



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**SXSW EDU® Announces Initial Lineup of Dynamic Main Stage Speakers
for 2025 Conference & Festival, its 15th Annual Event**

Librarian and Literacy Ambassador Mychal Threets, Teach for America CEO Elisa Villanueva Beard, WAYE CEO and Co-Founder Sinead Bovell, and more join to discuss the many key issues facing young people, from ethical tech use to mental health.

August 28, 2024 // Austin, Texas – From best-selling authors to tech and gaming leads, the South by Southwest EDU® Conference & Festival is excited to unveil the first round of Featured Speakers participating in its 15th annual event taking place March 3-6, 2025.

These speakers bring a fresh perspective on how to empower and inspire the next generation, showcasing ways to utilize video games like Minecraft to bring global awareness and catalyze youth-driven change; highlighting the continued power that libraries serve as a community center and institution of learning for children and adults alike; and more.

The nine leading voices in education confirmed to join the event include:

- **Annabelle Chang** - Annabelle is the teen founder behind [Annabelle's Book Club](#), a YA-focused bookstore that aims to spark imagination, inspire connection, and bring joy to people of all ages.
- **Sinead Bovell** - Sinead is the CEO and co-founder of [WAYE](#), an organization that prepares youth and vulnerable populations for a future with advanced technologies, focusing on ethical challenges.
- **Ana Homayoun** - [Ana](#) is an academic advisor and early career development expert, Executive Director of Luminaria Learning Solutions, as well as the author of four books, including *Erasing the Finish Line: The New Blueprint for Student Success Beyond Grades and College Admission*, a fresh perspective on how to support personal and professional development among future generations.
- **Jennifer Breheny Wallace** - [Jennifer](#) is co-founder of the Mattering Movement, an award-winning journalist, and the author of the *New York Times* bestselling book *Never Enough: When Achievement Culture Becomes Toxic – and What We Can Do About It*, a close examination

of the intersection of the drive to optimize performance and the rise in issues such as depression among America's youth.

- **Elisa Villanueva Beard** - Elisa is the [CEO of Teach for America](#). Having served with the organization for 25 years, she will step down in 2025. During her tenure, she has guided its increase in new corps members in the classroom and worked in more than 300 communities.
- **Mychal Threets** - [Mychal](#) is a librarian and literacy ambassador who has amassed a large social media following for his videos celebrating library joy and the power of libraries as inclusive community spaces.
- **Allison Matthews** - Allison is head of [Minecraft Education at Microsoft](#), leading a team in producing the game inspired by Mojang Studio's mission to build a better world through the power of play.
- **Susanna Pollack** - Susanna is the president of [Games for Change](#), the leading global advocate for the power of games as drivers of social impact.
- **Jose Antonio Tijerino** - Jose is [president and CEO of the Hispanic Heritage Foundation](#), a national nonprofit focused on education, workforce, social impact, and culture through innovative leadership.

Offering expertise in a wide range of areas, these speakers will dive into an array of subjects emphasizing some of SXSW EDU's main focuses on the challenges and topics that resonate at all levels of the education landscape. For instance, authors **Ana Homayoun** and **Jennifer Breheny Wallace** will come together in conversation to discuss well-being, executive functioning skills, and attainment for modern students. **Allison Matthews**, **Susanna Pollack**, and **Jose Antonio Tijerino** will join for a session on cross-sector, "glocal" (global and local) partnerships through the lens of video games in education. Also taking the stage will be an influential voice among younger audiences, **Annabelle Chang**, who will present her insight on entrepreneurship and literacy. In addition, **Mychal Threets** will share takeaways from his work promoting the power of libraries through social platforms.

"This initial lineup of dynamic speakers strongly represents the powerful and timely program we are building for SXSW EDU 2025. Not only do they bring an array of backgrounds and perspectives ranging from traditional and new realms of education, but they each represent a different aspect of the matters coming together to shape students and young people's experiences in and outside of the classroom," said **Greg Rosenbaum**, vice president of SXSW EDU. "As we mark SXSW EDU's 15th year, it's this combination of variety and commonality that has come to define the conference and festival, but also an increasingly important quality in the drivers behind the evolution of education."

To learn more about the speaker lineup, please visit sxswedu.com/speakers/.

About SXSW EDU:

Now in its 15th year, the SXSW EDU® Conference & Festival reflects the world's most critical social issues as seen through the lens of education. This year's event will bring together the learner, the practitioner, the entrepreneur, and the visionary to share their groundbreaking stories, tackle complex issues, and build reimagined paths forward. As a community of diverse people who are united around a like-minded vision for the future, SXSW EDU serves as a place for attendees to renew their purpose in practice from both a personal and professional perspective. It is a place to reinforce the core principles of teaching and learning as well as an opportunity to express your creativity and passion for education. Join the passionate and innovative community at SXSW EDU, March 3-6, 2025.

For more information, please visit sxswedu.com.

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