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Catholic School Leaders Expected to Gain Invaluable Insights into Their Schools' Technology Use and Needs

National Catholic Educational Association Teams Up with Project Tomorrow to Bring the Free Speak Up Tools to More School Leaders

Irvine, Calif. – Catholic school leaders are encouraged to take part in the [Speak Up Research Project for Digital Learning](#) as part of a new partnership between the [National Catholic Educational Association](#) (NCEA) and [Project Tomorrow](#), the international education nonprofit that lead the Speak Up project.

“For more than 15 years, schools across the country have been using Speak Up to gain valuable insights into the activities, attitudes and aspirations of their students, teachers and parents when it comes to technology and learning,” said Dr. Julie Evans, CEO of Project Tomorrow. “Catholic schools have always been part of the population of schools using Speak Up, but we expect this new partnership to help more school leaders gain access to our free tools.”

Catholic school leaders use Speak Up to learn the following from their students, staff and families:

- What access do Catholic school students have to technology and the internet when they are not at school?
- How does the use of technology in Catholic schools compare to public schools?
- What concerns Catholic school parents when it comes to technology and learning? What do they value about their children’s use of digital tools for learning?
- What do parents expect of their schools when it comes to school to home communications?
- What do teachers in Catholic schools need to be able to use digital tools and content more effectively? What is on their professional learning wish list?
- What are the expectations from students, parents and teachers about the use of digital tools in their ultimate school?

In addition to technology and learning, Speak Up always includes focused questions on a number of other educational topics. This year, there are questions about social emotional learning, school safety and coding. This year’s options also include special [free snapshot surveys](#) for schools looking for ways to evaluate the impact of their mobile learning initiatives and to get additional feedback from their teachers about their professional learning needs.

“After working with Project Tomorrow for several years and using some of their national-level data to inform our work, NCEA decided to take the next step and encourage greater participation among all Catholic schools,” said Pamela Bernards, Ed.D., Director of Professional Development, at NCEA. “We encourage all Catholic schools to take advantage of this free and timely tool to learn more about the views of your stakeholders and inform your efforts to create the best learning experiences for your students.”

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Catholic Schools Speak Up, page 2 of 2

To get started, school leaders simply need to [register a contact](#), [download the promotional materials](#) and make a plan for collecting the feedback from their students, staff and parents. The data will be delivered to all schools by February 2019 (or by January for those completing their participation by mid-December). Speak Up can be led from the diocese or school level. All data is confidential and local data is only shared with the registered Speak Up contact. Only national aggregated data is shared with partners, policymakers and the public.

NCEA hosted a webinar in October to introduce Speak Up to more members. The on-demand recording can be [accessed here](#).

Here's what some Catholic school leaders have to say about Speak Up:

“The Archdiocese of Newark piloted the Speak Up survey in the 2017-2018 school year. It provided insight into teachers’ perspectives on their comfort and use of technology to support students as well as the perspectives of students, parents, and community members. The insights are available at the school level and roll up into an archdiocesan wide perspective helping in the planning of technology training classes for the 2018-2019 school year,” said Dr. Margaret Dames, superintendent, Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey.

“Our parents entrust us to be good stewards of technology to teach their children. As educators, we do our best to implement technology to teach our students and hope that it is making an impact on their learning and that it is pertinent in their lives. Project Tomorrow’s Speak Up Survey triangulates our parents, teachers, administrators, and student information so that we can use data-driven decision-making. We can then compare diocesan, state, and national results with our school's data and then compare it yearly. We share this rich data with our PLC's, school board, technology planning committee and with our accreditation visits. It is a wealth of information,” said Dr. Karl Ochsner, STEM educator/technology integration, Saint John XXIII Catholic School, Diocese of Phoenix, Arizona.

“We have made the Speak-Up survey available to our schools for several years. The schools that have taken advantage of the free survey have been able to begin conversations and make informed decisions about digital learning, resources and equipment,” said Jane Schueller, associate superintendent, Diocese of Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Each year, the Speak Up Research Project collects feedback data from K-12 students, parents and educators about the role of technology for learning in and out of school – and gives that local data back to schools and districts as a free service. Since 2003, more than 5.4 million K-12 students, parents, teachers, librarians, principals, technology leaders, district administrators, communications officers and members of the community have shared their views and ideas through Speak Up.

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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 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.

About NCEA

In service of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, [NCEA](#) strengthens Catholic school communities by providing professional development, formation, leadership and advocacy.