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TEACHERS TURNING TO THE WEB TO HELP MEET NATIONAL TESTING REQUIREMENTS AND TIME PRESSURE CHALLENGES, SURVEY SHOWS

First Web 2.0 Networking Site for Teachers Surveys Educator Concerns, Online Usage Habits

Cambridge, MA – October 16, 2006 – Squaring national testing requirements with individualized student needs and classroom time pressures poses the biggest challenge for K-12 educators, according to the results of a new national survey sponsored by TeachAde, the first Web 2.0 resource to enable online teacher communities and resource sharing.

The survey revealed that most teachers, particularly younger ones and those new to the profession, are actively engaged with online resources, viewing them as an important tool for lesson development, project ideas and professional development.

TeachAde, the first website of its kind to use Web 2.0 second-generation technology, commissioned the research to sample educator opinions regarding the current classroom environment as well as resources available to enhance their teaching and professional development.

“While these findings highlight the most significant pressures teachers face, they also show teachers are turning to the Web to help them meet these challenges,” said Wade Dyke, president and chief executive officer of TeachAde. “Many teachers expressed interest in participating in online educational communities to share resources which could help promote professional development, as well as provide a valuable source of teacher mentoring as growing numbers of baby boomer educators retire.”

Teachers nearly evenly ranked meeting national standardized testing requirements (65%), fulfilling individual student needs (65%) and time pressure (61%) as the biggest challenges that impact their ability to teach. On average, teachers said about 28% of classroom time is spent preparing students for national testing requirements, including those mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act, although one-fourth of teachers, particularly at the K-6 level, spend half or more classroom time on such preparations.

Dyke said that professional development is a priority for the vast majority of teachers, even though most say it gets put off because of their other obligations. About 60% gave their school administrations average or lower marks in providing professional development.

The survey also examined teacher attitudes towards restricted access to social networking sites for children from federally funded schools, such as proposed by the Deleting Online Predators Act (DOPA). While only 24% of respondents were familiar with DOPA, 71% favored restrictions, even though 80% believe the act would negatively affect their ability to do research and network online.

On average, teachers spend 21 hours a week online, half of that spent in a professional capacity. Most of their online activity is conducted after school hours from home.

Participating in the survey were 205 teachers, each of whom spend a minimum of five hours per week online, at least two hours of which is in support of professional activities. The average age of respondents is 42, and 90% are female. Nearly half hold graduate degrees, and an additional 28% have completed post-graduate studies. The survey was conducted by MSI International.

TeachAde™ (www.teachade.com) is an interactive website designed for K-12 teachers, giving them the ability to share, rate, create and search for resources to enhance their teaching and professional development, as well as network with other teachers. Powered by Web 2.0 second-generation, Internet-based technology which permits online collaboration, the free site is designed to improve education by enabling Web teacher communities and resource sharing.

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