



BOXFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS TRUST

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**B.E.S.T. Awards Grants to Boxford Elementary Schools for 16 SMART Board™
Whiteboards and 3 Laptop Computers**

Support from Boxford PTO and School Board Allow for SMART Board Installation Upgrade

Boxford, MA – March 11, 2008 – Boxford Elementary Schools Trust (B.E.S.T.), the town's non-profit educational foundation, today announced that they have granted funds for 16 SMART Board interactive white boards, 6 of which will be installed at the Harry Lee Cole School and 10 at the Spofford Pond School. B.E.S.T. will also provide funding for 3 laptop computers for Cole School's special education teachers through its Harriet Ernst endowment.

The SMART Board grant was made possible through B.E.S.T.'s *Touched by Technology* capital campaign launched in 2006 to infuse technology into Boxford's elementary schools with the goal of equipping each classroom with a laptop and SMART Board. Over \$100,000 has been raised to date and B.E.S.T. hopes to raise an additional \$50,000 before the end of this school year. The fundraising drive currently underway includes a laptop drawing on April 1st, the annual B.E.S.T. Home Tour on May 10th, and the *B.E.S.T. Homeowner's Resource Directory* that will be published in May.

This grant cycle brought new challenges for the B.E.S.T. grant committee and board. Having learned from experiences in using portable SMART Board models at Cole and Spofford, Candyce Wainright, technology instructor, submitted a grant application for 16

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SMART Board whiteboards to be permanently installed in the classrooms for easier day-to-day use by the teachers. After much deliberation with the school administration, school committee, finance committee and Boxford Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), everyone agreed that the installed model was the preferred choice. The school board, B.E.S.T., and PTO teamed together to contribute the additional funds needed to install 16 SMART Board whiteboards in the classrooms.

“Once we understood the benefits of the installed model, we were eager to find additional funding,” said Kathy Tyler, co-president of B.E.S.T. “The PTO and school board have been key contributors in supporting the *Touched by Technology* initiative and we’re delighted they were able to supplement the funding for this grant. I am also grateful to our B.E.S.T. Grant Committee, headed by Jill Godett, who reorganized our granting procedures and provided the thoughtful analysis and communication necessary to provide the most effective distribution of funds. It’s been a tremendous community effort – one that has had an enormous impact on the curriculum in Boxford’s elementary schools.”

The 16 SMART Boards will be installed during April school vacation. The installed model is easier to use, automatically synchronizes with the laptop software, and has less shadowing than the portable model. Mounted directly on the classroom wall, teachers need not be concerned about the disruption of the cumbersome equipment or students tripping on the lengthy power cables traversing the classroom.

“Using the portable SMART Board for teaching this past year has worked well although I’m really looking forward to having the installed model,” said Jen Abati, sixth grade teacher at Spofford. “The mounted boards will free up space in my classroom and will make it easier for the students to see and use the SMART Board during a lesson. The hands-on process of dragging and dropping icons and writing directly on the board helps students retain the course materials.”

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Laptop Computers for Cole School Special Education Teachers

Cole School special education teachers also submitted a grant request for 3 laptop computers to help them support approximately 40 students with special needs who attend Cole school. The laptops will enhance the teacher's ability to reinforce lessons being taught in the classroom during individual sessions with special needs students as well as provide ready access for assessing student's individual education plans (IEP), assessment data, evaluation results and progress reports.

“Harriet Ernst was a beloved teacher at Cole School for many years and the endowment was established in her memory,” said Diana Merriam, co-president of B.E.S.T. “The endowment allows B.E.S.T. to award grants in addition to those awarded through our annual grant fund. The special education staff at Cole School submitted a persuasive, thorough grant application and the B.E.S.T. board unanimously agreed to award this grant using funds from the Harriet Ernst endowment.”

About SMART Board Technology

An interactive tool that can bring learning to life in the classroom, the SMART Board is a whiteboard that is connected to a computer. Once the computer image is projected on the board, the SMART Board can be used as a computer. By just using your finger you can control it. This interactive tool is extremely engaging and not only increases student participation, but also brings a new sense of comradeship to classes. Massachusetts public schools including Concord-Carlisle, Lynnfield and Boxborough, among others are using SMART technology in their classrooms. For more information, visit www.smarttech.com.

About B.E.S.T.

The Boxford Elementary Schools Trust (B.E.S.T.) was founded in 1996 as a non-profit 501C(3), educational foundation. An all-volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to

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fostering excellence in Boxford's elementary schools, B.E.S.T. provides grants in three primary areas; technology professional development, and education in-residence programs.

Corporate Touched by Technology grant sponsors for the 2007/2008 school year who contributed by advertising in the *B.E.S.T. Homeowner's Resource Directory* include Howell Design & Build, ND Landscaping, Cuvee Storage Systems, B&G Cabinet, Beaulieu Cabinetry, Gwen Washburn at Coldwell Banker, CEM Home Maids, Eagle-Tribune Publishing, Kraunelis Insurance, Meadowview Construction and Soucy Insurance. For more information about B.E.S.T., visit www.bestforboxford.org or email info@bestforboxford.org.

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