



SXSW EDU® ANNOUNCES 2026 FILM LINEUP AND LIVE PERFORMANCES

SXSW EDU Film Program Features Narrative Films, Documentaries And Shorts

SXSW EDU Is The New Home For The Texas High School Shorts Program

Live Performances Include The Miró String Quartet, Live Dungeons & Dragons, Hip Hop Educators And More

February 11, 2026 | Austin, Texas – South by Southwest EDU® (SXSW EDU) today unveiled the screen and stage programming for the 2026 SXSW EDU Conference & Festival (March 9-12). SXSW EDU celebrates the power of the arts, and film and performance in particular, to shine a light on critical topics and issues impacting educators and students.

"We are incredibly proud of how the SXSW EDU Film and Performance programs continue to push the boundaries of how we experience learning through the arts," said **Julia Shatilo**, Senior Director of SXSW EDU. "By bringing together poignant films and immersive live performances, we create a unique space where storytelling leads directly to meaningful dialogue. This year is particularly special as we welcome the Texas High School Shorts Program into SXSW EDU, providing a high-profile platform for the next generation of storytellers to inspire us all."

Film Program

The SXSW EDU Film program highlights poignant narratives and documentaries focusing on all aspects of education. With films that tackle the social impacts on domestic and international education, peer into classrooms, explore the journey to becoming an educator, and more, the Film program is an integral and compelling component of SXSW EDU. All screenings conclude with a Q&A featuring the filmmakers, film subjects, or experts on the topic.

The 2026 Film Program features 19 projects, including 11 feature length films and, for the first time, eight short films. The Feature film lineup includes:

American Creed "Citizen Power" Preview

Director: Sam Ball

Young adults across the USA take on what they see as the greatest challenges facing their communities and our democracy. This preview of five shorts from a PBS series offers ground-level views of turbulence, and evocative glimpses of hopeful futures.

Q&A with Trinity Colón, Jonathan Blair, Sam Schimmell and Sam Ball

Class of 2025: Growing up in Oregon Schools

Executive Producer: Rob Manning, Producer & Host: Elizabeth Miller, Co-Producer & Editor: Dan Evans

This documentary follows seven students on their 13-year journey through Oregon's public education system as the state attempts to improve its dismal on-time graduation rate. ([Watch the trailer](#))

Q&A with Rob Manning, Elizabeth Miller, Dan Evans and Sarah Nairalez

First Voice Generation

Director: Cynthia Martinez

Three Latinx teenagers struggle with identity and belonging because they are children of Mexican immigrants in a Dutch American town. They dream of being the first in their family to go to college, but COVID-19 shuts the world down creating challenges with virtual learning, and the cost of affording college seeming impossible. ([Watch the trailer](#))

Q&A with Cynthia Martinez, Angel Ruiz, Gael Figueroa Enriquez and Nayeli Mora

In Our Nature

Director: James Parker

In a time of rising loneliness, disconnection, and division, this is the story of how nature - and those who teach with it - are helping us find our way back to each other. ([Watch the trailer](#))

Q&A with James Parker, Juliet Grable, Quilen Blackwell and Dr. Ellen Prusinski

The Inside Scholars

Director: JoeBill Muñoz

Empowered by their pursuit of higher education while in prison, three formerly incarcerated individuals start to imagine new futures on the outside—and discover a community of people who've found purpose, opportunity, and success after incarceration. ([Watch the trailer](#))

Q&A with JoeBill Muñoz and Jasmine Spearing-Bowen

Left Behind

Director: Anna Toomey

This gripping feature documentary tells the story of five tenacious mothers determined to establish the first public school in New York City for children with dyslexia. Addressing a learning disability that impacts an estimated 200,000 students in NYC, and roughly 20% of the public at large, the mothers' struggle to upend the nation's largest public school system and garner support to open the South Bronx Literacy Academy in September 2023. ([Watch the trailer](#))

Q&A with Anna Toomey, Kareem Weaver and Kareem Weaver, moderated by Juju Chang

Multiple Choice

Director: Charles Haine

In an economically-challenged Virginia community, one superintendent demonstrates the immense power of career-based learning—not as a last-chance resort for some, but as foundational for all. ([Watch the trailer](#))

Q&A with Charles Haine, Josh Reppun and Cristine Platt Dewey

Our Blues Make Us Gold

Directors: Brandon Gerard & Ashley Shante

Our Blues Make Us Gold uncovers the soul of North Carolina A&T—where defiance sparked change, students became icons, and a community's resilience forged a legacy that continues to light the way. ([Watch the trailer](#))

Q&A with Ashley Shante and Brandon Gerard

Second Nature

Director: Drew Denny

Elliot Page narrates this hilarious and heartening romp through the animal world, led by brave scientists fighting censorship as they reveal the truth about our nature. ([Watch the trailer](#))

Q&A with Drew Denny, Jennifer Steinman Sternin and Nicole Bramley

STREET SMART: Lessons from a TV Icon

Director: Ernie Bustamante

A vibrant portrait of Sonia Manzano ("Maria" from Sesame Street) — the trailblazing actress who transformed television and inspired generations. ([Watch the trailer](#))

Q&A with Ernie Bustamante, Renee Cafaro and Veronica Juarez

The Reading Reboot

Director: Scott Barnett

Best-selling Author James Patterson takes us to the front lines of the reading crisis to examine how the vast, interdisciplinary body of evidence-based, explicit research known as the Science of Reading is rebooting the entire way we teach kids how to read. ([Watch the trailer](#))

Q&A with Scott Barnett, Johanna Vega and Lisa Dodge

The Short Films lineup includes:

Boys of Summer

Directors: Mito Habe-Evans & Annabel Edwards

At a remote summer camp in the Vermont woods, a group of teenage boys embarks on a journey of emotional growth. Free from screens and societal expectations, they learn to open up, support one another, and redefine what it means to be a boy. The Boys of Summer is a tender vérité portrait of vulnerability, friendship, and the quiet rebellion of feeling deeply in a world that often tells boys not to. ([Watch the trailer](#))

Q&A with Razi Jafri

CB: Power to the Player

Director: Javier Wallace

CB: Power to the Player chronicles how C.B. Claiborne broke barriers as Duke's first Black basketball player, became a student activist and leader, and inspired change on and off the court. ([Watch the trailer](#))

Q&A with Javier Wallace and Funmi Ogunro

Death by Numbers

Director: Kim A Snyder

A school shooting survivor confronts her assailant in a poetic journey to empowerment. ([Watch the trailer](#))

Q&A with Sam Fuentes

OCD and Me

Director: Sydne Horton

High school sisters June and Mel race to escape school as June's overwhelming OCD intrusive thoughts spiral out of control, threatening to unravel everything they know. ([Watch the trailer](#))

Q&A with Sydne Horton and Trish Glowacki

Second Nature

Director: Marie Cusick

To protect a world they will inherit, young people are taking the fight against climate change into their own hands. ([Watch the trailer](#))

Q&A with Wyatt Mayes

Reflections Behind Bars

Director: Jacob Kornbluth

Inside San Quentin, America's most notorious prison, a group of incarcerated men share stories of childhood trauma in front of a packed audience of peers, community members and lawmakers. By going back to the start, they begin to change the future. ([Watch the trailer](#))

Q&A with Jenny Espinoza, MD and Brian Asey Gonsoulin

The Worst That Can Happen

Director: Laylan Saadaldin

An unlikely crew of Irish university students—including a sheep-farming engineer and an architect-turned-physicist—take on the seemingly impossible task of building Ireland's first satellite. ([Watch the trailer](#))

Q&A with Laylan Saadaldin

When I Talk, I Stutter

Director: Kelly Riot

Grounded in 30 years of research, this globally resonant animated series flips the script on stuttering, shifting the narrative from a deficit to be fixed to a natural voice to be celebrated.

([Watch the trailer](#))

Q&A with Dr. Courtney Byrd and Juell Reed

The Texas High School Shorts Program

New for 2026, The Texas High School Shorts Program is now part of SXSW EDU. The program elevates and supports future filmmakers, and features short films directed and produced by students enrolled in a Texas high school as of March 9, 2026. This year's program features 13 short films, presented on Crossover Day (March 12), followed by a 30-minute Q&A with the student filmmakers.

To preview the Texas High School Shorts Program, visit the SXSW EDU schedule [here](#).

Performances

SXSW EDU features live performances that offer attendees the opportunity to experience and reflect on the value of performing arts as a vehicle for deeper learning. Since its launch in 2018, the performance program has featured theater, dance, spoken word, puppetry, student musical showcases, and more, with performers and their associated organizations leading the audience through workshop-style experiences.

Highlights from this year's performance highlights include:

In the Muddle: A Live Look at Learning Thru Mistake-Making—While results-driven environments often discourage mistakes, true mastery requires the freedom to "muddle through" challenges via iteration and reflection. By showcasing a live rehearsal with the Miró String Quartet, these learning processes are visible to help others reimagine meaningful education.

The Kids Table Live-play: SEL, D&D, & Kids!—Experience a live Dungeons & Dragons session with kids and grownups that showcases how tabletop roleplaying builds essential social-emotional skills like empathy and communication. Following the game, experts will analyze these learning outcomes and provide practical strategies for integrating these games into your classroom, library, or home.

Rediscover Your Musical Voice: A Live Piano Experience—The ArtPlay method moves beyond rote memorization by teaching music as an intuitive language centered on improvisation, composition, and joyful exploration. Through live piano demonstrations and audience participation, **Jeremy Levine** shows how to build musical fluency and creative confidence in learners of all ages.

Schooled: The Musical—Experience a preview of a new musical, in the style of Hamilton-meets-The Sound of Music-meets-Good Night and Good Luck, that explores how students and teachers navigate identity amidst today's culture wars. Following the performance, hear from the show's creator **Peter Nilsson**.

Show U How To Do This - Hip Hop Educators Rock The Mic—Experience the immense onstage talent of some of the most accomplished Hip Hop Educators and Youth Mentors in the music industry. Performers will be diverse in terms of practice and industry role and will demonstrate a clear level of mastery with organizational messaging that encourages interaction and deeper understanding.

This Is a Magic Show (About The Power of Curiosity)—Award-winning educator and magician **Michael Six Muldoon** joins author and leadership coach **Mike Kleba** to guide you through an unforgettable magic show that doubles as a leadership clinic on managing attention, designing suspense, reading the room, and leading with purpose.

To view the full SXSW EDU Festival programming, including Films and Performances, visit the [SXSW EDU schedule](#).

SXSW EDU Bookstore

The SXSW EDU Bookstore features a curated selection of educating and entertaining reads authored by conference participants, open daily from 10am to 5pm CT at the Hilton Austin Downtown.

More than 50 books will be available for purchase, and from Monday, March 9 through Wednesday, March 11, select authors will be available for book signings: **Ana Homayoun, Brian Rashad Fuller, Britt Hawthorne, Elliot Haspel, Erin Geiger Smith, Jason Wingard, Jess Zafarris, Harold S. Koplewicz, MD, Larry Miller, Lindsay Whorton, Peter Nilsson, Tiffany Jewell, and Walt Hickey.**

For signing dates and times, visit the SXSW EDU schedule [here](#).

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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