Speak Up Guide for Superintendents

Dear District Administrator:

Speak Up, an online national research project facilitated by Project Tomorrow, annually polls students, educators and parents about key topics of importance to K-12 educators and policymakers. Such as:

- Students' use of technology in and out of school to learn.

- Educators' use of technology for instruction and their vision for 21st century classrooms.

- Hot trends in emerging technologies (e.g. mobile devices, online learning, gaming, simulations)

- Enhancing student achievement in science, math, technology and 21st century skills.

Speak Up provides an easy way for students, parents and educators to participate in the dialogue about K-12 program and policy decisions at the local, state and national level. Since 2004, Project Tomorrow has collected the viewpoints of over 1.5 million students, educators and parents – the **Speak Up** dataset represents the largest collection of authentic feedback from these key educational stakeholders.

As a participant in **Speak Up**, your district will receive free, online access to the aggregated results with national comparisons. Providing you with valuable data, which can be used for your strategic planning, professional development and budgeting plans during the school year.

Additionally, the aggregated **Speak Up** results are shared with K-12 educators, government officials, university faculty, business leaders and staff from youth and educator-serving organizations

Why should your district participate?

- **Free survey results** – Your district and participating schools will have free, online access to the survey and results with national benchmarks.

- **Gain insight about what's important to your stakeholders** – The data highlights the usage, attitudes, and aspirations of your stakeholders giving you the ability to identify their priorities.

- **Use the data to inform your strategic planning and budgeting process.** The data can be used to facilitate discussions and measure the success of your initiatives. District administrators report using the data to inform their district technology plans and budgets, assess professional development needs, plan school reform efforts, measure the effectiveness of technology plans or substantiate grant applications.

- **Ensure that your students, parents and educators are included in the national dialogue on K-12 education.** The **Speak Up** results are released at Congressional Briefings, through special reports, and presentations to staff at federal agencies and at key educational conferences.   Your participation in Speak Up will ensure that your district, along with other innovative and forward-thinking districts, has a voice in the national dialogue.

About the survey

- Questions cover hot topics in education such as online learning, one-to-one computer initiatives, professional development, science and innovation, and 21st century workforce skills.

- The survey is online, available 24/7 from any Internet connected computer and takes **15 minutes** to complete.

- All responses are 100% confidential. We do not collect any identification information (with the exception of gender and grade) or email addresses from any of the survey participants.

- It's easy to get started – simply register your district and then provide your students with the URL and secret password to access the survey. Register today at: http://www.speakup4schools.org/speakup2009

- The survey will be open October 19th-December 23rd, 2009 and accessible from any Internet-connected computer at home, school or other location.

It's easy to encourage participation

Here are just a few ideas that Speak Up districts use to encourage participation:

- Post a message on your district listserv.

- Assign a primary contact responsible for facilitating Speak Up in your district.

- Send an email to your school principals, technology coordinators, or media specialists encouraging them to promote Speak Up.

- Put a link to the survey on your district web page (Use our clickable banner: http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/speak_up_banner.html)

- Encourage your partners (school board members, PTA liaisons, community groups) to get the word out about the importance of participating in Speak Up.

- Issue a press release about your district's involvement in the national Speak Up survey.

- Publicize Speak Up on your school district's calendar.

- Designate a day between October 19th and December 23rd as Speak Up Day and encourage as many people as possible to take the survey.

- Encourage your principals to include Speak Up in their back-to-school activities.

- Offer prizes to the school with the highest participation.

Speak Up tools are available to help you facilitate participation

The Speak Up website (http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/speak_up_faq.html) offers convenient tools for helping make Speak Up a success in your district. You can find **promotion flyers** for posting at each school**, lesson** plans for teachers**,** copies of **the survey,** a **banner ad** to place on your website**, sample emails** for encouraging participation and more.

We hope you will join Speak Up!! Please let us know how if there is anything we can do to assist your efforts. You can contact us via email at SpeakUp@tomorrow.org or by calling our national office, 949-609-4660.