

3 Smart Boards to make learning fun

By JoANNE HICKEY
Staff Writer

Students in Marion School District 1 will have a new tool for learning this year. If trustees' reaction following a demo at the Marion School District 1 board meeting on Aug. 13 is any indication, learning is about to be more fun. Educators hope the product will boost students' motivation to participate in lessons, and improve learning as a result.

The tool is called a "Smart Board." It's basically a computerized slate that displays predesigned, interactive lessons, much like those in a workbook, but the format feels more like a game. Teachers download exercises related to the topics they are teaching. Using a stylus or a touch to the screen, students drag and drop from a list of answers.

Teachers report that students who were reluctant to participate in traditional lessons are eager to participate using the Smart Board.

Kandace Bethea, who delivered the Curriculum and Instruction Report, presented examples of exercises in a slideshow with the help of Ann Hood, technology coach. They displayed a diagram of the heart and showed trustees how students will drag and drop choices to label the parts, then go on to see if their answers are right.

An added bonus is that parents can access their children's Smart Board assignments from the MSD1 Web site, they say. (www.Marion1.k12.sc.us.edu)

They described an electronic tool already in use at the high school, the "Air Slate." Slates are linked to a screen that equates to a chalkboard. Students touch the slate, and without leaving their seats, their selection appears on the board.

Bethea and Hood invited trustees to go to Johnakin Middle School and watch a Smart Board demonstration.

Trustee Dr. Paul DeMarco said he realizes that the \$200,000 investment in Smart Boards has already been made, but he's suspicious of technology and wants to "see data that kids do better with Smart Boards than without." Bethea said she will find out if data exists.

Later in the meeting, when Chairman James Smith opened the floor for comments, several trustees said they can see the potential of the Smart Board to motivate students, saying they'd like to use it themselves.

Moving along to other topics, Bethea gave trustees a list of textbooks that were adopted.

Prior to introducing the Smart Board, Bethea listed some of her department's goals, including:

- ▶ Monthly classroom walk-throughs
- ▶ Apprising teachers of professional development opportunities
- ▶ Not just "testing to test," but using the data to teach more effectively
- ▶ Keeping up with technology

Regarding technology, she said that 15 teachers went to Columbia in July to attend training sponsored by ETV, and Marion County was recognized as having the most participants.

In her summer school report, Bethea said 427 students attended, district-wide, and at the high school level, 100 of 101 students succeeded at 80 percent or better.

She gave trustees a packet regarding the advanced placement program. Since 2007 data isn't available, she said, 2006 numbers were used as comparative data. She said plans are made for improvement when data shows a year to year drop in percentage of students passing. One change may be to "beef up" classes that prepare students for the AP level class, she suggested.

Bethea said help is available from college professors and colleges, to improve courses, train teachers, and assure the syllabus for a class is what they are supposed to be covering.

DeMarco asked, "How about setting a goal for AP at 50 percent or above as the pass rate?" Bethea said that sounds doable.

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Trustee Howard Blakeney asked, "Why are pass rates in English and literature courses so low?"

A staff member in the audience responded that they are tough courses, and high school students typically haven't yet accumulated enough reading and vocabulary to succeed.

Trustee Renee Baxley asked, "Can students get courses taught that they'd like to take?"

Superintendent Michael Lupo said logistical problems make it difficult; a teacher must be pulled and trained, leaving another class minus a teacher. It was added that virtual classes are available online, but there is a complicated approval process to undergo.

Betha reported that students' eligibility for AP classes is determined by PSAT and SAT scores.

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PHOTO BY JOANNE HICKEY

Trustees watch as Kandace Bethea and Ann Hood demonstrate the Smart Board in a computer-slideshow presentation at the Aug. 13 Marion School District 1 board meeting.

3

White boards, band equipment purchases approved

By **SCOTT POWELL**
Ledger Staff Writer
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A xylophone and 75 electronic white boards were added Monday to a \$2.2 million furniture and equipment fund for new school buildings.

School trustees voted unanimously to spend \$31,000 for Blacksburg High band equipment sought by school administrators for the new ninth grade wing. The band equipment includes tubas and a xylophone, a musical instrument played by striking wooden bell bars with small mallets.

The district will use money from the district's debt service fund to purchase the band equipment, superintendent Dr. Bill James said.

"The Blacksburg High band

equipment was not a part of the original project," James said. "These are instruments kids normally would not be able to buy or rent on their own."

The district's debt service millage increased from 12 to 22 mills this year to fund bond payments for a new building program.

Projects include a Gaffney High stadium, Limestone Learning Center, Blacksburg and Gaffney High ninth grade additions and a 6-classroom Goucher Elementary addition.

"Because the projects came in under budget, we will not need another bond sale to provide furniture and equipment for the schools," finance director Ben Childs said.

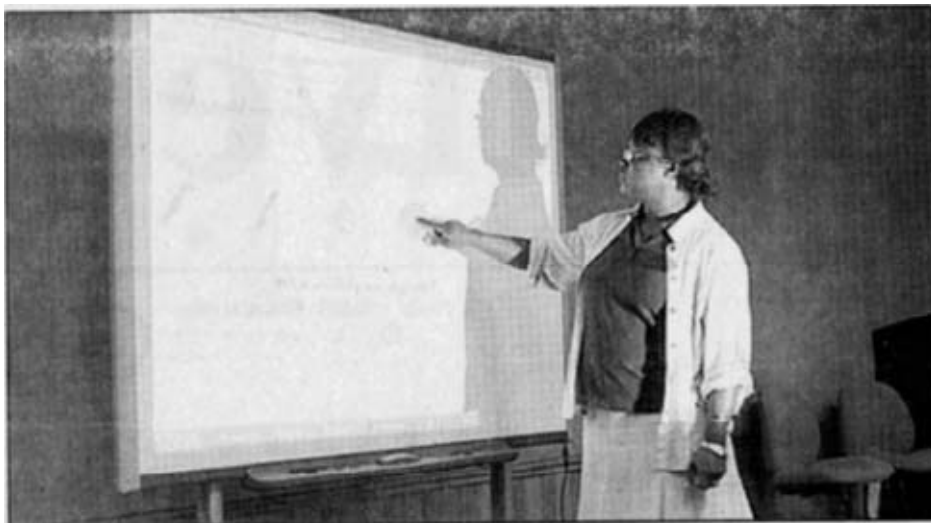
The district will fund furniture and equipment from

money included in the \$36 million school building program. Stadium lights and furniture for the new school buildings are among the items that will be purchased.

The district ordered 75 electronic white boards today for the new schools. Often called "smart" and "active boards", the electronic touch-sensitive devices can be used for traditional student board work, remote control student quizzes and teaching resources available over the Internet.

The district used state instruction funds and grant money in April to place 200 electronic white boards in science classrooms in elementary and middle schools. Each white board costs approximately \$1,100.

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Gwen Rodgers, first-grade teacher at Windsor Hill Elementary School in Charleston County, leads a class for fellow teachers on how to use Smart Boards at South Carolina Educational Television in Columbia, S.C., on Aug. 2, 2007. About 250 teachers came to Columbia recently to get up to date on the latest classroom technology.

(AP Photo/SCETV, Gaines Halford)

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S.C.³ teachers learn to use technology to teach age-old lessons

By PAGE IVEY
Associated Press

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What the Smart Board does, says Smart Technologies Inc. co-founder and chief executive Nancy Knowlton, is spread that limited technology around.

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The Education Week report ranked South Carolina 14th-best in the nation in terms of students' access to and schools' use of technology in classrooms. More than 90 percent of the state's students

have computers in their labs and media centers.

The state Education Department is recommending that all teachers become proficient with technology and it could become a requirement for recertification in the future, said Dee Appleby, interim director for eLearning at the agency.

Theresa Spruill, 58, who teaches students who have failed an English or math class, said she sometimes asks her students basic computer questions. "So that's why I spent three days here," she said of the ETV-sponsored classes.

The classes are in their third year and more teachers come each year, said Bobbi Kennedy, senior vice president for education at S.C. ETV. Classes included lessons on setting up computers and other high-tech equipment, using Web sites such as Google Earth and how to create podcasts.



Associated Press
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greg@dailyjm.com

The days when a classroom teacher would stand before a class, lecture to students and provide any visual aid through the chalkboard are as obsolete as the eight-track tape player, car phone and black and white television.

Today, school districts throughout the country are taking advantage of the ever-increasing availability of new technology for teachers to make their classrooms come alive. In doing so, they say student participation increases and that, they hope, will increase student achievement.

Under Superintendent Lee D'Andrea, the School District of Pickens County has made technology a major goal. As evidence of that commitment, the district installed Promethean boards in every classroom this summer — 1000 total — including special education, music and fine arts.

Tim Newman, the new executive director of accountability, information and technology for the school district, calls the Promethean board "instructive."

"Not only can you use it to store information, you can draw information on the board," Newman said. "It gives students a chance to walk up and be a part of the presentation rather than sitting in the back of the class, raising their hand and hoping to be one of the 3-4 students called upon."

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"There are almost 1200 teachers in the district," he said. "It's a credit to our faculty members for making it work."

Katherine Howell, a fifth-grade teacher at Clemson Elementary, said her students enjoy the opportunity to become more actively involved in the classroom.

"They enjoy the interaction and being able to get up and use the board," Howell said.

Newman, who has visited schools since opening day last week, agrees.

"Students can't wait to be part of the presentation," Newman said, adding, "We're just scratching the surface."

Newman said 60 training sessions are also scheduled next month, focusing on resources for the content areas, while D'Andrea told school board mem-

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"These laptops are used for grading, designing lesson plans and provide all the office products they need," Newman said.

In Oconee County, Instructional Technology Specialist Bill Sheskey said teachers and students use SmartBoards.

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In a 2006 interview, Sheskey, along with fellow Instructional Technology Specialist Mary Isenburg, said they have provided courses to introduce teachers to the SmartBoard as well as visited classrooms to assist in its implementation.

"It's the most challenging time to be a teacher because things are changing so fast," Sheskey said. "Yet, it's also the most rewarding time."

Sheskey said a smart pad allows teachers to operate the SmartBoard at the back of the classroom, therefore ensuring that students are paying attention to the projector screen. Students are even allowed to interact with the SmartBoard through exercises that include an electronic abacus simply by touching the projector screen.

Wireless Tablets are another effective teaching tool as Sheskey said more than 100 are used in the district to connect teachers and students wirelessly to the classroom computer and allow for writing, drawing and manipulating Web resources.

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The number one technology resource used by teachers in Oconee County is StreamlineSC — the on demand video service provided by South Carolina Educational Television (SCETV).

“This is how we’re going to watch television in the classroom in the future,” Sheskey said. “I think probably 80 percent of our teachers have their account set up and are doing this.”

Sheskey said there are 40,000 video clips in databases that can be used to incorporate into classroom lessons.

As for the next wave of classroom technology, Sheskey said there will ultimately be laptop computers provided to every student. Kershaw County has

already implemented that service and Sheskey said it is only a matter of time when they will be the norm rather than the exception.

“When the cost of a laptop meets the cost of a textbook, you’ll see it,” Sheskey said, adding that a majority of four-year universities require students to have their own laptops.

Sheskey said while there is some hesitancy among teachers to integrate the new technology into their classroom, he feels that, by and large, most teachers are open to learning.

“It’s just that they want to be given the opportunity, time and incentive,” he said. “Even teachers stereotyped as traditional seem to show a willingness to be here and learn.”

Newman said he has also found Pickens County teachers to be just as excited about the new technology as students.

“There’s a lot of excited people in the classrooms right now,” Newman said.

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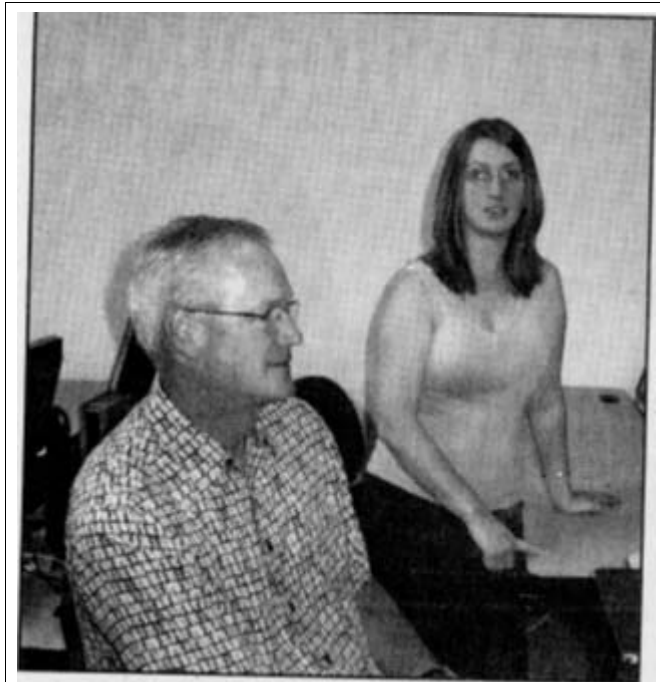
Greg Oliver/Staff

Lillian Kome, a fifth-grade student in Katherine Howell’s science class at Clemson Elementary, works with one of the approximately 1,000 Promethean boards now used in schools throughout Pickens County.





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Bill Sheskey and Mary Isenburg, instructional technology specialists for the School District of Oconee County, say SmartBoards are used in various schools throughout the district.

03-101 Teachers study technology to upgrade class

By PAGE IVEY
Associated Press

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The Education Week report ranked South Carolina 14th-best in the nation in terms of students' access to and schools' use

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The state Education Department is recommending that all teachers become proficient with technology, and it could become a requirement for recertification in the future, said Dee Appleby, interim director for eLearning at the agency.

Theresa Spruill, 58, who teaches students who have failed an English or math class, said she sometimes asks her students basic computer questions. "So that's why I spent three days here," she said of the ETV-sponsored classes.

The classes are in their third year, and more teachers come each year, said Bobbi Kennedy, senior vice president for education at S.C. ETV. Classes

included lessons on setting up computers and other high-tech equipment, using Web sites such as Google Earth and how to create podcasts.

"We believe there should be no teacher left behind," Kennedy said. "Our services provide teachers very creative ways to meet standards."

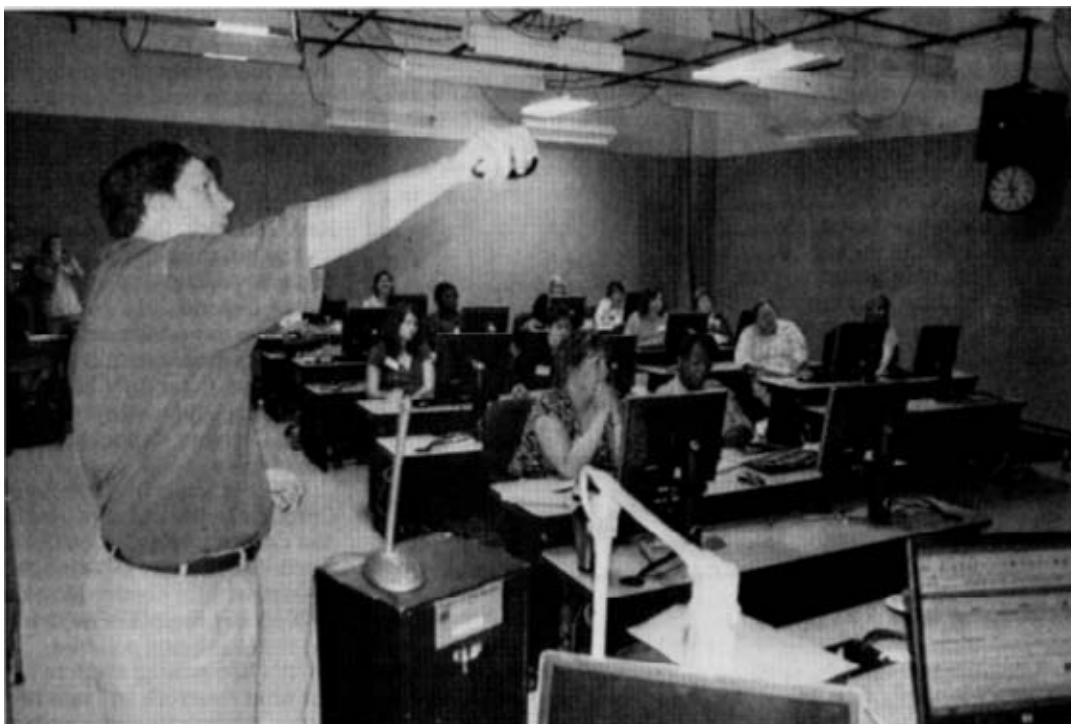
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Smart Boards cost \$1,000-\$1,200, Knowlton said. But that price can go up if schools buy installation services and a subscription to the company's digital media for use with the boards. The school also must have a computer and a projector to make the Smart Board work.

Teachers said the electronic boards help students learn.

"I have their attention more, and they remember more," Rodgers said. "I have seen so much more growth and quicker."



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South Carolina teachers learn to use technology to teach age-old lessons

By PAGE IVEY
Associated Press Writer

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The goal is to help teachers learn how to use the technology to help students meet educational standards set by state and federal officials.

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One of the big growth areas in school technology is in the materials, such as podcasts and streaming video, that teachers can download to compliment their lessons.

"How many classes can go to India?" asked Brad Fountain, regional account manager for the Discovery Educator Network, which lets teachers share media for classroom use. "We can take them there virtually."

Knowlton said Smart Technologies plans to offer interactive programs and other media online starting in October.

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Technology to enhance student participation, learning

3 By **GREG OLIVER**
greg@dailyjm.com

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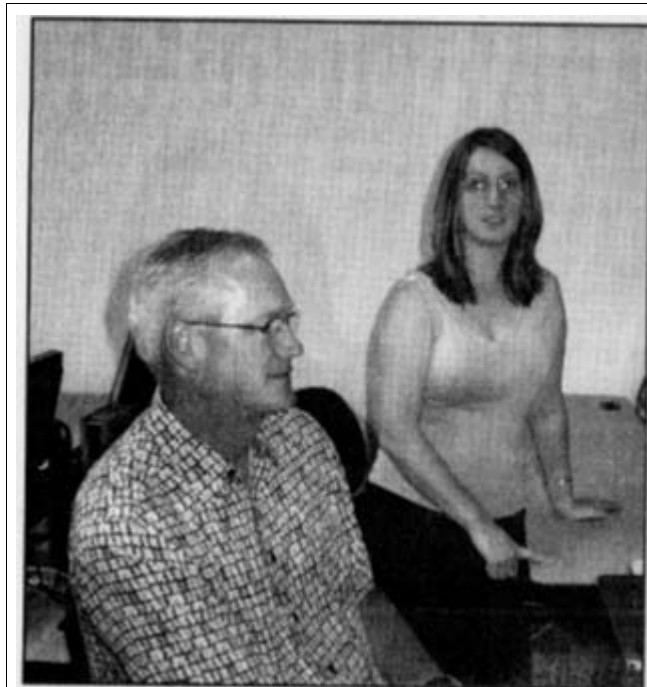
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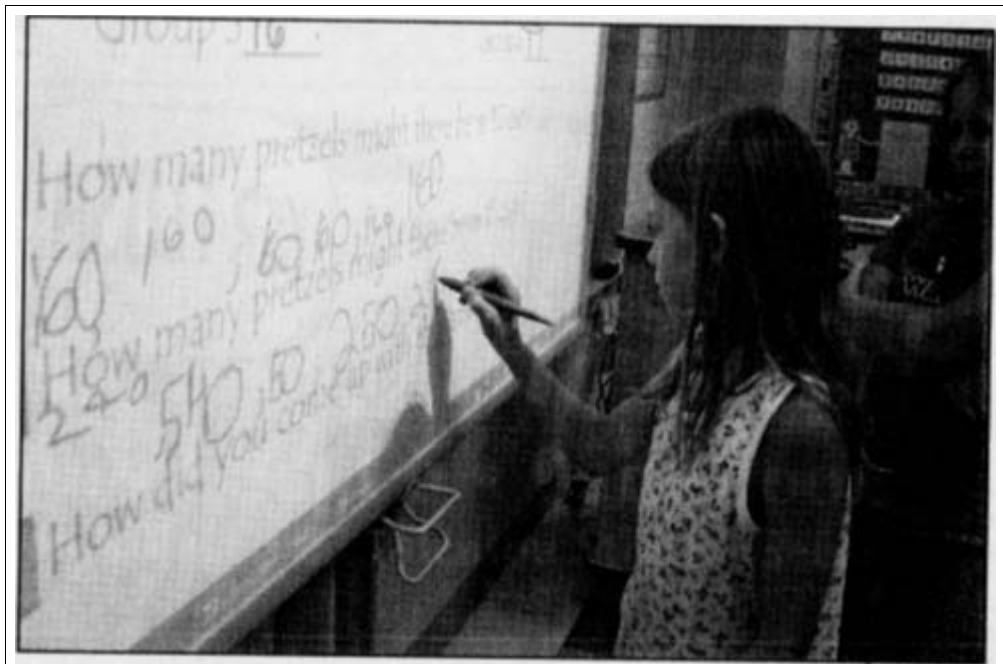
Greg Oliver/Staff

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