



**BOXFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS TRUST, INC.**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is *Touched by Technology*?**

*Touched by Technology* is B.E.S.T.'s initiative to infuse technology in every classroom at Boxford's Cole and Spofford Pond elementary schools.

### **How will B.E.S.T raise money to infuse technology in Boxford's elementary schools?**

Fundraising for the technology capital campaign will be through B.E.S.T.'s February fundraising drive, the B.E.S.T. Home Tour on May 19, 2007, the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the B.E.S.T. *Homeowner's Resource Directory* and other initiatives to garner corporate and foundation donations.

### **How much money does B.E.S.T hope to raise?**

B.E.S.T.'s technology capital campaign fundraising goal is \$145,000, approximately \$145 per Boxford elementary school student.

### **Will all classrooms have a SMART Board™ if you raise \$145,000?**

After our fundraising drives this year, B.E.S.T. will work with the elementary school administrators and school committee to determine how to best apply the money in the Technology Fund for our schools. We will consider SMART Boards, LCD projectors, laptops, software and other recommendations to support infusing technology in Boxford's schools.

### **Why is the fundraising drive in February?**

Organizations including B.E.S.T., PTO, SPED, Spofford Band, etc. are assigned specific months during the school year for fundraising. B.E.S.T.'s months for active fundraising are February and May. B.E.S.T. is appealing to families to donate in lieu of paying to attend a February fundraising event or purchasing a fundraising item. (For all those people who have been saying "I'd rather just write a check," now you can!) Of course, donations are welcome throughout the year.

### **Why is B.E.S.T. focusing on technology?**

Studies have shown that enhancing the teaching tools in schools through technology improves the quality of the learning experience, leads to greater retention of information and increases student participation. New technology in our schools can positively impact the learning environment for our children.

### **Can I make a donation so my child's classroom can get a SMART Board?**

We're seeking donations for the B.E.S.T. Technology Capital Campaign. The Technology Fund will be used toward the goal of providing every teacher in the school system the tools he or she needs, so that all children can benefit from the wonderful teaching tools now available through technology. We cannot apply your donation directly to your child's classroom. However, your support and the collective donations we receive will help us reach our goal.

### **So is B.E.S.T. all about technology now? What about the wonderful Artist In-Residence programs you've funded in the past?**

Together with PTO, B.E.S.T. will continue to support and fund Artist In-Residence programs for curriculum enrichment.

**Why are you only considering Apple computers and SMART Boards?**

The schools reviewed the solutions available when they implemented the technology pilot program last year and felt that Apple and SMART offered the best solutions. They've been pleased with both solutions and keeping the platforms consistent moving forward will be important for administration and maintenance.

**Are we getting a good price?**

The team evaluated various vendors and found the pricing for the equipment purchased to date to be competitive. All future purchases will be reviewed by a team to ensure we're receiving competitive pricing.

**When will my child's classroom have a permanently installed SMART Board?**

B.E.S.T. would like to see all classrooms have the technology the teachers need to enrich curriculum and day-to-day learning. At this time, we are not sure if each classroom will have its own SMART Board or if they will continue to be shared resources. A lot will depend on the funding available.

**What additional software is needed to run a SMART Board?**

The SMART Board comes with a plethora of software for educators for interactive lesson activities to correlated standards including cross-curricular, English, language arts, math, music, science, social studies and more. To learn more, please visit <http://education.smarttech.com/ste/en-US/Ed+Resource/>.

**Why should the teachers have their own laptops?**

While teachers will continue to have access to the computer labs, it's our belief that providing teachers with individual laptops will increase their ability to use technology to improve the learning experience for our children.

**Why is B.E.S.T. paying for teachers to have laptops?**

The public school budgets for the foreseeable future won't be able to fund laptops for our teachers.

**Who owns the laptops if the teachers leave?**

All equipment will become the property of Boxford's elementary schools. Any teacher who resigns from their position would be required to turn in their laptop.

**What kind of tech support is available in the schools?**

Both Cole and Spofford Pond schools have staff to provide technical support. Apple and SMART Board products are very easy to use and there will be ongoing education and training provided for teachers.

**Is teacher training required? How long will it take and how will it be implemented?**

Training has already begun! There have been workshops, after school meetings, teacher development days, and some attended a summer program last year. As with all technology, there's always something new to learn but the ease and simplicity of the Apple computer and the SMART Boards significantly accelerates the learning curve and there are numerous resources for teachers and administrators to draw on. Training will be ongoing and teachers are eager and willing.

**How will the training be funded?**

New and ongoing training will be funded by the district and B.E.S.T.'s professional development grants. A lot of the training will also be provided through the schools' technical staff and power users.

**Do you really think technology will make a difference in my child's education?**

Fact: Interactive whiteboards are now present in 28% of all K-12 schools in the US. "When you've got their attention, students are willing to learn."

**What do teachers think about this technology initiative?**

Teachers recognize that the world is changing - effort will need to be made to incorporate any new tool into their teaching but technology provides exciting opportunities for growth, enrichment & organization both personally and for students. Clearly, technology provides exciting opportunities to engage 21st century learners - isn't that what teaching is all about? Following are some teacher quotes:

*"Having laptops is a wonderful opportunity as a classroom teacher. I appreciate the ability to transfer work, E-mail colleagues, share files and plan for the future. It is giving us the chance to reach for the stars!"*

*"With a laptop, I can more easily communicate with parents, create lessons, organize and maintain data, research material and communicate with colleagues. I feel fortunate to work in a community that supports parents."*

**Are there other school systems that are using technology?**

Public schools including Boxborough, Concord-Carlisle, Lynnfield, Weston, Middleton and others are using SMART Board technology in their classrooms today. Many communities are also providing laptops to teachers so they can easily take their work from school to home providing greater opportunity for creativity, reducing the burden of switching between a school-based and home system, and simplifying the grading and assessment process. Many forms of technology are available and are being evaluated such as the E.L.M.O. projection system. B.E.S.T. also recently upgraded technology in our schools' libraries.

*"The new library software program gives a more accurate and easier to use search tool for the students which, in turn, makes the books in the library more accessible to all. It also shows a more accurate picture of the current state of the library and provides a more robust management tool for adding and maintaining resources. For this, we are grateful! The previous system was outdated by at least 10 years."*