



## **FINAL PRESS RELEASE**

### **National Student/Parent Mock Election To Give Students a Voice in 2008 Election**

#### **Students Can Register Now at [www.nationalmockelection.org](http://www.nationalmockelection.org) To Cast Presidential Ballots on October 30**

Washington, D.C. (Sept. 8, 2008) – Students of all ages – from kindergarten through college – will be joining the National Student/Parent Mock Election (NSPME) to vote for their candidates of choice on October 30, five days before eligible students and the rest of America select the next President of the United States. This national voter-education program for students and their parents gives young Americans the chance to make their voices heard in the electoral process. Every U.S. student, parent and educator is invited to participate free of charge at [www.nationalmockelection.org](http://www.nationalmockelection.org).

“In the classrooms of today are our future Presidents, members of Congress, governors and judges – but most importantly, these young people are the voters of tomorrow,” said NSPME President Gloria Kirshner. “Whether we are sending these children to the White House or to the polls, we hope to give them a deep understanding of ‘government of the people, by the people, and for the people.’ ”

Kirshner said that with support from the 2008 campaign partners and collaborators – Google, the National Association of Broadcasters’ Education Foundation, the educational publisher Pearson, USA TODAY, Declare Yourself, Strong American Schools, and School Perceptions – this year’s Mock Election campaign is significantly expanding its offerings of educational materials for America’s classrooms.

Kirshner added that through the extensive outreach resources of the campaign partners, she hopes to increase the number of Mock Election voters from four million in the last presidential election to many more young people and their parents this October 30. She noted that for the first time in the 28-year history of the Mock Election, two elementary and two secondary schools will receive a special award for highest participation levels—a visit to their school of an original copy of the Declaration of Independence, provided by the Declare Yourself youth voting organization with funding from the Pearson Foundation.

Google will host the National Student/Parent Mock Election Night headquarters at its offices in Washington, D.C., where student volunteers will tabulate the final results of the mock ballots cast

by elementary through college students across the nation and in American schools overseas. Results of the NSPME will be posted on [www.nationalmockelection.org](http://www.nationalmockelection.org) on October 30.

“The Mock Election gives students of all ages and their parents the opportunity to vote for president, members of Congress from their own state and districts, and governors of their states when there is a contested race,” said Kirshner. She added, “In so doing, they learn many valuable lessons, foremost of which is what they can hope to contribute to our democracy by voting.”

A second ballot invites students to learn about and vote on the major issues, including the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and America’s troubled economy. Another ballot invites a comparison of some of the country’s most popular past presidents and lets students vote for the ones they would choose today if they were still with us.

Kirshner noted that the Mock Election has assembled a “vast curriculum of materials that teachers may use at their discretion pertaining to our democracy and political institutions, our civic responsibilities and efforts to strengthen our schools. Many of those materials were contributed by our 2008 campaign partners.”

### **HOW THE NATIONAL STUDENT/PARENT MOCK ELECTION PARTNERS ARE BRINGING AWARENESS TO THE IMPORTANCE OF EACH PERSON’S VOTE**

GOOGLE - As part of its collaboration with the Mock Election, Google has created Elections Tools for Teachers, a web site that helps teachers to bring some of the best Internet tools into the classroom to help students get engaged. Elections Tools for Teachers includes descriptions and suggested learning activities for tools such as YouTube, Google Maps (including an interactive Electoral College map), Google Trends, Google Elections News, Elections Video Search, Blogger and more. ([www.google.com/educators/elections\\_tools.html](http://www.google.com/educators/elections_tools.html)).

DECLARE YOURSELF, the national, non-partisan youth voter advocacy group, will provide on-line voter registration and information for students who turn 18 before Election Day. ([www.declareyourself.com](http://www.declareyourself.com)).

DECLARE YOURSELF and The PEARSON FOUNDATION are collaborating to sponsor a U.S. tour of an original copy of the Declaration of Independence, printed July 4, 1776 and owned by Declare Yourself founder Norman Lear. With funding from the Pearson Foundation, the Declaration of Independence will visit the hometowns of six schools – two elementary, two middle schools and two high schools – that either have the highest absolute number or highest percentage of Mock Election votes. ([www.declareyourself.org](http://www.declareyourself.org) and [www.pearsonfoundation.org](http://www.pearsonfoundation.org)).

The PEARSON FOUNDATION and the Digital Arts Alliance will team up with the National Writing Project and its *Letters to the Next President: Writing Our Future* initiative, a program that invites young people across the country to share their thoughts about the issues they want the next president to address. The young writers will publish their letters online through the Google Docs application. Teachers and students will then be invited to respond to these letters with their personal videos, which will be shared in classrooms around the country and broadcast in Town Hall meetings in conjunction with the tour of DECLARE YOURSELF's original copy of the Declaration of Independence. In addition, the National Writing Project’s website of resources for teaching about the presidential election includes links to the National Student/Parent Mock Election site.

PEARSON, the world's leading education publisher, will promote the Mock Election campaign to schools across the country and to national education and civic associations. Additionally, Pearson is creating a variety of print and digital social studies, civics, and government materials for elementary, middle, and high school classrooms which will be available at [www.PearsonSchool.com/ElectionKit](http://www.PearsonSchool.com/ElectionKit). Pearson's Family Education Network will reach out to elementary and secondary teachers, parents, and students through its [www.TeacherVision.com](http://www.TeacherVision.com) and [www.FactMonster.com](http://www.FactMonster.com) sites. And Pearson will promote the Mock Election to college students with outreach to university TV and radio stations, college papers, and through Pearson's Higher Education Student Advisory Board.

STRONG AMERICAN SCHOOLS, a nonpartisan public awareness and advocacy effort aimed at elevating discussion among America's leaders about the need for education reform, is providing funding for the National Student/Parent Mock Election campaign. Strong American Schools seeks to draw public support and political will around the critical mission of improving our nation's schools. The organization supports three common sense solutions to improve America's schools: rigorous standards, effective teachers, and increased time and support for learning. ([www.strongamericanschools.org](http://www.strongamericanschools.org)).

USA TODAY Education, the arm of the USA TODAY brand that develops and delivers educational products and resources to students and educators nationwide, is providing support for the National Student/Parent Mock Election by contributing resources that supply students with the news and information they need to become civically engaged. These include USA TODAY's online resources, interactive features and educational materials that help students examine national issues from many perspectives, clarify their own beliefs and become advocates for policies that promote their values. In addition, USA TODAY's Election 2008 Student Portfolio program utilizes USA TODAY's daily coverage to guide students through investigating ongoing election topics. ([www.education.usatoday.com](http://www.education.usatoday.com)).

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTER'S EDUCATION FOUNDATION (NABEF) is encouraging radio and television stations nationwide to partner with their local schools on the mock election. NABEF has built a comprehensive on-line tool kit for stations. This includes school contact information, partnership ideas, Public Service Announcements scripts, downloadable school posters and other school materials. Stations across the country are already working on pre-election activities such as student-produced Public Service Announcements, Presidential Minutes, debates, and town hall meetings. They will also cover the school mock elections on October 30. ([www.NABEF.org/mockelection](http://www.NABEF.org/mockelection)).

SCHOOL PERCEPTIONS, a leading education research firm that specializes in gathering, organizing and presenting school-related data, will provide the infrastructure that allows coordinators the flexibility of adding custom questions and participants the option of voting online or with paper and pencil. In addition, School Perceptions will tabulate the totals and work with Google to present the results on Mock Election Night. ([www.schoolperceptions.com](http://www.schoolperceptions.com)).

The National Student/Parent Mock Election receives support from numerous organizations, including the National Parent Teachers Association, the National School Boards Association, the National Council for the Social Studies, the American Association of School Administrators, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the Council of the Great City Schools. The Election Assistance Commission and the Kaplan Foundation provide ongoing funding for the Mock Election. The

collective contributions of all supporters help NSPME create a richer and more meaningful experience for students, parents and teachers.

For more information and to register to vote, go to [www.nationalmockelection.org](http://www.nationalmockelection.org)

**About the National Student/Parent Mock Election**

**The NSPME is** the nation's oldest, largest and most successful voter-education project, dating from 1980. Since the first Mock Election in 1980, nearly 50 million young voters have cast their ballots and, in the process, discovered what it means to be an American citizen and the value of citizenship in our democracy.

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