Next Generation of Teachers Are Learning to Use Word and Excel; They Want to Master Digital and Social-Learning Tools for Classrooms

District Administrators Have More Positive Views of Technology than Principals and Teachers

Washington, D.C. – The number one skill aspiring teachers are being taught in their methods course is how to use word processing, spreadsheet and database tools. But when asked what would best prepare them to teach in a 21st century classroom, the college students suggested better training in current technology, according to Speak Up 2009 data released today by Project Tomorrow.

The *Unleashing Learning: Educators "Speak Up" about the Use of Emerging Technologies for Learning* report addresses how educators are using technology to facilitate learning environments where students have opportunities to learn collaboratively, with classmates or experts, anytime or anywhere using digitally-rich curriculum.

And, for the first time, the Speak Up survey included pre-service teachers (students in college majoring in education). These students said learning the following would best prepare them to teach today's students:

- learning how to use technology to differentiate instruction for students (75 percent),
- incorporating digital resources in a lesson (68 percent),
- locating and using electronic teaching aides (67 percent),
- creating and utilizing video or podcasts within a lesson (57 percent) and
- using electronic productivity tools (57 percent).

In March, Project Tomorrow released the findings of the student survey, *Creating our Future: Students Speak Up about their Vision for 21st Century Learning Project Tomorrow*, which outlined compelling evidence that students are using technology to take responsibility for their own learning, often times bypassing traditional educational settings. As "Free Agent Learners," students are using technology to personalize their learning experience to meet their individual learning styles and interests.

"Meeting students' demands for un-tethered, socially-based, digitally-rich learning experiences requires addressing several factors simultaneously," said Julie Evans, Chief Executive Officer, Project Tomorrow. "Campus-wide Internet access is the cornerstone of this vision, supported by the ability for students to access their work and classroom resources anytime and any place. At the same time, teachers need opportunities to learn how to effectively integrate mobile devices and digital resources and explore the use of technology to facilitate collaboration amongst their students. Districts, schools and teachers

also need to identify meaningful digital resources that will engage students in learning and utilize the technology."

The *Unleashing Learning* report include responses from online surveys administered in more than 5,700 schools and 71 schools of education in Fall 2009.

Aspiring teachers are more likely than their future colleagues to incorporate digitally-rich resources into their classrooms. Across the board, these future teachers express more interest in using:
- digital media tools (79 percent vs. 66 percent),
- digital resources such as, databases, electronic books, animations, or videos (59 percent vs. 46 percent),
- flip cameras (38 percent vs. 17 percent) in their classrooms,
- games (52 percent vs. 42 percent),
- virtual simulations (28 percent vs. 5 percent) and
- video conferences or webinars (19 percent vs. 8 percent) in their classrooms.

This new generation of teachers is also five times more likely to use electronic portfolios for their students (54 percent vs. 10 percent).

The next generation of teachers may find their strongest allies among district administrators (instead of fellow teachers and their principals). For instance, while district administrators are supportive of integrating mobile devices into the classroom, both the teachers' (76 percent) and principals' (44 percent) perception that mobile devices will be a distraction may influence the implementation. Students value the fact they can use their mobile device to look up information on the Internet, access their online textbook or collaborate with classmates, yet teachers are concerned that students will surf the Internet, text or play games

Overall district administrators are more likely then principals or teachers to recognize the value of using mobile devices for learning. The primary benefit is increased student engagement; however, mobile devices also support social based learning by enabling personalized learning and helping students develop skills in collaboration, teamwork, and communications.

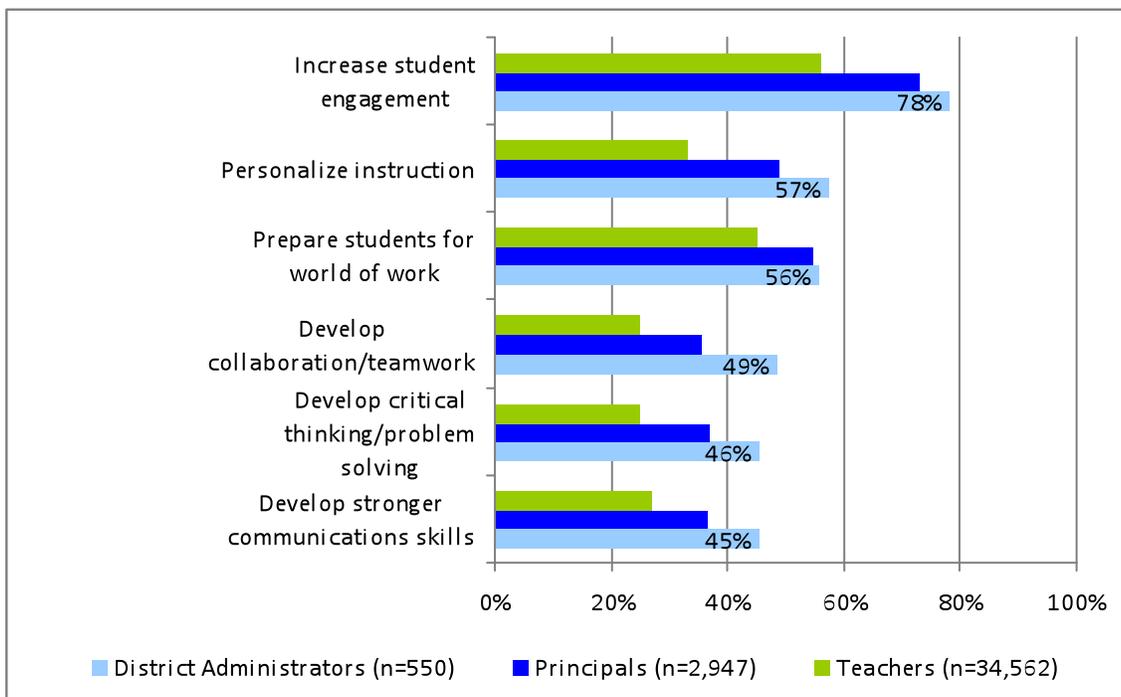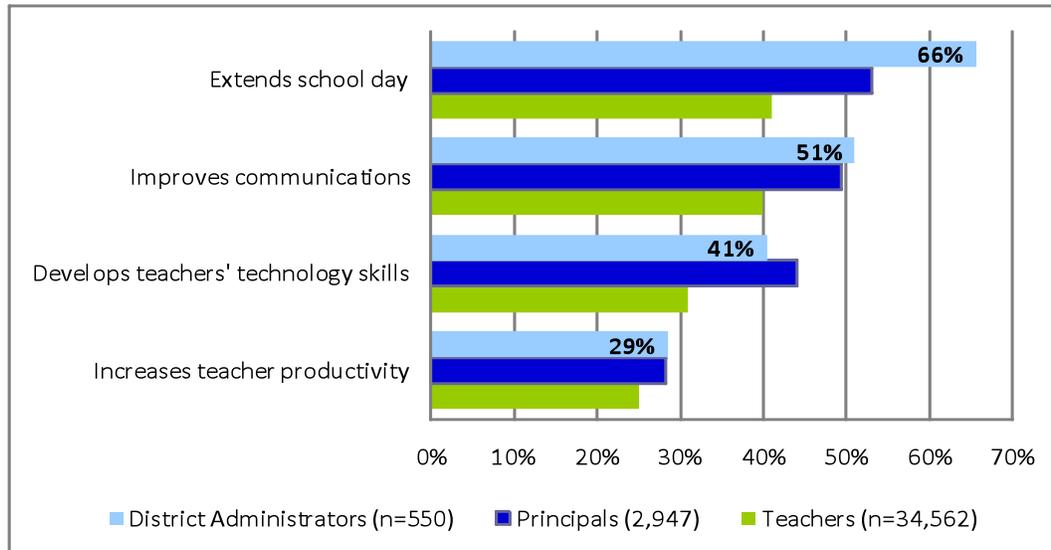**Figure 1: Educators' Speak Up about perceived benefits of using mobile devices for instruction**

Figure 2: Mobile devices benefit students and teachers

About Speak Up

Speak Up is a national initiative of Project Tomorrow, the nation's leading education nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that today's students are well prepared to be tomorrow's innovators, leaders and engaged citizens. Since fall 2003, the annual Speak Up National Research Project has collected and reported on the views of over 1.85 million K-12 students, teachers, administrators and parents representing over 23,000 schools in all 50 states. The Speak Up data represents the largest collection of authentic, unfiltered stakeholder input on education, technology, 21st century skills, schools of the future and science and math instruction. Education, business and policy leaders report using the data regularly to inform federal, state and local education programs.

In Fall 2009, Project Tomorrow surveyed 299,677 K-12 students, 26,312 parents, 38,642 teachers, 1,987 pre-service teachers and 3,947 administrators representing 5,757 schools and 1,215 districts including public (97 percent) and private (3 percent) schools. Schools were located in urban (38 percent), suburban (31 percent) and rural (32 percent) communities. Over one-half of the schools were Title I eligible (an indicator of student population poverty) and 42 percent of the participating schools had more than 50 percent minority population attending.

The Speak Up 2009 K-12 audience-specific surveys were administered online between October 18, 2009 and January 25, 2010. The surveys included foundation questions about technology use, 21st century skills and schools of the future, as well as emerging technologies (online learning, mobile devices and digital content), math instruction and STEM career exploration, and the challenges faced by teachers and administrators.

The Speak Up 2009 National Findings from the K-12 students and parents were released on March 16, 2010. You can access the national report on those findings "Creating Our Future: Students Speak Up about their Vision for 21st Century Learning" at
http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/pdfs/SUNationalFindings2009.pdf.

For more information, visit www.tomorrow.org

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