# Project Tomorrow Unveils Expanded Opportunities for Schools and Districts to Use Speak Up to Learn from Key Stakeholders

## Annual Speak Up Project, in its 16th Year, is Adding to its Suite of Support for All School and District Leaders to Improve K-12 Teaching and Learning

**Orlando, Fla. –** The tool that thousands of schools and districts have used for 15 years to inform and evaluate how digital learning is impacting instruction and student outcomes is now available on demand. Project Tomorrow's  Speak Up Research Project for Digital Learning (Speak Up) will no longer have participation windows and deadlines. School and district leaders can now use the free, nationally recognized Speak Up suite of tested resources whenever they need to collect feedback from their stakeholders. And, that is just the beginning of the changes to come.

"We believe that the views and values of K-12 students, parents and teachers as well as community members are a powerful asset that is not being fully leveraged by most schools and districts," explained Dr. Julie Evans, CEO of Project Tomorrow.

"When school and district leaders understand the needs and aspirations of these most important constituencies, those leaders are more effective in designing, developing and implementing transformations in the education system that will better prepare students for the future. We have upgraded our Speak Up solutions to make that a reality within all schools," she said.

The Speak Up 2018-19 school-year cycle was already shaking things up by providing new choices for education leaders. They can now choose any or all of the following:

- **Speak Up 360** – Annual, comprehensive feedback tool to learn about the views of education stakeholders. Speak Up 360 provides education leaders with tools to collect and analyze longitudinal data around multiple themes and from a variety of audiences to support both short- and long-term planning and decision-making.
- **Speak Up Snapshots** – Data collection tools focused on particularly timely topics of interest to education leaders. For this year, the focus is on the impact of mobile learning initiatives and the professional learning experiences and aspirations of teachers.
- **Speak Up Flash Indicators** – Short 5-question surveys on hot topics in education aimed to collect indicator data to inform current initiatives or decisions. This year's hot topics include school-to-home communications, school safety and digital citizenship.

Schools and districts annually use Speak Up's online surveys to not only learn about the views of their own stakeholders but to stimulate new discussions about how to create new learning environments that leverage digital tools to empower higher levels of student learning and teacher effectiveness.

Using national Speak Up data, Project Tomorrow has made K-12 school and district leaders, as well as policy makers at the local, state and federal levels, aware of the emerging trends in the use of technology for learning. The validity of the Speak Up findings on digital learning is enhanced by the size, variety and depth of the national data set. Since 2003, more than 5.5 million K-12 stakeholders including students, parents, teachers, librarians, principals, district administrators, technology leaders, communications officers and community members have shared their views and values on the use of technology in educational settings.

**- more -**

During this time, the Speak Up findings have had a tremendous impact on local school technology plans, 1:1 mobile device programs, digital content adoptions, homework gap solutions, community engagement, online learning and new classroom model implementations, digital citizenship lessons and more. At the state level, Speak Up has offered powerfully relevant data to inform policymaking especially around investments in technology, new learning models and teacher professional development. And at the federal level, the Speak Up data has not only informed federal policies and rule-making, but has stimulated new discussions about digital learning, equity and access.

"While we are incredibly proud of this legacy, we are not yet satisfied with the impact," said Evans. "We believe that we can do more to help school and district leaders built new capacities around how to effectively engage the voices of their constituents and then how to use that feedback as strategic input for planning and decision-making, especially around digital learning and student preparation for college, career and citizenry."

"Over the next year, we will be working with a select group of schools and districts on a new initiative around capacity building and leadership development. With this select group of innovators, we will leverage the expertise we have developed over the past ten years designing and implementing studies that measure the efficacy of digital learning in K-12 schools. Those studies conducted with districts, museums, nonprofit organizations, foundations, associations and companies have provided us with a keen understanding of the need for new tools and skills to support local leadership for digital learning."

In addition to the on-demand service and new survey options available now, Project Tomorrow will develop during 2019 and early 2020 new solutions to address a variety of vexing school and district challenges as identified from the Speak Up research. For example, new tools and resources will help K-12 leaders answer challenges such as these:

- How to effectively address parental concerns about screen time and online safety while preserving your vision for digital learning.
- How to translate the avalanche of data that leaders have into actionable knowledge that can realistically impact plans and decisions at the school or district level.
- How to engage stakeholders in meaningful discussions about how to leverage digital resources to prepare today's students to be ready for college, career and active citizenry.
- How school and leaders can inspire and empower teachers to think differently about instruction and student outcomes when using digital resources.
- How to build a culture for innovation that is sustainable and reliable even in times of stress or conflict.

"We are very excited about this new direction for Project Tomorrow and Speak Up because it directly addresses significant needs in K-12 education that we have uncovered in our analysis of the Speak Up data and through our direct work within K-12 classrooms, schools and district offices," said Evans. "We encourage others who share this vision to join us in this work to support our school and district leaders in developing new capacities to meet the increasingly complex challenges within education today."

**About Project Tomorrow & Speak Up**
Project Tomorrow is the nation's leading education nonprofit group dedicated to ensuring that today's K-12 students are well prepared to become tomorrow's leaders, innovators and engaged citizens of the world. The Speak Up Research Project for Digital Learning is a national initiative of Project Tomorrow. Since 2003, the annual Speak Up project has collected and reported on the views of more than 5.4 million K-12 students, teachers, administrators and parents representing more than 30,000 schools in all 50 states. This represents the largest collection of authentic, unfiltered stakeholder input on education, technology, schools of the future, science and math instruction, professional development and career exploration. Project Tomorrow's research goal is to help build the capacity of education leaders to create new learning experiences that prepare today's students to compete and contribute to the global economy and society.

<div align="center">###</div>