

INITIATIVE 2026-2027: THE PURPOSES OF EDUCATION

To celebrate PLATO's 30th anniversary, we are launching a yearlong signature initiative to investigate one essential and enduring question: ***What are the purposes of education — historically, now, and in the decades ahead?***

This initiative stems from our commitment to create spaces for educators, students, and communities to ask and discuss complex, contested, and meaningful questions together.

In a rapidly changing global educational landscape—shaped by advances in artificial intelligence, shifting social and economic realities, and evolving expectations of schooling—PLATO seeks to support and encourage reflection: to consider how educational policies and systems have developed over time, to examine what they are being asked to do today, and to imagine how they may evolve.

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historically, now, and in the decades ahead?*



PLATO
philosophy learning and teaching organization

30 YEARS
1996-2026

WHAT TO EXPECT

During the 2026–27 academic year, PLATO will host a series of 30 events inviting teachers, students, scholars, and members of the public from around the world into sustained philosophical conversation.

The initiative will feature a rich range of programs designed to engage diverse audiences and perspectives, including:

Kickoff Event

September webinar exploring the history of public education. Leading scholars will discuss the evolution of public schooling and the challenges it faces today.

PLATO's "Book for the Year"

A discussion series, featuring a book chosen by the PLATO community.

Professional Development

Free professional development seminars for teachers to think philosophically about education and their role in shaping it and materials for professional development communities designed for use in schools across the country.

Philosophy Across the Ages

Our intergenerational series inviting participants of all ages to explore questions such as What is most valuable about education? and What should schools teach?

Winter Webinar: "Why Go to College?"

Panelists from a range of higher-education institutions will reflect on the purpose and future of higher education.

Middle and High School Philosophy Courses

Philosophy courses for middle and high school students on topics such as personal identity and education, artificial intelligence and schooling, the meaning of being smart, and what is worth learning.

Questions: Philosophy for Young People

The 27th issue of *Questions: Philosophy for Young People* will be focused on the theme "Why go to school?"

Capstone Event

The initiative will culminate in an event at PLATO's 2027 8th Biennial Conference at Oberlin College.

The initiative will honor PLATO's impact over three decades while inviting the next generation of thinkers, educators, and communities to envision what a flourishing education system can be.

