



Austin Cashin solves a lunar puzzle on the SMART Board during his science class at Spofford Pond School.

photo by Linda Greenstein

Goal is SMART Boards in every Boxford classroom

BEST backing classroom tech

by Linda Greenstein

What do educators need for a 21st century classroom? The Boxford Elementary School Trust (BEST) believes the answer is: Technology.

"Our goal is to provide technology-infused classrooms to allow for more creative and efficient approaches to curriculum, and to encourage innovation and collaboration amongst and across grade-level teaching teams," says Kathy Tyler, BEST co-president. "Technology will, ultimately, have a very positive impact on our schools and our children's future."

In 2006, BEST granted funds for a pilot program that provided a laptop computer to every second and third grade teacher. In addition, they purchased four SMART Boards for the schools along with LCD projectors. 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. The SMART Board technology was demonstrated to parents on Jan. 23 at the Spofford Pond School Literacy Night.

"The response to SMART Boards from students and teachers has been overwhelmingly

positive," reported Tyler.

"I am very excited about the SMART Boards," exclaimed fifth-grade teacher Joanne Green, who has been actively using the technology in her Spofford Pond School science and math classes.

"When I use the SMART Board, all you have to do is look in the faces of my students and you can see how engaged they are with the materials and lesson. This technology reaches out to every type of learner, even the most reluctant learner is more engaged. Having a SMART Board in every classroom would be so great for the students."

"The BEST initiative for our schools has provided the teachers and students with a new and exciting dimension for learning," commented Cole School Principal Kathryn Nikas.

"The SMART board technology has afforded teachers and students an instructional experience that is interactive as children can learn a new concept in our curriculum, and try it out on a medium that they are comfortable with, and motivated by. This type of technology will change the instructional landscape as it provides endless opportunities for students to explore ideas and new learning

with one another. I am grateful for the parents who are involved with BEST, as they are helping our schools stay consistent and current in a global sense."

"I can't thank BEST enough for their bringing this great technology into the schools for the students and the teachers. With their help we are truly becoming a 21st century classroom," added Green.

February is the kick-off month for the BEST "Touched by Technology" fundraising campaign. This fiscal year, BEST is seeking direct contributions from families and the community-at-large. The fundraising goal for the new technology initiative is \$146,000, which breaks down to about \$150 per student.

Parent volunteers are reaching out to businesses, friends and neighbors to help raise the necessary funds. As an incentive, anyone who makes a donation before Feb. 28 is automatically entered in the BEST drawing to win a MacBook computer. Details on the "Touched by Technology" program and donations forms are available in the organization's Website www.bestforboxford.org.

Linda Greenstein is a contributing writer from Boxford.