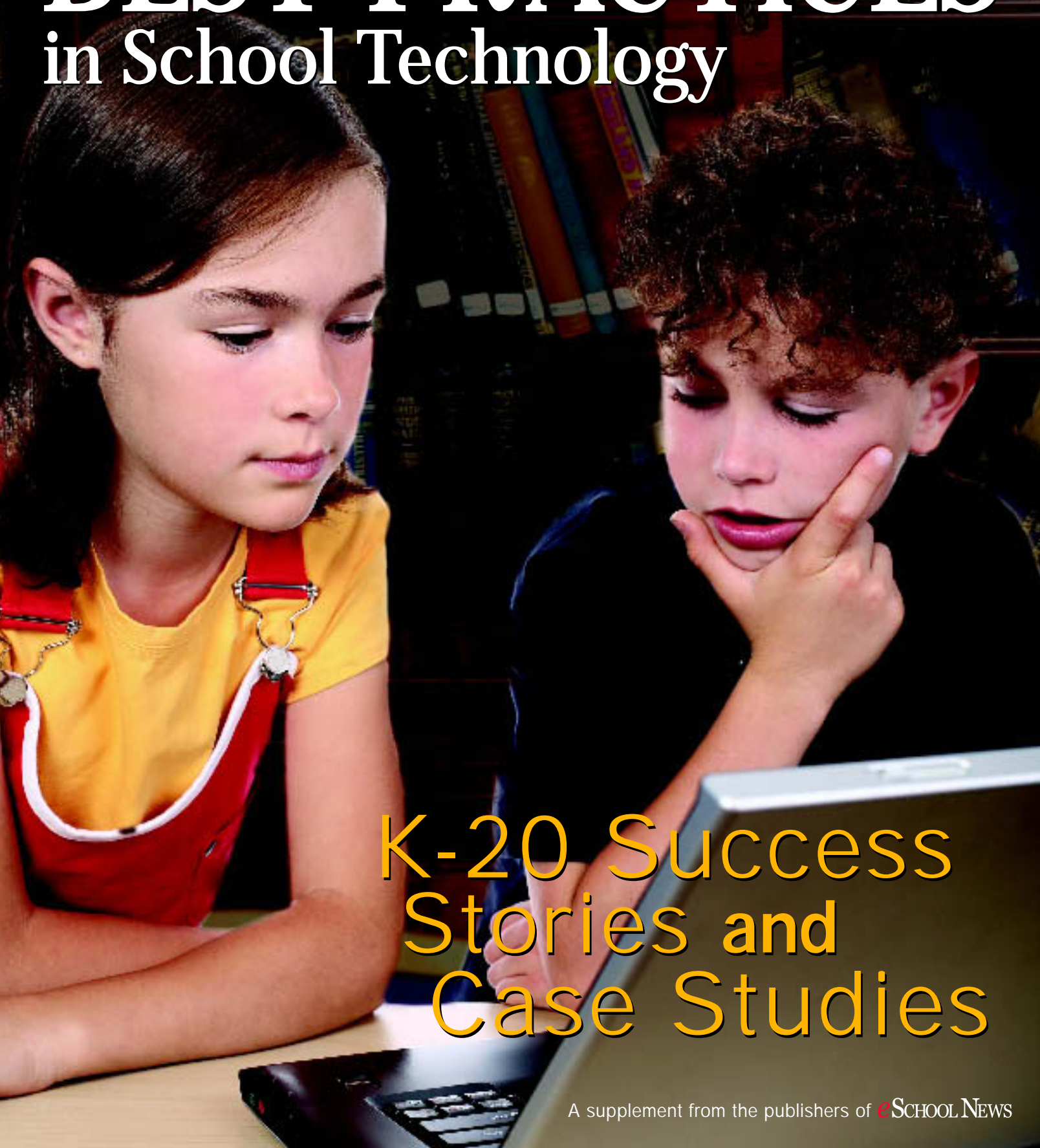


SPRING EDITION

eSCHOOL NEWS

BEST PRACTICES

in School Technology



K-20 Success
Stories and
Case Studies

A supplement from the publishers of eSCHOOL NEWS

BEST PRACTICES in School Technology

Best Practices in School Technology is a publication of eSchool News and is dedicated to providing K-20 educators real-world solutions to school technology challenges.

Rob Morrow

Chief Executive Officer
rmorrow@eschoolnews.com

Gregg W. Downey

Publisher & President
gdowney@eschoolnews.com

Production Director

Chris Hopson
chopson@eschoolnews.com

Advertising Sales

Western Region

Paul Turchetta
310-540-3344
prturchett@aol.com

Eastern Region

Barbara Schrader
800-394-0115 Ext. 163
bschrader@eschoolnews.com

Best Practices in School Technology

is published by eSchool News
7920 Norfolk Ave., Suite 900
Bethesda, MD 20814
Phone: (301)913-0115
Fax: (301)913-0119
eMail: gdowney@eSchoolNews.com
Home Page: www.eSchoolNews.com

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Austin ISD Teachers Get Serious About Teaching 21st Century Skills – to Themselves.

If you're in the education field, it is likely that a week doesn't go by without hearing, reading or discussing 21st century skills. Teaching 21st century skills in our schools to train students on current technologies and prepare them for their future education or careers is a key point of focus in education.

As schools are integrating technology into their classrooms, they are faced with many challenges. Not only do they need to teach the student population 21st century skills, but in order to effectively pass these skills on to students, teachers need to be versed in these current technologies. One large school district in Texas has realized the importance of bridging the gap between teacher comfort and classroom integration of technology and has built a program specifically around the issue.

Austin Independent School District, a district of over 5,000 teachers and staff members serving their student population of over 75,000, has a detailed and comprehensive technology plan. Along with goals to enhance student learning through the use of technology, Austin recognizes the need to provide educational opportunities to faculty and staff members to better prepare them for teaching in the 21st century.

To address the need for effective technology instruction, Austin ISD began developing online courses. Using ATutor, an open source Web-based Learning Content Management System (LCMS), technology and professional development staffers started to build courses that included detailed course information, robust content and an assessment feature, which could be a quiz, a survey or a project assignment to test skills learned.

Austin also subscribes to Atomic Learning, an online technology training provider. Atomic Learning offers training (and various curriculum resources) on over 110 software programs. Each application is broken down into small, manageable tasks and each task is explained through a one- to three-minute tutorial movie. This unique training method was designed to help people quickly access Atomic Learning, watch a short tutorial that addresses their issue and to get back to work. As professional development specialist Steve Jeske states, "It fills the needs for knowledge so you can move on."

The professional development team and the instructional technology team at Austin ISD decided to combine these two resources, ATutor and Atomic Learning, to create a unique learning opportunity for faculty and staff members: an effective, flexible and easy-to-use online technology course. ATutor provided the platform that allowed the team to create the structure and assessment, and Atomic Learning provided the content so that the Austin ISD technology staff saved hours of valuable time and resources they would have needed for creating software training from scratch. Instead, the team could focus on higher-level issues.

One of the technology courses that is especially innovative involves Atomic Learning's Lesson Accelerators. Lesson Accelerators are technology-infused lesson plans that combine a subject with a software application. Teachers can have their students create PowerPoint presentations on a period of art, comic

books about health and fitness or visual models that illustrate Pythagoras' Theorem. While Lesson Accelerators are traditionally used in the classroom as student projects, Steve Jeske saw an opportunity to use these resources for teacher education.

The seven-day course, entitled "Independent Study Using Lesson Accelerators," first leads teachers to www.AtomicLearning.com to learn more about Lesson Accelerators and assigns them a tutorial that describes how the projects work. Then teachers are instructed to choose a Lesson Accelerator that corresponds with their curricular area and to follow the step-by-step tutorials to complete the student project.

"What I like most out of the whole premise is that these tools are filling the needs of educators." –Steve Jeske, Austin ISD

After completing the Lesson Accelerator just as the example project portrayed it, teachers are then asked to adapt another Lesson Accelerator project to fit their grade level and subject.

The adaptation, along with the completion of a short survey, is the final assessment for the course. The teachers came back with a lot of positive feedback:

Michael U. stated, "The strongest quality that makes this course enjoyable and effective is its self-paced nature. I found that being able to work at my own pace (and to work at times that are convenient) made me put a greater amount of effort into the final project. I also found that by the very nature of Lesson Accelerators, adaptation to different courses, different learning styles, and different modified approaches are very manageable."

When asked how this online course compared to other types of professional development, Steve Jeske said, "This course is actually more demanding than a face-to-face training session. In a seminar or class, you just have to sit there, earn credit and leave. In this course, you have to produce something."

And the course participants agreed: "I liked the fact that this course provides a hands-on learning experience," says Alicia H. "Some online courses require a great deal of reading and reflecting, but no real application. This course maintains a fine balance between the two."

Austin teachers also had incentive to complete the Lesson Accelerators course—they earned a day's training stipend.

Austin ISD plans to continue using and creating more online courses with ATutor and Atomic Learning. "What I like most out of the whole premise is that these tools are filling the needs of educators," says Jeske, emphasizing the fact that these two companies specialize in creating products and offering services to the education industry.



866-259-6890

www.AtomicLearning.com

ARE YOU GETTING CASH BACK?

Troxell Communications cares about education. That's why we created a way to give your school cash back for purchasing the audio visual equipment it uses every day!

The Education Scholarship Grant Rebate Program is designed specifically for K-12 schools, colleges and universities. It earns your school supplemental funding, money you can add to your bottom line, just for buying the audio visual equipment your school already needs.

"Our organization is strongly committed to supporting the nation's schools. Developing a simple program that is beneficial to every school was our way of strongly demonstrating our continued support to the educational community. We hope to see every scholastic customer take advantage of this great program," said Jim Troxell, president of Troxell Communications.



Mardee Barnett, Executive Director of Aldine ISD Technology Services, and Board President Rick Ogden were presented with an education rebate by Adela Briner with Troxell Communications.

Troxell Communications partnered with many top manufacturers of audio visual products to offer schools a vast selection of quality AV solutions for virtually any application. Participating manufacturers determine which products are available through the program and their associated rebates. Troxell handles the administration—tracking your school's purchases, generating a detailed program purchase statement, and disbursing the rebate checks.

Best of all, your school determines how your Grant Rebate money is used! Since the program's inception less than four years ago, Troxell has sent Grant Rebate checks totaling nearly \$400,000 to schools that have used their supplemental funding for things like:

Creative & Elective Courses
General Scholarship Funds
Emerging Needs Fund
Summer School Scholarships
Education Foundation Support
Teaching Excellence Awards
Band Trips & Uniforms

Scholarships
Classroom Computers
Honors Day
Yearbook
Art on Campus
Playground Equipment
Facility Maintenance/Repair

Projectors & Other Classroom Technology
Interactive Website Development
Lending Library Support
Literacy Programs
Tuition Assistance
Recognition of Academic Excellence
Library Books, Equipment & Furniture

Upon being presented with a \$1,000 Grant Rebate check for her district, Mardee Barnett, executive director of the Aldine Independent School District's Technology Services said, "On behalf of the youngsters in Aldine who want to go to college but don't have the money, we are very grateful that Troxell has this program. Someone in Aldine is going to get to go to college next year who would not have been able to go otherwise. That is a huge benefit to the child and to society as a whole."

It's easy to enroll and participate in the Education Scholarship Grant Rebate Program. All products available through the program are displayed on www.trox.com along with their corresponding rebate amounts. All public or private, accredited, not-for-profit, K-12 schools, colleges and universities in the United States are eligible to participate.

"It is simply a way for Troxell and our vendor partners to express our interest and support of the education process," said Adela Briner, Troxell's Houston-based account executive. "Our program has proven to be successful and rewarding for many Districts. It has also been very rewarding for Troxell to know we are taking a part in helping to support students who want to go to college but may not have the financial means to do so. We take great pride in knowing that we are making a difference in student's lives," she said.

Troxell Communications Inc. is based in Phoenix, Arizona with more than 50 offices strategically located nationwide. Troxell has been providing audiovisual solutions to schools, businesses and government facilities since 1946. Currently they are the leading supplier of audiovisual equipment to the U.S. scholastic market. For more information, please visit www.trox.com.



YOUR PARTNER IN AUDIO VISUAL SOLUTIONS



Document Cameras: *All You Need to Know to Make Great Presentations!*

For more than eighty years, ELMO USA has been the leader in supplying audio-visual products to educators, corporations, United States Government agencies, hospitals and conference centers. During this time, ELMO has learned much about the importance of communicating effectively.

This knowledge and awareness is what led us to publish the *“All You Need to Know to Make Great Presentations”* book. We have incorporated sensible information on its use, application and even included simple connection diagrams. ELMO’s book is so detailed and comprehensive; it includes pictures of the connection cables that are used to operate the document camera. This way, if you happen to lose one, you know exactly what to ask for from your local Radio Shack store.

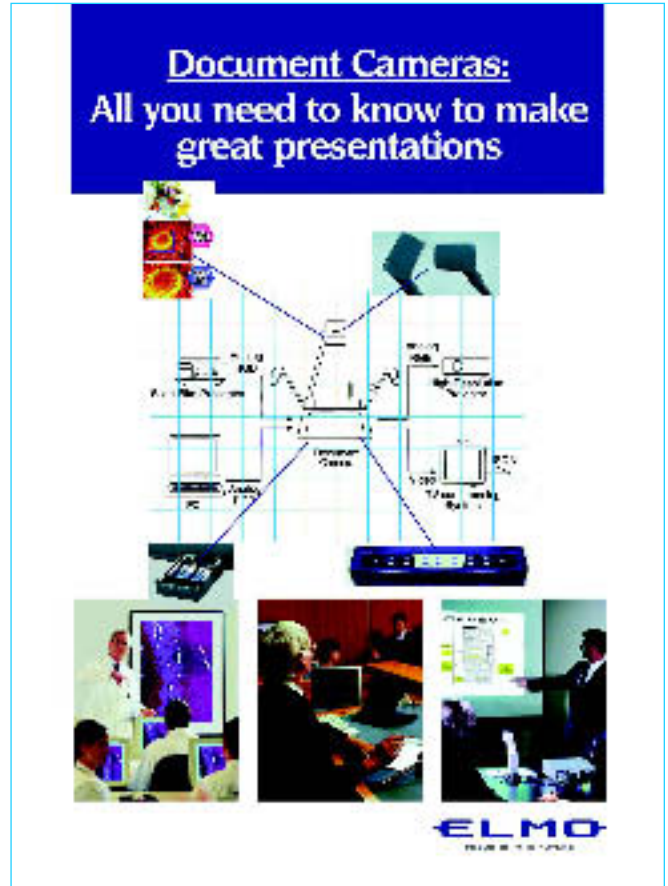
This book is a tool to help teachers and other educators better understand what a document camera is, and what it can do to inspire and increase attention from students in all K-12 grades. It’s a good resource for “first time users” (and those who are new to the technology) as well as long-time users. Accordingly, this book has value whether you’re still using overhead projectors, filmstrip projectors—or even the old, traditional “Blackboard.” It also includes case studies about different ways that different school district are using document cameras.

ELMO’s “How to” book also explains what a document camera can accomplish in a traditional classroom environment. For example, there are numerous and various White Papers, which have expounded on the value document cameras bring to the educational process by increasing students’ absorption, retention, and interest in any specific classroom syllabus. Additional benefits cited in the book include: educating, informing and providing numerous classroom applications with names and locations that can be used for reference purposes and examples of how other teachers and schools have utilized them successfully.

In developing the book, ELMO paid particular attention to orienting it to lay people who have absolutely no experience with technology, electronics, or any other advanced educational technology equipment. It was written for the technology challenged educator, administrator, and curriculum coordinator, lawyer, businessman or government employee.

The book treats document cameras as a generic technology not oriented to ELMO or any of its competitors except as it relates to explaining the actual cable connections. According to Howard Winch, executive vice president of sales and the primary author of the book, “the overriding objective of the book is to help instructors to see that there are more effective classroom display devices, other than overhead projectors—which are a dinosaur technology, noisy, create too much heat, and are not interactive at all.”

Added Mr. Winch, “Put simply, children of today are



digitally savvy and find overhead projectors to be quite boring and uninteresting. Transparencies are a thing of the past. To that extent the book has been quite successful and we are extremely proud that we have distributed it to thousands of teachers, lawyers and businesspersons who wish to be educated about this new technology. As a public service, ELMO offers the *All You Need to Know to Make Great Presentations* book at no cost.

For more information, contact Howard Winch, executive vice president of sales at 516.501.1400, or visit www.elmoussa.com.

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Henrico County School District Study Finds Promethean Activclassroom Technology Enhances 21st Century Teaching and Learning

Henrico County School District (HCSD) focuses on creating collaboration in learning as part of their 21st Century Skills Instruction focus. According to an independent study completed in 2007, HCSD teachers using Promethean Activclassroom technology successfully incorporated 21st century skills in the areas of communication, problem solving and collaboration more often than teachers without the boards.

“I found the students were more interactive with each other...,” said one Activboard teacher involved in the study. “They were more willing to help each other out and collaborate... there was more engagement amongst the students.”

In addition, teachers in classrooms with Activboards were found to monitor student learning by asking questions more frequently than those without the boards. They used Activotes, Promethean’s student-response technology, and software to view student responses, which allowed them to respond to student comprehension in real-time and create student-centered learning environments.

“I really felt like I got to spend more time asking [students] to tell me why or how they knew something was true, which is truly how you acquire new knowledge...,” said another Activclassroom teacher involved in the study.

The study, which began in February 2007, found that students in classrooms with Activclassroom technology were more engaged, and asked higher level and more questions than students in classrooms without the boards. Students exposed to Activboards also had a slightly higher pass rate on the Standards of Learning tests than non-board students, and scores for students were higher in the pass advance category, meaning students in Activclassrooms had a deeper understanding of the material.

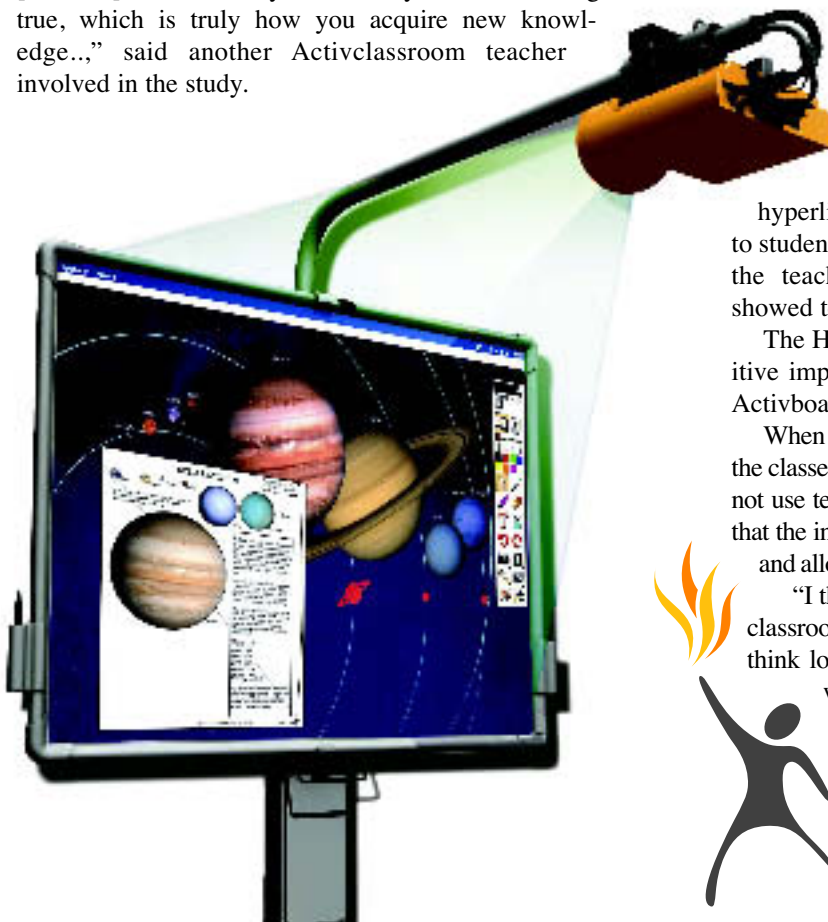
“I think any time [students] are more engaged then they pick up on things quicker, they participate more in class. There was a lot more volunteering of answers because they wanted to come up to the board, they wanted to use the tools, so that participation, I think, really helped and I think that always helps learning,” said an Activboard teacher participant.

During the study, students led their own learning using Promethean Activstudio software, which enables users to easily create electronic flipcharts incorporating text, images, video clips, sound and web page content, as well as hyperlink to other programs. Activstudio was downloaded to student computers so they could create flipcharts based on the teachers’ topics of instruction. Students’ flipcharts showed teachers whether their instruction was effective.

The HCSD study also found that Activboards have a positive impact on the teaching and learning process, and that Activboards may support teacher retention.

When asked, teachers involved in the study wanted to stay in the classes that had Activboards. Even teachers that typically did not use technology responded positively to Activboards, stating that the integrated tools were essential, saving instructional time and allowing them to be more spontaneous in their instruction.

“I think we should really go ahead and buy one for every classroom,” said an Activboard teacher. “I know that I would think long and hard about getting a different job because it would mean I’d have to leave mine behind.”



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My classroom doesn't have walls, it is boundless and engaging. I can travel the world, climb glaciers, scale mountain ranges, and even explore the moon.

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This is how I want to learn. This is how we get results.
It's not just about technology, it's about something bigger.

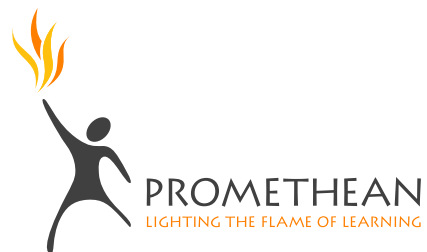
ARE YOU ACTIV?

The Promethean Activclassroom provides an interactive classroom experience, by integrating thousands of standards-based resources, formative assessment, training, and instructional tools in a complete classroom delivery system.

All components of the ActivClassroom – Activboard, Activote, Activstudio, Activprimary, Activslate, and Activwand – are designed to work together easily and seamlessly.

See the Activclassroom in action at

WWW.PROMETHEANWORLD.COM/VIDEO



Saywire is Helping Schools Bring Web 2.0 Safely into the Classroom

Bridging the gap between web 2.0 tools and social networking is helping educators to better connect with today's student.

As educators seek to expand their curriculum to include web-based utilities, concern for protecting their students online often stalls their progress. More and more, teachers are introducing their students to the exciting possibilities of collaborating online. And yet, even as we are realizing the infinite opportunities brought about by this shift in educational practices, movements like the Deleting Online Predators Act threaten to close this critical door before it's fully opened. Further, the importance for today's youth to develop both the skill sets to understand these tools and the appropriate manner in which to utilize them, is often overlooked.

There is no doubt that expanding the classroom to the World Wide Web and Web 2.0 has unlimited potential. Currently, teachers must utilize multiple locations on the web to make this happen. Additionally, sites like MySpace,

"What Saywire does is give us access to a Social Academic Network (SAN) where teachers, staff, and students can reside together, but with the security tools put in place."

—Jim Frye, District Technology Coordinator for the Ohio Upper Sandusky School District

Facebook and YouTube are wildly popular with the students, but they lack the necessary security measures, often making them inappropriate and even inaccessible.

Saywire changes that. Saywire's Social Academic Networking platform was designed for the education system from its conception. Providing one application in which to deploy these tools safely and easily is a big part of Saywire's overall appeal. Students and teachers are free to collaborate through blogs, wikis, chats, eNotes, academic portfolios, and more. And because the tools in the Saywire program exist within an environment protected from the public Internet, the risk of predator activity and unwanted solicitation is eliminated.

Jim Frye, District Technology Coordinator for the Ohio Upper Sandusky School District views Saywire as a legitimate solution to the problems facing today's teachers. "Educators must understand that the whole 'social networking' world is a reality for today's youth, evident by the popularity of sites like

MySpace and Facebook. What Saywire does is give us access to a Social Academic Network (SAN) where teachers, staff, and students can reside together, but with the security tools put in place. We all know that communication and the lack there of is the problem in most schools and Saywire offers a new, web-based portal for information to flow from teacher to teacher and teacher to student."

Being in the technology side of the academic world, Frye is no stranger to the risks of his students being online. "Knowing that Saywire logs all chats, scans all words for appropriateness, and only allows users to connect after being granted permission, gives me more peace of mind that I will not have to spend precious time dealing with these types of possible issues."

Sandra Jenkins, an Instructor at the University of Central Missouri, also uses Saywire. "In fall 2007, I pieced together Web 2.0 applications from various resources to use in my Information Resources class— a freshmen research skills course. Between semesters, I was excited to discover saywire.com. All of the applications I wanted are available from one source. Most of my students already have a Facebook or MySpace account, or both. Their learning curve for Saywire is zero because they already know about blogs, wikis, etc. The difference for students is that they use other social networking sites to stay in touch with friends, not wanting their instructor intruding on that area of their lives. However, since they understand the function of social networking, they can quickly apply their skills to Saywire. They can use a venue that is extremely comfortable for them and keep it completely separate from their private lives. They are able to focus on the rigors of university curriculum without the anxiety of learning a new technology to complete the course requirements."

The challenge now facing educators is how to get today's technology-charged student rejuvenated in the learning process. Providing teachers with a platform in which they can safely communicate and collaborate in their classrooms, as well as individually captivate and motivate students, is the goal of Saywire.

Frye adds, "I feel encouraged and excited about the opportunities that Saywire gives to us and I look forward to seeing it become a tool we all use on a daily basis."



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Communicate. Collaborate. Captivate.



Enhance your Classroom with Saywire!

SayWire utilizes over 75 Patent-pending communication and collaboration features designed specifically for safe, convenient use in the classroom. Now school administrators, staff, faculty and students K-20 and beyond finally have a place to explore Social Academic Networking in a totally secure environment, protected from the public Internet using state-of-the-art security. Nothing to buy or install. Whether you have a classroom of 10 or a campus of 10,000, Saywire features are designed to accommodate your needs.



Portfolio Pages

Showcase individual achievement on your own personalized home page.



Chat Rooms

Engage in private or school-wide electronic discussions in real-time.



Guestbooks

Personal messages from member to member. Content is 100% private.



School Pages

Blogs, wikis, calendars and more provide a central location for members to collaborate.



Multimedia Galleries

Enhance your Portfolio with photos, documents, audio and video clips.



Custom Groups

Classes, clubs, teams and friends can be created by members for instant access.



eNotes

Safe alternative to E-mail provides SPAM-Free communication, guaranteed.



Blogs and Wikis

Multiple publish settings let members control who can read, post & edit content.



Network

Easily network with other students and teachers by name and photo.



Download our free white paper, "Integrating Web 2.0 Technology into the Classroom" by visiting saywire.com and entering the promo code ESNBP08. For more information on our free online tools for schools, visit our web site or call toll-free: 888-471-3461.

A New Model for Teacher Resources

Product development is not an easy task for publishers. In the typical process, a prototype product is given to a group of teachers who provide feedback for refining the product. Holt McDougal decided to take an entirely different approach for the new Teacher One Stop™.

In a twist to the standard focus group, teachers were asked to bring their most valuable teaching resources along with a list of the most annoying barriers they faced in their job. In almost every case, teachers brought the tried-and-true binder of favorite lesson plans, activity sheets, and teaching ideas that they had collected from each other, from the internet, or that they had made themselves. And for the Barriers? Teachers complained that navigating through a cumbersome mound of materials from different sources, in different places, and often in different formats made lesson planning difficult and time-consuming. Publisher resources were “helpful” they said, but it was difficult to adapt those resources for their own use. And once modified, teachers still had to navigate through multiple collections of such resources.

So, Holt McDougal listened to teachers and built a brand new **Teacher One Stop™** to serve as a tool to manage *all* of a teacher’s resources, not just the ones that Holt provides. The new Teacher One Stop lets teachers dump their 3-ring binders. The Teacher One Stop is a searchable database on DVD and it is inherently expandable. This means that teachers can add their own digital files of any format – including web pages – into the same database as those provided by Holt. Teacher and publisher resources have equal status, are aligned to standards, are tagged with helpful keywords, and *all* of it is searchable.

For teachers who prefer online resources, the Teacher One Stop has an online companion that will be available in Summer 2008. This online companion contains the same resources and maintains the same ability to mix in teacher favorites that have been kept so dutifully in those ubiquitous three-ring binders. Not every computer on a teacher’s desk has a DVD drive and some teachers do not have Internet access, but almost all teachers have access to one or the other. Holt has made sure that by offering both an online and DVD-based product, nearly every teacher’s needs can be met.

The Teacher One Stop is already being used and tested. Teachers are pleasantly surprised to find that:

1. Most of the publisher-provided resources come in an editable form, meaning they can be copied, modified, and then merged back into the product for future access.
2. Resources can be easily browsed by category or searched by keywords or other selective criteria.
3. Teachers can navigate the resources how they want to – whether they flip through resources like thumbing through pages in a book or using the simple or advanced search features to find resources by keyword or standard.



The new product strategy that informed the creation of the Teacher One Stop is an outgrowth of a long-recognized problem that both publishers and teachers face. Teachers need ever-increasing depth and breadth in teaching materials in order to meet the wide variety of issues they face in the classroom – English-language learners, different skill preparation levels, assessment-driven instruction – and publishers have worked hard to produce an ever-larger suite of resources to support that need. However, at some point, the increase in variety becomes unwieldy and too difficult to sort through. As a result, many of the resources that have been provided are either unfound or unused. Digital delivery accomplishes the first step of the solution, because a single DVD can replace dozens of workbooks, binders, and manuals in one highly portable package. The addition of resource management functions that are easy and intuitive to use, and which mimic other popular tools that teachers may be familiar with, like Google and iTunes, provide the second part of the solution with an unmatched level of grace and simplicity. But the feature that clinches it for teachers in tests has been the extensibility and open policy of the resource collection, so that every teacher can truly make it their own.



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Four-Peat! LenSec Wins Another GTC Award For Deer Park Video Surveillance Solution

Winning a prestigious award four years in a row for providing superior video surveillance solutions is a great accomplishment. Helping our schools and community by providing a more safe and secure learning environment is even better. For the fourth consecutive year, LenSec has won Government Technology Conference's (GTC) Best Solutions Award by providing industry leading solutions in the video surveillance market. The 2008 award was presented to LenSec on January 31st for their project with Deer Park Independent School District at the GTC conference in Austin, Texas.

The GTC Best Solutions Award is awarded to companies that develop a custom solution which results in significant time and money savings. Deer Park ISD, located 20 miles



southeast of Houston and serving 12,200 students on 14 campuses, uses LenSec's video surveillance technology at their high school campus, with cameras monitoring muster areas and exterior entrances. The camera network is comprised of interior and exterior fixed cameras as well as numerous day/night and pan-tilt-zoom cameras for nighttime viewing of the campuses and football stadium. In addition, the middle schools are equipped with cameras and the elementary schools are slated for installation in late 2008.

According to Don Dean, Deer Park ISD's Deputy Superintendent for Administration, "The 'Roll Over' viewing technology offered by LenSec greatly reduces the time it takes to tour the campus visually. In addition, the 'Box Search' feature shortens archive search time by placing a virtual box around the area of concern and only searching that area. For example, if a laptop was stolen in the cafeteria during lunch, an administrator would draw a box around the area where the laptop was last seen, click the search button, and then find the last person who was in the area, all in a matter of seconds."

At Deer Park, team effort is required in order to effectively manage the IP-based video surveillance system. Students

serve as an extra set of "eyes and ears" and communicate potentially adverse situations to school officials and teachers promptly. Teachers are encouraged to seriously consider their students' concerns and be willing to utilize their time to address them to administrators. Finally, administrators work diligently to develop dynamic policies and programs that encourage participation as well as provide tangible rewards for individuals that help safeguard the campus community.

In Deer Park ISD, each campus is divided into distinct sectors with selected employees assigned to each sector. Personnel who are granted password authority to view the camera system are allotted double screen computer monitors to supervise student activities during peak congregation times, which include before school, during passing periods, at lunchtime, and after school. If an incident occurs, staffers communicate the occurrence via radio and responders are quickly sent to investigate the situation. This operating protocol makes it unnecessary to require a full-time employee that would otherwise be devoted entirely to monitoring the surveillance system, thus saving taxpayer money. Another benefit of this method is that it empowers staff and encourages them to become more active participants in the surveillance process.

"Outstanding results have been enjoyed by Deer Park since installing the LenSec IP video surveillance system", states Alan Morris, LenSec Regional Sales Director. "Not only do students and staff feel safer with the 'omnipotent' presence in and around the campus, parents are more confident in the district's ability to protect their children while at school. In addition, incident tallies remain relatively low, since students are fully aware of the strategically placed cameras and are less likely to commit an offense while on or near campus."

LenSec is honored to be the recipient of the 2008 GTC Best Solutions Award for Deer Park ISD, and takes pride in the fact that their products and services continue to receive special recognition for delivering exceptional results to their valued customers.



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One product, many solutions

Lightspeed's Total Traffic Control takes care of several network needs

Over the years, Bakersfield City School District has transitioned away from utilizing multiple products to manage our e-mail filtering, web filtering, bandwidth management and antivirus to a single product with a single point of management. Total Traffic Control (TTC) from Lightspeed Systems has fit perfectly.

Bakersfield City School District first started using Lightspeed to obtain a clear understanding of the traffic passing in and out of our network. By installing TTC between our PIX firewall and the core of our network we were able to get a very detailed picture of what was taking place inside our network. The detailed monitoring and reporting told us exactly when it was happening and who was doing it. We found a disturbing amount of P2P traffic as well as an unacceptable amount of other non-business related traffic. While there are several options to mitigating the unwanted traffic, the most logical approach for us was to simply limit or completely block the unwanted traffic. This approach allowed us to solve the problem without creating a lot of additional administrative work for our staff. This filtering has been in place for several years now, and we still have not received a work order to fix Napster or one of its equivalents.

"Our district is now utilizing TTC for our Internet filtering, traffic reporting and prioritization, client antivirus, malware removal, and spam filtering. We have enjoyed the central point of administration as well as the excellent support we have received from Lightspeed's staff."

—Bakersfield City School District

About the same time our district began prioritizing our network traffic, we were receiving a small amount of spam e-mail. To combat this, we utilized a combination of Real-time Blacklist servers and Symantec Antivirus/Mail Filtering on our Exchange servers. Over the following year, the amount of spam the district received seemed to be increasing ten-fold. We found that our current e-mail filtering using RBL servers was no longer sufficient. Given the performance and great support we had received from Lightspeed with our TTC, we decided to give their spam filter a try. While the fine-tuning took a few weeks, the spam filter quickly began catching a much larger portion of the spam mail making its way into staff accounts. We have now been utilizing Lightspeed's spam filtering for over

three years. Currently 91 percent of the e-mail traffic attempting to enter our e-mail servers is caught and categorized as spam by Lightspeed. We also tracked our overblocked mail and typically run at an average of between 0.1 percent and 0.2 percent overblocked. We have also noticed that since Lightspeed's spam filter provides virus scanning of incoming e-mails that our exchange servers very rarely see any infected messages reaching their antivirus scanners.

As Lightspeed Systems has continued to update its product and add additional features over the past several years, we have had several programs come due for renewal. One such product was our Internet filtering agreement with Websense. While we were happy with the filtering Websense provided, we could not ignore the potential savings of switching to Lightspeed's internet filtering. Our network administrators were sold on switching to Lightspeed due to the central point of management and the overall design of Lightspeed administrative console.

As the number of threats from spyware, malware and adware have continued to grow, our district decided to give Lightspeed's Security Agent a trial. The Security Agent virus and spyware signatures are loosely based on an open source database known as "clam." Our initial trial of the Security Agent went very well, so we have begun a district wide implementation of the Security Agent. We are now in the process of removing Sophos antivirus and utilizing the Security Agent on all NT kernel clients. Our district has approximately 3,000 nodes that are running the Security Agent for antivirus and malware removal. Having the Security Agent installed on our clients has also given access to more accurate and granular reports. The Security Agent has allowed us to force Internet filtering policies on desktops and laptops both inside and outside our network.

To sum it up, our district is now utilizing TTC for our Internet filtering, traffic reporting and prioritization, client antivirus, malware removal, and spam filtering. We have enjoyed the central point of administration as well as the excellent support we have received from Lightspeed's staff. We will continue to utilize their product and further integrate into our network infrastructure.

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Online Professional Development Helps Norfolk Public Schools on Journey to World-Class Status

PBS TeacherLine provides convenience, graduate-level courses and ISTE NETS certification to meet district's instructional technology initiatives

When Superintendent Dr. Stephen Jones took the helm of Norfolk Public Schools in Norfolk, Va., in summer 2005, he and his staff developed a five-year strategic plan to guide the district in its mission to provide students with a world-class education. An important aspect of the plan is a five-year technology-intensive directive to impact teaching and learning. To help teachers incorporate technology in their daily instructional practices, Norfolk Public Schools is investing in teacher professional development through PBS TeacherLine and PBS member station WHRO in Norfolk. The district is committed to technology integration to ensure students become successful graduates, and are prepared for the competitive environments of higher education and the workplace.

Over 15 percent of the district's EETT Grant is allocated for PBS TeacherLine, which provides high-quality, affordable professional development through facilitated, online courses, collaborative learning communities, and exemplary Internet-based resources. The organization offers more than 100 courses in reading/language arts, math, science, instructional strategies, and instructional technology.

Norfolk Public Schools serves approximately 35,500 PreK-12 students in 49 schools and 11 auxiliary facilities, including early childhood, hospital, alternative, and career centers. To meet the diverse needs of its large student population, the district uses the Instructional Technology Resource Teacher (ITRT) program as a scalable model to provide technology training and professional development to its staff of over 3,000 teachers.

For the past two years, the Norfolk Public Schools Department of Instructional Technology has focused on professional development for its ITRTs, who are responsible for training their peers in classroom technology integration and providing on-going support. To prepare them for their responsibilities, all ITRTs are required to take the PBS TeacherLine International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Capstone Certificate Program, a series of research-based, online courses that enable teachers to demonstrate their mastery of ISTE's National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers (NETS•T).

Additionally, all ITRTs and auxiliary site staff are required to utilize PBS TeacherLine to meet the differentiated training needs of their colleagues. Since each school is different, each ITRT conducts a survey at the beginning of the year to ascertain the staff's instructional technology needs that are aligned with state standards. PBS TeacherLine courses are offered to teachers interested in learning online.



By January 2008, 81 percent of the district's ITRTs received ISTE NETS•T Certification, and approximately 500 teachers completed PBS TeacherLine courses. In addition, the district was able to use PBS TeacherLine to address a staffing issue. Three schools in the 2006-07 school year lacked an on-site instructional technology specialist, so teachers were allowed to enroll in any PBS TeacherLine course. Today, each school has an ITRT, however, teachers are still encouraged to utilize PBS TeacherLine to enhance their skill set.

"Time is of essence for any educator, and to have the ability to take a class anytime, anywhere is priceless," said Janice Richison, senior coordinator of the Department of Instructional Technology for Norfolk Public Schools, commenting on PBS TeacherLine. "The teachers enjoy having the opportunity to learn and exchange instructional strategies with their colleagues online, while also, having the ability to develop reliable research that directly relates to their content area.

"The online service is highly effective in that it allows for professional growth, and each teacher experiences a new comfort level by identifying pedagogy and lesson designs related to technology," Richison said. "In an era where technology is growing by leaps and bounds, the student's learning style is rapidly changing. PBS creates doors of opportunity for educators to enter with the technology-savvy student. Therefore, our teachers are utilizing the PBS TeacherLine services, and making a difference in the lives of all NPS key stakeholders. In 2006, we began collecting professional development data from each ITRT. To date, ITRTs have recorded well over 15,977 hours of technological professional development for our district's teachers and administrators."



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Changing the Classroom Equation Adds Up to Success

How one Tennessee elementary school kept their doors open by improving their math AYP.

Kingsley Elementary is a small school tucked into the quiet community of Kingsport, TN, a peaceful area of north-east Tennessee that boasts majestic mountains, tranquil lakes, and sparkling streams. The academic theme of Kingsley Elementary is “Where the Wheels of Learning are Always Turning,” and the school works hard to maintain that motto with their school programs that include a Title I program, speech program, gifted program, resource program, and CDC class. They had already proven academic success several years ago, when they created a Kingsley School Improvement Plan for writing that resulted in a 58% gain in student writing performance.

So it came as a surprise to Principal Dr. Sandra Ramsey when she found her school on the list for improvement because they were not meeting their math AYP scores. Suddenly, she was faced with the possibility that her school might be shut down.

“We thought we were doing fine until the scores came in last year,” Ramsey says. “Our third grade math was weak. We had to put our heads together and find tools to help our teachers and students.”

They did some research about courseware programs that would help them target and improve areas of weakness in their elementary math program. After doing the research and



talking to other schools, they wanted to purchase the *A+nyWhere Learning System*® (*A+LS*™) courseware program, but were afraid they couldn’t afford it.

“We needed the tools to help us improve scores,” says Ramsey, “but we thought it would be too expensive.” Luckily, it wasn’t. Ramsey says she and her board worked with American Education Corporation to put together a package that worked with their budget.

“Our teachers and students worked very hard,” says Ramsey. “The third and fourth grade teachers used the math instruction from the *A+LS* courseware program with their students for one hour a day, every day. The courseware helped students review all kinds of math facts; it helped them to learn how to do the math. It’s a wonderful tool.”



“Teachers like that the courseware does a good job of reviewing all math facts,” Ramsey continues. “Students use the program to review each chapter from class, and the program can pinpoint their weaknesses. The students who are struggling in math can work at their level, and the ones who need more of a challenge can also succeed on the courseware.” Ramsey says her math teachers also use an interactive whiteboard to work on lessons together as a class.

Because the *A+LS* lessons are aligned to Tennessee state standards, students and teachers could target their learning to match the specific test requirements of their state. These lessons were combined with other resources, including TCAT test practice booklets and Thinklink Learning, a predictive assessment program that matches diagnostic assessments to each state’s high-stakes test so teachers can see student results before they actually test.

All the hard work paid off. When the school retested at the end of the year, their math scores rose 22 points. They were off the target list.

“We did so fantastically with high marks,” says Ramsey. “Using the *A+LS* courseware program helped us have better test scores. My third grade scores went from 74 to 98, and my fourth grade scores went from 81 to 94!”

A combination of hard work and solid teaching tools helped Kingsley Elementary meet and exceed their AYP in math. “We were able to help each individual child review and improve math on his level. This is a great thing.”



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