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**Project Tomorrow Brings Education and Business Leaders Together  
to Address Competitiveness Challenges**

***John Gage, Sun Co-Founder and Chief Researcher, leads discussion with Orange  
County business, education & community leaders***

**Irvine, CA, February 28, 2007** - Project Tomorrow, the national education nonprofit organization based in Irvine, hosted the first in a series of regional meetings today to bring together business, education and community leaders to discuss how to improve K-12 education to address the nation's economic competitiveness challenges. John Gage, Sun Microsystems' co-founder and Chief Researcher, led the discussion with xxx Orange County business, education and community leaders at the Pacific Club.

We are reminded every day a new that the United States is in danger of losing its lead in today's increasingly technical, information-intensive, global economy. And while there is widespread knowledge and acceptance that the world is indeed flat (*thank you, Tom Friedman*), this knowledge has not filtered down to our schools. "We must begin with our education system" said John Gage, a board member of Project Tomorrow and founder of Sun Microsystems, "as we cannot wait to begin to produce the creative and critical thinking students skilled in math and science who will become the workers, innovators and leaders the United States economy needs for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Project Tomorrow convened this meeting in response to the release of the **New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce long awaited report, "Tough Choices or Tough Times,"** (<http://skillscommission.org/executive.htm>). This report contains a set of hard-hitting recommendations on the changes needed in American education to address our competitiveness challenges, and sounds an alarm for new regional competitiveness groups of business leaders, educators and community activists to roll up their sleeves and dig into this problem without delay. Project Tomorrow is answering that call with this first meeting in Orange County. The organization plans to follow this meeting with a series of regional events to bring together business and community leaders to discuss how to better prepare today's students to be tomorrow's innovators, leaders and engaged citizens of the world.

Our schools have a stake in addressing this challenge as demonstrated by Project Tomorrow's national research on student, teacher and parent viewpoints on technology, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, math and science education and schools of the future. According to Project Tomorrow's Speak Up national research project (an online survey completed by 270,000 K-12 students, teacher and parents nationwide in November 2006) 52% of parents do not believe that their child's school is doing a good job of preparing students for jobs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Project Tomorrow is committed to insuring that every student is well prepared to become tomorrow's innovators, leaders and engaged citizens of the world. The community breakfast series is just one component in a larger Innovation in Education initiative in Orange County that is driving new collaborative efforts between education and economic stakeholders to provide pathways for school and community based reform measures. To learn more about the Project Tomorrow Innovation in Education initiative and the upcoming second annual Innovation in Education Summit on May 24<sup>th</sup>, visit [www.tomorrow.org](http://www.tomorrow.org).

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