

The Edtech Insiders Guide to ASU+GSV 2026

Everything you need to know to make the most of this year's jam-packed Summit

[Sarah Morin](#)

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The Edtech Insiders Guide to ASU+GSV 2026

For the EdTech community, ASU+GSV is the Super Bowl, the Academy Awards, and Dreamforce all rolled into one — the one moment each year when over 7,000 community members come together to make deals, trade ideas, and take stock of where this industry is actually heading. This year, we have a particularly special connection to the Summit: Edtech Insiders' Co-Founder Alex Sarlin has stepped in as Global Edtech Lead for ASU+GSV Summit, which means we have an even better view of what's happening on every stage.

This year's Summit arrives at a genuinely pivotal moment for EdTech. AI is dramatically reshaping what's possible — both in terms of product features and business models — and big tech is leaning hard into learning use cases. The pace of change is dizzying in the best way. But it's happening against a backdrop of contracting public education budgets, declining university enrollment, and a pervasive cultural skepticism around screen time and learning tools that we'd be foolish to ignore.

So how do we — as individuals, as organizations, and as a sector — navigate these turbulent times? That's the central

question hanging over this year's Summit. The good news: there will be serious, substantive programming to wrestle with it, plus an extraordinary community of peers, mentors, advisors, and yes, competitors, to help you think it through.

Without further ado, here's our guide to set you up for a great time in San Diego.

Edtech Insiders at ASU+GSV

Ben's Panel

[Raising the Bar: Building Quality, Trust, and Learning Science into AI Education Tools](#)

Tuesday, April 14, 2026 | 10:10–10:50 am | Harbor E, Level 2

Ben will be moderating a panel on confronting education's overcrowded "junk drawer" of AI tools—examining why the sector is flooded with shallow applications that promise transformation but fail to earn the trust of teachers and students who must use them daily. The conversation will challenge the edtech sector to prioritize pedagogical integrity and user agency over rapid deployment, setting a higher standard for what belongs in educators' and students' essential toolkit.

Alex's Sessions

This year, Alex is co-hosting the [GSV Cup](#) (presented by AWS and GSV Ventures, with support from Pearson) — where 50 top startups pitch their companies to the ASU+GSV audience. The K-12, Higher Ed, and Workforce cohorts each get their own session, all on Tuesday, April 14th in the Seaport Village Parking Lot:

- **10:10–11:30 am** — Future of the Classroom: GSV Cup 50 K-12 Innovators Take the Stage
- **11:30 am–12:20 pm** — Higher Ed, Rewired: GSV Cup 50 Higher Ed Innovators Take the Stage
- **1:15–2:00 pm** — Built for the Job: GSV Cup 50 Workforce Innovators Take the Stage

Edtech Insiders Rooftop Happy Hour

Join us for one of our biggest in-person events of the year, our Happy Hour at ASU+ GSV! We'll be at the Marriott Marquis from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Snag your ticket or a spot on the waitlist, this event does sell out every year.

[Grab Your Ticket](#)

Our Top Session Picks

Ben's Picks

[Can Tutoring Save Us?](#)

The AI tutor has become something of a Holy Grail in education — unlimited scalability, 24/7 availability, and learning gains that could make Two Sigma look modest. But is that a reality or an aspirational myth? This panel will dig in.

[The Agentic AI Wave](#)

Agents, agents, agents. We've been hearing about agentic AI for a year now — but has the revolution actually come for education? This all-star panel promises to address the why, the when, and the how.

[The GSV Cup 50](#)

Want to feel optimistic about the future of Edtech? Come watch these pitches. This year's cohort is exceptional, and nothing recharges the batteries quite like watching passionate founders take the stage.

Alex's Picks

There's too much good programming this year to play favorites — but here are a few areas every founder and investor should have on their radar:

[The Multiple Choice Stage](#)

This is the inaugural year of the "Multiple Choice" stage, dedicated to the fast-growing educational pluralism movement — where public funding can flow to diverse

school models. Two sessions in particular are unmissable for Edtech founders:

- *A Choice Consumer Marketplace — The Big Opportunity for Edtech*: What happens when public school parents become sophisticated, highly informed consumers? What does that mean for your product?
- *Laying the “Tracks” — The Modern Infrastructure Powering Multiple Choice*: What systems exist (and which are still needed) to support alternative school models and ESAs?

The K-12 Edtech Stage

Conversations about trust, innovation, leadership, assessment, and AI agents — featuring speakers from across the ecosystem, from tech-forward educators to AI-native startups to frontier labs to the industry’s biggest established players. Filter for the “K-12 Edtech” channel on the ASU+GSV agenda to see the full lineup.

The Edtech Building and Investing Stage

All about how to build, scale, and exit Edtech companies — and where the investment landscape is heading. This year’s focus: AI scaling, acquisition readiness, frontier labs entering Edtech, private equity, the shifting VC landscape, and philanthropic capital. Filter for the “Edtech Building and

Investing" channel to see what's on.

The Forum: Edtech Debates

Brand new this year, the Forum is a two-on-two debate format tackling propositions like *"Every Student Should Have an AI Learning Companion," "AI Will Expand Human Intelligence,"* and *"Universities Are Stuck in the Year 2000."* Sparks. Will. Fly.

Tech Worth Watching

This year, major tech companies are showcasing cutting-edge hardware and software at the Summit — including **Google Beam** and **Apple's latest hardware technology for students**. If you care about where consumer tech meets the classroom, carve out time to check these out.

Insider Tips

Ben's Tips

- **Book lunch reservations in advance.** Specifically, Puesto and Sally's Fish House. You will thank yourself later.
- **Plan your evenings like a pub crawl.** You can realistically hit five events in a single evening if you're strategic — bonus points for rallying ten friends to do it

with you.

- **Find a quiet spot early.** Book the executive lounge for meetings. It's away from the noise, and there are homemade cookies. Seriously.

Alex's Tips

Don't miss Entrepreneurs and Investors Night — a two-part event on Monday, April 13th:

- **Part 1: Entrepreneurs and Investors Reception**
4:30–5:30 PM | Temecula Room, Marriott Marquis
(ASU+GSV badgeholders only)

This event is sponsored by our friends at Ednition. Alex and Ben will be there hosting! Come meet the GSV Cup 50 and a remarkable cross-section of investors — VC, PE, philanthropy, angels, and more.

- **Part 2: Edtech Insiders Rooftop Happy Hour**

Join us for one of our biggest in-person events of the year, our Happy Hour at ASU+ GSV! We'll be at the Marriott Marquis from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. [Snag your ticket or a spot on the waitlist](#), this event does sell out every year.

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Upcoming Events

AI & Efficacy: What Works, What Doesn't, and What We Need to Know

[Sponsored by ElevenLabs](#)

AI is moving fast in education... but is the evidence keeping up?

Join us for a live conversation exploring how AI tools should be evaluated, what counts as credible proof, and how educators and decision-makers can separate impact from marketing.

If you care about moving beyond AI hype toward meaningful learning outcomes, this session is for you.

[Register Here](#)

Edtech Insiders Rooftop Happy Hour

Join us for an amazing Rooftop Happy Hour at this year's ASU+GSV Summit! This is one of our biggest events of the year, and it does sell out every time. Grab your ticket while they last!

[Register Here](#)

**Designing AI to Support Teachers with
Dr. Rachel Book and Charlie Thayer of
Lincoln Learning Solutions**

[Sponsored by Lincoln Learning Solutions](#)

[Dr. Rachel Book](#) is an education leader at [Lincoln Learning Solutions](#) with over 20 years of experience in early childhood and student development. [Charlie Thayer](#), Chief Academic Officer, brings 15+ years in online and blended learning, specializing in scalable, instructionally sound solutions.

5 Things You'll Learn in This Episode:

1. The difference between generic AI tools and purpose-built AI for education
2. How AI can extend teacher capacity without replacing human instruction
3. Practical AI use cases that support both teachers and students
4. Why AI guardrails, safety, and age-appropriate design matter
5. The risks of AI shortcuts and the importance of building AI literacy early

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