

Hall Memorial School

Case Study, Willington, Connecticut



“Teachers who had 35 years experience but very little technology skills are now doing integrated technology lessons in their classrooms with SMART Board interactive whiteboards. It’s pretty phenomenal.”

– David Harding, Principal

Hall Memorial School bet its blue chip grant on SMART technology and won

Hall Memorial may be a small fourth to eighth grade rural school with just over 330 students, but the right principal, a Blue Chip School Grant and SMART Board™ interactive whiteboards have transformed this Willington, Connecticut school from ordinary to exemplary. Students are engaged, teachers are tech-savvy and sharing what they learn with each other, and parents are enthusiastic about the school’s technology integration.

Integrating technology 101

When Principal David Harding joined the school in 2001, technology wasn’t a high priority for Hall Memorial. But Harding wanted that to change. “One of the reasons I came here was because I thought I could make a difference with respect to technology,” he explains.

Like many rural schools, Hall Memorial doesn’t have much money for technology, so during his first year at the school Harding and a few teachers searched for technology funding. Along with 16 other schools in the state, Hall Memorial was awarded a Blue Chip School Grant of \$225,000 for technology and professional development in 2002.

Wanting to use the money effectively, Harding researched everything from laptops

to handheld devices, eventually choosing SMART Board interactive whiteboards.

“When I was teaching, I used a multimedia projector in the classroom, and it was an invaluable tool. The SMART Board interactive whiteboard seemed like a natural extension of that tool; not only could you project, but now it became interactive,” explains Harding.

But Harding was cautious. He purchased one SMART Board interactive whiteboard and put it in his most tech-savvy teacher’s class to test it out – math teacher Lynn Reedy.

“The kids were excited,” says Reedy, “they were going home telling their parents about it and parents were calling the principal asking why this technology wasn’t in their own student’s classroom.

“There was also so much excitement from the teachers about the interactive whiteboard and how versatile and easy-to-use it was that I started holding training sessions on how to use it,” says Reedy.

Seeing the enthusiasm, Harding bought four more SMART Board interactive whiteboards and gave them to the teachers who showed the most interest in technology. This sparked a major

Challenge

Successfully embed useful technology in classrooms while creating technology-savvy teachers and students.

SMART Solution

Twenty SMART Board interactive whiteboards – one in every classroom.

Result

Teachers are tech-savvy, students are engaged and parents are enthusiastic.

Hall Memorial School

Case Study, Willington, Connecticut

“We don’t have discipline issues here – all the focus is on curriculum alignment and strategies for improving curriculum.”

– David Harding, Principal



Teachers at Hall Memorial School have become more technology-savvy since the school bought SMART Board interactive whiteboards.

change. Teachers who were traditionally isolated in their classrooms developed what Harding calls a professional education community.

“When teachers found a new resource, a new way to use the SMART Board interactive whiteboard or a new feature, they would run across the hall to show another teacher. It changed from a closed door environment to a more collaborative environment,” says Harding.

Students and parents speak up

Harding also created a student technology committee that surveyed students about SMART Board interactive whiteboards. He learned that students felt more engaged and excited about learning, they were more likely to want to go to the board and they found lessons easier to understand because they could see exactly what the teacher was talking about.

He also got parents involved, holding a technology night where students and teachers demonstrated how they were using the SMART Board interactive whiteboard in their classes. Reedy says parents were surprised at how well the students used the interactive whiteboard and had a lot of positive things to say about the school’s technology integration.

Harding knew he’d made the right decision. Within two years he gave every teacher a laptop and put a SMART Board interactive whiteboard in every classroom. He says the laptops helped the integration process because teachers could take them home at night to work on lessons.

“Now, our art teacher, our music teacher, our shop teacher – everybody uses a SMART Board interactive whiteboard,” says Harding.

As part of his plan to integrate technology into the curriculum, Harding also eliminated the school’s computer class and created a

Technology Integration Specialist position. Lynn Reedy, the first teacher at the school to have an interactive whiteboard, filled the position. Teachers became responsible for integrating computer competencies into their regular classroom instruction, but they could call on Reedy as a resource to help them use technology in their classes.

“As a result, teachers who had 35 years experience but very little technology skills are now doing integrated technology

“Now, our art teacher, our music teacher, our shop teacher – everybody uses a SMART Board interactive whiteboard”

lessons in their classrooms with SMART Board interactive whiteboards. It’s pretty phenomenal,” says Harding.

Student success soars

Although Harding doesn’t believe that technology alone improves student performance, he does expect to see rising scores over the next few years. He believes that integrating SMART Board interactive whiteboards has increased engagement and improved performance. He says adding technology such as a wireless internet connection, video cameras, scanners, digital cameras and subject-specific software that students can use with the interactive whiteboards has also made a difference.

Seventh grade students, for example, participated in a live exchange with scientists studying thermal vents on a submersible underwater vessel off the coast of South Africa. Using the SMART Board interactive whiteboard and a phone line, students asked

Hall Memorial School

Case Study, Willington, Connecticut



Students at Hall Memorial School feel more engaged and excited about learning since they've started using SMART Board interactive whiteboards.

"One of the reasons I came here was because I thought I could make a difference with respect to technology,"

– David Harding, Principal

the scientists questions. While the scientists responded, they could also show the students what they were talking about through the video feed to the interactive whiteboard.

Harding says even the culture of the school has changed – teachers and students are

"They've started to contact us and say 'Wow, those SMART Board interactive whiteboards were a great investment, how can we get them'."

excited to be there every day. With so much excitement about learning, discipline issues are non-existent. This gives teachers more time to focus on teaching. "We don't have

discipline issues here – all the focus is on curriculum alignment and strategies for improving curriculum."

Attracting state-wide attention

The original Blue Chip School Grant was awarded to 16 schools but Harding says Hall Memorial was the most successful school. Now many of these schools and school districts from across the state want to duplicate Hall Memorial's success.

"They've started to contact us and say 'Wow, those SMART Board interactive whiteboards were a great investment, how can we get them'," explains Harding.

He attributes Hall Memorial's success to a slow integration process and support from parents and teachers who were willing to tackle new technology in the hopes of bringing students a better education.

About SMART

SMART is both the industry pioneer and global market leader in easy-to-use interactive whiteboards and other group collaboration tools. SMART products include the family of award-winning SMART Board interactive whiteboards, interactive pen displays, interactive digital signage and software. Using SMART products, groups can access and share the information they need to meet, teach, train and present. SMART customers include NASA, British Telecom, BMW, the Los Angeles Lakers, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Disney Imagineering and Harvard University. SMART products are sold through dealers across North America and distributors worldwide.



www.smarttech.com
info@smarttech.com

Toll Free 1.888.42.SMART
Phone 403.245.0333 Fax 403.228.2500