SXSW ↙ EDU®

MARCH 3-6, 2025
AUSTIN, TX

PanelPicker®
Guide

HOW PANELPICKER WORKS

PanelPicker is the official online platform that enables the community to propose programming ideas in a variety of session formats.

Simply enter your session proposal for SXSW EDU 2025 during the submission window. Then PanelPicker will re-open for public voting, allowing the public to review, vote on, and provide feedback for all ideas entered.

The final decision is derived from SXSW EDU Advisory Board evaluations (40%), public voting (30%), and staff review (30%).

40% Advisory Board

FINAL PROPOSAL GRADE

30% Public Voting

30% Staff Review
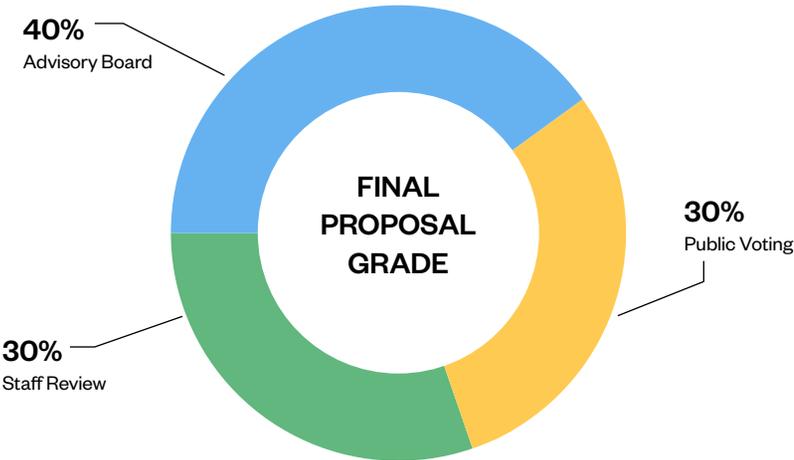
IMPORTANT DATES

June 25	PanelPicker opens for entries
July 21	PanelPicker entry window closes
August 6	Registration opens
August 6	PanelPicker public voting begins
August 18	PanelPicker public voting ends
October	Notification of session decisions

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

*Data from SXSW EDU 2024

COMMUNITY NUMBERS

10,243 Total Attendees

4,973 Public Expo Attendance

1,108 Speakers

386 Sessions

202 Media Attendance

99 Exhibitors

44 Countries

OVERALL COMMUNITY FOCUS AREAS

60% K-12

40% Higher Ed

COMMUNITY COMPOSITION

26% Nonprofit

8% Student

3% Government

38% Practitioner & Administrator

25% Business & Industry

23% K-12 Teacher

37% K-12 Administrator

29% Higher Ed Administrator

11% Higher Ed Professor
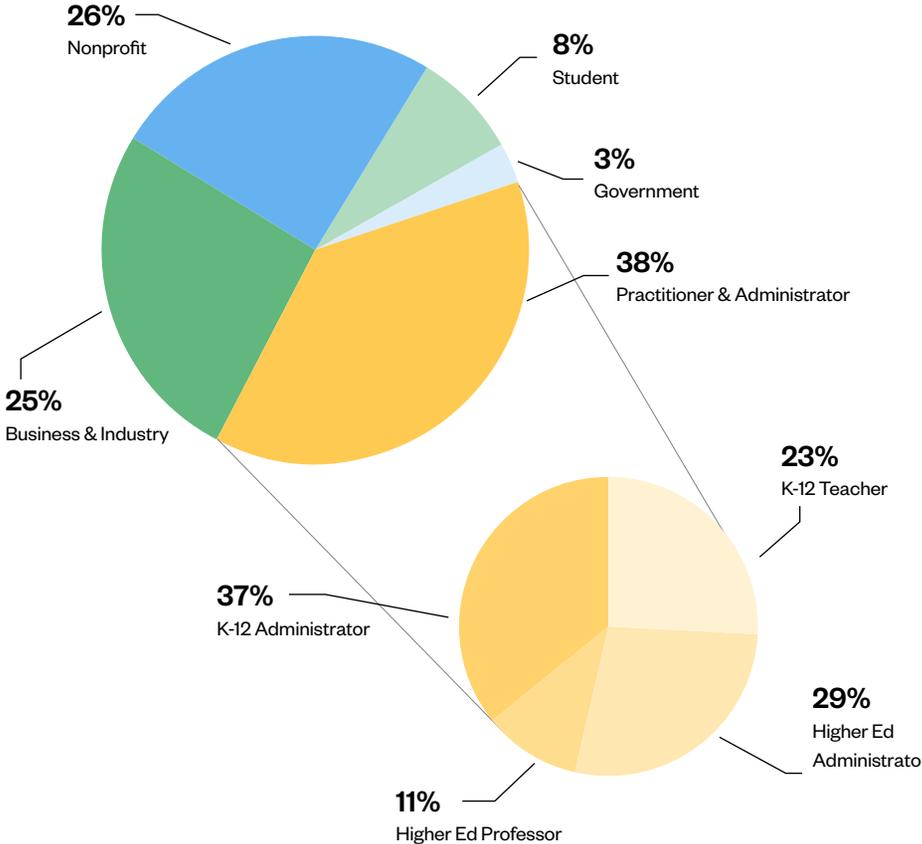
TRACKS

ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION
Exploring initiatives and programs that focus on special education, learning differences and neurodiversity, and disabilities across the learning lifecycle including adaptive instructional strategies, assistive technology, universal design, and more

ARTS & STORYTELLING
Exploring arts-based pedagogies and creative practices including the performing and visual arts, arts integration, media creation, gaming, and media and entertainment initiatives as well as narrative and world-building approaches for teaching and learning

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES
Programs and projects focused on empowering and connecting communities in and out of the classroom by highlighting partnerships and work organized by community spaces and groups including libraries, museums, makerspaces, community centers, after-school and summer programs, informal learning programs, and more

EQUITY & JUSTICE
Addressing work championing equity, justice, belonging, diversity, and inclusion in education and beyond, including social and economic disparities, culturally responsive teaching, anti-racism practice, gender and LGBTQIA+ issues, restorative justice, and more to ensure equitable opportunities and outcomes for all

FUTURE OF TECH
Exploring development and implementation of educational technology including virtual tools, generative artificial intelligence, machine learning, XR, and data interoperability, with a focus on issues surrounding equitable access to and ethical use of technology and future-forward solutions for tech integration

GLOBAL INITIATIVES
Programs and initiatives exploring the importance of global collaboration in education and beyond including international instructional approaches and business ventures, language learning and ESL/ELL instruction, program implementation across borders, global partnerships, issues impacting refugee and immigrant learners, cross-cultural initiatives, and more

HEALTH & WELLBEING
Furthering social emotional learning, whole-child education, and human flourishing including initiatives addressing mental and physical wellness, trauma-informed practices, sports and physical education, and health education with a focus on mental health initiatives and comprehensive wellbeing for educators, students, and families

LEADERSHIP FOR TOMORROW
Groundbreaking insights spotlighting work in leadership development and institutional transformation with topics including organizational management, executive leadership, systemic implementation, cultivation of youth leadership, pathway creation across the education sector, and educator development and support

POLICY & ADVOCACY
Addressing education policy issues across local, regional, national, and international governance including funding, curriculum and assessment standards, student data use and privacy, school safety, and digital policies, as well as economic development, civic engagement and activism, and public-private partnerships

STARTUPS & INVESTMENT
Content focused on the business of education with a focus on entrepreneurship and startups, with topics including investment and funding, marketing and branding strategies, corporate initiatives and partnerships, market trends and analysis, and business adaptability

TEACHING & LEARNING
Content focused on instruction and pedagogy across the entire learning lifecycle with a focus on solution-oriented strategies, innovative teaching, learner agency, and child development, with topics including instructional best practices for all educational levels and evolving curricula, the science of learning, creative pedagogies, and communities of practice

WORK REIMAGINED
Programs and new approaches to professional development, upskilling, corporate learning, and talent development, including workforce revitalization, training, and career transitions, as well as initiatives for mature learners, career pathways for non-traditional students, and how the future of work will impact new generations of students

FORMATS

CONVERSATION (60 MIN, 2 SPEAKERS)
An in-depth interview, fireside chat, or debate that spotlights thought leadership and insights on a particular topic or area of expertise, followed by audience Q&A

MEET UP (60 MIN, 1-2 SPEAKERS)
A speaker-facilitated networking event that encourages communities to connect around similar topics, passions, roles, or interests. *Please note this is NOT a presentation-based session format*

PANEL (60 MIN, 3-4 SPEAKERS)
A dynamic and diverse discussion offering multiple viewpoints on a particular topic, followed by audience Q&A

PERFORMANCE (90 MIN, 1+ SPEAKERS)
A musical, theatrical, storytelling, dance, poetry, or other performance that includes a workshop or extended Q&A to reflect on the value of the performing arts as a vehicle for deeper learning and offer takeaways for the audience

PODCAST (60 MIN, 2-4 SPEAKERS)
For media organizations and existing podcasts, a conversation on topics across the education landscape, recorded in front of a live audience to be used as a future episode

SOLO (30 MIN, 1 SPEAKER)
A short solo presentation highlighting new and emerging ideas, followed by an audience Q&A

WORKSHOP (90 MIN, 1-3 SPEAKERS)
An in-depth, instructional program with hands-on learning activities and specific takeaways

PANELPICKER STEP-BY-STEP

Visit panelpicker.sxsw.com and sign in with your universal SXSW account or create one for free with your email address and a password.

Begin your proposal by selecting "**+ SXSW EDU Proposal**" to be considered for SXSW EDU 2025.

Please note that you are only able to submit ONE (1) proposal for SXSW EDU per account.

The application form is divided into six steps and PanelPicker allows you to save and continue as you go.

Click on the "More Info" buttons next to important fields for helpful tips and guidelines. For additional questions, please reference the FAQ.

STEP 1

SESSION ORGANIZER

Appoint a primary contact for your session, known as the **organizer**, to facilitate correspondence throughout the PanelPicker process and beyond, if accepted. The session organizer can also be a proposed speaker, but they are not assumed to be participating as a speaker unless indicated. Remember that the session organizer serves as the main point of contact for the session, and is responsible for communicating information to the speakers and ensuring the success of the session.

Will Blake

Sabrina Macias

STEP 2

TITLE & CHARACTERISTICS

The information required in this step serves as the foundation for your session idea. Your selections will help the community understand and differentiate your proposal among many others.

- Try to keep your **title** as concise and explanatory as possible. Make sure your proposal is easily accessible to the community with a great title that clearly speaks to the audience you are trying to reach. (max. 60 characters including spaces)

- Choose the **format** that best fits your session structure and presentation style. Reflect on the goals of your session idea — are you looking to engage in a thought-provoking discussion, lead a learning activity, or convene a specific community? Reference the corresponding options to determine which format best suits your idea.

- Designate a **session focus area** to set the level of education your session content will be addressing. The SXSW EDU program covers the entire learning lifecycle, and this allows your session to better stand out within the community. If your idea focuses on multiple levels of education or covers broader initiatives within the education space, please select "Convergence."

- Select a thematic **track** that generally aligns with your idea so that attendees looking for similar content can find your session. Your idea may fit under multiple track options, so focus on the track that best represents your session content and goals.

- Further clarify the focus of your idea by selecting two **tags** from the dropdown menus that will help the community search for your session and home in on the specifics of your content.

- Clearly identify the **intended audience** for your session, as well as the **background knowledge required** to help attendees understand who will benefit most from your session and to further refine your session goals.

STEP 3

DESCRIPTION & TAKEAWAYS

Describe your session content (max. 600 characters including spaces) and session takeaways (max. 150 characters each including spaces). Accurately define the comprehensive focus of your idea in a compelling manner and provide three specific and concrete learnings that attendees will gain from attending your session. The SXSW EDU community looks for actionable insights that they can implement in their own work and development. Please keep in mind the following tips:

- Depth is more important than breadth in making your idea an impactful session.
- The audience at SXSW EDU is well-versed in the current education landscape. Given the limited space, your description does not need to reference broad statements and statistics about the state of education, and should focus on the specific content of your session.
- Please do not include speaker names or organization references in the session description as these are listed separately in the application process and beyond.
- Use paragraph form for your description (no bullets or lists).
- Be sure to spell out the first mention of any acronyms you include.
- Advertorial or brand-centered descriptions are not allowed. If you are interested in promoting your brand at SXSW EDU, email sales@sxswedu.com.
- Please note that session takeaways are optional for Meet Up proposals only, as the Meet Up format is NOT presentation-based.

STEP 4

RESOURCES

Add a short creative video and/or visual aids to serve as the digital face of your proposal. You must provide at least one resource to support your programming idea. Videos are highly preferred, and there's no need for high-value production, as we just want to hear you speak — just record yourself on your phone or computer pitching your idea! Please note that you must have clear rights to whatever resources you include. **Please enable closed captioning for any videos you include and make sure they are publicly viewable.**

Sofie Milton

STEP 5

SPEAKERS

Speakers are an important part of your proposal and play a large role in the evaluation of your idea. Be prepared to enter each proposed speaker's name, contact information, short bio, and diversity contributions. Although most of this information is kept confidential, know that each speaker's name, title, organization, and bio will be shared with the community.

- SXSW EDU values diversity in perspective, opinion, and representation and the most interesting sessions are ones that offer many different perspectives. For each proposed speaker, you will be asked to address how they contribute to the diversity of the session.
- Keep in mind the maximum speaker limits associated with your selected session format. For example, the panel format is limited to a maximum of four speakers, including the moderator, if desired.
- Moderators are optional but should be independent, neutral facilitators in the discussion. Please note the moderator counts toward your maximum speaker limit.
- While a particular speaker may be proposed for multiple sessions, in the interest of providing diverse perspectives, speakers will be limited to participating in two (2) programmed sessions (with the exception of Mentor sessions).
- You must have consent from all listed speakers to be included in your proposal.

Will Blake

DIVERSITY GUIDELINES

Speaker diversity plays an extremely important role in the decision-making process.

The most interesting sessions are ones that include many different perspectives. When choosing speakers keep in mind these basic diversity guidelines.

All sessions with 3 or more speakers should include:

- Diversity in gender
- Diversity in ethnicity
- Diversity in location and employment of speakers
- Diversity in thought and opinion

We understand that some sessions work best with full representation of a particular group and will review these on a case-by-case basis.

STEP 6

REVIEW & SUBMIT

Proofread and double-check that your proposal is complete and error-free.

Make sure you take a few moments to review all of the agreement terms before finalizing your proposal. **Please note, once submitted, you will NOT be able to make any additional edits to your proposal.**

Your proposal is not complete until you click the "Enter Proposal" button.

WHAT'S NEXT?
Start thinking of ways to promote your session idea to the community once public voting goes live on August 6!

SXSW EDU® ↙ 2025

REGISTER TO ATTEND STARTING AUGUST 6

ALL ACCEPTED SPEAKERS WILL RECEIVE A COMPLIMENTARY REGISTRATION