

SMART Showcase School Profile

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Denver School Chooses the Proven Path to Success

By **Lavonne Boutcher**

Colorado Academy (CA) is a century-old independent school that looks back with pride on its history, but also has a keen focus on the future. The Denver school is a technology leader with a vision to use classroom technology to better prepare students for success in college and beyond.

"People are thinking about their children having 21st century skills, and to many people, that means technology skills – which are integrated into every occupation," says CA's director of technology, Jan Beattie. "Being conversant and competent in technology is one of the things we want students to be when they leave here."

Teachers in the school's three divisions use computers, laptops and a variety of interactive classroom products, including interactive whiteboards.

When Beattie first set out to bring interactive whiteboards into CA's middle and upper school classrooms, she wanted a powerful engagement tool that was easy to use and offered the most value. Beattie chose the **SMART Board™ interactive whiteboard**. "The effect that SMART Boards have had on classroom engagement, and therefore learning, is almost magical."

"If it's easy to use, it will get used," explains Beattie. "I felt the SMART Board had the least steep learning curve and the most comprehensive set of features of any whiteboards out there."

Beattie also felt SMART offered the training and online resources to help teachers get the greatest benefits from the technology products in their classrooms.

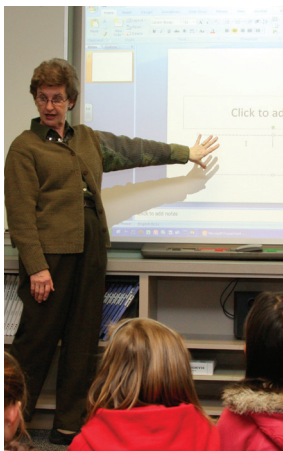
Beattie wanted to ensure teachers had all the support they needed to successfully integrate SMART Board interactive whiteboards into their teaching. So, her approach to implementing them in CA classrooms was to start slowly and build momentum, providing teachers with training opportunities at every turn.

From the beginning, SMART Board interactive whiteboards were only given to teachers who really wanted one. Beattie says she wanted teachers to feel it was "a privilege to have a SMART Board," and not something that was imposed on them.

Teachers at CA still have to apply to get a SMART Board interactive whiteboard because Beattie wants to make sure the interactive whiteboards are only in classrooms where they'll be used. Today, about half of all middle and upper school classrooms have SMART Board interactive whiteboards, and the plan is to have them in every classroom in two to three years.

"My SMART Board has absolutely lived up to my expectations. I have only had it in my classroom for two years and I use it almost daily. I find my students are more engaged in lessons," says Erin Galvin, a middle school science teacher. "A lot of kids are much more able to grasp concepts through what I do with the SMART Board."

Paul Kim is another enthusiastic user of the SMART Board interactive whiteboard and enjoys talking to others about what he calls a revolutionary teaching tool. After 20 years of teaching, Kim says his SMART Board interactive whiteboard has helped him find new ways to bring history to life.



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Jan Beattie

Director of Technology
Colorado Academy
Denver, Colorado



If you'd like to visit Colorado Academy to find out more about its chosen path to success and see firsthand how teachers are using SMART products, please visit the [SMART Showcase School](#) section of our website. From this page, you can also find a [SMART Showcase School or District in your area](#).

"When I thought about how the students I have now are different from the students I had at the beginning of my career, I knew I needed some different sort of forum to teach them. The old-fashioned stand-up-and-lecture business wasn't as effective, so I needed something more dynamic," he explains.

Kim feels the SMART Board interactive whiteboard isn't only for schools that want to be technology leaders. "It's just a great tool for people who are really interested in teaching more effectively," he says. "It's not just the seduction of the technology, it's actually really, really useful."

Both Kim and Galvin appreciate all the training and support they received from their school's technology department. Galvin explains that the encouragement helped her become "faster, more knowledgeable and more comfortable" integrating technology in her teaching.

Technology integration makes everything easier

Galvin is now interested in using more interactive technology products in her classroom and has already requested a [SMART Slate™ wireless slate](#). She says it will allow her to control her SMART Board interactive whiteboard while moving around the classroom to provide more individual attention to students.

Beattie says the addition of other SMART products to complement the SMART Board interactive whiteboard will focus on the individual needs of teachers. "We tried to just give them a board at first because we didn't have the money to get all of the accessories," explains Beattie. "Now, we're kind of filling in with those people who say, 'I could really use this,' or 'I see how this could enhance what I'm doing even more.'"

Beattie is pleased with how reliable SMART products are and how well they work together. The integration means less troubleshooting for her and gives teachers the confidence of knowing everything works properly.

"It's invaluable to them because if they think it's going to be a problem, they're not going to use it. And of course the important thing is to use it," she says.

Integrated products are just one part of SMART education solutions, and Beattie says teachers have benefited from other components as well, especially the access to training and professional development, support services, digital content and the large online education community.

"I think SMART's [online training](#) is just marvelous," she says. "We also direct people to the [SMART Exchange™ website](#) so they can download other people's lesson plans and make them their own."

Beattie is convinced that providing teachers with resources, training and encouragement is key to making technology integration successful. Every day, she sees educational technology being used, and teachers and students experiencing the benefits. And to her, that means Colorado Academy has chosen the right path to success. **EC**

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