, social, or environmental and impact the next generation at home or abroad. A number of films will feature a post-screening Q&A with film participants to give the audience an opportunity to ask questions about the subject matter or filmmaking techniques.

Presented by EdChoice, the film lineup includes:

Changing the Game – Transgender high school athletes from across the country challenge the boundaries and perceptions of fairness and discrimination. Their stories span across the U.S.—from Sarah, a skier and teen policymaker in New Hampshire, to Andraya, a track star in Connecticut openly transitioning into her authentic self, and Mack Beggs, who made headlines last year when he became the Texas State Champion in wrestling. Q&A to follow.

Hungry to Learn – The cost of college is forcing students to make choices that put eating regular meals and their education at odds. This poignant film follows four college students as they navigate food insecurity in their attempt to change their lives for the better. Homelessness, abandonment, and mental health issues loom as students are caught between educational institutions' pursuit of profit during "the best time of their lives." Q&A to follow.

In My Blood It Runs – Set in Australia, ten-year-old Djujan is a child-healer, a good hunter, and speaks three languages. Yet Djujan is 'failing' in school. As he travels perilously close to incarceration, his family fights to give him a strong Arrernte education alongside his western education lest he becomes another statistic.



Learning to Skateboard in a Warzone (if you're a girl) – This Oscar®-nominated “Documentary (Short Subject)” tells the story of young Afghan girls learning to read, write — and skateboard — in Kabul. With Afghanistan still dubbed “one of the worst places to be born a girl,” an organization called Skateistan recruits kids from underprivileged neighborhoods and teaches them skills so they can join or return to the public school system and get a start in life.

Miss Virginia – Miss Virginia highlights a struggling single mother who is losing her son to the rough streets of Washington, DC. Unwilling to see him drop out and deal drugs, she places him in a private school. But when she can’t afford tuition, she launches a movement to change the system that is destroying him and thousands like him. Attacked and threatened by those who don’t want change—from corrupt politicians to the local drug lord—Virginia must discover depths of strength she never knew she had. Q&A to follow.

No Small Matter – No Small Matter is the first feature documentary to explore the most overlooked, underestimated, and powerful force for change in America today: early childhood education. The film lays out the overwhelming evidence for the importance of the first five years and reveals how our failure to act has resulted in a crisis for families, and a slow-motion catastrophe for our country. Q&A to follow.

River City Drumbeat – For 30 years, the indefatigable Nardie White has offered a path to empowerment for African-American youth in Louisville, KY through his River City Drum Corps. White has dedicated his life to teaching communities about their Pan-African roots, but with retirement approaching, he must train his successor. Set against the backdrop of the American South and featuring glorious drum battles, this uplifting film is a timely reminder of the incredible change one person can create. Q&A to follow.

Shot in the Dark – Chicago harbors many scars for Orr Academy’s basketball team. There’s the abandoned house where Tyquone’s friends were murdered, the corner where Coach Lou was shot, and the alley where Marquise was arrested for gun possession. This film shows how Tyquone seeks refuge between the lines of the basketball court. With Coach Lou as his guide, their eyes are set on a championship. But Tyquone wants more and grapples with dreams bigger than Chicago can offer.

The Candidates – Since 1996, the students at a Queens, NY public high school have staged a mock election, modeling the American electoral process playing out in real life. In 2016, Ukrainian-American class-clown Daniel and Pakistani-American Misbah step confidently into the roles of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. Capturing the ins and outs of the political system through teenagers’ eyes, The Candidates suggests that politicians could learn from the civically-engaged optimism of younger generations.

Unschool – Parents desperate for a solution to the failing Philadelphia, PA public school system turn their hopes to a new radical education program that believes formalized education is part of the larger problem—dehumanizing our children. The program practices unschooling, which empowers students to direct their own education. When three young teens enroll, these radical ideas are put to the test. Q&A to follow.



We Are the Radical Monarchs – (Premiered at SXSW Film 2019) Set in Oakland, CA, this inspiring film documents the Radical Monarchs, an alternative to the Scout movement for girls of color. Its members earn badges for completing units on social justice, being an LGBTQ ally, the environment, and disability justice. The group was started by two queer women of color and is anchored in the belief that adolescent girls of color need dedicated spaces, that this innovative work must also be rooted in inter-dependent sisterhood, self-love, and hope. Q&A to follow.

“Film has been an important storytelling vehicle at SXSW since its early days. With this in our roots, we incorporated the powerful medium of film in 2013 and it has been growing every year since,” said Greg Rosenbaum, Head of SXSW EDU. “We are always amazed at the incredible talent both on and off the screen and the impact that these stories have to bring tough issues to light to foster dialogue.”

The conference programming continues to be finalized. Joining the keynote, Revolutionizing Education from the Ground Up, is award-winning NBC News Correspondent Rehema Ellis. Ms. Ellis serves as NBC’s Chief Education correspondent and reports for all platforms of NBC News, including NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt, Today, NBCNews.com, and MSNBC. She has won countless awards for her reporting including Emmys, Edward R. Murrow Awards, Associated Press awards and awards from the National Association of Black Journalists. She will serve as moderator of a discussion with Sir Ken Robinson and Ted Dintersmith.

Newly added to the Featured stage is Valorie Kondos Field, former head coach of the seven-time NCAA Champion, 22-time Regional and 18-time Pac 12 Champion UCLA Women’s Gymnastics team. She was inducted into the UCLA Athletic Hall of Fame in 2010. She is a motivational speaker, a breast cancer survivor, and author of the book, Life is Short, Don’t Wait to Dance. Valorie’s coaching success can be attributed to her extraordinary leadership and mentorship of young student-athletes, and the way in which she used gymnastics as an avenue through which to teach valuable life lessons while encouraging individuality and joy.

The Policy Forum features a diverse and impactful discussion around critical policy issues in education featuring civic leaders, policymakers, and community voices. New sessions and voices added to the program include:

Make It Movement: Everyone CAN Make It – Steve Adler, Susan Dawson, Nikki Graham, and Roy Spence will explore a multi-tiered awareness campaign that joins business, education, and community leaders to inform and engage our future workforce around opportunities in trades, 2-year, and 4-year colleges.

Navigating Bias: Teaching in an Election Year – Andrea Delbanco, Jeffrey Knutson, and Michelle Millben will discuss how teachers can facilitate open discussions without about elections without bringing bias into the classroom.

Redefining Opportunity: When a Degree Isn’t Enough – Audrey Henson will discuss the importance of making a combination of education and experience possible for our future workforce, and why the lack of diversity on Capitol Hill is threatening our nation’s progress.

Student Veterans: Serving to Learn – Terrell Odom, Tanya Ang, Lisa Firmin, and Jeremiah Gunderson examining the largest education and training provider in the world; the armed forces of the United States.

For more information on the SXSW EDU Conference & Festival, please visit the SXSW EDU website.

**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

The deadline for press accreditation is Friday, February 7, 2020. To register, please go to sxswedu.com/press.

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