

Administrators **“Speak Up”** about students’ vision for using technology to learn

Across the nation, students are adapting emerging technologies in new and innovative ways for learning. As part of Speak Up 2009, Project Tomorrow, the national education nonprofit organization, captured their ideas and documented this new Student Vision for using technology to facilitate “social-based, un-tethered, and digitally rich” learning experiences. With Speak Up 2010, we asked school and district leaders to respond to the Student Vision and describe their strategies for achieving it. Here is a sampling of some of those responses:

“I am excited by the student vision. I think the students got it right. Education that is based on the collaborative work of students is relevant and rigorous. The real difference between the traditional models of education and 21st century learning is the ‘un-tethered’ concept. We understand that students have the capacity to learn so much more than what we ‘pour in’. Providing digitally rich learning allows students to explore in ways that we never have been able to before. In our district, we are at the brink of change. Many of our schools are cautiously moving into the waters - and students are responding very positively. It will take the next three years just to communicate to parents and the community at large to garner support for the changes.”

- Principal, Pennsylvania

“We try to make everything possible available to students and teachers ubiquitously. Then they can do real time anywhere anytime learning. They can access their networks drives from anywhere, we have 1:1 laptops so they have the software needed, and next year we are letting folks use their own devices on our network.”

- CTO, California

“I believe the greatest potential lies within the “un-tethered and digitally-rich” aspect of the vision. The more we can extend learning beyond the school day and make it relevant and current by incorporating digital resources the better off our students and we as educators will be. At my school I continue to encourage students bringing their own devices to school and I continue to work with teachers to develop their ability to incorporate these student-owned devices into their classrooms.”

- Principal, Tennessee

“Digitally-rich learning. Our district has increased equipment availability and wireless capability so that students can use laptops w/out area restrictions. Many of our teachers are making great efforts to include more digital content and more student-led instruction.”

- Technology Support Staff, Alberta



**Preparing today’s students to be tomorrow’s
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“I believe the “un-tethered” aspect of the vision is most important. Students’ learning is too confined to the school day and is viewed as disintegrated from their everyday lives. Integrating their learning with their everyday lives and expanding the school day is the best way to enhance student learning and achievement.”

- Guidance Counselor, Georgia

“Our school utilizes interactive technology to connect students, through video and text, with other elementary school students. Our students are provided “digitally-rich” learning during general classes, library media lessons, computer specific courses, as well as during after school activities. Students are actively engaged in their learning while they create, observe, and interact with relevant, realistic, and unimaginable possibilities.”

-Principal, New Hampshire

“I am at a STEM school with one-to-one student laptops. The entire school is wireless so students can use their laptops anywhere. This year we have begun using Web 2.0 tools (blogs, wikis, and glogster mostly) and students are extremely engaged in this type of learning. They love the collaborative nature of the learning environment and using these tools has increased productivity - fewer lost or missing papers, fewer organizational issues with students, less paper teachers are having to carry home to correct. As far as the vision, I think the most critical starting point is that technology be “un-tethered”. Once schools have this, they can move toward social-based and digitally-rich.”

-Principal, Indiana

“Digitally-rich learning has the greatest impact on student achievement. Students can access instructional resources that will help them develop meaning of the content. They could also collaborate with web 2.0 tools. Students would be able to broadcast their knowledge through podcasts and blogs. Our district is currently working on this.”

-Principal, California

“I believe the key component is being un-tethered. We need to be willing to take a series of risks to provide our students with equal access to digital tools and learning that will help them be successful in their futures. We are setting our district priorities on how we can adjust our budget, professional development, and vision to ensure a social-based, un-tethered, and digitally-rich learning environment.”

- Principal, Wisconsin

“I believe that collaboration tools will have the greatest impact on student achievement. Web 2.0 tools such as wikis and blogs will benefit students as they contribute content and become more confident in their writing ability, in their ability to offer their own opinions, and their ability to communicate and collaborate. I also believe that online learning will impact student motivation for learning. Our district has begun offering online enrichment for our primary grade students as well as online learning for alternative high school students. Our plan is to also incorporate a cyber school for those students currently enrolled in cyber charter schools.”

- CTO, Missouri

About the Speak Up National Research Project

Speak Up is a national initiative of Project Tomorrow (www.tomorrow.org) and represents the largest collection of authentic, unfiltered voices regarding the use of technology for learning in and out of schools. Since 2003, over 2.2 million students, teachers, librarians, principals, technology leaders and district administrators have shared their insights through the annual Speak Up surveys and focus groups. Every K-12 school and district is eligible to participate in the annual surveys and the local data results are provided free-of-charge to all participating agencies. Speak Up makes it easy for you to collect feedback from your stakeholders and use it for your budgeting and planning purposes. To access the national Speak Up reports and learn how your school or district can participate in Fall 2011, **please visit: <http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/index.html>.**