



Fourth-grade students at Columbus Elementary School in New Rochelle, NY, use a SMART Board interactive whiteboard for their Build a Room project.

New Rochelle schools transformed by SMART Board interactive whiteboards

There's a word Christine Coleman likes to use when she talks about SMART Board™ interactive whiteboards – phenomenal. As the director of technology for the City School District of New Rochelle, Coleman began introducing the interactive whiteboards to the ten schools in the district three years ago. It didn't take long for the boards to become popular. "Now, when I walk down the school hallways, the teachers don't say 'hello.' They say, 'When am I getting a SMART Board interactive whiteboard?' It's phenomenal!"

When Coleman arrived in New Rochelle in 2003, the district was using little technology, and what they had was outdated. Coleman knew she needed some kind of tool that would

change what she calls "the mental model of the teachers" from discouragement about technology to excitement about it. Fortunately, Coleman had experience with interactive whiteboards. At a previous job, she had introduced SMART Board interactive whiteboards with great success. "I noticed how it transformed the learning process from one that was textbook-based to a visual, multi-media experience for the teachers and the kids," she says.

Coleman began with a pilot project at the district's one high-school and two middle schools. She found teachers who were receptive to training and trying the interactive whiteboards for a year in order to give her feedback. "After the first two months, I had teachers rearranging their classrooms to accommodate their SMART Board interactive whiteboards," she says. "After six months, I had teachers begging me for more boards!"

It's no mystery to Coleman why their SMART Board 680 interactive whiteboards became so popular so quickly. The teachers in the New Rochelle district embraced the ease with which they could create lessons and archive them for future use. Coleman says they also loved the ability to send lessons and assignments to students who had missed class. Discipline and focus in the classroom improved. Teachers marveled that many of their students were more engaged, enjoying school and learning more effectively.

Chris Starace, who teaches high-school Spanish, says using the SMART Board interactive whiteboard has been "a godsend and I'd never want to go back. It saves me a lot of time and allows me to be more creative and spontaneous."

Coleman gets especially excited when talking about the impact SMART Board interactive whiteboards have had in two assisted-technology classrooms, accommodating students with special needs. "To see autistic children, children in wheelchairs, going up to the board, interacting with the board at their grade level is phenomenal," she says. "They touch it and feel it. It's bright. The sound and image quality is fantastic. When I see those kids, it tells me I made the right decision."

By September 2007, teachers in New Rochelle will be using nearly 450 SMART Board interactive whiteboards across the district's nine schools and one early childhood center. "We will always have good teaching and good teaching practices," Coleman says. "But the tools we were able to supply our teachers because of the SMART Board interactive whiteboards have transformed this school district. When it comes to technology in education, we've taken just three years to move about nine years ahead." Coleman isn't finished yet – her goal is a SMART Board interactive whiteboard in the classroom of every teacher who wants one. She's confident she'll get there and when she does, one word will describe the results – phenomenal.

SMART Profile New Rochelle School District

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director, technology