

# SXSW EDU 2025

## Event Quotes



MARCH 3-6, 2025 · Austin, TX

"The story, as well as a documentary that I saw last week at the SXSW EDU conference on model child care programs, left me feeling inspired about the future of child care in America for the first time in a while. The documentary, "Make a Circle," tells the story of highly trained and qualified child care workers in the California Bay Area, and their efforts to transform the way society views their industry. It will be available on PBS in the fall, and is being shown at film festivals and other events across the U.S."

**- Liz Willen, Hechinger Report**

"Since its inception in 2011, the South by Southwest Education (SXSW EDU) festival has opened a busy March in Austin, Texas by bringing all kinds of people together to connect, share, cajole, engage, launch, and learn about the now and the next of human flourishing. This year — the first since inimitable founder Ron Reed retired to pass the reins to Greg Rosenbaum, Val Link, and the team to shepherd the festival into the future— delivered on the brand, beauty, and energy we expect and love from SXSW EDU. The outcome: a convergence of disparate, and sometimes divergent, voices towards a shared goal of improving the human experience."

**- Sarah Morin, Alex Sarlin, Ben Kornell, and Jen Lapaz, Edtech Insiders**

"Much like my 2025 predictions that the education market would value steak more than the sizzle throughout the last few years of hype cycle and stimulus, SXSW EDU delivered pretty deeply across key challenges, innovations and opinions affecting the sector. Though we didn't see former Presidents, current Secretaries of Education, or billionaire philanthropists on the schedule this year, the depth and value of the content was as strong or stronger than previous years. Indeed, the content was particularly topical considering the SXSW EDU Panel Picker process happened more than a political ion ago... ahem, more than 30 days ago."

**- Sarah Morin, Alex Sarlin, Ben Kornell, and Jen Lapaz, Edtech Insiders**

"As for content, AI was a part of the conversation at SXSW EDU, but it was less breathless, less all-consuming, and went deeper than other recent events have tilted."

**- Sarah Morin, Alex Sarlin, Ben Kornell, and Jen Lapaz, Edtech Insiders**

"But while AI was visible, the keynotes and featured speakers covered a breadth of important facets, including a timely and very topical track on working together in a polarized world."

**- Sarah Morin, Alex Sarlin, Ben Kornell, and Jen Lapaz, Edtech Insiders**

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“Women have been historically underrepresented and undervalued in their workplaces, leading to an imbalance of opportunity compared to their male counterparts. SXSW EDU tackles the expansive issue of the undervaluation of women by providing sessions aimed at educating, fostering discussion, and increasing collaboration with festivalgoers.”

**- Lilybeth Dooley, Complex Discovery**

“At SXSW EDU 2025, Anne-Laure Le Cunff, neuroscientist and founder of Ness Labs, delivered a thought-provoking keynote on the power of an experimental mindset—one that prioritizes curiosity over certainty and learning over rigid success metrics. She challenged traditional notions of progress, arguing that iteration fuels both personal and professional growth.”

**- Rob Robinson, Complex Discovery**

“We left SXSW EDU 2025 with a treasure trove of new ideas and tools. One particularly impactful workshop focused on accessibility, where attendees explored dyslexia-friendly fonts, alternative text for visual content, and movement-friendly spaces—all aimed at making learning more inclusive... The session ‘What Makes Us Human? Preparing Young People for the Digital Age’ introduced attendees to the Question Project, a program designed to help students ask and explore deep human questions. Another standout session, ‘The Art of Empathy: NYU x Whitney Museum Collaboration,’ showcased how art can be a catalyst for developing empathy and critical thinking skills.”

**- Remake Learning**

“A major highlight for many attendees was witnessing youth-led workshops, where young leaders took center stage to share their insights and expertise. Youth-Adult Partnership for Inclusive Decision-Making, facilitated by students from the World Affairs Council, was widely praised for its depth and impact. These sessions reinforced the importance of empowering students to be active participants in shaping their own education... Another standout experience was the Pittsburgh Delegation Happy Hour, where attendees had the chance to forge meaningful connections with fellow educators and nonprofit professionals. This informal gathering sparked new collaborations and strengthened the sense of community among those working to advance education.”

**- Remake Learning**

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"As a speaker and as an attendee, I recently had the opportunity to experience SXSW EDU, an annual learning festival that explores the future of teaching and learning. Immersing myself in numerous sessions and roundtable discussions, I found myself inspired and, quite frankly, in awe.

The caliber of speakers and the depth of discussions at SXSW EDU conference in March affirmed how critical education is in shaping the future. Artificial intelligence (AI) dominated the conversation across almost every category (nearly half the sessions offered were about AI and/or edtech). One thing that stood out was the fresh perspective on early childhood education, a topic that also found itself intertwined with discussions of AI.

A standout moment came during a roundtable discussion led by Michelle Kang, CEO of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The session sparked passionate discourse on the current and future state of early childhood education."

**- Hyesun Ahn, L.A. Parent**

"At least one teacher argues that bringing students into the curriculum development process could also help...At a panel during SXSW EDU last week, Dashiell Young-Saver, an AP Statistics teacher at IDEA South Flores, a public charter school in San Antonio, Texas, suggested that schools can learn from his approach to curriculum development."

**- Daniel Mollenkamp, EdSurge**

"Kaylin Hernández — a former student of Young-Saver's and a panelist at the SXSW EDU event in Texas — argued that bringing students into the education decision-making process even lifts civic involvement. That's because her experiences in class informed Hernández's own work for the city of Martinsville, Virginia. After classes, students were surveyed on what they wanted to see taught. It made her feel that her opinion mattered in a way that it often didn't seem to before, she said on the panel...Giving students a chance to offer their views empowers them to actively make school more meaningful for them, she added."

**- Daniel Mollenkamp, EdSurge**

"Thank you to @gloryshaalom and Liz Stein for giving me the amazing opportunity to experience the SXSW EDU Conference! It was such a wonderful experience. I was inspired by the innovative ideas and thought-provoking discussions on education's future. The chance to connect with passionate educators and thought leaders has truly broadened my perspective. I'm excited to apply what I've learned and continue to grow in this field!"

**- DeAsia Speaks, Pennsylvania State University**

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"The discussion with SXSW EDU founder Ron Reed comes as the Austin district faces a \$110 million budget deficit, navigates an ongoing state-mandated correctional order for special education, and a slate of new orders aiming to reshape the federal government's role in education."

**- Keri Heath, Austin American Statesman**

"An inspiring conversation with three young innovators! TMN @ajahaywood had the chance to interview @alexandrabrownchang @annabellebrownchang and @raeganrevord at the @sxswedu Featured Session on Books, Media & Entrepreneurship. Their passion for literacy, storytelling, and connecting readers worldwide is truly remarkable! Thank you Alexandra, Annabelle and Raegan for speaking with TMN!!! #sxswedu #education #books #teensmedianetwork #teensmedia #TMNaustin"

**- Teen Media Network**

"What happens when young creators interview a founder who's changing lives through music? Pure magic! Watch our TMN creators chat with the founder of Amped Arts @amplifymusiceducation an educational platform helping kids learn music. @sxswedu #musiceducation #music #sxsw #sxswedu #teensmedianetwork #teensmedia"

**- Teen Media Network**

"'Pittsburgh has always been a city of builders and innovators — from steel to meds/eds, and from meds/eds to tech, we've consistently reinvented ourselves,' Herring says. 'When our educators share their unique perspectives at SXSW EDU, they're not just exporting Pittsburgh's educational approach; they're creating a two-way street of inspiration.'"

**- Kidsburgh**

"South by Southwest Edu returns to Austin, Texas, running March 3-6. As always, it'll offer a huge number of panels, discussions, film screenings, musical performances and workshops exploring education, innovation and the future of schooling.

Keynote speakers this year include neuroscientist Anne-Laure Le Cunff, founder of Ness Labs, an online educational platform for knowledge workers; astronaut, author and TV host Emily Calandrelli, and Shamil Idriss, CEO of Search for Common Ground, an international non-profit. Idriss will speak about what it means to be strong in the face of opposition — and how to turn conflict into cooperation. *Also featured: indie musical artist Jill Sobule, singing selections from her musical F\*ck 7th Grade.*

As in 2024, artificial intelligence remains a major focus, with dozens of sessions exploring AI's potential and pitfalls. But other topics are on tap as well, including sessions on playful learning, book bans and the benefits of prison journalism."

**- Greg Toppo, The 74**

(continued)

**SXSWEDU.com**

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“This March 3-6 in Austin, TX, the SXSW EDU Conference & Festival celebrates its 15th year of exploring education’s most critical issues and providing a forum for creativity, innovation, and expression. Topics for this year’s panels, workshops, and conversations ‘range from ethical AI application and strengthening talent pipelines, to rising areas of interest such as non-traditional learning spaces and enhancing opportunities for neurodivergent students and educators,’ according to organizers.

Not surprisingly, among the multitude of trends and technologies on the agenda, the event features dozens of sessions focused on various aspects of artificial intelligence. In particular, five sessions offer a perspective on AI in higher education.”

***- Rhea Kelly, Campus Technology***