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NEWS CONTACTS:
Julie Evans, Chief Executive Officer
949 609-4660 ext 15
jevans@tomorrow.org

Speak Up 200 Recognizes Schools Across the Nation for Incorporating Student, Teacher, Parent, and School Administrator Ideas into Local Education Planning

Project Tomorrow Recognized the 2012 Speak Up 200: Schools and Districts Who Are Empowering Students, Teachers and Parents in Decision-Making

IRVINE, CA. (September 23rd, 2013) – Two hundred schools and districts across the country were recognized for incorporating feedback from their students as they develop strategic plans, make budgeting decisions, enhance their curriculum and determine professional development needs. Project Tomorrow®, a national education nonprofit, announced this year's Speak Up 200, a collection of the top K-12 schools in the country that encourage and involve authentic student, parent and educator ideas and views in education planning and decision-making.

"I am very excited to announce our honor roll of the top schools in the country that demonstrated by their high levels of participation in Speak Up 2012 their commitment to listening to their stakeholders' views on education and digital learning," said Julie Evans, CEO of Project Tomorrow. "This year's Speak Up 200 schools have done an excellent job of incorporating the views of students, parents, educators, and administrators in local decision-making. Each year, we strive to make progress in leveraging technology to enhance the educational experience for all in involved in our schools across the nation, and this year's Speak Up 200 cohort proves this goal is possible and attainable."

The schools were selected for this national distinction from the 35,000 schools nationwide that have participated in the annual Speak Up surveys, conducted by Project Tomorrow, since 2003. The Speak Up National Research Project collects K-12 student, parent and educator viewpoints on technology, 21st century education and student aspirations through an annual online survey process and shares that data with national, state and local policymakers to improve education for all children.

The schools selected for the 2012 Speak Up 200 represent a broad range of educational institutions in rural, suburban and urban communities. The complete list of Speak Up 200 recognized schools are highlighted on the Project Tomorrow website at **http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/speakup_200.html**.

Based upon total participation and demonstrated commitment to engaging their stakeholders in local decisions on education issues, six school districts were recognized for special distinctions:

Top five school districts (based on high level of participation in Speak Up):

- Klein Independent School District (Texas)
- Shelby County School District (Alabama)
- Weslaco Independent School District (Texas)
- McAllen Independent School District (Texas)
- Richardson Independent School District (Texas)

Top performing district for parent participation in the surveys:

- Shelby County School District (Alabama)

Top performing district for administrator participation in the surveys:

- Klein Independent School District (Texas)

Top performing district for teacher participation in the surveys:

- Klein Independent School District (Texas)

This year, schools and districts shared some of their insights on the benefits of participating in Speak Up:

"Speak Up is an excellent survey tool for the South Carolina Virtual School Program for several reasons. Speak Up is a way for us to survey our students at no charge to us. The promotional materials that are provided to us by Speak-Up survey have never failed to generate interest among our students, and the promotional materials have, without a doubt, helped us to increase our number of responses, which is critical to the success of any survey. Also, the level of transparency is wonderful. Speak Up allow us to not only review our results, but other results across the nation."
-- Vicki Williams, Research and Planning Administrator, South Carolina Virtual School Program, South Carolina

"The survey gives us a clear picture of where we are at in our implementation of technology and 21st Century Skills in our teaching and the effect on student learning. This is a work in progress and every year we can see how we have progressed and see where the weak links are and take steps to make positive changes."
-- Maureen Koenig, 7th & 8th Grade Science Teacher, Yorba Linda Middle School, Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District, California

" …We view participation in Speak Up as an opportunity - especially for students - to play a part in participatory democracy. Having their voices represented is important to them and to us."
--Ann McMullan, Executive Director Educational Technology, Klein Independent School District, Texas

"The data collected through the Speak Up survey[s] was shared with key stakeholders in the district including parents, patrons, Board of Education, and the Technology Advisory Committee members. Each group found the data informative and helpful to them in their work.
--Kristy Sailors, Director of Educational Technology, Blue Valley School District, Kansas

Project Tomorrow will promote the schools' distinction to the Congressional representative and state Governor of each Speak Up 200 school to demonstrate the power of educational innovation at the local level. The schools will also receive a unique Speak Up 200 logo to include on their school and district websites.

Additionally, this year Speak Up 200 Schools will receive a special Gold, Silver, or Bronze badge to display on webpages, e-mails, and more.

Project Tomorrow has tapped into the expertise of this year's Speak Up 200 schools to develop new questions for Speak Up 2013 which will be open October 2nd through December 20th, 2013 for student, educator, parent input and more at http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/. Additionally, their success stories are being shared with our partners and national policy organizations to inform national and regional education reform efforts.

More than 466,000 K-12 students, teachers, administrators and parents, representing 8,020 public, private and charter schools from all around the country participated in the Speak Up 2012 surveys which were open for participation in fall 2012.

About Project Tomorrow

Project Tomorrow is the nation's leading education nonprofit organization dedicated to the empowerment of student voices in education. With 17 years experience in the K-12 education sector, Project Tomorrow regularly provides consulting and research support about key trends in K-12 science, math and technology education to school districts, government agencies, business and higher education. For additional information, visit: www.tomorrow.org.

About the Speak Up National Research Project

The Speak Up National Research project annually polls K-12 students, parents and educators about the role of technology for learning in and out of school and represents the largest collection of authentic, unfiltered stakeholder voice on digital learning. Since 2003, over 3 million K-12 students, parents, teachers, librarians, principals, technology leaders and district administrators have shared their views and ideas through Speak Up. Education, business and policy leaders report that they use the data regularly to inform federal, state and local education programs.

Speak Up 2012 was made possible through the generous support by many of our nation's most innovative companies, foundations and nonprofit organizations including Blackboard K-12, Dream Box, HP, K12, Inc., Schoolwires, SMART Technologies, Wireless Reach, and Rosetta Stone Education. Project Tomorrow partners with over 75 different education associations, organizations, and think-tanks for outreach to the schools and development of the survey questions including the American Association of School Administrators, Consortium for School Networking, Digital Learning Day, Digital Promise, International Association for K-12 Online Learning, International Society for Technology in Education, National Association of Secondary School Principals, Technology Leadership Network, Secondary Education Teacher's Association, and the Southern Regional Education Board.

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