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## **2007 Speak Up Calls on School Leaders; Findings to Influence National Education Policy**

*Fifth Annual Online Survey Opens Today; Will Remain Open Thru December 15*

Irvine, CA (October 17, 2007) –Over the past four years, nearly a million students, teachers and parents from around the country have joined the Speak Up movement and are actively participating in a national discussion about what is needed to provide students with a 21st century education. This year, for the first time ever, Speak Up 2007 is calling upon school leaders – principals, district administrators, and school board members – to share their opinions about how technology and science education can be leveraged to provide students with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in the Digital Economy.

Participation in Speak Up 2007 starts today. The online survey is available for K-12 students, parents, teachers and school administrators at [www.netdayspeakup.org](http://www.netdayspeakup.org). All public, private, parochial and charter schools in the US and Canada are eligible to participate. Individual participation and responses are completely confidential and the online surveys can be accessed 24/7. Speak Up is facilitated annually by Project Tomorrow (formerly known as NetDay), the nation's leading education nonprofit group focused on science, math and technology education.

"Speak Up gives students, parents and educators the opportunity to address the elements critical to educational technology success such as professional development, student engagement and classroom integration," said Chris Rother, group vice president, CDW Government, Inc. "As a technology solutions provider to K-12 institutions, CDW-G embraces programs like Speak Up as a means to spread the message that technology offers schools viable, proven options to enhance and improve education."

Given the importance of education in the upcoming 2008 Presidential election, Speak Up 2007 includes new questions to help stimulate national and local discussions. These new questions will address:

- Student interest (and parent support) in science, math and technology careers – and the national competitiveness agenda;
- Using Web 2.0 tools such as MySpace in school;
- Views on the importance of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as critical thinking and learning a second language;
- Value of emerging technologies within education – such as video games, cell phones, MP3 players and laptops; and,
- Designing the ultimate school for the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner.

“National and state leaders look for the Speak Up data each year to gain insight from education stakeholders about how to fix America’s education system in order to ensure our continued global competitiveness. The survey is an avenue for everyone – students, parents, teachers and school administrators – to participate in this national conversation,” said Julie Evans, Project Tomorrow CEO. “At the same time, we also provide participating schools and districts with their own Speak Up data to inform and impact local policies, programs, and budgeting and purchasing decisions.”

“We highly value the Speak Up data because it gives us unique insights into the views of our students about emerging technologies, and their aspirations for a 21st century education,” says Sharnell Jackson, Chief E-Learning Officer, Chicago Public Schools. “We use this data to shape new programs, to inform our budgeting and purchasing processes, to train our teachers and to engage our parents and our Chicago business and civic leaders in an effort to improve learning opportunities for every child.”

Speak Up 2007 is supported through generous contributions of these corporate and foundation sponsors: CDW-G, SMART Technologies, PASCO scientific, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Futurekids, and KI Education. The national movement is also supported through a network of over 100 nonprofit education, business and community partners including our 2007 Champion Outreach Partners: State Education Technology Directors’ Association, Consortium for School Networking and the National School Boards Association.

Participation in last year’s Speak Up grew by 35% over the previous year, and since 2003, more than 857,000 K-12 students, teachers, and parents from over 10,000 schools in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Department of Defense schools have participated in the survey. In fact, the size and depth of the survey makes it the largest collection of authentic, unfiltered stakeholder input on education, technology, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, schools of the future and science instruction, and the data is used regularly by education, business and policy leaders to inform federal, state and local education programs. It is anticipated that 325,000 K-12 students, teachers, parents and

school leaders will submit Speak Up surveys this year.

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### **About Speak Up**

Speak Up is a national initiative of Project Tomorrow (formerly known as NetDay), a national education nonprofit group. The vision of Project Tomorrow ([www.tomorrow.org](http://www.tomorrow.org)) is to ensure that today's students are well prepared to be tomorrow's innovators, leaders, and engaged citizens of the world. Project Tomorrow's mission is to support and promote the effective and appropriate use of science, math and technology resources in K-12 education so that every student has the opportunity to fully participate in today's global economy and community.