



SXSW EDU® ANNOUNCES NEW KEYNOTE AND LINEUP FOR 2026 PODCAST STAGE

Keynote From Dr. Laurie Santos, Professor of Psychology at Yale University and Host of The Happiness Lab Podcast, and Bruce Reed, Head of AI at Common Sense Media

SXSW EDU Podcast Stage Expands for 2026 to Feature 16 Live Podcasts

New for SXSW EDU 2026, Reserve Your Place At Keynotes, Featured Sessions and Workshops Starting Friday, February 23, 2026

January 28, 2026 // Austin, Texas – South by Southwest EDU® (SXSW EDU) today announced a new Keynote from **Dr. Laurie Santos** and **Bruce Reed**, plus the full lineup for the Podcast Stage and the new Reservations system for the 2026 SXSW EDU Conference & Festival (March 9-12).

“We are thrilled to feature Dr. Laurie Santos and Bruce Reed for a timely conversation on how technology is reshaping young minds. This session embodies exactly what our community thrives on: bridging the gap between research and action,” said **Julia Shatilo**, Senior Director of SXSW EDU. “I’m also excited to announce our Podcast Stage programming, featuring student journalists, educators and more, on a range of conversations on how we can build a healthier, more equitable future for education.”

Keynote

Improving Young Minds & Mental Wellbeing in the AI Era—How is technology shaping young people’s mental health? Join **Dr. Laurie Santos**, Professor of Psychology at Yale University and host of The Happiness Lab podcast, and **Bruce Reed**, Head of AI at Common Sense Media, to explore the science behind mental wellbeing and the risks of algorithm-driven systems. They will discuss how families, educators, and policymakers can respond with common-sense guardrails to protect and support young people in a rapidly changing digital world.

Podcast Stage

SXSW EDU’s Podcast Stage will feature important discussions from principals, professors, students, journalists, and more around the intersection of education, society, and culture. This year’s program will expand to 16 podcasts, including:

Weekly Wisdom Live: Inside the Playbook of 100 Presidents—Hosts **Bridget Burns** and **Doug Lederman** share powerful leadership insights from past college presidents in a candid, behind-the-scenes look at leading real transformation in higher ed.

P.S. Weekly: How Teen Journalists Drive Change in Their Communities—High schoolers regularly face unreceptive administrators, underfunded programs, and top-down decisions. In this conversation, hosts and student reporters **Aponi Kafele**, **Jeremiah Dickerson**, **Fredlove Deshommes** and **Salma Baksh** will discuss how journalism allows students to speak out and demand better.

Beyond Voting: Defending Truth in Education: AI, Equity, & Power—Beyond Voting host **Emily Williams** in conversation with The Washington Post columnist **Karen Attiah** will discuss how AI can fuel authoritarianism in education, erase marginalized scholarship, surveil students, and exploit hidden labor, and how educators and students can fight for equity, protect dissent, and defend truth in learning and research.

Plot Twist: Power, Protest, & Politics in Young World—Educator and co-founder of the North Texas Teen Book Festival **Rose Brock** and bestselling author of the School for Good and Evil series **Soman Chainani** will discuss critical themes such as youth activism, institutional collapse, empowerment through education, resilience and adaptation, social justice and equity, and the perilous cost of radical change.

To view the full Podcast Stage lineup, visit the [SXSW EDU schedule](#).

Save Your Spot with Reservations

New to SXSW EDU 2026, Reservations guarantee access to select Conference programming. Each badgeholder can reserve a spot at two Keynotes, Featured Sessions or Workshops per day. There is no limit on reservations for one-on-one mentor meetings. Reservations for SXSW EDU open at 9:00am CT on Monday, February 23, 2026.

The SXSW EDU Web Schedule and SXSW EDU GO app are now live with dates, times, and venues for all programming announced to date. For more on the new sessions added today, and all SXSW EDU Conference & Festival programming, visit the [schedule](#) to start planning your experience.

About SXSW EDU:

The SXSW EDU® Conference & Festival is a reflection of 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 9-12, 2026.

Media accreditation is now open for SXSW EDU through February 13, 2026. Please visit sxswedu.com/press/accreditation to submit your application.

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