



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SXSW EDU® ANNOUNCES NEW FEATURED SPEAKERS, FILM AND PERFORMANCE LINEUP AS WELL AS MENTORS FOR ONLINE EVENT IN MARCH

Actor Chris Evans and Dr. Mary Hawkins join the list of headlining speakers, while films such as BLACK BOYS round out the poignant programming

January 27, 2021, AUSTIN, Texas — [SXSW EDU](#) announces an exciting array of films and performances, as well as a newly added Featured Session and partner programming, for its upcoming virtual conference happening from March 9-11, 2021.

Featured Session:

The new Featured Session **Connected in Class: A Starting Point & Close Up** has been added to the SXSW EDU schedule, hosted by the co-founders of A Starting Point (ASP): actor, director, and producer **Chris Evans**, best known for playing Captain America in Marvel films; **Mark Kassen**, an actor and filmmaker; and **Joe Kiani**, a medical technology entrepreneur. A Starting Point is a video-based platform seeking to be a truly unbiased resource for information and civic engagement. Working with students and teachers, the non-profit Close Up Foundation shares a similar mission. The two organizations have teamed up to create ASP HOMEROOM, an educational civic engagement portal. This panel discussion between Evans, Kassen, Kiani, and **Mia Charity**, chief development officer of Close Up Foundation, is a must-see for anyone interested in the future of civic education. In addition to this new session, **Dr. Mary Hawkins**, president of Bellevue University, will join **Dr. Paul LeBlanc** and **Dr. Michael Sorrell** in their Featured Session on **How Universities Can Power the Future of Work**.

“SXSW EDU programming serves to support our community's goals and provide a signpost of the issues that matter most today,” said Ron Reed, Founder and Executive Producer of SXSW EDU. “The richness of content from keynotes and featured sessions to films and performances, SXSW EDU is where you can teach, learn and further your own aspirations and learning lifecycle. We can't wait for the SXSW EDU Online experience to kick off!”

Film Program:

Always one of the most popular programs and now in its ninth year, the SXSW EDU Film Program brings together a diverse selection 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.

The complete film lineup for 2021 includes:

Beautiful Something Left Behind – Life-affirming and profound, *Beautiful Something Left Behind* captures the heartbreaking, mundane and even the funny moments in the lives of several young children who have recently lost one or both parents.

BLACK BOYS – A film for this historical moment, *BLACK BOYS* exposes the dehumanization of Black men and boys in America at the intersection of sports, education and criminal justice in a nation still struggling to rectify its past. Ultimately, the film serves as a rare glimpse into the emotional landscape of Black men and boys, illuminating their full humanity, vulnerability, and resilience.

Bulletproof – What does it mean to be safe in school in the United States? Safe from what, and from whom? *Bulletproof* poses and complicates these questions through a provocative exploration of fear and American violence.

We Are the Radical Monarchs – 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.

Beautiful Something Left Behind, *Bulletproof*, and *We Are the Radical Monarchs* were previously World Premieres at the SXSW Film Festival.

Performances:

SXSW EDU's Performance series provides a way to collectively delve into current and sometimes difficult topics that are impacting culture and society. Through the arts, students and teachers can address some of the tough issues they face in an active and healing way. Performances also provide a platform to give marginalized communities a voice. Some of the newly announced performances feature:

Cry Havoc Theater Company: Once Upon a Moon – Once upon a time, the nights were always dark... Once upon a time, a little girl wandered barefoot through the snow... And, once upon a time, another curious girl released the moon and stars from a secret room. Join Cry Havoc Theater Company in their newest devised piece created from some of the lesser-known fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm and others.

Paramount Story Wranglers: Processing through Performance – This year's 3rd grade Story Wranglers will examine the issues they face and process them through fictional allegories using clear story structure, rich word choice, and exciting performance. This year's issues are

more relevant than ever — viruses, inequalities, and uncertainty. Join the Paramount Story Wranglers as we transform students' stories from page to stage (or YouTube video) and give a glimpse into how students are processing this unprecedented time.

Mentors:

Networking is a pillar of what makes SXSW EDU so special. This year's online networking program will support the community's goals through mentorship. The **Mentor** program provides a purpose-driven, one-on-one connection between experienced professionals and attendees. This year's mentors include leaders from all aspects of education — edtech to foundations to practitioners and beyond including participants from The Aspen Institute, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Chicago Public Schools, Reach and Teach, Smithsonian Affiliations, The Grade, Headwaters School, and Western Governors University.

For more information on SXSW EDU Online, please visit the SXSW EDU website.

About SXSW EDU:

The SXSW EDU® Conference & Festival cultivates and empowers a community of engaged stakeholders to advance teaching and learning. The annual 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 Online, March 9-11, 2021. For more information, please visit sxswedu.com.

Press Credentials:

The deadline for press accreditation is Wednesday, February 10, 2021. To register, please go to sxswedu.com/press.

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