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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CALIFORNIA STUDENTS SEND MESSAGE: FIX OUR SCHOOLS**

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA – January 8, 2008** – In findings released today, YouthNoise, a not-for-profit internet-based meeting place for activist youth, reports California's High School students are deeply concerned about the quality of education they receive. Their most pressing concern is the shortage of good teachers and counseling followed by unhealthy conditions related to facilities and food service.

Between November 5 and December 15, 2007, over 700 California youth, mostly from low-income communities, posted stories at [www.RightToLearnCA.org](http://www.RightToLearnCA.org) about their educational experiences. From San Diego to Sacramento and from Inner City Los Angeles to the suburban communities of The Bay Area, youth's message is clear – California must fix its public schools and young people are eager to play a role in making this happen.

44% of stories submitted cited shortage of good teachers and counseling as students' most pressing concern; 30% of stories mentioned unhealthy conditions related to facilities and food service; 16% talked about inadequate funding. Other concerns included safety and violence and limited access to books and computers.

*The biggest thing affecting my grades is the size of the classes I am in. Seriously, some of my classes have around 40 kids in them. That is insane! I know public high schools are overflowing with students, but I think we need to get more teachers because right now some of my teachers didn't even know my name until three-quarters of the way into the semester.*  
Alynaugh (where from)

*Regular schools don't give us the one on one attention that we need because there's not enough time and there's crowded classes. A teacher is supposed to teach his/her students, and show them new things. In my case my teacher just gives assignments every day, expecting us to do them without much explanation...I'm hoping for more teachers that actually teach and actually connect with their students.* AsucenaA (where from)

*“Waking up every morning is painful ... going to public school every day means leaving the comfort of my home where somebody cares about me, or at least knows my name ... we as students need to feel important in our learning environment. We need to know that the place*

*where we spend the majority of our lives cares about each of our futures.”*  
— conehead (Granite Bay)

*“I didn’t even know there were [A-G] classes you had to take to go to a four-year university. So I went to talk to my counselor, and she told me, ‘Well, there’s nothing I can do. There was no way I was going to a four-year university. ‘ I felt dumb and betrayed by my education system.”*  
— SMcKinley08 (Long Beach)

Ginger Thomson, YouthNoise CEO commented, “The 750 students who submitted stories and the more than 29,000 who visited the site since its launch show students can and want to be part of the debate on education reform that will take place during 2008 Year of Education. We need to listen to them because they are the primary consumers of public education and will work alongside school leaders to improve their school if they are included in the process.”

Going forward, during 2008 Year of Education and into 2009, the **Right To Learn** Campaign will provide a platform for students to join together with one another and with teachers, school administrators and State and local decision makers to address the challenges they have encountered. Through a series of phases and Days of Action this Spring, youth will create, promote and advocate for the solutions they have identified.

The full report will be available in PDF format along with an accompanying video from the Right To Learn website on January 8, 2008, at [www.RightToLearnCA.org](http://www.RightToLearnCA.org).

About YouthNoise:

YouthNoise is the first user-generated online meeting place for activist youth. YouthNoise is a nonpartisan, nonsectarian, nonprofit organization that brings young people ages 16-26 together to form a global network for sharing and converting their ideas into action to improve the world around them. Featuring 100% youth-generated content, YouthNoise.com has registered more than 120,000 youth from all fifty states and more than 170 countries, and welcomes an average of 100,000 visitors per month. Originally founded in 2001 by Save the Children, YouthNoise is an independent 501c3 organization based in San Francisco, CA. For more information, visit [www.youthnoise.com](http://www.youthnoise.com).

About **Right To Learn**:

YouthNoise's **Right To Learn** campaign engages high school and college students in a statewide program to raise their voices for education reform. Students have told stories of the challenges they face in graduating prepared for college or a competitive job; and in coming months will be encouraged to join together within and across communities to create and advocate for their solutions. The programmatic action takes place on a web site that has been created for this initiative, [www.RightToLearnCA.org](http://www.RightToLearnCA.org). The program is specifically designed to engage all the voices of California’s youth, including underserved and minority students in the most marginalized communities across the state. The program was developed with a generous grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

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