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STUDENTS VOICE THEIR THOUGHTS ON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

NC New Schools/Breakthrough Learning and YouthTruth Student Survey partner to collect student perception data at schools across the nation

North Carolina/San Francisco – NC New Schools/Breakthrough Learning announces a 3-year partnership with national nonprofit YouthTruth Student Survey to gather student perception data that will help inform the design and development of programs, services, and learning approaches at more than 130 schools across the United States.

“There is a national need to improve how we support and educate our students,” said Angela Hinson Quick, Ed.D, Senior Vice President of NC New Schools/Breakthrough Learning. “Changes are being made for the benefit of students, but all too often, their voices are left out of the process.”

Beginning in early 2016, students from a sampling of NC New Schools/Breakthrough Learning partner schools will provide feedback about their school experience through the anonymous online YouthTruth survey.

Students will voice feedback on the topics that matter most to delivering a high-quality education. A growing body of academic research from sources including Stanford University’s [John W. Gardner Center](#)¹ the [Measures of Effective Teaching Project](#),² and others³ link student perceptions to academic outcomes. The YouthTruth survey topics will include:

- student engagement;
- academic rigor;
- relationships with teachers and peers (including bullying);
- school culture;
- college and career readiness.

Select schools will tailor their surveys with STEM questions while others will add a Project-Based Learning and/or Student Motivation and Grit module to capture a wide volume of data.

“This research tool lets us tap into what students are thinking,” continued Dr. Quick. “We take a continuous learning approach in all that we do. Knowing what students think well in advance helps us design learning systems that take us one step closer to preparing students for college, career and life.”

¹ Strobel, K. (2010). “[Practices that Promote Middle School Students’ Motivation and Achievement](#).” John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities.

² Gates Foundation. (2013). “Ensuring Fair and Reliable Measures of Effective Teaching”. MET Project.

³A 2001 study in the Journal of Educational Psychology found that students who perceived stronger connections between their schoolwork and their success later in life had higher grades and lower absenteeism. See: Church, M. (2001). “[Perceptions of Classroom Environment, Achievement Goals, and Achievement Outcomes](#).” *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 93(1), 43-54. Other relevant research linking student perceptions with learning and outcomes can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

The resulting data will be used to help teachers and school administrators better address the needs of their students. The feedback will also inform the design of professional development and student-centered learning environments across the NC New Schools/Breakthrough Learning network.

“We are incredibly excited to engage in such a thoughtful, student-centered partnership,” said Jen Vorse Wilka, YouthTruth’s Executive Director. “NC New Schools/Breakthrough Learning provides an effective model for how to listen to students in a way that develops a culture of ongoing improvement and accountability. We are honored to provide the mechanism that will allow student voices to be heard and acted upon.”

About YouthTruth Student Survey

YouthTruth is a national nonprofit that harnesses student perceptions to help educators accelerate improvements in their K–12 schools and classrooms. Through validated survey instruments and tailored advisory services, YouthTruth partners with schools, districts, states, and educational organizations to enhance learning for all students. Founded in 2008 in collaboration with the Center for Effective Philanthropy, YouthTruth has surveyed hundreds of thousands of students across 33 states and four countries, including Russia, Thailand, and Singapore. For more information, visit www.youthtruthsurvey.org.

About NC New Schools/Breakthrough Learning

NC New Schools/Breakthrough Learning is a professional services agency focused on developing high-performing schools and school districts by providing innovative approaches to teacher and administrator professional learning. Since 2003, NC New Schools/Breakthrough Learning has partnered with districts, higher education, businesses and communities in every region of the state to ensure that all students graduate ready for college, careers and life. For more information, visit ncnewschools.org and follow on social media [@ncnewschools](https://twitter.com/ncnewschools).

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