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**America's Top 200 Schools Recognized for Leveraging Student Voices in Educational Decision-Making**

*Project Tomorrow Announces Speak Up 200 Schools*

IRVINE, CA. (June 17, 2008) -- Project Tomorrow, ([www.tomorrow.org](http://www.tomorrow.org)), the national education nonprofit group, announced this year's Speak Up 200, a collection of top schools working to encourage and involve authentic student, parent and teacher ideas and views in education planning and decision making. These schools are selected for this national distinction from the 10,000 schools nationwide that have participated in the annual Speak Up surveys since 2003. The Speak Up Project collects student, parent and educator viewpoints on technology and 21<sup>st</sup> century education through an annual online survey process and shares that data with national, state and local policymakers to improve education for all children.

The schools selected for the 2008 Speak Up 200 recognition this year represent a broad range of educational institutions in rural, suburban and urban communities from twenty-one states and the Department of Defense ([http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/speakup\\_200.html](http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/speakup_200.html)). Based upon total participation and demonstrated commitment to engaging their stakeholders are five school districts recognized for additional distinction:

Top 5 school districts (based on total participation)

- City of Chicago School District (Illinois)
- Klein ISD (Texas)
- Baltimore City Public Schools (Maryland)
- Paradise Valley Unified District (Arizona)
- Capistrano Unified School District (California)

Top performing district for parent participation

- Capistrano Unified School District (California)

Top performing district for school leader participation

- Klein ISD (Texas)

"The Speak Up 200 schools offer powerful examples of the ways in which educators are using stakeholder input to drive new ideas and innovation in education and technology within their schools and districts. I am inspired and impressed by the multiple ways in which these educational institutions are leveraging student views in their planning process and improving the learning environment," noted Julie Evans, CEO of Project Tomorrow in making the announcement.

Speak Up 200 schools are using the data collected through the Speak Up surveys to develop strategic plans, make budgeting decisions, enhance their curriculum, and determine professional development needs. Examples of the ways in which Speak Up 200 schools are leveraging their school specific Speak Up data to improve education include:

- "...the survey data figured prominently in our 6-year strategic educational plan which was approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The data was also used to draft a successful Classrooms for the Future application." **Paul Caputo, Supervisor of Curriculum, Technology & Federal Programs, North Schuylkill School District, PA**
- "Our leadership team will use the data to determine our master schedule for middle school, outline what classes will look like and formulate our new school site plan." **Glen Warren, Library Media Specialist, McPherson Magnet School, CA**
- "We are using the data to inform our entire learning community about the views of our students. We have used the data to guide our Strategic Planning process, sub-committee work, and continuous improvement plans. **Leah Christman, Southern Lehigh School District, PA.**
- "Both at the school and district levels, we recognize that parents and students represent our primary customer groups. Speak Up 2007 data is one of the several important tools the district uses as part of an annual SWOT analysis, a process by which our key stakeholders help us to determine our organization's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Data from Speak Up 2007 will show up in our school technology plans, the district technology plan and, where appropriate, the data will be linked to the district's overall strategic plan." **Matt Frey, Manager, Training and Customer Support, Brevard County School District.**

This year's Speak Up 200 schools are prominently featured on Project Tomorrow's website ([http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/speakup\\_200.html](http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/speakup_200.html)) and receive special recognition from Project Tomorrow including a unique Speak Up 200 logo to include on their school and district websites. Project Tomorrow will promote the school's distinction to the Congressional representative and state Governor of each Speak Up 200 school to demonstrate the power of educational innovation at the local level. Project Tomorrow is tapping into the expertise of this year's Speak Up 200 schools to develop new questions for Speak Up 2008 which will open up for student, teacher and parent input in mid-October. Additionally, their success stories are being shared with our partners and national policy organizations to inform national and regional education reform efforts.

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### **About Project Tomorrow**

Project Tomorrow (formerly known as NetDay) is a national education nonprofit organization committed to ensuring that all students are well prepared to become 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. For additional information, visit: [www.tomorrow.org](http://www.tomorrow.org).

### **ABOUT SPEAK UP**

Speak Up, a national research initiative of Project Tomorrow, has surveyed over 1.2 million K-12 students, parents, teachers and school leaders since 2003. The Speak Up data represents the largest collection of authentic, unfiltered stakeholder input on education, technology, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, and math and science instruction, and the data is used regularly by education, business and policy leaders to inform federal, state and local education programs. Speak Up 2007 was made possible through the generous support of CDW-G, SMART Technologies, PASCO scientific, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Discovery Education, FutureKids and KI Education with outreach support from over 100 national education groups including the State Education Technology Directors' Association (SETDA), Consortium for School Network (CoSN) and the National School Boards' Association (NSBA).