

# Seamless Integration

**EDCompass** newsletter

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## SMART Products Fit the Mix at Buckley School

By Heather Ellwood

"Adding SMART Board interactive whiteboards into our technology mix has helped our teachers become even more effective in the classroom," says Stuart Posin, director of technology at the Buckley School in Sherman Oaks, California.



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Sherman Oaks, California

And what a mix it is. At Buckley, a private school with over 100 teachers and around 760 students from kindergarten to twelfth grade, all the classrooms are completely technology enabled. The school currently has over 500 computers, including those in its one-to-one laptop program in the fourth and fifth grades. There are also document cameras, interactive response systems, wireless slates and other peripherals such as digital cameras and video recorders. As a result, when Posin considers the purchase of a technology product, he knows it must integrate smoothly into the existing environment.

Marina Leight is the vice president of education for the [Center for Digital Education](#), a leadership resource for technology in K–12 and higher education, based in Folsom, California. Her advice to educators on ensuring effective use of technology echoes Posin's approach. She believes that not taking into account how new classroom technology purchases fit into an existing mix and overall strategic plan is one of the biggest mistakes a school technology leader can make.

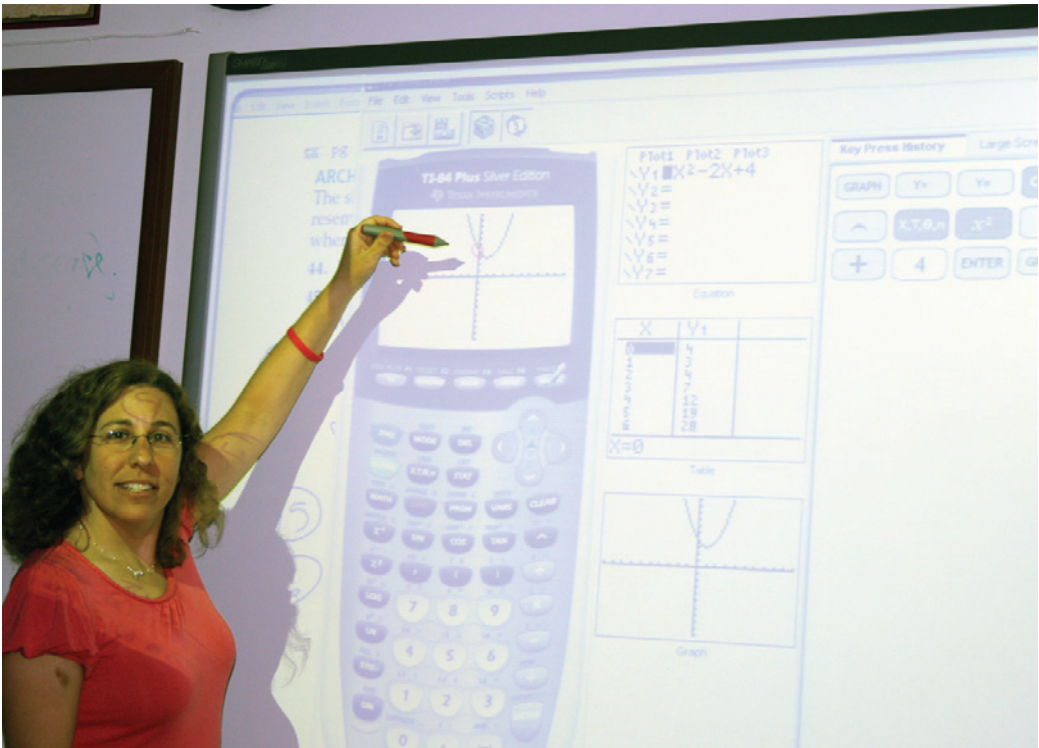
"School leaders should take an inventory of what technology they have and cross reference that with what their strategy has been and where their strategy is going before making any decisions. That way they keep everything aligned," Leight states.

Maintaining alignment with Buckley's technology plan and ensuring straightforward integration were crucial to Posin's decision to purchase SMART Board™ interactive whiteboards for the Buckley School. He also understood that teachers must believe in the technology. "In all of my purchase decisions for classroom technologies, my top priority is ensuring that the new technology supports the goals and passions of our teachers and enhances student learning," he stresses.

Leight is in full agreement. Any investment in classroom technology must generate excitement in the staff room and the school hallways. "Time and again when we do research at the Center for Digital Education, we find that the most successful model for technology investment or implementation always has teachers at the table," says Leight.

### Complementing instruction

Having purchased AirLiner™ wireless slates some years ago, Posin has long known about SMART products. But it was Buckley's math department chair who initially asked the technology director to look into adding SMART Board interactive whiteboards to their repertoire, after having seen one in action at an education conference. In 2007, after witnessing the strong, positive reactions from the staff and students to the interactive whiteboard in the math chair's classroom, and the way the product supported and extended the use of other products, such as document cameras and graphing calculators, Posin oversaw the installation of six SMART Board interactive whiteboards into other math classrooms.



Posin didn't stop the interactive whiteboard integration at the math wing. He says, "I very quickly saw the value for our school. I believe that the software and the capabilities of the SMART Board complement classrooms from kindergarten through to Advanced Placement history or math. It fits a wide range of teaching styles and classroom configurations."

With such a variety of technology products already in Buckley classrooms, it was crucial that the SMART Board interactive whiteboards interoperate, with little burden on the tech support team or the budget. Leight believes that testing the boards, as Posin did, in a few classrooms with tech-savvy teachers before making a more substantial investment, is integral to a school's success.

"Our research shows that it's best when teachers and tech leaders see classroom technology in action," Leight explains. "Tech leaders get a different perspective actually experiencing a product rather than simply reading about it. They can watch these products in action knowing what they know about their students and their teachers. That's when they'll have one of those aha moments. They will see a utilization that no sales rep ever is going to think of."

Posin explains that because SMART Board interactive whiteboards fit so well into the existing Buckley technology mix, and into overall instruction and learning, the entire school community quickly realized the potential of the product. For example, in the lower school, Posin says, "Teachers appreciate the way the SMART Board works with other technology products we have, like our document cameras."

And it wasn't just teachers clamoring for interactive whiteboards. Students questioned their teachers, asking why interactive whiteboards weren't in every classroom, and at open houses and meetings parents wondered when their children's classrooms would get them.

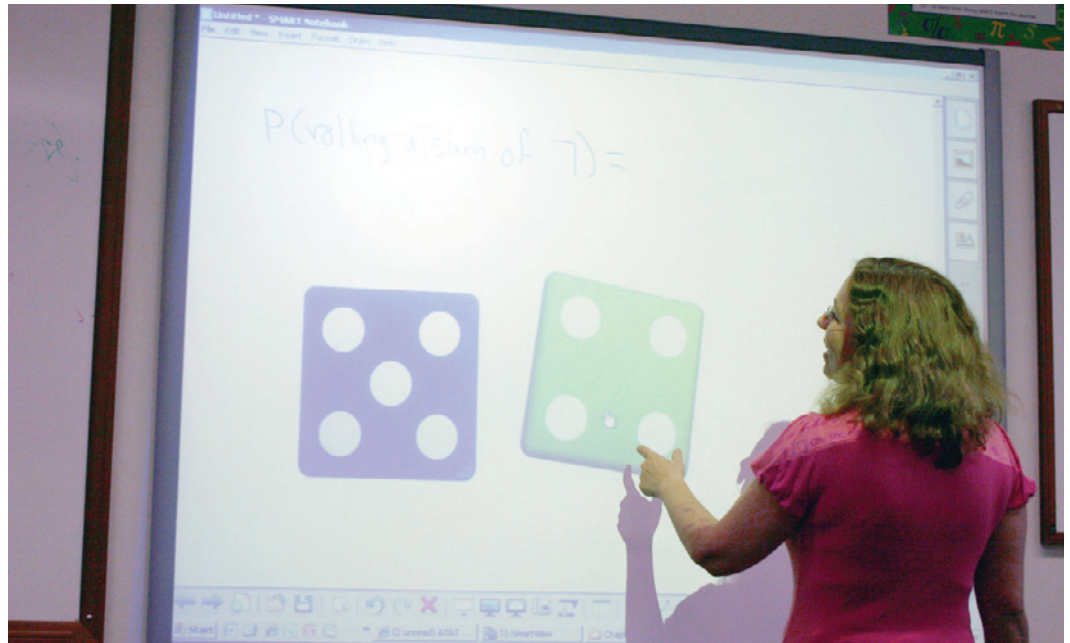
"Parents are looking for schools that understand the importance of technology for their children, today and in the future. This is one of the reasons SMART Boards are a central part of the Buckley technology lineup," explains Posin.

Within one year, the school went from 6 SMART Board interactive whiteboards to its current 25. And plans are in place to continue their rollout to every academic classroom by the beginning of the school year, bringing the total to around 40.



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### Adding interactivity

Because her duties at the Center for Digital Education take her to classrooms throughout North America, Leight is in a unique position to witness educational technology in action. Interactive whiteboards are valuable assets, she believes, owing to their ease of use, rapid rate of adoption, trouble-free integration with other technology and their positive impact on student outcomes.

"Classrooms with interactive whiteboards create an environment that increases the level of engagement for students, and once you embark on that road, there is no going back," Leight explains. "Teachers are creating great engagement experiences for their students with SMART Boards, so I would consider it to be a very worthwhile consideration for investment."

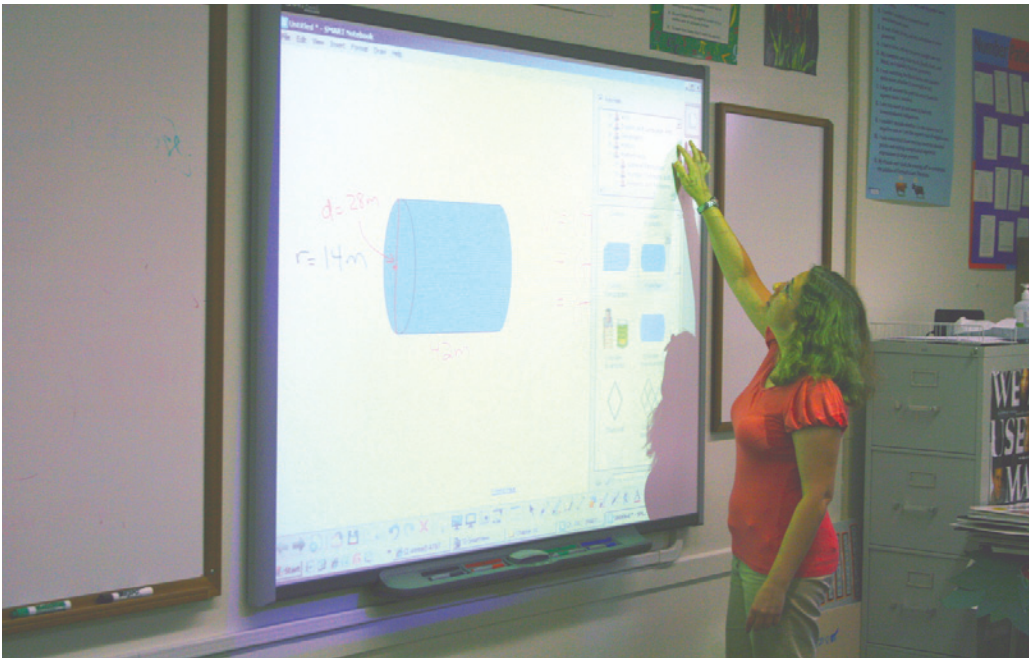
You won't hear Posin arguing that observation. He and his peers on the Buckley administrative team believe it is critical to provide the most advanced teaching resources available today and to engage students in ways that they relate and respond to.

To that end, SMART Notebook software, which comes with every SMART Board interactive whiteboard, has helped Buckley teachers add interactivity to their instruction. They find the software is an excellent tool to organize their existing content and teaching materials, and it's also easy to use when they create new lessons. When they are looking for interactive resources, Buckley teachers have turned to the SMART Exchange, the online community where members share best practices and resources such as lesson activities. "SMART products make the practical elements of teaching seamless and second nature, freeing up additional time for our teachers to focus on the most important elements of teaching – students and content."

"The on-the-fly annotation and manipulation of content our teachers get from the SMART Boards, and the interactivity they gain with students coming up to the board for activities, is just amazing," says Posin.

### Creating excellence

Since its inception in 1933, the Buckley School has emphasized a well-rounded program, focusing on academic training, physical development, moral education and creative expression. This four-fold approach dares students, staff and other partners to be brilliant, creative, strong and true. This passion for ideas and intellectual growth, say administrators and teachers, means Buckley students are encouraged to take on academic, artistic and physical challenges.



SMART Board interactive whiteboards, says Posin, fit that focus by providing teachers with advanced classroom-support tools that engage students and elevate the school's academic programs. "In 24 months, we will have gone from not having a single SMART Board to having one in every classroom. We've committed to these products, and we've seen them working," he says.

The story doesn't end there. The Buckley School is currently planning a campus-enhancement project that will see a new academic center constructed and extensive renovations to existing buildings. Posin is looking to outfit new and newly refurbished classrooms with SMART Podium (formerly Sympodium™) interactive pen displays, SMART Board interactive whiteboards and SMART Response interactive response systems. His reasoning is quite simple – not only do the products and solutions fit into the existing technology mix, but, "SMART products help us continue to achieve excellence. They just make teaching easier."

Finding classroom technology that makes teaching easier and sets a course for increased levels of student achievement is right on the mark, as far as Leight is concerned. She explains, "I have seen, time and time again, wonderful results with interactive whiteboards in classrooms. There are tremendous gains that can be quickly achieved by creating that kind of interactive experience for students in the classroom. Interactive whiteboards are a proven commodity." Plus, with their interoperability and ease of use, SMART products fit hand-in-glove with other educational technology, quickly increasing student engagement.

"There's nothing more expensive than starting over or going off in a direction you haven't planned for," says Leight. She knows from experience that when it comes to purchasing classroom technology, if a product integrates into a mix and aligns with an overarching classroom technology strategy, then it's an investment that will pay off in the long term. **EC**



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